Predictors of Career Indecision among Senior Secondary School Students in Nasarawa Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

1Prof. Deng, D.I.; 2Umar, Usman Sani & 3Samuel, Ruth I.

1Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria

2Guidance and Counselling Unit, Department of Education Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria maruu1959@gmail.com

3Department of Science, Technology and Mathematics Education, Faculty of Education, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria ruthsa124@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
The study examined the predictors of career indecision among secondary school students in Nasarawa Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, using a sample of 430 Secondary School students out of these, there were 215 boys and 215 girls drawn from Senior Secondary School students (SSS) III. The ages of the students ranged from 14 to 24 years, with an average age of 17.8 years. The results of this study showed that there was significant association between career indecision and external locus of control among male respondents though, negative association existed with vocational identity and career readiness. The results also showed significant correlation coefficient between females’ career indecision and their external locus of control. It therefore, indicated the existence of negative correlation with vocational identity, career decision-making self-efficacy. Perceived social support and career readiness was evidenced. There was a significant model fit for females F(13.12),P<0.05, which showed the independent variables at 36.2% of the variance, inferring that career readiness was the strongest predictor followed by vocational identity. The study recommended that schools should avail their students with adequate career information, encourage the students to explore various careers and consult widely to improve their career literature. The more the students explore such career literature, the less likely is their career indecision. Parents, school counsellors and teachers should also assist students to explore their self-efficacy for their future self-identity and greater career goal achievement.

Keywords: Career Indecision, Career Readiness, Locus of Control, Senior Secondary Student.

INTRODUCTION
Career indecision is a common and temporary state of difficulties encountered by students in making a decision that is career-related (Brown, 2016). Such decisions are among the most complicated decisions one faces in life. The student’s skills, goals, family, social support and emotional intelligence all combine to play different roles in decision-making. The ideal situation is choosing a career that fits the individual’s skills, interests and values, which many senior secondary school students have trouble deciding on a
career path that fits them. The indecision may be due to inadequate information or uncertainty about their future. It may also be due to lack of ways to obtain relevant information and unfamiliarity about the overall process of making a career decision (Creed, Patton & Prideaux, 2006).

Indecision is most highly associated with personality and emotional intelligence (Santos & Ferreira, 2006). Developing the individual’s emotional intelligence is about learning to choose emotions that lead to experience and transforming out of feeling of negativity and applying those tasks effectively. Therefore, individuals with high emotional intelligence have more stability to cope with environmental pressures and tend to make decisions quickly and positively. Indecision can push individuals into avoiding careers or making wrong career choices. This is why indecisions have been of great interest in the field of counselling psychology (Gordon, 2007). When experienced for a brief and limited moment, career indecision can be seen as an appropriate developmental experience. It can however, become a strong personality trait which can limit the decision-making process in relation to career choices too. (Santos, 2001). Making a career decision is an important task for students. It begins to emerge early when children are in primary school. During this time, children develop interests and begin to understand how their ability relates to the world of work (Hartung, Porfeli & Vondracek, 2005). The advancement in technology, urbanization and changes in the job market are some of the primary reasons for complexity in career decision-making. This is also a challenge for most students who are in the process of making career decisions. Patton & Prideaux (2006) have estimated that as many as 59% of students experience career indecision. Therefore, career indecision is an important issue in career development the assessment of career indecision provides an important information about specific problems that prevent students from making appropriate career decisions.

Donati & Lafranchi (2007) have identified two main career indecision difficulties among students. The first is the difficulty in complying with the compromise process through which students give up their favourite aspirations to choose others that seem below theirs, but are nonetheless, more accessible. This is a minor compromise. This process becomes more difficult and less voluntary when the student must put aside acceptable alternatives and can even be very painful when the choice is limited to alternatives that the student perceives as unacceptable. This is a major compromise. The second difficulty detected was, for some students and for different reasons, the almost complete absence of a reflection on the future and therefore, on career. Any deviation from either of these two difficulties is seen as a possible problem that can affect the student’s decision-making process in two ways: by preventing the student from making a decision or by pushing him or her to a lesser decision.

Gender and ethnicity differences in career decision-making confidence and in the perception of career-related barriers may contribute to career indecision. It is noteworthy that few studies of career indecision have used diverse examples. Therefore, it remains unclear whether perceptions of barriers and decision-making confidence function similarly or differently as predictors of career indecision across students from different cultural groups. Unlike their male counterparts, females are more likely to anticipate gender-related barriers to career decision-making, such as gender discrimination and potential work-family conflicts (Levon, 2007).

