
External Motivation and Extrinsic Reward on Career Choice Among Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

The awareness of the level of incentive and income receivable from a particular occupation can greatly influence an individual choice of occupation. The study therefore sought to assess external motivation and extrinsic reward on career choice among secondary school students. The survey research design was used in this study. The research area was Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The subjects of this study consisted of 300 Senior Secondary School students (150 males and females) randomly down from five secondary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area. The instrument was constructed and subjected to vigorous editing and checking. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot study. In the pilot study, 40 students were administered with the questionnaire at the first instance and later were re-administered with the same instrument after two weeks in the same school. The study concluded that Extrinsic-reward value exerts significant influence on career choice among secondary school students who proffer different occupations. This is because teaching of occupational choice in schools gives students more information about each occupation, in terms of nature of work, prospects and risks. It was therefore recommended that students should be helped to broaden their occupational knowledge by taking them on field trips/excursions to different work organizations where they would have the opportunity of seeing and interacting with the workers in real life situation- sharing their on-the-job experiences before leaving school.

KEYWORDS: External Motivation, Extrinsic Reward, Career Choice, Secondary School Students

Introduction

The issues of selecting a career have posed a very formidable problem to students over the years especially in places where the impact of the guidance counselor has not been felt. To overcome this problem, the National policy on Education (1981) recognizes the place of the Guidance counselor in the school system. The policy states: "in view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospect and in view of personality maladjustments among schoolchildren, career officers and counselors will be appointed to post primary institutions. The educational levels of parents also influence the level of career choice of children (Miller & Bibby 1999 and Ogunlade, 2000). Children whose parents are well educated may themselves aspire to read higher than those from illiterate parents. Often, children pride themselves on attaining the levels similar or above those of their parents. It is often said that any child that does not aspire to grow above the level of parent is not worth noticing. It is not common to see medical Doctors or other professionals, having sons and daughters in their shoe or mothers who are nurses having sons and daughters aspiring to be nurses. Parents who are professionals are likely to attract

other professionals to their homes and thus motivate their children to aspire to enter such professions.

Some parents dictate careers for their children not minding their children aptitudes, in other to fulfill their own unfulfilled occupational dreams (Denga 2007, Onyehalu and Ezeani 2005) for instance, it was possible to find parents who had wanted to be medical Doctors, expressing the need to have one in the family. They then decide that their sons or daughters should accomplish that which they could not achieve. Plans that are more ambitious are made for him and the highest degree of attention and motivation are given to him to pursue the designed careers. Siblings may also have important motivational influence on the career choices of students (Abiri, 1999, Lipseti, 1999). The eldest child's success and satisfaction in an occupation might motivate his younger brothers and sisters in that direction, often one noticed two brothers and sisters becoming medical doctors or in other professions and vice-verse. On the other hand, sibling's failure and dissatisfaction in a particular career might also discourage the younger ones from copying his footsteps.

Statement of the problem

This study is intended to examine external motivation and extrinsic – reward on career choice among secondary school students in Akpabuyo Local Government Area in Cross River State. There have been cases where students are frustrated when they apply for admission into universities and other higher institutions and are rejected. There are also cases where students enter the universities or other higher institutions to read course they neither like nor possess the aptitude. Worst still, there were others who believed they could not achieve anything good in their academic pursuits and as a result become uninterested with the entire school system. When critically examined, these groups of students constitute the dropouts in our schools and this cause a lot of concern to well-meaning peoples in the society.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine external motivation and extrinsic – reward on career choice among secondary school students. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. To examine the external influence or factor that motivates the choice of career among secondary school students.
2. To determine the extrinsic reward that influences career choice among secondary school students.

Research Questions

1. Are there any external factors that motivate the choice of career among secondary school students?
2. Is there any extrinsic reward that influences career choice among secondary school students?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of external factors on the career choice among secondary school students.

2. There is no significant influence of extrinsic- reward on career choice among secondary school students.

Literature Review

External Motivation and Career Choice

Eysenck (2000) defined motivation as “one of the hypothetical processes in the determination of behavior in addition to the effect of a stimulus or perceived situation”. External motivation refers to the influence of parents, siblings, teachers, peers and the mass media (Occupational information). Quite a number of researchers have shown the motivational influence of External factors on the career choices of students. For instance, Stacey (2000), researched into some psychological aspects of inter-generational occupational mobility. His study revealed that the socio-economic status of parents, motivated children’s learning capabilities and eventually their level of career choices. Children from high socio-economic families are fed properly, given good medical care, provided suitable reading environment and might be sent to special schools, thus promoting their studies, children from low socio-economic parents would not have such opportunity conditions and so perform poorly in their studies. This performance may limit their opportunities regarding career choices because they could not score grades to qualify them for highly prized careers.

