



Factors Influencing Students' Career Choice In Secondary Schools In Rivers State: Implication For Career Counselling

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated factors influencing students' career choice in Secondary School in Rivers State with implications for career counselling. The study used descriptive survey design. The population of the study was two thousand nine hundred and forty (2940) students. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw five hundred and eighty eight respondents for the study. The instrument used to collect data for the study was called "Factors Influencing Secondary School Students' Career Choice" (FISSCCICQ). The Z-test statistic was used to test the three null hypotheses at 0.05 level through test-retest method. The result revealed that significant differences found in HO₁ and HO₂; while HO₃ was accepted. Six recommendations were made based on the findings.

Keywords: Counselor, student, career and choice

INTRODUCTION

Investigating and better understanding the numerous factors that contribute to career choice is a topic of recurring interest in our schools today. To guide students in their career decision making, socio-demographic factors play a central role in this lifelong process (Pilot & Regis, 2012).

Johnson (2008) defined career as one's lifework in other words, career is one's profession which includes a number of occupation, vocations or jobs one person engage in during his or her working life. Career is the course of events that constitute a life, the sequence of occupations and other life roles which combine express one's commitment to work in his or her total pattern of self development. Parents' educational and occupational background may affect student's choice of career because some students may contemplate on whether to continue with their parents occupation or not. What the students see in the television also may affect their career choice some careers demand that you have the personality to match the qualities of the occupation. For these reasons the necessity of a guidance counselor on schools cannot be over emphasized.

According to Basavage (2007), Career choice is one of many important choices students will make in determining future plans and that this decision will impact them throughout their lives. The essence of who the student is or want to become will revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work. She went ahead to ask what really influences university students in one way or another.

A career guidance counsellor is needed to unreliable and dangerous source in search of career information such as culture peer groups which can lead to their graduating into armed robbery and other criminal business unintentionally. The primary goal of career guidance and counselling is to make it possible for an individual to see and explore his or her unlimited endowed options. it is an undeniable fact that the major service areas of guidance and counselling are, educational guidance and counselling which assists students in their choices of career, vocational guidance and counselling which assists the individual to choose and prepare for an occupation that is compatible with his interests and aptitudes, and personal and social guidance and counselling which assists the individual to behave appropriately in relation to other members of the society (Odeck 2009 ; Ipaye, 2015). Career development provide insight to the fact that career counselling is being challenged to meet the needs of a society that is experiencing vast changes in the work place that is rapidly becoming more

diverse (Zunker, 2012). The changes in counselling needs have occurred because there is the need for quality work performance which is so pervasive in the lives of individuals since it influences all our life roles.

Career counsellors on the other hand do offer a wide range of career related programmes to students which are aimed at assisting students to plan their career, make informed decision and choose a career which will land him or her into the right vocation so as to make students enjoy their work (Zunker, 2012; Collins, 2007). In view of this, students receive comprehensive career counselling programmes (interventions) that require career and life plans through all level of schools and beyond, as well as school-to-work programmes which focus on preparing students for work through experienced internship activities in communities and organizations (Zunker, 2002). Thus, it is important to provide career intervention activities in school with the aim to support students with information and guidance with regards to personal, academic and career option (Rosenbaum & Person, 2003), as well as to guide and prepare students for multiple roles within broad industry sectors from the transition from secondary school to workplace, college or Secondary school is a critical path juncture. If such interventions are provided, it will enable the fit into the rapidly advancing technology. Thus there is the need for increased training and education to enable students break into most fields that are important and sophisticated than ever to choose thoughtfully (Weiten & Llyod, 2003).

Guidance counsellors therefore have an important role in advocating for broad based career plans that focus on the student's interests and abilities which will give students increase future career options. Most students are provided with inadequate realistic information about occupations and careers on which to base their interests. Meanwhile, job experiences play an important part in the development of maturity with regard to vocational interests, abilities, and traits (Black & Langone, 1997; Levinson, Peterson, & Elston, 1994; Pumpian, Fisher, Certo, & Smalley, 1997). Career interests, thus need to be stimulated through short-term job tryout experiences and job shadowing experiences that include documentation of preferences and performance.