The main avenues through which students grow and make career choices are family and school contexts (Fouad, Kim & Ghosh, 2016). On the family front, such as socio-economic status, studies have shown that these are the risk factors which predispose the student to career decision debacle (Pajaron, 2012). The family’s socio-economic status can in fact influence the student indirectly by preventing the family from adequately supporting the student when searching for information that would be useful to him or her. In this instance, the family does not play an active negative role, rather, it refrains from playing a positive role in the construction of the professional identity of the student unintentionally denying important support (Crisan & Turda, 2015). The issue is related to family support which in turn highlights the importance of direct or indirect family and social support for psychological and physical well-being of the student and demonstrates that social support acts as a buffer between stressful life events and symptoms associated with career indecisions (Marcionetti & Rossier, 2017). The school provides a specific context and identity possibilities in which the students create their career identities (Stringer & Kerpelman, 2010).
The content of school curriculum based on students’ impacts can be categorised into different groups such as the attentive student or the agitated one, the good or the bad one, the gifted or the ungifted (Aivior, 2015), which can be internalised by the students and become part of the ways they think of themselves as future workers (Deschamps & Moliner, 2011). Academic performance also directly influences the professional future of students by opening or closing access to schools and training opportunities. The school may also provide support to students by offering the possibility of meeting a career adviser or through the social support which peers, teachers and relevant others in the school.

Career decisions can have long-term repercussions as they can commit a student to a particular career path that can involve long periods of education and training before actually resulting in employment. Career indecision can therefore, be viewed from response when students are required to make career related decisions it might occur at any time a career is contemplated, though likely to occur at career transition points when thinking about a part-time job or choosing school subjects or tertiary institutions’ programme (Santos & Ferreira, 2012). The early years of secondary school education are a springboard in the career development of students, as such this is when they actively explore their interests and aptitudes and develop career-related goals and aspirations in the context of testing their personal strengths and weaknesses against available job opportunities (Patton & Creed, 2007). Therefore, career indecision is a developmentally appropriate experience for adolescents, especially senior secondary school students. It may fluctuate depending on a variety of situational factors and is likely to resolve with the assistance of appropriate interventions including access to relevant career-related information and assistance with clarifying values and goals (Birol & Kiralp, 2010).

Guay, Ratelle & Senecal (2006) have identified two types of career indecision: developmental and chronic. The former, which is a normal developmental phase is temporary, while the latter is an on-going inability to make decisions because of psychological problems such as high levels of anxiety, low esteem and lack of well-defined self-identity.

Other specific characteristics of a student, such as gender and personality, are related to career indecision (Marcionetti, 2014). For instance, female students are more likely to privilege services and social careers, while male students tend to prefer production and technology careers. This gender stereotypical discrimination can impact on choices and career indecision. Marcionetti, (2014) added that personality traits have been related to career indecision, in particular neuroticism, consciousness and extroversion that can be related to different approaches to study and to school obligations. Career indecision is causally related to self-efficacy and changes in career indecisions leads to changes in self-efficacy. Conversely, reducing a student’s career indecision creates confidence to tackle career related tasks.

**Purpose of the Study**

The goal of this study is to investigate the predictors of career indecision among senior secondary school students in Nasarawa Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

The specific research questions of the study were:

i. Which predictors influence students’ career indecision?

ii. Do male and female students have similar predictors in their career indecisions?

iii. What is the relationship between gender and locus of control among the students?

**Research Hypotheses**

The following Null Hypotheses were drawn for the study:

i. There is no significant difference in the predictors of students’ career indecision;

ii. There is no significant relations between male and female predictors of their career indecision; and

iii. There is no relationship between gender and locus of control among the students.
METHOD
Participants
The total sample consisted of 430 secondary school students in Nasarawa Local Government Area: 215 boys and 215 girls comprising senior secondary school students (SSS) III. The ages of the students ranged from 14 to 24 years, with an average age of 17.8.

