

School type and location as correlates of career choice among senior secondary school adolescents: Counselling Implications

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Abstract

*This paper assessed the influence of school type and location on the career choices of senior secondary school adolescents in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The correlational survey approach was adopted for the study, in which two questions were raised and the corresponding hypotheses were formulated. The Population comprised two thousand two hundred and seventy (2270) SS1 students from the 12 public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State with a sample size of four hundred (400) students drawn from SS1 classes in eight (8) public secondary schools randomly selected in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The instrument titled "Career Interest Survey Questionnaire" (CISQ) developed by Akinade (2019) and modified by the researchers was adopted for data collection. The instrument was trial tested for reliability and a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient *r*-value of .78 was obtained. Data were analyzed using Regression Analysis. The result indicated that school type significantly influences the career choice of secondary school adolescents, while school location did not significantly influence the career choice of secondary school adolescents. It was then recommended that Professional school counselors should be sent to schools irrespective of the school type i.e. co-educational and single-sex and location i.e. urban or rural for support on career guidance as this would help in assessing the needs of adolescents with regards to career choices and thus providing the necessary assistance.*

Keywords: Influence, School type, location, Correlates, career choices and adolescents.

Introduction

The awareness of the importance of career choices is the justification for being exposed to vocational guidance. According to Eremie and Okwulehie (2018), industrialization and post-industrialization have made it possible for a common person to be richer as long as they have due skills and knowledge. However, the reality in our present time in Nigeria shows that not all senior secondary school adolescents can end up becoming medical doctors, lawyers and engineers no matter how great they aspire. The process of making a choice is complex and unique for each individual depending on cognitive factors and social structures of the individual's milieu (Braza & Guillo, 2015) since the adolescents' world is characterized by a lot of inconsistencies and contradictions because their decision outcomes are a function of experience, exposure, and reasoning which are not as accurate and developed as that of adults. One of the most pressing problems confronting young people today involves choosing an appropriate occupation, preparing for it, liking it, and keeping it (Ozohu-Sulayman, 2006). The process of aligning career decision making with educational requirements has increasingly become complex with the evolution of advanced technology in the world today than before (Onoyase & Onoyase, 2009) and with the complexities of unemployment and the technological shifts in today's labor market, young people need not only information but also the skills they can get to ensure they make sound career decisions (Okumu, 2009).

There is a widespread agreement that the high school years are crucial for adolescents to become prepared for the transition from school to work or college (Amoah, Kwofie & Kwofie, 2015; Ombaba, Keraro, Sindabi & Asiengo, 2014). Secondary school years present the transition from the cooperatively sheltered life of the primary school to the freedom and responsibility of either tertiary education or employment (Watts & Kidd, 2000). However too often, by focusing exclusively on academics, secondary schools neglect the need for adolescents to acquire greater competence in the knowledge and skills required in making informed career decisions (Gati, Krausz and Osipow, 2006) as the choice of career one prefers determines to a large extent, how their time will be spent, who will be chosen as friends, what attitudes or values will be adopted, where one will reside, and what pattern of family living will be adopted (Egbochuku, 2008). Career choice and decision making in rural and urban centers remain a worrisome problem among Nigerian male and female students across the country as many students still rely on chance and luck elements when it comes to choosing a career because many of them are not aware of new opportunities (Ofem & Ajayi, 2008).

This study employed the conflict decision-making model by Janis and Mann (1977) as its theoretical frameworks. In 1977, Irving Janis and Leon Mann proposed a descriptive

model of the decision-making process, in which they advanced the idea that the need to make a decision involves a conflict which engenders a certain degree of stress, the excess or absence of which is, in turn, a major determinant of the subject's failure to make a good decision, since it is associated with unproductive information search, assessment and decision making patterns. This stress stems from two concerns: on the one hand, a worry about the objective personal and material losses that may result from the chosen alternative; and on the other, a worry about the subjective losses that may lower self-esteem (Janis and Mann, 1979).

