

THE INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS ON CHOICE OF CAREER AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AKOKO SOUTH WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA ONDO STATE. NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out mainly on the factors that influence students' choice of career in secondary school. Questionnaire was used to obtain data. The sample consisted of 100 students from two schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo state. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson Moment Correlation Co-efficient. This was used purposely to test the relationship that exists between the variables. The result revealed that factors such as family background, peer group pressure, societal valued jobs and the school environment directly influence students' choice of career. By implication, secondary school students need adequate guidance from their parents and school counsellors to avail them the chance of making the right career choice.

Key Words: Environment, career choice, family background, school climate.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research on the choice of career among secondary school students has for long being of interest to educational psychologists and professional counselors. Although, some studies have been carried out on the factors that influenced the choice of career among secondary schools students (for example, Hassan, 2018, Egwuchukwu, 2014; and Nworah, 2014), they did not investigate thoroughly the influence of environmental factors on students choice of career instead, emphasis were placed on factors such as personality type, prestige and economic rewards.

However, Aderigbigbe (2017)said that research evidence shows that the choice of career among secondary school students is determined by a combination of personal abilities, personality type and certain environmental factors. This is why Onayase and Onayase (2013) suggested an investigation into environmental factors such as:

- Family background
- School environment
- Religious institutions and
- Even peer group and their influence on students' choice of career.

Career, according to Akeusola (2013) is referred to as “job or series of job that you do during your working life”. It is also defined by Adeniyi S.O(2018) as a general work description that often includes vocation, profession and occupation. It is a sequence of occupation, jobs and positions throughout a person’s working life. Thus, choosing a career simply means you are choosing a life job.

However, all careers have their subjects requirements, personality characteristics and personal abilities which are supposed to be fully assessed before individual can be deemed to be qualified to go into specific careers (Onayase and Onayase, 2013).

In this study, attention will be placed on environmental influence on the choice of career among secondary school students in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo state.

Environment is a term which has many connotations – it has physical, economic, social and cultural dimensions. From an environmentalist point of view, it is defined as the sum total of all social, biological, chemical and physical factors which compose the surroundings of man (Salami, 2014).

Olatunji, (2015) argues that we have three types of environment viz:

1. The Natural Environment
2. The Biological Environment
3. The Social Environment

He claimed that the Natural Environment is made up of man’s surroundings which are the product of natural processes. It consists of such natural phenomenon as air, water, land, mountains, rivers as well as climate and its element. Thus, the natural environment has some influence on man as determined by weather condition, source of income and mode of living.

The Biological Environment includes all living things, plants, animals including man himself and micro-organisms that surround man in an area. These living things are interdependent on each other and they ultimately depend on the natural environment for survival.

The Social Environment refers to all effects of man’s interaction with man in the process of his living in the natural environment. Social environment includes all the patterns of social relationships and groupings as well as the educational, recreational, religion, technological, cultural and economic opportunities created by man in the environment for the use of mankind. From the foregoing, the elaborate research conducted by Olatunji (2015) indicates that the social environment has functionally since it looks into social concepts such as the family, religion, education, peer group and even political group. Therefore, it will be more appropriate to carry out this research in light of Olatunji’s (2015) definition of social environment

The influence of the environment on the choice of career among secondary school students in Akoko South West will therefore be examined in the context of Olatunji’s (2015) social environment. The aim of this study is to look at how the family, peer group, society and school environment can influence the choice of career among secondary school students.

Asimogun-Ejiogu (2015) said that the influence of environmental factors on the career choice of students cannot be over-emphasized. They opined that environmental factors play an important role in deciding the career of students. In the same vein Aderigbigbe (2017) also agreed that there is a positive relationship between environmental factors and career choices of students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research work is to:

- i. Find out the influence of environmental factors on choice of career among secondary school students in Akoko South West .
- ii. Find out if student choice of career depends on such factors as family, peer group pressure, societal valued jobs and the school environment.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. Is there any relationship between family background and the choice of career among secondary school students?
2. Is there any relationship between peer group pressure and the choice of career among secondary school students?
3. Is there any relationship between societal valued jobs and the choice of career among secondary school students?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁ There is a significant relationship between family background and the choice of career among secondary school students

H₀₂ There is a significant relationship between peer group pressure and the choice of career among secondary school students

H₀₃ There is no significant relationship between societal valued jobs and the choice of career among secondary school students

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Aderigbigbe (2017), career can be defined as the choices made previously and subsequently that influences occupation or job.

In other words of Olatunji (2015), career is traditionally seen as a course of successive situations that make up a person's work life. It is a course or progress through life and is usually pertaining to the series of jobs that you do during your working life.