The role(s) of the counsellor is therefore to plan career development intervention activities to support students make informed choices. These activities can empower the student to cope effectively with career development tasks (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002), it can be a deliberate act aimed to enhancing some aspect of students career development in terms of career maturity and career decision making (Isaacson & Brown, 2000). The counsellor thus can focus on career development interventions including career guidance, career counselling, career information, career education, career development program and career coaching (Isaacson & Brown, 2000).

The first factor in choosing a career is the environment factors that influence students' career choice. Students tend to choose career that is directly linked to the surrounding environment and try as much as possible to solve the existing challenges in the surrounding (Splaver (2011). For example, students who have lived their entire lives on an island will most likely choose a career dealing with the environment around them which is mostly to do with water, or alternatively choose to have nothing to do with the island, on no occasion to have anything to do with the environment around water again (Perrone, 2011). Maybe someone in the Students' life has made a significant impact or impression, leading to a certain choice of career (Hewitt, 2010). Parents' educational background may also influence Students' views on whether or not to continue their education. Media influence also play a role in the process of career choices among student, a student may see some prominent media personalities on television who may have influenced them to either make or alter a similar career choice to those personality or parents may have demanded that their Career Choice Factors assume a family business (Splaver (2011). There are various environmental factors that would lead a student to a chosen career (Stebbleton, 2007).

Again Shoffne and Vacc (1999) posit that school counsellors can help increase family collaboration by working closely with parents to increase family-school communication, and by providing parents with the skills and attitudes necessary to encourage their children to make appropriate career choices. Parents' beliefs influence children's beliefs. Shoffner and Vacc (1999, citing Fouad, 1995), mention that school counsellors can also work with students to address confidence, self-assurance, self-worth, and positive attitudes. This clearly shows that environmental and personality factors play a great role in the secondary students' career choices. This study will be carried out in Rivers State will be useful to the guidance counsellors in assisting senior students in their career also help the ministry of education in curriculum planning to widen the students career choice opportunities through curriculum content of educational system.

Statement of the Problem

Career choice decision making process is one of the key elements in an individual's life. There exist numerous problems encountered by students in their process of Career choice. Wrong career selection opens the door for lifelong consequences. Such individual's by underperforming becomes a source of inefficiency not only for themselves, their organization but also for the economy as a whole.

The problem of the study is that some secondary school adolescent students are not able to make appropriate career choices due to a number of factors that affect their career development process. Such factors include psychological, sociological, physical, economic, educational and chance factors. The factors that may influence choice of career include; Socio economic factors Personal or family factors. Cultural factors which include schools, peer group and age groups. Taking the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria as the confusion of some students with respect to the career they want to choose, the researchers want to find out how the school counsellor support students at the Senior high school to make well informed choices, through the collaboration with students and the use of interventions.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the Factors influencing students' career choice in secondary schools in rivers state: Implication for career counselling. The Specific Objectives is to:

1. To examine the specific role schools counsellors play in assisting students make career choice.
2. To examine the environmental factors and career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt.
3. To determine the factors of personality and career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study

1. What specific role do schools counsellors play in assisting students make career choice?
2. To what extent do environmental factors influence career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt?
3. To what extent do factors of personality influence career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses was generated to support the study

1. There is no significant difference between the roles of schools counsellors and students career choice.
2. There is no significant difference between environmental factors and career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt?
3. There is no significant difference between the factors of personality and career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive survey design was used to carry out this study. The comparative analysis was achieved by means of utilizing z-test statistic for the comparison of mean scores at 0.05 level of significance. While, the research questions were answered by descriptive statistics: Mean and Standard deviation.

Population and Sample of the Study

The Population of this study consists of two thousand nine hundred and forty (2940) SS2 secondary schools students in two selected local Government Area of Rivers State. The simple random sample of 588 students was drawn from the study.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for this investigation was A 4-point Modified Likert scale which is an interval scale-ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree with a numerical value ranging from 4 points to 1 points. The instruments that were used for this study were the questionnaire titled: Factors that Influence secondary schools student's choice of career Questionnaire (GCAPSCSQ). The instrument has 15 (Fifteenth) items. A weighted average of 2.5 was accepted for research questions.

Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by Experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the faculty of Education, who ascertained the face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-re-test method, using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. A reliability coefficient of 0.725 was obtained for the study.

RESULTS

4.1 Research Question 1: What specific role do school counsellors play in assisting students in choosing their career?

Table 4.1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Roles School Counsellors Play to Assist Students in Choosing a Career

| S/N | Items | SA | A | DA | SDA | $\bar{\chi}$ | SD | Remark |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|------|----------|
| 1 | Information on future opportunities | 150 | 100 | 80 | 50 | 2.92 | 1.12 | Agreed |
| 2 | Help in self assessment | 200 | 80 | 80 | 20 | 3.21 | 0.90 | Agreed |
| 3 | Personality and career aptitude test | 120 | 140 | 110 | 10 | 2.97 | 0.70 | Agreed |
| 4 | Organized career field trips | 220 | 40 | 40 | 80 | 3.05 | 1.58 | Agreed |
| Total Mean/S.D | | | | | | 12.15 | 4.3 | Accepted |
| Grand Mean/S.D | | | | | | 3.03 | 1.07 | Accepted |

Source: Survey Data, 2018

The result of table 1 shows a mean rating of variables. The four items in the table were remarked accepted. In all, the respondent indicates that The study revealed that among other career intervention activities which formed the role the school counsellor played to assist the students in their bid to choose a career include career guidance and counselling, career goals identification, information on future career opportunities, career decision making, help in self assessment, career awareness day, organized career field trips, occupational interest inventory, career conferences, and administration of personality and career aptitude test.. This was confirmed by the grand mean of 3.03 and standard deviation of 1.07.

4.2 Research Question 2: To what extent do environmental factors influence career choice among secondary schools students in Rivers State?

Table 4.2: Means and Standard Deviations on environmental factors and career choice among secondary schools students in Rivers State

| S/N | Items | SA | A | DA | SDA | $\bar{\chi}$ | S.D | Remark |
|-----------------------|---|-----|-----|----|-----|--------------|------|----------|
| 1 | My parents had or will have the greatest influence in my career choice. | 99 | 107 | 87 | 87 | 2.57 | 1.22 | Agreed |
| 2 | Family member had or will have influence in my career choices | 149 | 187 | 30 | 14 | 3.23 | 0.56 | Agreed |
| 3 | Socio-economic factors played or will play a role in my career choice. | 28 | 39 | 50 | 6 | 3.58 | 0.60 | Agreed |
| 4 | My gender played or will play a role in my career choice. | 95 | 207 | 59 | 19 | 2.99 | 0.60 | Agreed |
| Total Mean/S.D | | | | | | 12.37 | 2.98 | |
| Grand Mean/S.D | | | | | | 3.09 | 0.74 | Accepted |

Source: Survey Data, 2018

The results of table 4.2 which is for research question two, shows that all the items in the table indicates a positive response with mean scores of 2.57, 3.23, 3.58 and 2.99 respectively. The response of the respondents shows that Environment has a momentous role in the career choice students make and the position the student attains in various ways. The environment being referred to here is a factor that is used to foster decisions in career choice. The Career choices are partial determined by factors

like socioeconomic status, gender, race, parents' occupation and level of education and the expectation of your parental. This confirmation was made by the grand mean of 3.09

4.3 Research Question 3: *To what extent do factors of personality influence career choice among secondary schools students in Rivers State?*

Table 4.3: Means and Standard Deviations on the factors of personality influence career choice among secondary schools students in Rivers State

| S/N | Items | SA | A | DA | SDA | $\bar{\chi}$ | SD | Remark |
|-----------------------|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1 | My values played or will play a role in my career choice | 35 | 25 | 200 | 120 | 1.93 | 0.74 | Disagreed |
| 2 | My skills played or will play a role in my career choice | 25 | 175 | 100 | 80 | 2.38 | 0.78 | Disagreed |
| 3 | Any other personality factors that have influence your career choice | 49 | 218 | 33 | 80 | 2.62 | 0.91 | Agreed |
| 4 | My values played or will play a role in my career choice | 105 | 160 | 70 | 45 | 2.85 | 0.91 | Agreed |
| Total Mean/S.D | | | | | | 9.78 | 3.34 | |
| Grand Mean/S.D | | | | | | 2.44 | 0.83 | Accepted |

Source: Survey Data, 2018

Table 4.3 which is for research question three shows that two items in the table were accepted while two item were rejected. In all the respondents accepted by their responses that Personality is a fundamental element of career choice making. The choice of an occupation is an expression of personality and that the members of an occupational group have similar personalities. He also maintains that occupational achievement, stability and satisfaction depend on congruence between personality and the work environment. Personality factors of an individual will include the interest of a person. This confirmation was made by the grand mean of 2.44.