Instrument
Demographic Questionnaire was employed to collect personal information of the respondents. It included age, gender, type of school, parental level of education and occupation.
Career Indecision: the Career Decision Scale (CDS) was used to measure career indecision of the respondents on a 4-item Likert scale (4= Exactly like me; 1= Not at all Like me). The scale contained 19 items made up of 16 items that measured indecision and 2 items measured the degree of certainty felt in having made a career decision. Reliability test using Osipow (1976) measured .85 and a Cronbach’s alpha of .89. Reliability coefficient for this study was 0.77.
Career Readiness: Career Maturity Inventory was employed to ascertain career readiness of the respondents. The readiness subscale with 20 items measuring confidence, concern and curiosity was applied on a 5-point Likert scale, where 5= Strongly agree; 1= strongly disagree. Savickas and Porfeli (2011) found a coefficient alpha of .85 measuring readiness. The reliability coefficient for this study was 0.75.
Vocational Identity: the Vocational Identity of the respondents was measured using Vocational Identity Scale consisting of 21 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale, 5=Very True, 1=Very false. This scale measures the possession of clear and stable picture of one’s aspirations and hopes. Holland, Daiger and Power (1980) reported an internal consistency reliability of .86, while Wang, Jome, Haase and Bruch (2006) had .85 and Koumoundourou using Cronbach alpha got .75. The reliability coefficient for this study was 0.83.
Self-Esteem. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was utilized to assess the respondents’ self-worth. The scale is a10 item Likert scale with items answered on a 5 point scale- from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This scale is the most widely used measure for research purposes. The reliability coefficient for the current study was 0.78.
Career Locus of Control. The career locus of control scale was used to measure the respondents’ career development and decision-making process. Using a 47 items on a 5-point Likert scale to measure both internal and external locus of control. The reliability coefficient for this study was found to be 0.79.
Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy. Career Decision Making self-Efficacy Scale was used to assess the career decision making self-efficacy of the respondents. The instrument measures a persons’ degree of belief that they can successfully complete tasks necessary for career decision without external interference. The instrument has 25 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale with 5 subscales measuring self-appraisal, occupational information, career planning, problem solving and goal selection. The reliability coefficient for this study was found to be 0.84.
RESULTS

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviations and Pearson Product Moment Correlation for Dependent and Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>21.26</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELoC</td>
<td>20.01</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>34.43</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.41</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILoC</td>
<td>34.04</td>
<td>9.54</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>46.08</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDMSE</td>
<td>90.55</td>
<td>14.12</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>59.06</td>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>9.36</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SE=Self-Esteem; ELoC=External Locus of Control; CI=Career Indecision; ILoC/Internal Locus of Control; VI=Vocational Identity; CR=Career Readiness; CDMSE=Career Decision Making Efficacy.

The results of this study as indicated in Table 1 showed that there was significant association between career indecision and external locus of control among male respondents, negative association existed with vocational identity and career readiness. The results also showed significant correlation between females’ career indecision and their external locus of control. It was existence of negative correlation with vocational identity, career decision-making self-efficacy, perceived social support and career readiness was evidenced.

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for variables Predicting Career Indecision for Male and Female Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>48.66</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>64.14</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Locus of Control</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Locus of Control</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Esteem</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Identity</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Decision Making Self Efficacy</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Readiness</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.33</td>
<td>-.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to test the hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was applied for predicting gender influence on career indecision scores. As could be seen from Table 2, there was a significant model fit for females F(13.12), P<0.05, which showed the independent variables at 36.2% of the variance inferring that career readiness was the strongest predictor followed by vocational identity. These revelations indicated significant individual prediction above the group prediction. There was a significant model fit, F (8.23) = 11.87, P, 0.05 for males, which showed the independent variables in the model at 36.3% of the variance inferring that career readiness was the strongest predictor followed by external locus of control and vocational identity. These revelations indicated significant individual prediction above the group prediction.

DISCUSSION

The present study looked into the multiple predictors of career indecision scores for male and female students of Nasarawa Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria using the hypothesis that there was no significant difference in the variables that predicted career indecision scores for male and female students. The results however, indicated that there was different combination of predicted career
indecision scores for the male and female students. The inferred results showed significant model fit for both males (36.2%) and females (36.3%) of the variance. It was evidenced that the strongest predictor in both sexes was career readiness, signifying that students who were actively engaged in seeking for career information were less undecided when it came to making career decisions. It was identified that there was wide margins between the sexes when it came to external locus of control, whereby in males, it was stronger predictor than vocational identity. The females’ scores, on the other hand showed that external locus of control scores did not predict career indecision scores. All the remaining variables tested did not predict career indecision in both males and females. Worthy of note was the existence of significant correlations between career indecision and career decision making self-efficacy, perceived social support and external locus of control for the female students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The evidence from the current study indicated that career decision making self-efficacy should be viewed as a direct antecedent variable to career indecision. The vocationally-indecisive student presents a major counselling problem because career indecision often is associated with human suffering therefore, it is important to gain more insight into the causes and consequences of career indecision. Schools should avail their students with adequate career information, encourage the students to explore various careers and consult widely to improve their career literature. The more the students explore career literature, the less is their career indecision. Parents, school counsellors and teachers should assist students to explore their self-efficacy for their future self-identity and greater career goal achievement.

REFERENCES