The conflict decision-making model is a cognitive assessment model very similar in some respects to other cognitive models such as those developed by Bandura (1977) or Lazarus and Folkman (1984). All these models involve a double assessment: (a) assessment of the demands of a specific environment, and (b) self-assessment of the personal resources available to respond to these demands. In Janis and Mann's model, the most decisive resource affecting a decision-making process is the time available. In this model, the presence or absence of three antecedent conditions determines which decisional conflict pattern the subject chooses to follow: (1) awareness of a serious risk if nothing is done, (2) hope of finding a better alternative, and (3) belief that there is enough time to learn about and assess the situation and choose the best alternative. The five resulting patterns are un-conflicted adherence, un-conflicted change, defensive avoidance, hyper-vigilance, and vigilance. According to the definition offered by the model, only the last of these, vigilance, is adaptive, being characterized by the systematic search for information, careful consideration of all viable alternatives, and the unhurried, non-impulsive making of the final decision.

The term career is broadly defined as the roles people play including students, parents, employees, retirees, and employers, in securing a livelihood (Eremie & Okwulehie, 2018). Choices of careers by individuals are greatly influenced by the individual's perception, expectation, and the necessary environmental support. In adolescence, career preparation is an important precursor for successful career development across the life span and is closely related to adolescent adjustment and well-being (Skorikov, 2007). Although young people have high ambitions, expecting to be well educated, and have professional careers, many do not develop coherent plans for achieving their goals (Schneider & Stevenson, 2009). The current mass unemployment in Nigeria is threatening the career preference of school leavers as many senior secondary school students are expected to choose their careers, choosing the right career by young adolescents' can pave way for employment opportunities. Students in secondary schools, like many other young adults, are always worried about what they will do with their lives, the kind of adult they would become, and many other worries (Her & Webb, 2004). Ogunsanwo (2000) and Salami (2004) observed that the need for a good salary, an attractive financial package which in turn determine his/her social class,

attractive working conditions, and a secured future are very important factors influencing students' career choice or aspiration.

School type consists of both co-educational and single sex. Co-educational refers most generally to education at the elementary, secondary, or postsecondary level in which males and females attend school exclusively with members of the opposite sex, while single-sex education refers to that in which male or female students attend school exclusively with members of their sex. The type of school attended by the adolescent could have a significant impact on the career development of the individual. However, it has been observed that the confidence level of students varies depending on the type of school attended. Adolescents learn which careers are "acceptable" from their social environment (Schoon, 2001). Halpern (2007) posited that mixed schools are not doing enough to promote girls' confidence and ambitions, while single-sex schools find it easier to promote confidence and competitive attitude in the absence of boys which may influence their decision to choose 'more robust careers' such as engineering and medicine. He further opined that boys in all-male educational environments feel more comfortable pursuing 'arts' degrees compared with boys in mixed schools.

School location is the area where the school is situated and could in one way or the other influence the choice of adolescents' careers due to what they see and experience in the school environment. The provision of education in rural areas is fraught with qualified teachers' refusal of appointment in isolated villages, villagers refuse to send their children to schools because they are dependent on them for help, while some parents hesitate to entrust their daughters to male teachers. Again, the lack of roads or satisfactory means of communication makes it difficult to get career-related information to the schools and this courses inadequacy of career counselors which place difficulties in the way of organizing school career day and seminars. Ezike (1997) in Mbagwu and Ajaegbu (2016) conceptualized an urban environment as an environment that has a high population density containing a high variety, beauty, and common place views. According to him, children who live in the metropolis may have high career aspirations than children in the rural environment who are not exposed to urban life. Children from urban schools due to the exposure to urban life will always want to meet up with the expectation of the society by choosing professional careers such as medicine, pharmacy, and engineering while the influence of location on career choice varies from one geographical location to another.

