



Parental Influence on Subject Selection and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State

Sota, Vivien Voke & Agi. C.W.

**Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education,
Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Phone no: 08033167991, 08030958193**

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the parental influence on subject selection and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers State. A correlational research design was adopted on a target population of 16,956 Senior Secondary Two (SSII) students. A sample size of 400 students was randomly selected using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was an adapted instrument titled “Parental Influence on Subject Selection and Student Academic Performance Questionnaire” that was administered to students after validation and tested for reliability. The reliability index was 0.78, 0.82, 0.79, 0.73 for each variable Section. The analysis of the data was done using mean and standard deviation for research questions and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis for hypotheses testing. The findings from the study revealed that; there is no significant relationship between parental influence on subject selection and students’ academic performance and that parental influence on subject selection will not predicts the academic performance of students in secondary school. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made; students should always maintain their choice of subject based on what they are interested in, and not to succumb to the pressures of their parents who impose subjects they lack interest in. Parents should be enlightened on the importance of subject selection and career guidance. The enlightenment can be channel through workshops and Parents/Teachers Association (PTA) meetings.

Keywords: Academic career, Subject selection, Parental interest, Academic performance, Attitude.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important functions of education in our society today is to assist the learners make different career choices including subject selection by the students that will match their individual interest, abilities, personalities etc. needed to their development. It is a known fact that most young students have challenges of selecting subject at the secondary schools. The senior secondary education (SSS) represents the third stage in the current educational system known as 6-3-3-4. This system of education that was designed by the National Policy on Education exposes the learners to as many disciplines as possible in the junior secondary school (J.S.S.) and then allows them to make choices of subjects in the senior secondary school levels (SSS).

Making choices from such array of options becomes a herculean task to the students. It is one of the many important choices students will make in determining their future plans and this decision will impact them throughout their lives. In terms of career and subjects selection, Okeke (2000) posits that parents and guardians have a significant effect on their children, that parents’ characteristics played a vital role in students’ choice of technical subjects.

Parents have a crucial task of preparing their children for education. In their task of career guidance, Mabunda (2002) stated that parents have a greater influence on the child’s development and future career choices. That is why Ozioma (2011) observed that the level of interest in students and the position of the parents in the society sometimes influenced student’s interest in the study of vocational subjects, which this current study attributes as subject selection by parents for their children. According to Jordan, Orozco and Averett in Odiriamatari (2015), research have also indicated that the degree the family of the child is able to create a home environment that encourages learning,

expresses high and realistic expectation for the child's achievement and future career; as well as being involved in the child's education at school and in the home predicts the child's success in school and in the future. That, parental involvement in education as investigated in this study refers to the various activities parents engage in both at home and in school intended to assist with the children's overall learning experiences.

The influence by parents/guardians on subject selection as well as career choice for their children have been observed to have some negative impacts on the performances of some of these children. The negative impact on the performances of some of these children has lead many research indications on the dropping of students' academic achievement in our educational system. This dropping was also supported by Tenibaje (2009) who asserts that, students' academic performance in Nigeria is declining at a disturbing rate. Although, academic performance is seen as a very significant instrument with which the success as well as ability of a student contribution to the societal development are measured. To Olaitan (2017) the implication of this, is that students that perform beyond average of the standard set by the society are not only seen as brilliant but as well probable to contribute meaningfully to the growth, development and sustenance of that society in the near future. With this result, the society constantly has eyes on the academic performance of its students at all levels of educational institutions be it primary secondary or tertiary (Olaitan, 2017).

Based on the falling of students' academic performance, Ibang and Eremie (2017) contended that students will need a lot of help by all school personnel especially the principal, teachers, and counselors working cooperatively on subjects' selection of students. This is in line with Ozioma (2011) observed that, shortage or absence of guidance counselors in some schools influenced the study of vocational subject in secondary schools. As a result most students, who were skilled and had the ability to study vocational or technical subjects, were not counseled to enroll in subjects that they would do better. This is in line with FRN (2004) that provides that at the completion of JSS, students are to be streamed on the basis of their tests results, academic ability, aptitude and vocational interest. Getting to senior secondary students were further streamed into any of science, arts, technology/technical or commercial disciplines. This is with a view of guiding the students to their future career. Therefore, the study seek to provide some insights into these issues as well as establishing the parental influence on subject selection and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Parents and Guardians are bequeathed by the virtue of their authority to train, direct and guide their children or wards in other to obtain or acquire religious, psychological, social, moral and educational values. Same is applicable in the biblical injunction to parents, to train their children in the way to go as this would direct their path when they grow old. Prov. 22:6 The gap here is: How possible would this injunction be if the students are compelled by their parents to take up subjects that will direct their interests towards their parents aspirations, to the detriment of the children's interest in their own desired field. Do parents today give adequate interest and attention to the aptitudes, mental capabilities, interest, resources and limitations of their children or wards before suggestive impressions are made on their children? This impression by parents may influence the child positively if the child can adapt to it, but adversely when such a child has different desires or goals as his priority.

