

Gender as a Factor in the Career Choice Readiness of Senior Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State, Nigeria

Irene Durosaro & Nuhu, Muslimat Adebanke

University of Ilorin

Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

This study investigated Gender as a Factor in the Career Choice Readiness at Senior Secondary School Students in Ilorin, Kwara State. Samples were drawn from two senior secondary schools. A 20 item questionnaire was administered to the respondents. Data were analyzed using Chi-square. The main findings revealed that male and female secondary school students differ greatly in their career choice readiness. Other finding indicated that majority of the respondents have not reached the degree of readiness which permits commitment to a particular vocation or career. The counselling implications of this study were discussed and recommendations were made in line with the findings.

Keyword: Gender, Career, Career Choice Readiness

Introduction

Various societies have tried to integrate the concept of work and career in their lives. Isaacson (1977) postulated that society and work are inter-related. Work is identified as a source of good activity that sustains the society and enhance its future. Today, work has prevailed as a most viable subject with scientific community and has occupied the thought of scholars from a variety of disciplines who dared to venture into the complex area associated with work. The idea of work has different meanings to different people. For instance, the white people may differ in their idea of work to the black people. The Greeks consider work as tedious, and so they hire slaves to work for them. The Hebrew considers work as a result of the original sin and so regard it as a form of punishment.

In the same vein, Archer (1989) suggests that work can be looked at as a pleasurable activity which leads to satisfaction. It can also be viewed as drudgery, a necessary evil for man. Similarly, Coleman and Hamman (1974) argued that it is usually assumed that work is something few people do willingly, that everyone would prefer other activities if it were not for financial necessity. Work therefore is an activity which calls for an expenditure of effort towards some definite achievement or outcome (Omoegun Buramoh, 2001). Whether paid or not, hard or easy work is always an effort towards a specified end. To many people, work is the most important activity in their lives; this is because it provides social status and is usually basic for categorizing and judging people. Thus Ipaye (1989) described work as any worthwhile job or occupation, a means of putting into effective use the talent an individual has inherited or occupied from the society. It gives people the feeling of having something to do and a sense of purpose and belonging. In most Nigerian societies, everybody is encouraged right from infancy to engage in some form of work or the other as a means of livelihood. In the same vein, Sarpong (1974) asserts that work is so highly valued in the Nigerian traditional life that, at a tender age, children learn some work that are essential for survival. This was the main reason why the traditional system of education was tailored towards character training and job orientation. Vocational training in the Nigerian society was largely run on apprenticeship system.

Makinde and Alao (1987) noted that integration of apprenticeship training and career presentation into the family setup made the traditional form of education in the African context highly effective. While all these are true of Nigerian children, experience however shows that most children do not choose on their own to learn the trade, to become apprenticed or to go to a particular vocation. In other words, we do not have any conclusive answer yet as to how vocationally matured (ready) Nigerian adolescents were then and as of now. Yet, theory of career development has emphasized the importance of work in the individual's life, as well as the importance of choosing a career.

From the psychoanalytic point of view, work provides an acceptable way for an individual to release portion of his psychic energies that would be unacceptable in the society if expressed directly. Stressing this further, Osipow (1983) states that work is ideally suited to provide outlets for sublime wishers and impulses. Similarly, Durosaro (2005) explains career development as the first awareness that, a job can help meet an individual's psychological needs and this influences the choice of an occupation.

Career choice and development are the experiences of the total personality, and that the satisfaction thus derived from a career depends on the compatibility of a person's work situation and personality type. Anne Roe (1957) contended that generic factors, need hierarchies and the nature of the home determines the type of career an individual chooses. Anne Roe suggests that home environment that determines the type of job selected could either be that of accepting, rejecting, reflecting, avoiding and emotional concentration on the child. Onivehu (1990) stressed that the theory of Ginzberg, Ginburg, Axeirad and Herma (1951); Tiedemar and O'Hara (1952) hypothesized that career choice and development is a continuous life long process of decision making in which the person tries to reconcile goals and preparations within the reality of limited opportunity of all career development theory. However, Super's (1957) was the only one to centre or focus his main hypothesis on career maturity.