Russell’s (1999) study revealed that children from rich parents have both physical and psychological needs which when met, contribute positively to their academic achievement and invariably their career choices. These needs include a conducive environment, good food, a playground. McClelland and his associates (2000) carried out a variety of investigations on the influence of socio-economic status on achievement needs. They discovered that the need to achieve is low in low socio-economic classes but high in middle socio-economic classes. According to Davis (2000), in a study carried out by the National Opinion Research Centre (N.O.R.C) in which data were collected from about 34,000 graduating students from 135 American Universities and Colleges, it was discovered that there was a relationship between family status and plans for further study. A similar positive relationship was found between these plans and the rating of the father’s occupations could be classified as “professionals” 38.5 percent of them had plan for further study compared with 21.8 percent of those whose fathers were farmers. Similarly, with father’s education, the relationship between those and plans for further study was strongly positive. Dunkerley (2000) concluded that taking these three dimensions, it was clear that family background in terms of social class plays a key role in occupational choices

A study carried out by Yoloye (1989) on the background of children in three schools in the former Western State of Nigeria revealed that the selectivity index for grammar schools was 6.5 percent for children of professionals, executives and clerks, while for farmers, it was 0.06 percent, in other words, when it came to secondary school selection which was often based on performance in aptitude and intelligence test, children of professional, executives and clerks were at an advantage over the children of farmers. Olayinka (2005) confirmed that parental socio-economic status and intelligence have either facilitator or inhibitory effect on the career choices of a child depending on the traits inherited or the environment in which he is brought up. Miler and Bibby (1999) researched into choices and expectations of fifth form pupils in Accra, Ghana. Among the pertinent issues discussed in their work were the influence of parental education and the type of school

attended on the occupational choices of children. The study revealed that children of the literate group selected typical elite occupations like Medicine, Law and the Civil Service more than children of the illiterate parents, while children of the illiterate group selected occupations like uniformed services and teaching. On the influence of the type of school attended, children from the high socio-economic group attended private schools and aimed at professionals like Medicine and Law. Children from middle socio-economic families who attended private schools aspire to read courses like science and technology.

Extrinsic Reward on Career Choices

Another motivational factor influencing vocational choices, which is external to the individual was good income. Okon (2003) studied factors influencing or repelling students' choice of teaching as a career. The researcher found that poor remuneration was one of the factors that repel students from the teaching profession. Forster (1998) earlier had studied motivational factors on occupational choice among Ghanaian students. The researcher asked the subjects to rank some stated 25 occupations on a five-point scale and also sought their responses on the level of income earned by those in the occupation. He found that awareness of the level of incentive and income receivable from a particular occupation influenced greatly the individual choice of occupation.

Silvey (2000) also studied motivational factors on occupational choice among Uganda adolescents. The researcher found that the most important reason for people choosing a profession was that "the job pays well". Carpenter and Roseer (2001) investigated the factors which influence the choice of disciplines. The sample consisted of 402 final year students of college of Education, Ghana. The findings showed that financial attractiveness and a desire to enter a professional career dictated the subjects' choice of occupation. Olayinka (2005) studied occupational choices of Nigerian youths and the reason behind their choices. The researcher found that the reasons behind their choices of career in order of importance were high salary, better condition of service and humanitarian interests, confidence and job security.

Glen (2000) studied the perceptions of occupational prestige in male students enrolled in grades one to twelve. Twenty boys in each grade were asked to rank eleven jobs in order of their standing in the community and also to give reasons for their ranking. The reasons given by most of them were classified into service, income attributes of the job, psychological rewards, education, power and unspecified criteria. The data showed that boys in grade one and two ranked jobs in relation to what the job meant to them personally and tend to equate dangerous jobs with high standing. The third graders were beginning to see that status hierarchy in jobs. This trend was accentuated in grades four, five and six. Jobs were no longer ranked in terms of what they meant to the students personally and services became the major criteria. From the seventh grade, a definite trend towards ranking occupation were in much the same manner as adults were discernible because there was now, the awareness of factors other than service in occupational status. Thus good income became a prime motivator.

Methods

Research Design

The research Design used in this study is the survey.

Research Area

The research area is Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Population

The subjects of this study consisted of 300 Senior Secondary School students (150 males and females) randomly down from five secondary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area

Sampling Techniques\Procedure

The five secondary schools selected for the study in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State were stratified on the basis of types (Urban Schools and Rural Schools) and also co-educational Schools.