It is clear from various literatures that students' choice of career is made while in junior class going to the senior class (Olatoye and Ogunkola, 2008). Nwachukwu, 2013; and Adeniyi, 2012). Generally, researchers have investigated issues relating to aspects of career choice by teenagers. One of such studies was carried out by Nworah (2017) in Onayase and Onayase (2013) who researched into the factors that influenced career choice among secondary school students in Onitsha Zone. The aim of the study was to find out the factors that students considered before choosing careers. The study, which was a survey, had a population of 4,729 S.S II students from which a sample of 400 students was selected.

The result of Nworah's research showed that 76% of the boys preferred professional courses like Medicine and Geology. 98% of the girls preferred people-oriented courses such as Banking, Broadcasting and Teaching.

Career choice has become a complex science with advent of information technology, the emergence of past industrial revolution and job competition. It was a common practice in the olden days to find feudalism converting it into a family affair where the son of a blacksmith was destined to become a blacksmith and a feudal was born a leader. Industrialization and post industrialization had made it possible for a common person to be richer as long as she or he has due skills and knowledge (Adeniyi 2012). Today, one has not only make due career planning but also exhaustive career research before making a career choice so as to adjust with the evolving socio-economic conditions (Adeniyi 2012). Most of the secondary school students do not have adequate information about occupational opportunities to help them make appropriate career choice.

According to Hassan (2018), career choice is influenced by multiple factors including personality, interests, self concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and financial. Aderigbigbe (2017) state that such individual undertaking the process is influenced by several factors including the context in which they live in, their personal aptitudes, social contacts and educational attainment. According to Hassan (2018), factors influencing career choice can either be intrinsic or extrinsic or both. Hewitt further states that most people are influenced by careers that their parents favour, others follow the careers that their educational choices have opened for them, some choose to follow their passion regardless of how much or little it will make them while others choose the careers that give high income. Students perception of being suitable for particular jobs also have been found to be influenced by a number of factors including ethnic background, year in school, level of achievement, choice of science subjects, attitudes and differences in job characteristics (Nworah, 2017)

Career choice, Adeniyi claims, involves making compromise, that is choosing a career which one can make maximum use of one's interests and capabilities in such a manner that will satisfy his goals, but in doing that, "one has to weigh the environmental factors likely to either enhance or inhibit achieving a maximum degree of satisfaction in one's life and work". Adeniyi has since modified his ideas on career decision making process including those of irreversibility. This change of position came about as a response to serious objection by his critics. Adeniyi (2012) later view it that occupational choice is a life-long process of decision making of which an individual seeks to find the optimal fit between his career preparation of goals and the realities of the world of work.

Adeniyi believes that career choice is an expression of, or an extension of, personality into the world of work, followed by subsequent identification with specific occupational stereotypes. The rationale is that individuals are attracted to a given career primarily because of their particular personalities. Holland proposed six personality styles (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional) with matching occupational environments. The stability of a career choice depends on the dominance of personal orientation

and subsequent career choice. Self knowledge is a key ingredient in making an optimal career choice.

However, how students forms an initial career choice is a multidimensional process of development that is very inclusive. One can conclude that people play an active role in the formation process of initial career choice through participation in activities in their environment. There may be some stage-like changes as well as gradual ones. The shaping process is both continuous and discontinuous. Some key factors that can influence career choice include the following: competency in planning, attitudes, consistency of choice, crystallization of traits, the person's individuality, socioeconomic status (SES), faulty beliefs, self-knowledge, self-efficacy, freedom of choice, prestige of career, interests, career gender types and personality types. The career choice process is thought to be a learned skill and a problem-solving activity (Salami, 2014)

The factors influencing the choice of career among secondary school students further received attention from Owoyele and Toyobo (2008).

Their investigations revealed that parental will, peer pressure and academic ability of the students affects the choice of career students make. Others have classified these as environmental factors. For instance, Aderigbigbe (2017) opined that career choices are shaped through the constant interaction of social and cultural contexts and their influence on individual's core beliefs about family, society and work in general. To Nworah (2017), the environmental factors such as the family, society, peer group and even the school exert great influence on choice of career choice made by the students.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive method of the survey of type. The researcher adopted the descriptive survey method because it is found relevant for the study. The study finds out influence of environmental factors on the choice of career among secondary school students in Akoko South West, Ondo State, Nigeria

Population

The study population consisted of all secondary school students in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo state.

Sample

The sample for this research work was the selection of two senior secondary schools from the total population which are:

However, the sampling procedure employed for this study was mainly simple random techniques so as to limit the numbers of schools used.

In a nutshell, the research work consist of 100 (100) respondent with fifty (50) respondents from each schools.