4.4 Research Question 4: *What are the factors that affect career choice of students in secondary schools?*

Table 4.4: Means and Standard Deviations on the factors that affect career choice of students in secondary schools

| S/N | Items | SA | A | DA | SDA | $\bar{\chi}$ | S.D | Remark |
|-----------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | knowledge of one's personal abilities, attitudes | 149 | 187 | 30 | 14 | 3.23 | 0.56 | Agreed |
| 2 | Parent's financial status influences choice of career | 45 | 25 | 200 | 110 | 2.01 | 0.82 | Disagreed |
| 3 | Parental and Peer Group Constraints | 200 | 80 | 80 | 20 | 3.21 | 0.90 | Agreed |
| 4 | | 20 | 10 | 10 | 340 | 1.23 | 0.31 | Disagreed |
| Total Mean/S.D | | | | | | 9.68 | 2.59 | Agreed |
| Grand Mean/S.D | | | | | | 2.42 | 0.64 | Agreed |

Source: Survey Data, 2017

The result of table 4.4 shows the mean rating of variables. The two items in the table were remarked accepted while two items is remarked rejected. In all, the respondents indicated that Parent's financial status influences choice of career. This was confirmed by the grand mean of 2.42 and a standard deviation of 0.64.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the roles of schools counsellors play in assisting students and their career choice.

Table 4.5 z-test analysis on the significant difference between the roles of schools counsellors play in assisting students make career choice.

| LGA | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Std Error Mean | z-value | Z-Crit | DF | p |
|-------------------|-----|---------|---------------|----------------|---------|--------|-----|-------|
| School Counsellor | 86 | 12.1845 | 1.51890 | .11719 | 4.065 | 1.97 | 232 | 0.000 |
| Students | 148 | 13.0500 | 1.93519 | .19352 | | | | |

Sources: Field Survey Data, 2018

In table 4.5 the result indicated a mean of 12.1845 for school Counsellor and 13.0500 for students, with a standard deviation of 1.51890 for School Counsellor and 1.93519 for students. A standard error mean of .11719 for School Counsellor and .19352 for students. The observed t-value is 4.065 and the probability level of significance for the test is 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), table value of 1.97. This means that the null hypothesis which stated that there is a significant difference in the opinion of school counsellor and students on en the roles of schools counsellors play in assisting students make career choice is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between environmental factors and career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt.

Table 4.6: z-test analysis on the significant difference between environmental factors and career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt.

| LGA | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Std Error Mean | Z-value | Z-Crit | DF | p |
|------------------|-----|---------|---------------|----------------|---------|--------|-----|-------|
| School counselor | 46 | 12.9900 | 2.32898 | .23290 | 4.855 | 1.97 | 232 | 0.000 |
| Students | 168 | 11.8988 | 1.35204 | .10431 | | | | |

Sources: Field Survey Data, 2017

The test was conducted using z-test statistics and the mean of the Students is 11.8988 and that of the school counselor 12.9900, the standard deviation for the Students is 1.35204 and for the school counselor is 2.32898: the standard error mean for the Students is .10431 while that of the school counselor is .23290. The observed z-value is 4.855, the p-value is 0.000 ($p < 0.005$), table value is 1.97. The null hypothesis is thus rejected because there is a significant difference in the opinion of environmental factors that influence career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt. By implication, the test revealed that the respondents disagreed that the environmental factors influence career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the factors of personality and career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt?