Some parents go by this injunction to influence their children choice of subject in secondary schools. Some threaten not to be involved in the educational pursuit of their children or wards if their choice of subject does not meet up with their personal interests. Consequently such students may be negatively or positively affected by this. Tenibaje (2009) did not mince his opinion when he asserted that, Students academic performance is declining at disturbing rate. For this reason, it becomes necessary to ask: The relationship between parental influence on subject selection and academic performance of students in secondary schools. Is there a correlation between parental influence on subject selection and academic performance students in secondary schools. Will parental influence on subject selection predict the academic performance of students in secondary school. These and many more is what the study seeks to provide answers to and which will form the basic problem of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to undertake a research of parental influence on subject selection and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers

State. It will as much as possible determine the extent parents influence their children in subject selections in secondary schools. However, the following specific objectives will guide the study.

1. To determine the extent parental occupational preference influence students' subject selections in secondary school.
2. To determine the extent parental values influence students' subject selections in secondary school.
3. To determine how parental education influence students' selections in secondary school.
4. To determine the extent parental influence on subject selection predict the academic performance of students in secondary school.

Research Questions

The research questions proposed for this study was aimed at addressing some of the concerns raised in the literature review and provide a platform in answering some of the emerging issues in parental influence on subject selection for their children in secondary school. However, the study raised four research questions to guide the study:

1. To what extent does parental occupational preference influence students' subject selections in secondary school?
2. To what extent does parental values influence students' subject selections in secondary school?
3. To what extent does parental education influence students' subject selections in secondary school?
4. To what extent does parental influence on subject selection predict the academic performance of students in secondary school?

Hypotheses

The study was formulated with the following research hypotheses as shown below:

- Ho₁. There is no significant relationship between parental occupational preference on subject selection and academic performance of in secondary school.
- Ho₂. There is no significant relationship between parental values on subject selection and academic performance of in secondary school.
- Ho₃. There is no significant relationship between parental education on subject selection and academic performance of in secondary school.
- Ho₄. Parental influence on subject selection will not predicts the academic performance of students in secondary school.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

A theory is a rationalized set of assumptions or hypotheses that allows you to explain the past and predict the future. As such, theories may provide direction. The study will attempt to describe parental influence on subject selection and academic performance of secondary school students using three broad theories such as; the Cognitive theory of Cognitive Information Processing (Cognitive Information Processing theory), motivation theory of Self-determination (Self-determination theory) and Parental Attachment Theory. The study anchor on these three theories because of its significant role they played. The Cognitive Information Processing stressed on parental influence on career choice process especially among young children, the Self- determination theory stressed on how self-determination can help children in their academic performances, while the parental attachment theory anchor on the strong emotional bond a child have with another person which could be his/her parents, guidance or caregiver during childhood and frustration can occur when they expect things beyond the child's capability, such as choosing subjects for the child.

Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) Theory

The Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) theory is a theory propounded by Parrillo in the 2008. The theory provides a theoretical framework which was used to examine how parental variables influence career choice process especially among young children. Cognitive psychology sees the individual as a processor of information, in much the same way a computer takes in information and follows a program to produce an output. This theory illustrates how young-adults' decisions on career are influenced by the environment created by their families. The young-adults' perceptions and thoughts on future careers and occupational choices are shaped by their family environment, parents

playing pivotal roles. This is because young adults get career and occupational orientations from their parents who they relatively spend most of their times with (Parrillo, 2008).

Moreover, CIP theory points out that these thoughts about careers emerging from the family context have a great effect on career decision-making process. The CIP theory points out family variables are perceived cognitively by young adults as an external conflict (Peter, Punnet, & Rokeach, 2014). Peter, Punnet and Kecheach point out that these experiences and thoughts from family environment may be maladaptive, hence referring the condition as an external conflict. This is because young adults may experience difficulties in an effort to balance his or her career decision making ideas with those of their family. It should be noted that family variables have different impact on career choice. The family variables have an impact on the decision making part of the brain. The brain is fed with information from the immediate environment that is mainly made up of family that forms the immediate environment hence providing direct exposure to young adults on careers and career occupations. This CIP theory points out that young adults who experience love, high expectations from parents with parents with high income and educated parents are more likely to have less maladaptive career thoughts on decisions as compared to their counter parts that experience the reverse. This theory is supported by research studies conducted by Dodge (2001) and Van Ecke (2007) with link to CIP supporting the idea that parental variables influences the career decision-making process. This is because young adults are not autonomous in decision-making in their lives especially when making crucial decisions like career choice.

Self-Determination Theory

The self determination theory was propounded by Deci and Ryan in the year 1985. The theory proposed that individuals are active organisms with the growing tendencies geared towards mastering ambient challenges, and integrating new experiences into a coherent sense of self. Deci and Ryan maintained that these natural development tendencies do not operate automatically, but rather requires an ongoing social nutrients and supports. According Deci and Ryan, the social context can either support or thwart the natural tendencies towards active engagement and psychological growth; furthermore the social context can catalyze to lack of integration, defense, and fulfillment of need-substitutes. The proponents remarked that the dialectic between the active organism and the social context is the basis for predictions about behaviour, experience and development. The self determination theory is applicable to this study, based on the fact individuals or groups need to be self determined to achieve a set goal. The habit of determination can help children in their academic achievement. Although their parents may desire what they think is good or best for their child or children. This may affect the child positively if the child can cope with it but negatively when such a child has other things in mind which he/she wishes to do. Therefore the result of this is that the child may not concentrate on the parents' needs and so may not adjust positively towards his or her academic career. The child may not cope with the parents' continual force against his/her will.