Mehar and Kaur (2015) from their study in India investigated the career choice preferences among rural and urban adolescents, the study consisted of 200 students of 10th class randomly drawn from four different schools of Amritsar district, and the result indicated a significant difference between the career choice preferences of rural and urban adolescents. The result was in support of an earlier study by Pathaki and Rahman (2013) which observed a significant difference between rural and urban undergraduate

students in certain areas of career choice preferences. In Meghalaya, India a survey was conducted to explore the career preparation status, career belief patterns, and academic achievement motivation of high school students from rural and urban settings, and it was discovered that a significant difference existed among the students (Sangma & Arulmani, 2013). Rowland (2004) opined that high career aspiration of students is borne out of school facilities they are used to, as the type of school attended by an adolescent can have a significant impact on the career development of the individual.

Results from several studies had shown that secondary school students all over the world are faced with the dilemma in making career decisions (Issa & Nwalo 2008; Macgregor, 2007; Watson, McMahan, Foxcroft & Els, 2010). Thus, investigating and a better understanding of these innumerable factors that contribute to career choice is of utmost importance among adolescents in schools today and to the knowledge of the researchers, there is a dearth in literature as it relates to how school type and location correlate career choice among senior secondary school adolescents in Egor local government area of Edo state, a gap this study sought to fill. Counseling psychologists, vocational experts, researchers, and other specialists will therefore find the results of this study a useful guide in assisting their clients who are victims of career choice inadequacies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate school type and location as correlates of career choice among senior secondary school adolescents in Egor local government area of Edo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. Is there any relationship between school types and adolescent's career choices?
2. Is there any relationship between school location and adolescent's career choice?

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant relationship between school location and adolescents' career choice.
2. There will be no significant relationship between school type and adolescent's career choice.

Method

Design of the Study

A correlational survey design was adopted for this study in assessing the relationship between school type and its locations and students' career choices and aspirations.

Participants' Information

The population of the study consists of two thousand two hundred and seventy (2270) SS1 students from the 12 public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

Table 1:

Population Public Senior Secondary Schools Class Two Students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State

Schools	Location	School Type	Male	Female	Total	%
1.	Urban	Co-educational	199	201	400	17.6%
2.	Urban	Single Girls	182	-	182	8.0%
3.	Urban	Co-educational	210	186	396	17.4%
4.	Rural	Co-educational	40	30	70	3.1%
5.	Urban	Co-educational	102	68	170	7.5%
6.	Urban	Co-educational	106	131	237	10.4%
7.	Urban	Single Boys	-	162	162	7.1%
8.	Rural	Co-educational	26	26	52	2.3%
9.	Rural	Co-educational	34	44	78	3.4%
10.	Rural	Co-educational	61	50	111	4.9%
11.	Urban	Co-educational	124	152	276	12.2%
12.	Rural	Co-educational	58	78	136	6%
TOTAL			1,142	1,128	2,270	100%

Source = Ministry of Education, Iyaro-Benin City, (2019).

Table 2:

Sample of Public Senior Secondary School Class Two Students from Eight Selected Schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State

S/N	Schools	Male	Female	%
1	Asoro Grammar School	25	25	12.5%
2.	Edo Boys High School	50	-	12.5%
3.	Uselu Secondary school	25	25	12.5%
4.	Iyoba College	-	50	12.5%
5.	Uwelu Secondary School	25	25	12.5%
6.	Evboutubu Secondary School	25	25	12.5%
7.	Ohonre Secondary School	25	25	12.5%
8.	Egor Secondary School	25	25	12.5%
	TOTAL	200	200	100%

Table 2 shows the Sample of students randomly selected from eight Schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State with the percentage of population size selected per school. The sample size for this study consists of four hundred (400) students drawn from SS1 classes from eight (8) public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. This study adopted multi-stage sampling technique. Firstly, a stratified sampling technique was used to stratify the schools into single-sex, mixed, urban, and rural schools. Secondly, two schools were selected from each stratum using balloting without replacement. Lastly, fifty (50) students were randomly selected each from the selected schools making a 12.5% selection from each school. However, 371 respondents were used for analysis, while 29 questionnaires were rejected because they were not properly filled.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for this study is the questionnaire titled 'Career Choice Questionnaire' (CCQ) adapted from Akinade Vocational Interest Survey and modified by the researcher. This instrument is made up of two sections, section A and B. Section A contains information about students bio-data while section B consists of twenty (30) items on a four-point Likert Scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD).