In the formulation, Super fitted together certain aspect of developmental psychology with self-concept theory. Thus, the theory has four major concepts: Vocational life stages; Vocational maturity; Career pattern, Self-concept and its transition into Vocational Self-concept (Makinde and Alao, 1987). Similarly, implied in other developmental theories is the concept of career maturity. The work of Ginzberg et' al (1951); Super (1957); and Tiedeman et' al (1952) as the major apostles of developmental theory are of the view that there are critical and identity stages which an individual passes through before finally achieving career maturity.

Readiness to Choose

To be 'ready' to choose means more than simply arriving at a point when a choice is necessary. Just as emoting in an advanced programme requires prior mastery of basic elementary concepts, making a decision involves pre-requisites. The concept of "readiness" emerged from the basic notion that vocational choices should not be seen as single, point-in-line events but rather, as the result of previous process (Dominic and Jones, 2007). Such a notion suggests a developmental view in which previous events might make one more or less ready to cope with subsequent ones. Super (1963) proposed such a view, drawing on the concept of life stage as an organizing framework. Super asserts that vocational development can be viewed as occurring in the five context of five major life-stages, each of which imposes certain development tasks that require mastery prior to movement to the next stage.

Given that each life stage imposes a difference set of tasks, a new set of attitudes and behaviours are required at subsequent stages, and it is through the acquisition of these attitudes and behaviours that an individual becomes "ready". Many investigations have elaborated that precise element of readiness and developed assessment device to measure elements. Majority of these factors have focused or readiness at the exploration stage of development. The enquiry about vocational maturity has provided a broad view on what constitute "readiness" at least as it applies to the exploration stage of development, although theoretically, the concept of readiness is applicable throughout the life-span, it is less well developed and elaborate for other life-stages.

Theoretically, the causes and consequences of developmental readiness have yet to be subjected to empirical test. For instance, as implied in the above, current readiness is based on points of successful completion of the tasks of the previous life stage. In other words, present maturity should be preceded by past maturity, and future maturity should be predicted from present maturity. Thus the above suggests that "readiness" to choose results from mastery of previous and current developmental tasks and the detection of and interventions for readiness problems largely follows this developmental prescription.

Making Career Choice

The National Vocational Guidance Association and the American Vocational Association having jointly defined career development as "the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational physical, economic and chance factors that combine to shape the career of any given individual." Career life planning focuses on a significant number of factors that influence career choice. It involves setting of priorities and goals for career life planning, developing ultimate designs and setting long range and short term goals and major choice objectives.

Major diverse factors are generally accepted being influential in the career development of students. According to Guay, Senecal, Gauthier and Fernet (2009), all too often career planning has been ineffectual because it was based upon an effort to match intellectual ability and interest with an occupation without considering other important variables. Career life planning, values, interest, abilities, achievement and work life experiences are viable factors to discuss, evaluate and clarify in order to make career life planning determination. Decision-making models also provide a frame-work from which career counselling objectives are derived. Clearly, defined steps in decision-making strategies provide sequences designed to assist most individuals in making a career choice. To Tiedeman and O'Hara (1963), one problem solving approach for career choice is that it involves the processing of developmental tasks and resolving of psychological crisis. All theories, systems and strategies underscore the inclusive nature of the career choice process.

The process of making a choice is complex and unique for each individual depending on cognitive factors and the social structure of the individual's milieu. In career planning programmes, career choices are tentative from the standpoint that practically every choice involves some doubts about the credibility of the chosen career and the possibility that it can be successfully carried out over a little time. The individual's uncertainties and unknown forecast may be affected by vast imminent technological changes.