Parental Attachment Theory

The theory, parental attachment theory was proposed by Bowlby in 1980. The theory stated that, the child forms a strong emotional bond with another person (parents/guidance or caregiver) during childhood with lifelong consequences. According to the theory, sensitive and emotionally available parenting helps the child to form a secure attachment life style which fosters a child's socio-emotional development and well being. While a less sensitive and emotionally available parenting or neglect of the child's needs may results in insecure forms of attachment style, which is a risk factor for many problems in mental health. This theory is relevant to this study in the view of the fact that; the proponent provides clues in the emotional development of children. The theory also made reasonable suggestions for parents and guardians or caregivers. The parents and guardians can now see the necessity of forming secure attachment bond with their children. Such bonds will enable the children to end up with secure attachment and secure state of mind later in life. Parents should also learn to understand the biological and psychological needs of the children and to avoid unrealistic expectations of the child behaviour. In this way, parents or guidance may seek to avoid frustration that will occur when they expect things beyond the child's capability, such as choosing subjects for the child.

Conceptual Framework

A study of this kind requires the elucidation of some conceptual issues to keep the study on track. Some of these concepts include; The Concept of Secondary School and Subject Selection, Parents' Influence on Subject Selection and the Concept of Academic Performance.

The Concept of Secondary School and Subject Selection

Secondary school is a schooling system designed to educate children between the ages of 11 and 18 years. According to Webster's Dictionary (2013), secondary school is defined as a higher school or preparatory school intermediate between the grammar school and college (tertiary institution). Based on Webster's Dictionary definition of secondary school, secondary school can be describe a school that sandwiches between the primary school and the tertiary institution. No wonder, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) in the National Policy of Education provides in section 5 for secondary education, defined secondary education (secondary school) as the education children receive after primary education (primary school) and before the tertiary stage.

In Nigeria, secondary school is a period of schooling within six years duration given in two stages: The Junior Secondary School (JSS) stage, which ranges from JSS 1 to JSS 3 and the Senior Secondary School (SSS) stage, which ranges from SSS 1 to SSS 3. According to Uriahi and Okachikwu-Agbaraeke (2017), the Junior Secondary School is both pre-vocational and academic and teaches basic subjects to enable students acquire further knowledge and skills. While, the Senior Secondary School is comprehensive with a core curriculum designed to broaden the students' outlook. While the choice of subject selection starts from Senior Secondary two (SS 2) in most schools especially the government own schools (public schools). The selection of subjects by the students at the SS 1 or SS 2 level is to assist the students to concentrate on any of science, social science or arts disciplines to determine their future career and the career to choose at the tertiary level or stage.

Parents' Influence on Subject Selection

Parents' influence on subject selections stems from the continuous process of association with their children (Young et al. as cited in Alphonse, 2016). In analysing subject selections related conversations between students and their parents, Young et al in Alphonse (2016) found a reconstruction of the relationship between the parents and the students through some aspect of career exploration.

In a similar investigation by Keller (2004), he reported that the behaviours of parents seemed to be specially relevant to middle school students. His study findings indicated that, perceived parenting behaviours discriminate between children with high and low career maturity and decision making self-efficacy scores. Which he noted that in order for parents to boost the career development of their young children, parents should to do the following;

- a) Expresses the interest in various adolescents' matters that are relevant to their own children.
- b) Tell their children that they have high expectations for their academic career.
- c) Encourage their children to make their own decisions based on their own interest.
- d) Tell their children they are proud of them.
- e) Assist their children understand the results from interest assessments they have chosen.

According Hewitt (2010), argues that factors influencing subject selection and career choice among children can neither be intrinsic nor extrinsic nor both. He further stated that most children are influenced by their parents' favoured career, while others follow the career educational choice that is open for them, some students choose to follow their own passion or career regardless of how much or little it will make them. While some choose the particular career that will give them high income in near future. Finally, he posit that, student's perception of being suitable for a particular job also have been found to be influenced by some number of factors including choice of science subjects, level of achievement, differences in job characteristics and ethical background.

However in Parents' influence on subject selections, Borchert in Alphonse (2016) observed that several parental factors that influenced children subjects selection in secondary schools. They include; environmental factors, opportunity factors and personality factors. While Ebong (2015) discovered family background is a major contributory factor to students' subject selection. For Wachira (2018), she listed some parental factors that influenced children subjects selection in secondary schools to be;

parental expectations, parent level of education, parent socio-economic status, parental occupation and parent- child relationship.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