Table 4.7: z-test analysis on the significant difference between the factors of personality and career choice among students in secondary school in Port Harcourt.

| LGA | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Std Error Mean | Z-value | Z-Crit | DF | p |
|---------------------|-----|---------|---------------|----------------|---------|--------|-----|-------|
| Students | 158 | 20.3512 | 3.16065 | .24385 | 0.277 | 1.97 | 232 | 0.000 |
| Teachers Counsellor | 56 | 20.4600 | 3.02988 | .30299 | | | | |

Sources: Field Survey Data, 2018

From table 4.7, it revealed that the Students mean is 20.3512 while for the Teachers Counsellor was 20.4600 and the standard deviation of 3.16065 and 3.02988 for Students and Teachers Counsellor responses respectively, while a standard error mean was .24385 for Students and .30299 for Teachers Counsellor and df value of 266 and p-value of 0.782 and the observed z-call of 0.277 ($p > 0.005$), z-value 1.97. Thus means that the null hypothesis which stated there is no significant difference in the opinion of factors of personality and career choice among students was not significant.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion in this study was done according to the findings of this study. Findings from table two which was for research question showed that among other career intervention activities which formed the role the school counsellor played to assist the students in their bid to choose a career include career guidance and counselling, career goals identification, information on future career opportunities, career decision making, help in self assessment, career awareness day, organized career field trips, occupational interest inventory, career conferences, and administration of personality and career aptitude test. The study revealed that advising interventions which include academic planning counselling, career focused parent/student conference, career peer advising/tutoring, career counselling, career interest assessment, computer-assisted career guidance, and individual career plan, helped students to make career choice and as such many of the counsellors in Nigeria use it more than any other intervention. All these interventions and/or role of the counsellor according to Niles & Bowlsbey, (2008), help people to develop self-awareness, occupational awareness, learn career decision making skills, job search skills, cope with job stress, adjust and implement problem solving skills and make a choice.

The study findings also showed that family members played a role in influencing or determining their career choices. These findings agree with some of the already existing literature that family members have a role to play in Students' career choice. Maze (2008), family background can be influential in career decision making. In several study for college students, researchers have found out that parents are the most influential career role models for students.

The study surveyed the personality factors influencing Students' career choices among secondary school students and over 90% of the respondent's career choices were influenced by personality factors against 3% who felt that were not influenced by the personality factors. 7% of the respondents remained neutral on the personality factors. Majority of the respondents also acknowledged that personal interest, values and skills played a major role in their career choices.

CONCLUSION

Although the counsellors played their role in order to assist the students to choose a reputable career, however, the effects or influence of the counsellors effort on the career choice of students was low. This could be that the counsellors are not well resourced, did not do effective and efficient follow-up, counsellor-parent consultation concerning students career choice as against their ability and interest was not properly done. This can be one of the factors that resulted in students not making the right choice of career, hence becoming shop attendance, yogurt sellers while others join the 'sakawa' group. It was also concluded that environmental factors, the study opt to establish whether they influence the choice of career students among secondary school students make. The study's findings showed that environmental factors play a great role in influencing Students' career choices. However, part of the respondents felt that environmental factors have no influence in their career choice whereas we had a significant percentage that had no idea and remained neutral. The study's conclusion is that environmental factors play a significant role in determining the career choice students among secondary school students make.

And finally, with regard to personality factors, the study sort to find out how personality factors influence the career choice. The findings showed that personality factor too significantly influence the career one chose. It was the highly rate factors by respondents as one of the most significant factor that influence career choice. The study's conclusion is that personality factors play a significant role in determining the career choice students among secondary school students make.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for Factors that influence secondary school students' choice of career in Rivers State:

- 1) Government should support guidance and counselling practically by providing and making funds available for all the services in guidance and counselling.
- 2) Guidance and counselling should be made an integral part of University and secondary school programmes and therefore supported by all concerned.
- 3) The guidance counsellor should be consulted by all schools administration in implementing some of the counselling programmes.
- 4) Guidance counsellors should be committed to the counselling programmes through helping the teachers with the identification of students with learning problems and inform the teachers, so that different individualized methods can be used for effective teaching and learning.
- 5) Parents also should be included in guidance and counselling programme through giving them progressive report of their students.
- 6) Counsellors should understand their limits in helping the students and therefore make use of referrals.

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