Validity of Instrument

As empowered by Bakare (2003) in the Motivational for Occupation Choice Scale. The instrument was constructed and subjected to vigorous editing and checking

Reliability of the Instrument

To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot study. In the pilot study, 40 students were administered with the questionnaire at the first instance and later were re-administered with the same instrument after two weeks in the same school.

Results

Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of external factors (or the parents, peer groups, teachers, siblings and mass media) on vocational choice among secondary school students. In this hypothesis, the dependent variable was choice of occupation, while the independent variable was external factors influence.

In testing the hypothesis, data were extracted from the data bank and summarized into response frequencies based on the categories of external influences. The summarized data was then subjected to statistical analysis using one sample mean chi-square (χ^2) statistical procedure, the results of the analysis is presented in table 1.

TABLE 1: ONE VARIABLE CHI-SQUARE (X2) ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL FACTORS ON VOCATIONAL CHOICE AMONG STUDENTS N=300

| Variable (external factors) | O | E | O-E | (O-E) ² | (O-E) ² / E | Df | X ² -cal |
|-----------------------------|----|----|-----|--------------------|---------------------------|----|---------------------|
| Parents | 95 | 60 | 35 | 1225 | 20.417 | | |
| Peer group | 75 | 60 | 15 | 225 | 3.750 | | 4.45.83 |
| Teachers | 60 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 | | |
| Siblings | 40 | 60 | -20 | 400 | 6.667 | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------|----|----|-----|-----|--------|--|
| Mass media | 30 | 60 | -30 | 900 | 15.000 | |
| Total | | | | | 45.830 | |

***Result is significant at $P < .05$, $df = 4$, $\text{crit-}x^2 = 9.49$**

From table 4.2 the calculated X^2 value of 45.83* was found to be far higher than the calculated X^2 value of 9.49 needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 4 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant influence of external factors (of parents, peer group, teachers, siblings and the mass media) on vocational choice among secondary school students. From the table, it could be further inferred that 95 (or 31.7%) of the respondents attribute their occupational choice influence to parents; 75 (or 25%) attribute to peers, 60 (or 20%) to teachers, 40 (or 13.3%) to siblings' influence and 30 (or 10%) attribute to the mass media.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant difference in extrinsic-reward value on career choice among students who proffer different occupations. The dependent variable in this hypothesis was occupational choice/preference while the independent variable was extrinsic-reward value.

To test this hypothesis, data for the independent variable were extracted from the data bank and summarized into means (\bar{x}) and standard deviations (SD), and according to the category of reward – value as proffered by the respondents. The summarized data were then subjected to statistical analysis, using the independent t-test analytical procedure. The result of the analysis is presented on table 2.

TABLE 2: INDEPENDENT T-TEST ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCE IN EXTRINSIC REWARD VALUE ON PROFFERED CAREER CHOICE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS N = 300

| Variable (Extrinsic-Reward Value) | N | X | SD | Df | T-Cal | Sign |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----|-------|------|
| No special proffered Occupations: | 83 | 12.94 | 3.61 | 298 | 11.64 | .000 |
| Proffered special Occupations: | 227 | 17.82 | 2.07 | | | |
| Total: | 300 | 15.38 | 2.84 | | | |

***Result is significant at $P < .05$, $df = 298$, $\text{crit} - t = 1.968$**

From table 4.3, the calculated t-value of 11.22* was found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.968, needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level, with 298 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in intrinsic-reward value on career choice among students who proffer different occupations. From the table it could be deduced that the mean scores of those who have no preference for special/professional occupations were lower than the mean-scores of those who have preference for special/targeted occupations (that is $\bar{x} = 17.82$ (Proffer), $\bar{x} = 12.94$ (Non proffered); $SD = 2.07$, $SD_2 = 3.61$).

Discussion of Findings

External Factors on Career Choice

The results of analysis of hypothesis one of this study have revealed to us the facts that a significant influence exists between some external factors (such as parents, peer groups, teachers, siblings and mass medias) and vocational choice among secondary school students. Furthermore, most of the respondents (precisely 32%) attribute the career choice influence to parents. 25% attribute to peers' influence, 20% to teachers, 13% to siblings and 10% to the mass media.

The results of this findings are in agreement with the findings of Stacey (2000) by which it was revealed that an external factor like the socio-economic status of parents motivated children's learning capabilities and eventually their levels of career choices. Children from high socio-economic status are fed properly given good medical care, provided good reading\study environment, and might be sent to special schools, thus, promoting their zeal to make high academic grades that would earn them good jobs and professional pursuits. This is quite opposite with children from low socio-economic status whose parents may not be educated and so may see no need sending their children to school and so, limiting their opportunities regarding highly prized careers.