This section reviews some empirical works that have been done on areas related to the study. The empirical reviews are source from both nation and international sources. Isaac and Mopelola (2014) investigated on the Effects of Parental Influence on Adolescents' Career Choice in Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The main purpose of their study was to investigate the effects of parental influence on adolescents' career choice on secondary schools students in Badagry Local Government Area. Their sample size consisted of three hundred (300) respondents who were randomly drawn from 10 purposely selected secondary schools; 3 from Model Colleges, 4 from Non-Model Colleges, and 3 from Private Colleges. The instrument they used was a questionnaire which they administered to the respondents personally. Their study hypotheses stated were five (5) null hypotheses and were tested using Chi-square analysis of contingency table. All the hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance of variable of sex, class of school, and type of school as to the effects of parental influence on adolescents' career choice on secondary schools students in the Local Government Area. Their findings from the study indicated that; 48.36% of the respondents agreed to parents influencing their career choice. On the average, 21.5% of the respondents agreed that their parents' line of business influenced their career choice, while 78.5% disagreed. On the whole, 30% of the respondents agreed that they chose the family career because they need to sustain the family business. In addition, three (3) out of the five (5) null hypotheses tested were Great Extent because there were no significant differences in the variables compared. These were hypotheses 1, 3, and 5. Hypotheses 2 and 4 were rejected as there were significant differences in the variables compared. From their results, the findings indicated that, adolescents in secondary schools in Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos State have some form of independence in making career choices.

Tillman (2015) investigated on "Parental Influence on College Students' Career Aspirations" the main purpose of his study was to find out the level of influence parents had on the career decision making process for their children who are pre-service teachers. The study participants were pre-service teachers in their final year in the teacher education programme. The data collections for the study were from both a survey and interviews schedule. The data were then divided into two groups consisting of responses from the pre-service teachers who were children of educators and those who were children of non-educators. As the two groups were compared in the study, it was study revealed that, the children of educators indicated a slightly greater parent influence on their career choices than the children of non-educators. On the qualitative findings, the study showed that some of the educator parents discouraged their children from pursuing education and thus most of the pre-service teachers actually began college in other career fields.

Ugwuja (2010) studied the Influence of Family Background on the Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Nsukka Educational Zone of Enugu State. His study was aimed at investigating the family background factors that can influence students' academic achievement in Senior Secondary School. His study was guided with, five research questions and five null hypotheses. The study research design adopted was Ex-Post Facto Design. The population of the study consists of all senior secondary students from the fifty three (53) secondary schools in the three Local Government Areas in Nsukka Education Zone. The fifty three secondary schools in the zone have a population of seven thousand, nine hundred and forty five (7,945) senior secondary students. Out of the fifty three schools, twelve schools were sampled using proportionate random sampling technique. In the twelve schools, all SSII students numbering eight hundred and sixteen (816) were used as the study sample size. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Family Background Influence Questionnaire (FBIQ) which was designed by the researcher and validated by some research experts, while the study reliability yield a reliability coefficient of 0.69 using the Cronbach Alpha reliability method after the research instrument have been pilot tested on thirty (30) students in Obollo Afor Educational Zone. The data collected from the study were analysed descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics of t-test was used to test the study hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. His findings revealed that, students from educated parents achieve more than those from uneducated parents in academics; students from high-income status parents enjoy considerable advantage in academic achievement than students of low income status parents because their parents were able to afford necessary materials and equipment needed for effective learning in the school; parental level of motivation also influenced students'

academic achievement because motivation and reward served as a form of reinforcement for children's learning at school. Based on his findings, his study recommended among others that; parents should diversify their sources of income to be able to provide fund for their children's schooling. Parents should equally realize the importance of using rewards and other measures to motivate their children.

Osuafor and Okonkwo (2013) studied the "Influence of Family Background on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Biology Students in Anambra State". Their intension was to find out how family background of senior secondary school students in Anambra State influences their academic achievement in Biology. For that purpose, three research questions and four hypotheses were formulated for the study. They adopted the survey research design for their study. A sample size of five hundred and forty six (546) Senior Secondary Two (SS 2) biology students was drawn from fourteen (14) schools within Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha Education Zones of Anambra State. The data for their study were collected from SS1 and SS2 results and a questionnaire constructed by the researcher. Their results revealed that; family structure, parents' occupation and educational level of parents, did not have significant influence on students' achievement in biology. As a result of their findings, they concluded that, family background did not have much influence on students' achievement in science (biology) as against what most previous studies have shown. Also researches should therefore focus on other possible factors that contribute to students' poor performance in Biology and science generally in order to find lasting solution to the problem. However, they made some recommendations for the study.

Pepple (2014) study investigated Parents' influence, Career views and Choice of institution correlates on students' choice of science education in Rivers State tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design and disproportionate stratified sampling technique to select six (6) departments in the faculty of sciences in three (3) academic session of 2010/2011 in three (3) tertiary institutions in Rivers State, namely Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, and University of Port Harcourt. In other to ensure equitable representation of the study, a representative group of 28 boys and girls from both 200 and 300 levels each from these institutions were selected. The instrument for data collection was title "Science Education Career Choice Questionnaire (SECCQ)" and have subjected for face and content validity by experts in science education as well as tested for reliability that gave the reliability coefficients of 0.79 for Parental Influence, 0.86 for Career Views and 0.97 for Choice of University Influence using the Cronbach Alpha reliability technique. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages while the inferential statistics of student t-test and multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The result from his findings revealed that parents played an important role in the course of study, career choice and institution attended by their children.

