

Comparative Analysis of Factors Influencing Career Choices among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated factors influencing career choices among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling techniques were adopted to select four hundred (400) Senior Secondary School Student from five Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The "Comprehensive Career Choice Survey" (CCCS) was administered to the respondents to collect necessary data. The t-test statistics was used to test three null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there were significant differences among male and female secondary school students in their career choices in terms of: Prestige of a profession, gender parity, and parental influence. Based on the findings some recommendations were made: (1) Professional career counsellors should be consulted to assist students in planning and choosing their careers. (2) Professional career counsellors should include the students in the selecting process, considering interest, ability, skills and personality of the students.

Keywords: Career analysis; Self-knowledge; Financial status; Secondary school; Counsellors

Introduction

Several researchers have carefully conducted studies in identifying factors influencing students' career choices among secondary school students all over the world. Career choice has become a complex task among students in the face of ever changing technology in the information sector. The term career is broadly defined as all life time roles people play including students, parents, employees, retirees and employers. Therefore, career could be seen to be life time pursuits of an individual. The complexity of career decision making among individuals was earlier recognized by career theorists such as super (1957), Ginsburg et al. [1], Tiedeman and O'hara [2] and Gelatt decision making model [3]. All the above theorists recognized that individual decision-making styles play significant part in the whole process of career development, and that gender, personal interests, and learning experiences were all seen as factors affecting students' career choices. They recognized that career choice among students was influenced by personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, family and social support. While, Stanley [4] observed that prestige of a profession was a strong motivating factor influencing students in making career choices.

Similarly, Achebe [5] investigated the career choice of boys and girls, both in urban and rural schools, observed girls having greater preference for middle level jobs than boys.

Ezeonu conducted a review on career choice among primary and secondary school students on basic issues that affect career choice identified knowledge of the job, self-knowledge, parental and peer group constraints, and parental financial status influenced career choice pattern of students.

Also, Ogunlade and Akeredolu [6] examined the influence of counselling on career preference among secondary school student in Ekiti State concluded that there were significant differences in external influence as factors. The study further revealed that significant difference existed among male and female students, showing gender as a factor.

In addition, Madu [7] conducted a study based on the impact of gender on academic performance on 160 Arts-Related subjects in Nasarawa State University concluded that female students performed significantly better than males in Arts-Related subjects. Similarly, Buabeng et al. [8] studied female senior high school students' interest in physics as course of study at the University level in Ghana, concluded that female students do not prefer physics as a course of study at the University level due to limited employment opportunities for females in physics as a career.

Also parental influences have been recognized as a determining factor in students' career decision-making. These influences could be either positive or negative on their decisions [9,10]. Sometimes parental influence tends to ignore the child's personal interest. Individual interest in making career choice is central in trait and factor theory of career decision making. In every endeavour of human life, interest of the doer is very crucial for success. In other words, career interest is defined as preference for specific life events that often play a major role in career decision making and choice. Basically, three types of career interests are distinguished: Expressed interests are those interests that are verbally reported by the student. "I would like to work as medical doctor". Manifest interests refer to the events in which individuals engage. For example, an individual who enjoys writing may manifest his or her interest by doing Journalistic writing. While tested interests are shown in an individual's knowledge of a specific area as measured by standardized objective tests.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate some selected factors influencing choice of career among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State.

Research Questions

- To what extent prestige of a profession influence choice of career among male and female secondary school students in Rivers State?
- To what extent gender parity influence choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State?
- To what extent parental influence affect choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study, the following null hypotheses were advanced and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the prestige of a profession and choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the influence of gender parity on choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in parental influence on choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Methodology

Research design

The research method used was the descriptive survey. The researcher utilized survey method because the study investigates some selected factors influencing choice of career among senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The t-test statistics was used at 0.05 level of significance.

Population of the study

The study covered five state secondary schools in Rivers State, with total male and female students of one thousand two hundred (1,200).

Sample and sampling techniques

The sample population of this study consisted of four hundred senior secondary students, of which two hundred were girls and two hundred were boys resulting to four hundred (400). The sample was drawn through simple random sampling method.

Instrumentation

The comprehensive career choice survey (CCCS) was developed to assess the career choice of senior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. The survey instrument has three sections: Personal Data, Response Guide, and twenty items on factors influencing career choice. It was a 4-point interval scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Responses were assigned values ranging from 4-1 points.

Validation of the instrument

The instrument "CCCS" was subjected to content and face validity by experts in the area of measurement and evaluation in the Faculty of Education.

Reliability of the instrument

Test-Retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. After the first administration of the instrument, an interval of two weeks was reached before the second administration. A correlation coefficient of 0.79 was reached.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the prestige of a profession on choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Variables	N	X	STD	Std Error	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male students	200	7.2	0.83	0.657	198	0.05	2.78	1.96	Sig.
Female students	200	4.2	0.85	0.613					

Table 1: The T-Test Analysis of the mean and standard Deviation of Prestige of a Profession on Choice of Career among Male and Female Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State.

The data in Table 1 revealed that the calculated t-test value of male senior students and female senior students was 2.78, while the critical t-value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 198 at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that there was significant different of prestige of a profession on choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the influence of gender parity on choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The result is shown in Table 2.

Variables	N	X	STD	Std Error	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male students	200	78	0.73	0.658	198	0.05	2.41	1.96	Sig.
Female students	200	62	0.71	0.616					

Table 2: The T-Test Analysis of the mean and standard Deviation of Influence of Gender Parity on Choice of Career among Male and Female Senior Secondary School Students.

The data in Table 2 revealed that the calculated t-test value of male and female senior secondary school students was 2.41, while the critical t-value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 198 at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that there was significant difference of influence of gender parity on choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in parental influence on choice of career among male and female senior secondary students in Rivers State. The result is shown in Table 3.

Variables	N	X	STD	Std Error	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male students	200	7.8	0.88	0.6584	198	0.05	2.07	1.96	Sig.
Female students	200	4.6	0.86	0.6175					

Table 3: The T-Test Analysis of Parental Influence on Choice of Career among Male and Female Senior Secondary Students in Rivers State.

The data in Table 3 revealed that the calculated t-test value of male and female senior students was 2.07, and mean scores 7.8 (male) 4.6 (female) respectively, while the critical t value was 1.96 at degree of freedom of 198 at 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that there was significant difference of parental influence on choice of career among male and female senior students. Furthermore, the result revealed that the parental influence was higher on male students than female students.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that prestige of a profession higher influence choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State. This position was also held by Oladele [11], Gesinde [12-14] and Ogunlade and Akeredolu [6]. Also, gender parity influenced choice of career among male and female senior students in Rivers State. Ogunlade and Akeredolu [6] findings are in line with the above findings.

In addition, the study revealed that parents do have influence on male and female senior secondary school students on their career choices. It was revealed in this study that the parental influence was even higher on male students than female students. These findings are in line with Rainey and Borders [9] and Sebald [10].

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that there was a significant influence of prestige of a profession on choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State. It was also concluded that gender parity has significant influence on career choice pattern among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

In addition, it was concluded that parents have high influence on both male and female senior secondary school student in Nigeria. It was revealed that the parental influence was even higher on male than female senior secondary school student in Rivers State.

Recommendations

- Professional career counselor should be consulted to assist students in planning and choosing their careers.
- Professional career counselors should include the student in the selecting process, considering interest, ability, skills and personality of the student.

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