Moreover, career choice is a process in which one not only chooses, but also eliminates and consequently stifles some interests and talents. According to Henseley (2000), part of us is left to go to seed when a career choice is made. This is because eventually we must give up a chance to develop talents and interests as we limit ourselves on the narrow pathway leading to a career. Career choice is also clouded by the search of experience for self-identification and meaning, in a society that is drawing closer together. Fortunately, career life planning provides for a regular revelation of where we have been and where we are going. Opportunities are provided to reconsider choices of the past and to realign them with new values and interests. These talents and interests that have remained can be nurtured and developed on career life-planning programmes.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate how the factor of gender influences career choice readiness of Senior Secondary School Students. Essentially, this study was intended to investigate the following: whether there is a significant difference between male and female students as regards career choice readiness. Thus the hypothesis to be tested was:

-There will be no significant difference between male and female students as regards their career choice.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population from which the sample was selected consisted of all secondary schools students in Kwara State. However, two secondary schools were purposively selected. The participants for this study were senior secondary students randomly drawn from the two schools situated within Ilorin, the Kwara State capital in Nigeria. The two purposively selected schools were Queen's School and Government Secondary School, Ilorin.

The choice of this group of participants was based on the assumption that majority of the students in the Senior Secondary School falls within the Super's exploratory stage of development (15-24) which implies that they are preparing to enter the world of work.

Data Analysis

The sample frame for this study, that is, the total number of students in the senior secondary schools in Ilorin town over which the results of this study can be generalized was 1970. The sample size used in the study was 167, that is about 8.8% of the total population. The data was run with the computer programme SPSS/PC. The Chi-square test was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 1: Chi-square Analysis of the Difference between Male and Female Students as Regards their Career Choice Readiness

	Value	Df
Chi-Square	30.520	22
Likelihood Ratio	38.141	22
No. of Valid Cases	167	

Results:	1	Chi-Square	X^2	=	30.520
	2	Table Value	X^2	=	12.338
	3	Hence	$X^2 < X^2$		

Table 1 depicts the case of chi-square test in respect of the hypothesis stated above. A calculated value of $X^2=30.520$, a degree of freedom (df) of 22 at 0.05 alpha level of significance has been reported. But the table shows $X^2c=12.338$. Thus $X^2 < X^2$ and since the calculated value (X^2c) is greater than the table value, we therefore reject this hypothesis. In effect, there will be no significant difference between male and female senior secondary school students in Ilorin as regards career choice readiness.

Discussion

The Senior Secondary School is an exploratory period, and this means that much of education should be designed to facilitate, rather than prepare in the sense of specific skill acquisition. That exploration, in many cases, for several years after formal schooling is terminated, emphasizes the need for planned exploration, for evaluation trial rather than for haphazard hounding.

The fact that the development of the majority of adolescents have not reached a degree of 'readiness' which permits commitment to a particular vocation or career, underscores the importance of methods of assessing the degree of career choice readiness attained when planning further exploration and when arriving at decision point.

Adolescents in the senior secondary school varies greatly in career choice readiness, in their tendency to anticipate choices which they will have to make in their exploration of alternatives, and in their tendency to acquire relevant information. This suggests that educators need relevant data on these characteristics when planning curricula; researchers need them in evaluating programmes and counselors need them as a means of assessing their characteristics as a preliminary to education and vocational counseling.

Implications for Practice

Based on the finding enumerated, and discussed above, the following suggestions are offered:

- Counsellors and school authorities should continue to encourage students to go in for the options which they so wish and are capable of excelling in, under no circumstances or conditions, therefore should a programme be imposed on any gender, for they may run counter-productive to their career choice.
- Gender is a significant factor in the career choice of senior secondary school students. It is therefore suggested that all stakeholders in education should continue to encourage both male and female to offer subjects of their choice, which invariably influences their career choice readiness.
- It is also suggested that series of programmes that will encourage both gender to go in for careers of their choice should be put in place. Although the responsibility of tailoring the minds of the students towards a particular career option lie on the school counselor, other school personnel should cooperate with the school counselors in fronting effective career choice readiness.

Conclusion

The study established that gender is a very significant factor in the career choice of senior secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. This implies that there is a tendency of sex stereo-typing in the career choice of the senior secondary school students. Another interesting and very important implication for this finding is that female students tend to go in for career that are feminist in nature while their male counterparts also opt for careers that are masculine in nature.