Ebuta and Ekpo (2014) study determined students' academic achievement in English language based on parental involvement in their children's education in the southern educational zone of Cross River State. Based on their study, one research question as well as one null hypothesis was formulated and tested. Their sample size consisted of 376 senior secondary two (SS 2) students of 2011/2012 academic session. Their instruments for data collection were the home background variable questionnaire (HBVQ) and an English Achievement Test (EAT). The data gathered their study was analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis. Their finding revealed that parental involvement in their children's education, significantly influenced the students' academic achievement in English language. On the basis of the finding, they concluded that when parents assist their children with their school work at home, children academic achievement is likely to be high. Therefore, they recommended that; parents should work regularly with children's learning activities at home to facilitate achievement of the students.

Ebong (2015) investigated parental background on student's academic performance in secondary schools in Abak local government, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The aimed of the study was to ascertain if the students' performances are influence by their parents, their own gender, the examiners or the examination body. As a result of the study, three research questions and three hypotheses were stated as the study guide. For the study design, the study adopted the survey design. Which one thousand four hundred and forty (1440) senior secondary three (SS 3) Physics students were drawn from his study population of 12 schools using the simple random sampling technique; six (6) each were selected from both Day and Boarding Schools within the study Local Government Area. The data obtained from his study were analysed using Pearson correlation coefficient (r), t-test of independent

and dependent sample, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test and Chi-square (χ^2) test. The study revealed that the performance of students in Physics examination does not depend on examination body or examiners, gender or parents. The result also, revealed that family structure, parent occupation and educational level of parent did not have significance influence on student's performances in physics examination. Based on his study findings that indicated that; the teachers have much influence on student performance in science (Physics) as against what most previous studies portrayed. He recommended that, research should therefore focus on the other possible factors that contribute to student poor performance in Physics and Science generally in order to find lasting solution to the problem.

Whiteley and Porter (n.d.) investigated into how career and subject selection has provided insights into the range of influences on such choices. Their research was initiated by the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority (TEPA) addresses similar issues from a student's perspective, over a four year period of time. They aimed at identifying the impact of school policies and practices on students as well as other influences which affect individual subject choices and career decisions. Their paper identified the preliminary analyses of the extensive qualitative data obtained from the first three phases of the project relating to subject selection for senior school. Based on the study, they anticipated that, further insight into these processes and procedures will be gained by the use of a qualitative research methodology. In addition, this paper was designed to evaluate from the students' perspective the usefulness of information given at times of decision making and factors that hinder or facilitate their post school choices.

Osuafor and Okonkwo (2013) studied the Influence of Family Background on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Biology Students in Anambra State. They sought to find out how family background of students in Anambra State, influences the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in of Biology. They adopted the survey research design. A sample of five hundred and forty six (546) Senior Secondary Two (SS 2) biology students was drawn by simple random sampling technique from 14 schools within Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha Education Zones, in the study area. The study formulated three research questions and four hypotheses to guide the study. Their data collection was done using selves constructed questionnaire and students' SS 1 and SS 2 school results. Their results revealed that; family structure, parents' occupation and educational level of parents, did not have significant influence on students' academic achievement in biology. As a result of their findings, their paper concluded that, family background did not have much influence on students' achievement in science subject (biology) as against what most previous studies portrayed. Researches should therefore focus on other possible factors that contributed to students' poor performance in the Biology and science subjects in generally, in order to find lasting solution to the problem. However, they made some recommendations for the study.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

The literature reviewed above, lies on theoretical framework, conceptual framework and reviewed of empirical literature. The theoretical framework was based on two broad theories such as; the Cognitive theory of Cognitive Information Processing (Cognitive Information Processing theory), and motivation theory of Self-determination (Self-determination theory). The study anchor on these two theories because of its significant role they played. The Cognitive Information Processing stressed on parental influence on career choice process especially among young children, while the Self-determination theory stressed on how self-determination can help children in their academic performance. The conceptual framework of the study includes the concept of secondary school and subject selection, parents' influence on subject selection and the concept of academic performance.

The concept of secondary school and subject selection first describes secondary school, is a schooling system designed to educate children between the ages of 11 and 18 years which children receive after primary education (primary school) and before the tertiary stage. Is a period of schooling within six years duration given in two stages: The Junior Secondary School (JSS) stage, which ranges from JSS 1 to JSS 3 and the Senior Secondary School (SSS) stage, which ranges from SSS 1 to SSS 3. On the parents' influence on subject selection, it was see as something that the parents' stems from the continuous process of association with their children and the parental factors that influenced children subjects' selection in secondary schools in the study were given as; Parental values and expectations, Parental occupational preference and Parental Education. While the concept of academic

performance, sees academic performance as something that has to do with what the learners are able to accomplish by execution of class work in the school. Based on the review of empirical literature, works related to parental influence on subject selection, career choice and student academic performance were reviewed.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data (Kothari, 2004). The research design used for this study was a correlational research design. The correlational research design is a design which seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variable. A correlational research design is used because this study aims at establishing the relationship between parent influence on subject selection and academic performance among secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in all public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. Rivers-East Senatorial District is the district where the State capital “Port Harcourt” is situated. The situation of Port Harcourt in the senatorial district, made the district distinct from other senatorial district due to the industrial activities and other commercial activities in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The senatorial district is comprises of seven Local Government Areas namely: Port-Harcourt Local Government Area, Ikwere Local Government Area, Okirika Local Government Area, Ogu/Bolo Local Government Area, Obi/Akpor Local Government Area, Etche Local Government Area, Omuma Local Government Area and Emohua Local Government Area. The district is mostly occupied by the Ikwerres, the Okirikans and the Etches’ and other tribes and English language is the predominant language that is used for communication. The district has a population 2,387,890 people, 1,872 settlements and 113 wards (extracted from Rivers State Summary Statistics 2010)