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the research instrument was subjected to both face and content validation through a series of amendments made by experts in the Field of Counselling Psychology and one from Measurement and Evaluation. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to determine the reliability consistency between a set of scores gotten from twenty students who were not part of the sample and an r-value of .78 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was highly consistent and reliable.

Method of Data Analysis

Then the data were analyzed using Regression Analysis.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between school type and adolescent's career choice.

Table 3:

Relationship between school type and adolescent career choice

Variables	N	R	p-value	Remarks
School Type and Career Choice.	371	.040	.034	Significant

Table 3 shows the relationship between school type and adolescent career choice. From the Table, the correlation coefficient (r) = .040, is an indication of a positive relationship between school type and adolescent career choice. The correlation coefficient is significant, testing at .05 alpha level and because the p-value of .034 is less than .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between school type and adolescent career choice." is hereby rejected. This means that there is a relationship between school-type and the career choice of students.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between school location and adolescent's career choice.

Table 4:

Relationship between school location and adolescent career choice

Variables	N	R	p-value	Remarks
School Location and Career Choice.	371	.013	.608	Not Significant

Table 4 shows the relationship between school location and adolescent career choice. From the Table, the correlation coefficient ($r = .013$), is an indication of a positive relationship between school location and adolescent career choice. The correlation coefficient though is not significant, testing at .05 alpha level and because the p-value of .608 is greater than .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between school location and adolescent career choice is hereby retained.

Discussion

The result of the study reveals that there was a relationship between school-type and the career choice of students. The finding lends credence to the assertion made by Schoon (2001) who posited that the type of school attended by the adolescent could have a significant impact on the career development and aspiration of the individual and this is in line with Halpern (2007) who from his study concluded that mixed schools are not doing enough to promote girls' confidence and ambitions, while single-sex schools find it easier to promote confidence and competitive attitude in the absence of boys which may influence their decision to choose 'more robust careers' such as engineering and medicine.

In the present study, it was discovered that there was no significant relationship between school location and adolescent career choice. This is in contract to the findings of Mehar and Kaur (2015); Pathaki and Rahman (2013) and Sangma and Arulmani (2013) all in India who found that there exists was a significant difference between the career choice preferences of rural and urban adolescents and between rural and urban undergraduate students in certain areas of career choice preferences.

Conclusion

From the study, it was therefore concluded that there was a relationship between school type and the career choice of adolescents. Meaning co-educational and single-

sex schools attended predicted the career choice of adolescents. It was also discovered that there was no significant relationship between school location and adolescent career choice, meaning school location be it rural or urban did not predict their career choice of adolescents.

Recommendation

1. Professional school counselors should be sent to schools irrespective of school type i.e. co-educational and single sex for support on career guidance as this would help in assessing the needs of adolescents as regards career choices and other aspirations.
2. Government and policy makers should from time to time enforce the implementations of policies that would enhance and promote activities of career guidance counselors, thus promoting vocational gains and aspirations among the students.
3. This information should serve as a springboard to achieve a balance in the distribution of trained Counselling psychologists/ Guidance counselors to schools irrespective of location and school type to enhance career aspirations of young adolescence that constitute future work force.

Implication for Counselling

Based on the findings of this study, the counselors should do the following;

1. Ensure students cultivate reading habits and provide current and adequate information about the knowledge of the world of work to the students.
2. That school administrators, principals, and teachers should be sensitized on the functions and benefits of the school guidance counselor, to aid early referral for students observed to have difficulties in making a career choice.

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