Corroborating the above facts, Miler and Bibby (1999) found in their study that educational attainment of parents and the type school attended influence occupational choices among job seekers; and children from the literate group usually select typical elite occupations like medicine, law and the civil services more than children from the illiterate group who select occupations like uniformed services and teaching. Udo (2003) findings also revealed a significant influence of teachers, peer group, siblings and environment on career choices of job seekers. That teachers dressing pattern, relationship with students and social interaction have been generally influential to their products propensities to choose teaching, and other related professions. Durojaiye (2003) also found in his study that 23% of the respondents agreed to have been influenced into their jobs by parenting and significant siblings in the family. The findings of this hypothesis are also in agreement with Shertzer and Stone (2003) and Udo (2003) who found in their separate studies that the level of awareness of job seeking opportunities as dissipated by the mass media (Radio, TV, and Newspaper) is significantly related to job placement of many youths in many industrial organizations mostly in the urban cities. This is one of the reasons for rural urban migration in most urban cities today. Other whose findings supported the findings of this study with regards to the mass media's influencing power on job-seeking or career preference behavior among secondary school students include among others: Kuti (1991) Super (2006) and Uba (2005). Each found separately that the higher the validity of the mass media the greater the awareness, and consequently the higher the benefits of career choice among the youths' job-seekers. Lastly, Kuti (1991) found that the most important factor in an individual's career choice is the amount and quantity of information available to the job-seek, about occupational areas.

Extrinsic Reward on Career Choice

The results of statistical analysis of hypothesis two of this study have exposed us to the facts that there is a significant difference in intrinsic reward value on career choices among students who proffer different occupations. Furthermore, more of the respondents indicated high preference for jobs with high extrinsic reward oriented values while less than 50% of them do not match their career choice to any extrinsic oriented values.

These findings are congruent with Okon (2003) and Siley (2000) who found in their studies that one of the major factors repelling people (especially graduating students) from the teaching profession was poor remunerating. These findings were first accentuated by Forester (1999) who, in his study of Ghanaian students' motivational factors on their occupational choice revealed that "awareness" of the incentives and income receivable from a particular occupation influenced greatly the individual choice of occupation. Similar studies by Siley (2000) Siley (2000) carpenters & Roseer (2001) and Olayinka (2005) all in their separate studies on motivational factors of several occupational choices revealed that high salaries, better conditions of service and more extrinsic-oriented reward values as provision of free of subsidized meals, dresses and accommodation to transportation arrangement/subsides, acted as attracting factors to most employees (students, and grandaunts alike) occupational choices.

The results of the findings of this hypothesis also agree very well with Glen (2000) who in his study of the perceptions of occupational prestige in male students enrolled in different grades of schooling found that irrespective of the grade of schooling, the respondents (students) showed preferences for jobs/professions which have higher financial attractiveness, irrespective of the risk factors involved in such professions. Similarly, Olayinka's (2005) study of occupational choices among a group of Nigeria youths in Lagos state found that the reasons behind the choice of most respondents of certain careers in order of importance of their preferences were high salary, better condition of service and humanitarian interest, as well as confidence and job security. In conclusion, Hinchliffe (2001) concluded that with respect to vocational choices and expectations, African students are always apt to reflecting more of the prestige and income perception of their society rather than the opportunities for referring into the profession.

Conclusion

Based on the problem of the study, the research questions and null hypotheses that directed it, as well as the results of the statistical analyses, it is hereby concluded as follows:

- 1) That external factor such as parental, peer groups, teachers, siblings and the mass media, significantly influence vocational choice among senior secondary school students. This implies that if schools could adopt career counseling as a serious, or part of their school's curriculum, it will assist students in their career choice.
- 2) Extrinsic-reward value exerts significant influence on career choice among secondary school students who proffer different occupations. This is because teaching of occupational choice in schools gives students more information about each occupation, in terms of nature of work, prospects and risks.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. On the basis of significant influence of external factors on vocational choice among secondary schools' students, it is recommended that career talks (in the form of seminars) and career days should be organized regularly in the secondary schools to help students gather reliable occupational information on different work types from different professionals. This would curb youth unsteadiness on jobs, and/or career choice.
2. Students should be helped to broaden their occupational knowledge by taking them on field trips/excursions to different work organizations where they would have the opportunity of

seeing and interacting with the workers in real life situation- sharing their on-the-job experiences before leaving school.

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