Population of the Study

The population of the study was all the public senior secondary schools and all the senior secondary two (SS II) students of 2017/2018 session in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers State. In Rivers-East Senatorial District, there are one hundred (100) senior secondary schools and sixteen thousand nine hundred and fifty six (16,956) SS II students, which seven thousand, seven hundred and eight (7,708) are male and nine thousand, one hundred and fifty eight (9,158) are female (see Appendix B). Source: from Planning, Research and Statistics Department Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board (RSSSSB) Port Harcourt.

Sample size and Sampling Procedure

A sample size of sixteen (16) schools (see Appendix C for sample frame) and four hundred (400) students were used for the study. Firstly, 16 schools were selected using simple random sampling technique to choose the sample schools; this was done by balloting to select two schools from each LGA in the District. The decision to use 2 schools each for the selection was because, some Local Government Areas in the study area have only three schools. So to give equal chance, two schools were used. Secondly, twenty five (25) SS II students from each sampled schools (16) were also selected using simple random sampling technique, which gave the final sample size of four hundred (400) respondents for the study. The reason this sampling technique was adopted, was to allow equal opportunity for all the target population.

Research Instrument

The study instrument was a questionnaire titled “Parental Influence on Subject Selection and Student Academic Performance Questionnaire (PISSSAPQ)”. The instrument was constructed by the researcher with the assistance of her supervisor. The instrument was made up of two parts, part 1 and part 2. The part 1 is the introduction to respondents while the part 2 are the area to be responded, and it is in turn divided into sections; section A and section B.

The Section A consists of the respondents’ Demographic Data such age and type of school. The Section B is a twenty (20) item questionnaire designed to elicit information from the respondents on Parental Influence on Subject Selection and Student Academic Performance. From item 1- 5 measured Parents’ Occupation and were adapted from Alphonse (2016) in a study titled “Parental Factors Influencing Career Choice among High School Students in Nairobi County. A Post Graduate Diploma Project, University of Nairobi”; from item 6 - 10 measured Parental Values and Expectations and was also adapted from Alphonse (2016) in the same study “Parental Factors Influencing Career Choice among High

School Students in Nairobi County. A Post Graduate Diploma Project, University of Nairobi”; from item 11 - 15 measured Parental Education and from item 16 - 20 measured Academic Performance. The twenty (20) item questionnaire was constructed on a modified four scale point Likert Scale of Great Extent = 4, Moderate Extent = 3, Low Extent = 2 and Not at All = 1.

Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaire titled “Parental Influence on Subject Selection and Student Academic Performance Questionnaire (PISSAPQ)” with the help of three research assistants the instruments were administered and retrieved. After an introductory letter to the various head of schools before the administration of the research instruments. The instruments were administered in three days; the first day, six schools were administered, the second day was five schools and the third day was another five schools. The sampled students were all arranged in a classroom, in the manner of examination to make the students serious with the exercise with the assistance of their teachers before administration of the instrument by the researcher and her assistants. The researcher and her assistants made sure as they administered, they also guided the respondents (students) where necessary and endeavour to retrieve the questionnaire that same day.

Method of Data Collection

Every research work has a framework for collecting data. Its function is to ensure that the required data are collected accurately. Therefore, the method of data collection used in this research work, is the primary data. The primary data was consists of sixteen (16) items in well-structured and non-disguised closed ended questionnaire that was administered to the respondents and retrieved by the researcher and her three research assistants; the choice of closed ended questionnaire was; to encourage the respondents to complete the questions quickly without delay.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significant and a decision rule of rejecting the null hypothesis if the *p*-value is smaller than the chosen alpha level. Hypotheses 1 to 3 were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient while hypothesis 4 was tested using Linear Multiple Regression Analysis.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

To what extent does parental occupational preference influence students’ subject selections in secondary school?