Instrument

The study made use of questionnaire as developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was titled “Career Decision Scale” (CDS). It consisted of two sections (A and B). Section “A” elicited personal information which includes Sex, Age, religious Status and School. While Section ‘B’ contained 20 items which elicited information on the influence of environmental factor on career decision.

The data collected from the questionnaires were scored using four point Likert scale.

Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaire was administered on respondents at selected schools. The researcher sort permission of whom it may concern, before the questionnaire was given to the student. However, before the questionnaires were administered, necessary precussions were taken by the researcher, as the researcher assured the respondents of utmost confidentiality in other to avoid anxiety or subjectivity on the part of the respondents.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using Pearson Moment Correlation Co-efficient to test for the relationship between the variables.

Results

Testing of Hypothesis/Answer to Research Questions

This section presents the testing of the hypothesis.

H0₁: There is a significant relationship between family background and the choice of career among secondary school students.

Table 1: Family background

<i>Variables</i>	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	<i>DF</i>	<i>r – cal</i>	<i>r – in</i>	α
	1244	1455	15986	22703	17807	99	-0.4955	0.195	0.05

It is clear from table 1 above that the r- calculated value is -0.4955 which is less than the r-critical value of 0.195 at 0.05 significant level.

Hence, the above stated null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between family background and the choice of career among secondary school students.

H0₂: There is a significant relationship between peer group pressure and the choice of career among secondary school students.

Table 2: Peer group Pressure

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	DF	r – cal	r – in	α
	1179	1455	14313	22703	17074	99	-0.3351	0.195	0.05

From the table 2 above the r-calculated value is -0.3351 which is less than the r-critical value of 0.195 at 0.05 significant level

Hence the null hypothesis stated above is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between peer group pressure and the choice of career among secondary school students.

H0₃: There is no significant relationship between societal valued jobs and choice of career among secondary school students.

Table 3: Societal-valued Jobs

$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	DF	r – cal	r – in	α
1221	1455	15437	22703	17420	99	-0.5473	0.195	0.05

From the table 3 above the r-calculated value is -0.5473 which is less than the r-critical value of 0.195 at 0.05 significant level.

Hence the above stated null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between societal value jobs and choice of career among secondary school student

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Hypothesis I

There is a significant relationship between family background and the choice of career among secondary school students. Findings indicated that the result is accepted. It shows that there is a significant relationship between family background and the choice of career.

This finding is in consonance with the view of Owoyele and Toyobo (2018) whose investigation revealed that parental pressure and academic ability of the students affects their choice of career. Likewise this finding supports the view of Nwachukwu (2013) that says the environmental factors such family, society, peer group and even event in the school exert great influence on choice of career being made by the students.

Moreso, Owoyele and Toyobo (2018) noticed that many parents are in the habits of determining virtually all academic decisions for their children, they choose the school attended, the books to read and even the subjects and course to study at school. In supporting the reasons for parental influences in the choice of career made by students, Professor Robert C. Chope of the San-Francisco State University claim that parental education and socio- economic status seems to have impact on students’ career choice.

Hypothesis II

There is a significant relationship between peer group pressure and the choice of career among secondary school students. Findings indicated that the result has been accepted. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between the variables. The findings agrees with the research result of Aderigbigbe (2017), whose research indicated that many peers act as role models in their group and influences the decision made by other members of the group.

Orji (2018) supports this finding, which says that, the peer group perception about life will ultimately affect their choice of career.

Most students rely on the information given to them by their peers in making decision and this calls for the reasons why their choice of career is being influenced by the beliefs of the group they belong.

Hypothesis III

There is no significant relationship between societal valued jobs and the choice of career among secondary school student. The null hypothesis has been rejected since the result shows that there is a significant relationship between societal valued jobs and the choice of career among secondary school students. This findings supports the view of Ogunkola (2018) the development of Science and Technology has shifted attention from Arts to Science oriented Courses. Today, the society clamours for more enrollments of science students than to other fields of study.

5. CONCLUSION

Considering the findings of this study. It is crystal clear that the influence of environmental factor cannot be over emphasized in the making of a career decision of adolescents.

Therefore, the study concluded that environment has a strong influence on the career decision of adolescents.

Recommendations

The findings of this study has established the fact that environmental factors greatly influence adolescents career choice. Thus the following recommendations were made to further enhance positive relationship that will ultimately give them life satisfaction.

- Parental value orientation is necessary in students' altitude to choice of career since family exerts a lot of influence on the response of the child towards the world of occupational choice. It is germane that parent exhibits a need rather than monetary and social gain.
- Parents are enjoined to checkmate the academic progression and academic track record of their children.
- Parents are advised to consider the strength and weakness of their children while advising them.

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