The above stresses the reason as to why most male students in the school sampled are offering courses in Agriculture and the sciences while most of the females are studying general arts.

Recommendation

There are very few indigenous researches on career choice readiness of senior secondary school students in Ilorin. However, the following recommendations are made:

The future leaders of this country must be provided with quality education that will prepare them to face adequately the challenges as they grow and take the mantle of leadership in the future.

It is in this view that this study considered the influence of gender on the career choice readiness of senior secondary school students for future careers. However, this is just one of the variables that may influence the preparation of adolescents in senior secondary school for future careers. It is hereby recommended that further research into the following variables as to how these influences career choice readiness of senior secondary school students be considered: programme option, location of school, religious affiliation, ethnicity, parental socio-economic status, intellectual ability, personality, interest and values.

It is hoped that a consideration of further research into how the variables listed above would influence career choice readiness of senior secondary school students would provide necessary clues to uncover the best and effective ways by which adolescents (youths) could best be prepared to face the challenges of the future.

References

- Crites, J.O. (1971). *The Maturity of Vocational Attitudes In Adolescents*. Washington: American Personnel and Guidance Association.
- Crites, J.O. (1969). *Vocational Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Dominico, D. M. and Jones, K.H. (2007). Career Aspiration of Pregnant And Parent Adolescents, *Family And Counselling Science Education*, 25, No. 1, 24-35.
- Durosaro, I. A. (2005). *Career Guidance for Secondary School Students*. Ilorin: Tip-Top Printing And Publishing Press.
- Gellat, H. B. (1989). Positive Uncertainty: A Decision-Making Framework For Counselling, *Journal Of Counselling Psychology*. Vol. 36 pp. 252-256.
- Guay, F., Senecal, C., Gauthier, L, and Fernet, C. (2009). Predicting Career Indecision: A Self Determination Theory Perspectives. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 96, No 2, 166-177.
- Henseley, L. (2000). The Influence Of Gender Role And Gender Stereotyping On The Career Choice And Career Community Of Adolescents, *Journal Of Counselling Psychology And Adolescents*, 69, 11-16.
- Holland, J.L. (1985). *Making Vocational Choices A Theory Of Careers*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall.
- Ipaye, T. (1986). *Educational And Vocational Guidance Concepts And Approaches*. Ife: University of the Press Ltd.
- Isaacson, I. E. (1977). *Basics of Career Counselling*. Boston: Ally and Bacon.
- Kottler, J. A. and Brown, R. W. (1985). *Introduction to Therapeutic Counselling*. California: Brosles/ Cole.
- Marr, E. (1969). "Vocational Maturity And Specification Of A Preference" *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*. VOL. 18 (1) pp. 45-48.
- Makinde, O. and Alao, K. (1987). *Profile And Career Education*. Ibadan: Signal Educational Services Ltd.
- Omoegun, M. and Braimoh, B. (2001), *Career Guidance For Nigerian Students*. Lagos: Babs Sheriff Ltd.
- Onivehu, A. O. (1990). *Some Factors Influencing The Career Maturity Of Nigerian Adolescents*. Unpublished Phd Thesis, Ilorin, University Of Ilorin.
- Osipaw, S. H. (1983). *Theories Of Career Development*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts.
- Super, D.E. (1990). *A Life-Span. Life Space Approach Tp Career Development*. San Fransisco: Joseey Bess Co.
- Tiedeman, D.V. and O'Hara R.P. (1963). *Career Development: Choice and Adjustment*. San Fransisco: D. Brown & Brokes Co.
- Tolbert, E. L. (1974). *Counselling For Career Development*. Boston: Houghton Mufflin Co.
- Wren, C. G. (1964). *Vocational Guidance And Career Development*. New York: Macmillian Co.
- Zytowski, D.G. (1968). *VOCATIONAL BEHAVIOUR, READINESS IN THEORY AND RESEARCH*. JSA Hnlt Rpinhrt Rh Winctnn trir