Table 1. Students Response on Parental Occupational Preference on Subject Selections

| s/n | Items | N | Mean | S.D. | Remark |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | My parent(s) cannot choose my secondary school subjects. | 400 | 3.16 | .557 | Great Extent |
| 2 | I would not like to select my subjects because of my parent(s) occupation. | 400 | 3.44 | .585 | Great Extent |
| 3 | I would not like to select my subjects after my father’s/mother’s occupation, instead I will go for what I have interest in. | 400 | 3.27 | .587 | Great Extent |
| 4 | I admire my parent(s) occupation, but I would not like them to select my subjects because, I will want to do what I am good at. | 400 | 3.16 | .697 | Great Extent |
| 5 | My parent/guidance occupation is good, but I am not interested in it. | 400 | 3.01 | .596 | Great Extent |
| Grand Total (G_T) | | | 16.04 | 3.022 | |
| Grand Mean | | | 3.21 | .604 | |

Criterion Mean = 2.5

Source: Researcher's Computation using IBM SPSS version 23

In Table 1 shows, the values of the entire mean are above the criterion mean and the positive standard deviation respectively and the grand mean of 3.21. This indicated that, the students agreed with the extent parental occupational preference can influence their subject selections in secondary school.

Research Question 2

To what extent does parental values and expectations influence students’ subject selections in secondary school?

Table 2 Students Response on Parental Values on Subject Selections

| s/n | Items | N | Mean | S.D. | Remark |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 6 | My parents prefer choosing my secondary school subjects because of the expectation they have for me. | 400 | 3.22 | .565 | Great Extent |
| 7 | I would not like to select my subjects based on my parent(s) value and expectation. | 400 | 3.33 | .539 | Great Extent |
| 8 | I would like to select my subjects after my interest, instead of my parent(s) expectation. | 400 | 3.33 | .527 | Great Extent |
| 9 | My parent(s) expectation is good, but I would not like them to select my subjects or select my subjects based on their expectations, but what I am good at. | 400 | 3.03 | .682 | Great Extent |
| 10 | My parents are expecting me to select science subjects because of their high expectation in those subjects. | 400 | 3.12 | .768 | Great Extent |
| Grand Total (G_T) | | | 16.03 | 3.081 | |
| Grand Mean | | | 3.21 | .616 | |

Criterion Mean = 2.5

Source: Researcher's Computation using IBM SPSS version 23

Also in Table 2 shows the values of the entire mean are also above the criterion mean and the positive standard deviation respectively and a grand mean of 3.21. This indicated that, the students also agreed with the extent to which their parental values can influence their subject selections in secondary school.

Research Question 3

To what extent does parental education influence students' subject selections in secondary school?

Table 3. Students Response on Parental Education in Subject Selections

| s/n | Items | N | Mean | S.D. | Remark |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 11 | Some parents prefer choosing their children secondary school subjects based on the educational background they have, and this may not work well for me. | 400 | 3.16 | .609 | Great Extent |
| 12 | My parent(s) educational background is good, but I would not like them to select my subjects, but what I am good at. | 400 | 3.19 | .586 | Great Extent |
| 13 | I would like to select my subjects after my interest, instead of my parent(s) educational background. | 400 | 3.09 | .611 | Great Extent |
| 14 | I appreciate my parent(s) educational background, but I would not like them to select my subjects. I will rather choose what I am good at. | 400 | 3.08 | .638 | Great Extent |
| Grand Total (G_T) | | | 15.7 | 3.136 | |
| Grant Mean | | | 3.14 | .627 | |

Criterion Mean = 2.5

Source: Researcher's Computation using IBM SPSS version 23

Again Table 3 shows, the values of the entire mean are also above the criterion mean and the positive standard deviation respectively and grand mean of 3.14. This indicated that, the students agreed with the extent their parental education influence their subject selections in secondary school.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between parental occupational preference on subject selection and academic performance of students in secondary school.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Parental Occupational Preference and Academic Performance

| Variables | Parental Occupational Preference | Academic Performance |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Parental Occupational Preference | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | (Sig. 2-tailed) | -0.39 |
| | N | .442 |
| Academic Performance | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | (Sig. 2-tailed) | -0.39 |
| | N | .442 |

$\alpha = 0.05$

Source: Researcher's Computation using IBM SPSS version 23

The correlation between the variables is negative, $r = -.039$, $p - \text{value} = 0.442$. The Sig. (2-Tailed) value is 0.442. This value is greater than .05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that, there is no significant relationship between parental occupational preference and academic performance. In other word, parental occupational preference on the subject selection for their children does not have positive influence on their academic performance.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between parental values and expectations on subject selection and academic performance of students in secondary school.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Parental Values on Academic Performance

| Variables | Parental Value and Expectation | Academic Performance |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Parental Value | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | (Sig. 2-tailed) | .052 |
| | N | .301 |
| Academic Performance | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | (Sig. 2-tailed) | .052 |
| | N | .301 |

$\alpha = 0.05$

Source: Researcher's Computation using IBM SPSS version 23

The correlation between the variables is positive but very low, $r = .052$, $p - \text{value} = .301$. The Sig. (2-Tailed) value is .301. This value is greater than .05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that, there is no significant relationship between parental values on academic performance. In other word, parental values on their subject selection for their children do not have positive influence on their academic performance.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between parental education on subject selection and academic performance of students in secondary school.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Parental Education and Academic Performance

| Variables | Parental Education | Academic Performance |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Parental Education | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | (Sig. 2-tailed) | .073 |
| | N | .146 |
| Academic Performance | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | (Sig. 2-tailed) | .073 |
| | N | .146 |

$\alpha = 0.05$

Source: Researcher's Computation using IBM SPSS version 23

The correlation between the variables is positive but very low, $r = .073$, $p - \text{value} = .146$. The Sig. (2-Tailed) value is .146. This value is greater than .05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that, there is no significant relationship between parental education and academic performance. In other word, parental education on subject selection does not have positive influence on their children academic performance.

Hypothesis 4

Parental influence on subject selection will not predicts the academic performance of students in secondary school.

Table 7: Regression Analysis Summary for the Prediction of Parental Influence on Subject Selection and Academic Performance of Students

| Model (Variables) | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | p-value |
|---|--------|------------|-------|--------|---------|
| Constant | 11.324 | 1.071 | | 10.571 | .000 |
| Parents' Occupation | -.082 | .056 | -.082 | -1.479 | .140 |
| Parental Values | .080 | .074 | .063 | 1.092 | .275 |
| Parental Education | .091 | .069 | .071 | 1.322 | .187 |
| R = .108; R ² = .012 | | | | | |
| Adjusted R ² = .004; F- Stat. = 1.546 (.202) | | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance of Students

In the Table 1 shows the F-stat is 1.546; p-value is 0.202 while the alpha level is 0.05. The p -value of 0.202 is greater than the alpha level. This revealed that the null hypothesis is not rejected. Implying that, the parental influence (parents' occupation, parental values and parental education) will not significantly predict academic performance of students. Also from table 4.7, the predictor (independent) variables; parents occupation" with ($\beta = -.082$), had a negative predictor on academic performance of students, parental values with ($\beta = .063$), had a positive but very low predictor on academic performance of students and parental education with ($\beta = .071$), also had a positive but low predictor on academic performance of students. The p -values for the independent variables are all greater than the chosen alpha level of 0.05. The R of .108 which is very low, is the absolute value of the Correlation Coefficient; The R² of .004 indicates that, the three independent variables (parents' occupation, parental values and expectation and parental education) will not predict academic performance of students by almost 0.4 percent while the Adjusted R² of .004 shows the goodness-of-fit of the model.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In all the three research questions, the respondents indicated positive responses on how parental influence on subject selection can affect their academic performance negatively in school. This collaborate with the study of Akinade (2016) who in her study posited that there are situations in which some parents, who are medical doctors, lawyers etc., most time urges or forces their children into a vocation similar to their own, or to career that has demonstrated high earning power in the society. With such parental occupational situational urges or forces, some of the younger children may find themselves selecting subjects to those of their parents occupations; to either science or art subject which they might not really have interest in. This could affect their performances at the secondary level and could also affect their career after graduation from tertiary. In line with the study of Hewitt (2010), he stated that most students are influenced by their parents' favoured career, while others follow the career educational choice that is open for them, some students choose to follow their own passion or career regardless of how much or little it will make them.

In the test of hypotheses, hypothesis one revealed no significant relationship between parental values and expectations on subject selection and academic performance of students in secondary school. Also hypothesis two revealed no relationship with parental occupational preference on subject selection and academic performance of students in secondary school. This finding correspond with the findings of Osuafor and Okonkwo (2013), which in their study, they reveal revealed that; family structure, parents' occupation and educational level of parents, did not have significant influence on students' academic achievement in biology and Ebong (2015) who also revealed that family structure, parent occupation and educational level of parent did not have significance influence on student's performances in physics examination. Also in hypothesis three, the study revealed no relationship

with parental education on subject selection and academic performance of students in secondary school. The findings is also in line the findings of Osuafor and Okonkwo (2013), which reveal revealed that; family structure, parents' occupation and educational level of parents, did not have significant influence on students' academic achievement in biology and also with that of Ebong (2015) who also revealed that family structure, parent occupation and educational level of parent did not have significance influence on student's performances in physics examination.

CONCLUSION

The study was design to investigates the extend parental influence on subject selection affect students academic performance in secondary school in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers State. From the investigation, it was observed that parental influence on subject selection can affect the students' academic performance either positively or negatively. And the study also showed that, there is no significant relationship between parental influence on subject selection on subject selection and academic performance of students in secondary school. Therefore, with the findings of this study, parent should allow their children to choose or select their secondary school subjects' base on their interest

Educational Implications

From the study results, the implications for educational system were observed as follows;

From the study, it was observed that the students are aware of the negative implication of the parental influence on subject selection. Which, if they continue allowing their parents to influence their subjects selection, the result for allowing that is poor academic performances, especially if they don't have interest in those subjects.

If parents will continue trying to influence their children with their school subject selection, the educational implication is that, there might be persistent poor performances, especially for those students who cannot cope with the subjects selected by their parents' influences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the study made the following recommendations;

From the study, it was revealed that the students are all aware to some extent on the influence their parent is putting on them for subject selection in secondary school, especially the science subjects. Therefore, students should always maintain their subject selection based on what they are interested in, and not to allowed themselves to be influenced by selecting the subject their parent want them to study.

Based on the negative implication of parents selecting subjects for their children, the parent should be enlighten on the importance of letting their children selected their school subjects based on their own interest. The enlightenment can be done through Parents/Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. As a result of the findings, parents should have one on one talk with their children on what they are interested in and encouraged them to take their studies seriously. Rather than selecting their subject for them.

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