



Determinants of Parental Influence on Career Choice among secondary school students in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The problem of career choice has generated a lot of questions and answers among scholars. The problem has been a delicate issue and amounted to serious controversies which still remains unresolved and needs to be treated with most caution. There is no clear process that students have used to make career choices. Most of the students rely heavily on their parents or guardians, mentors or idols to make career choices and which are been significantly influenced. Most of the students are easily cajoled by their parents in the choice of a life career which at the long run may not greet them with their expectations, thus giving out a life ambition or career or aspirations. The study sought to establish the factors that determines the influence of parents in career choice among their wards among school girls in Calabar metropolis in Cross River State, Nigeria. Research question was formulated to guide the study. Survey design was utilized to unveil the determinants. A sample size of 200 was drawn from students and their parents/guardians, teachers, students in schools, youth and leaders using the stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaire/checklist was used to collect the data which was analyzed using percentages. Parental educational background, cultural norms and values, parental occupations, parental expectations and socio-economic status of parents were among the determinants of parental influence in choosing career for their children. It was also gathered from the study that parental influence on career choices for their wards had consequently led to societal ills ranging from high crime rate, cultism, gangsterism, occultism, armed robbery, school dropout, high rate of failure, societal migrants, scolombo, teenage pregnancies, and many more societal ills. The study therefore advocated for the withdrawal of parental influence on students career choices. It was thus recommended that parents should desists from compelling their children into taking those career that they do not possess such capabilities, talents, interests of aptitude for.

Keywords: Parental Influence; Career Choice; Students, Societal Implications.

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INTRODUCTION

Career plays a very fundamental and significant role in the life of individual and society. Not only because they determine the pattern of income distribution among individuals, but also because they affect the individual personality and concepts in life. Career therefore is a choice of life pursuit, life work or success in one's profession occupied by a person throughout his or her lifetime. The views of Okorodudu (2004) shows that career is the totality of experience through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of his way of living.

Similarly James (2004) had observed that the influence parents, guardians and the home front has on the child's learning is strictly fundamental to the concept of life. This thus suggest that most of the habits are basically developed at home and thus can be adjusted were established during the early childhood pre-school years. This also highlights the fact that the home front and parents occupies the most important position in the child's education.

Adelusi (2013) had posited that parents and guardians could be a motivating or inhibiting factor to the career choice of their children especially when it is clear that the home is the first social group in which the child comes in contact with parents who are the most influential determinants of career plans, aspirations and occupational expectations of their wards or children.

The problem of career choice has generated a lot of questions and answers among scholars. The problem has been a delicate issue and amounted to serious controversies which still remains unresolved and needs to be treated with most caution. There is no clear process that students have used to make career choices. Most of the students rely heavily on their parents or guardians, mentors or idols to make career choices and which are been significantly influenced. Most of the students are easily cajoled by their parents in the choice of a life career which at the long run may not greet them with their expectations, thus giving out a life ambition or career or aspirations.

Thus, many parents may desire what they think will be good and best for their wards. But often times they don't take their wards natural abilities and other potentials, other factors into consideration before forcefully pursuing and choosing their selected career for their wards. Most children from this type of career indoctrination often fail to achieve their goals while only a handful live to accomplish the desires of their parents in terms of career choice. The societal implications in the ills associated with this include increase in examination failure, loss of concentration in chosen career, dropout from schools, teenage pregnancy, elopement, societal migrants, cultists, increase crime rate, political thuggery, armed robbery, occultism and a lot more crime and societal ills.

Thus, this research was design to unveil the effect of parental influences on the choice of career among secondary school students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State and the attendant societal implications and consequence of this act as enumerated earlier.

Some of the basic and fundamental reasons influencing parental influences on the choice of career for their wards were determined as outlined in the following research hypothesis:

- Does parental expectations and values significantly influence their choice of career for their children?
- Does parental socio-economic status significantly influence students' their choice of career for their wards?

- Does parental educational background significantly influence their choice of career for their wards?
- Does parental occupation significantly influence their choice of career for their children?

The study seeks to find out the extent to which the influence of parents on career choice for their wards will affect their performance in the chosen career, the success of the career towards the securing of job as a life time endeavor. The study also seeks to establish the relationship between parental influence on career choice and successful accomplishment of the chosen career over time.

METHODOLOGY

Research Question

The study formulated some research question which included thus; what are the factors controlling the influence of parents in choosing career for their children? Factors such as parental expectation and values, parental educational level, parental occupational distribution, parental income distribution and parental socio-economic variables.

Design

The study adopted a survey research design and employed same for the study because it focuses on determining the nature of situations, as at the time of investigation. It suits this particular study since it concerns itself with ascertaining and establishing the status quo, facts or pieces of information at the time of research, presenting such information as they are captured.

Population

The population for the study comprised of students, parents and career men and women in the Calabar metropolis, teachers of secondary schools, guardians, artisans, prisoners and area boys in Calabar. The stratified simple random sampling technique was used to select 8 schools, 10 women who are parents, 10 men who are parents, 10 teachers, 50 students currently at the senior secondary school level, 40 dropout students, 10 prisoners, 10 roadside artisans and 60 parents/guardians/relatives of the dropout, yielding a sample size of 200 population size. The survey instrument further consisted of a checklist, titled role of parents on students' career choice the checklist.

RESULTS

The research question sought to establish the contributory factors of parental influence on career choice among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis. Data were analyzed using percentages and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Contributing factors of parental influence on the choice of career by their children/students in Calabar Metropolis (N=200)

s/n	Parental Factors	Yes	%	No	%	Total	% total
1	Parent Expectation	175	89	25	11	200	100
2	Educational level	129	62	71	38	200	100
3	Values/Culture	106	58	94	42	200	100
4	Parental occupation	112	74	88	26	200	100
5	Socio-economic status	152	75	42	25	200	100

The results as presented in Table 1 above demonstrate that parental expectation for their children highly control their influence on their wards to choose career. Students who have chosen different careers based on this were about 89 % of the respondents interviewed. Only 11 % of the respondent parents were not influenced by this attributes of their parental expectation for them. The educational background and level of parents also accounted for their influence on career choice among their children.

Sixty-two (62 %) of the parents were influenced by their own educational status to compel their wards to choice a particular career while 38 % of the parents respondents were not influenced by their educational attainment in choosing career for their children.

Parental values and traditional norms/belief was seen to influence parents in compelling their wards to choose a career. The results showed that 58 % of the parents were influenced by the prevailing norms, values and beliefs in their traditional home front in compelling their wards to choose certain career. Some home front societies in this part of the world do not have regards for the education of the girl-child and as such the girl-child is compelled to look for suitors rather than making a professional career. However, this was not the case with other 42 % of respondent parents who reported that their influence on the choice of career by their wards was not in any way control by the prevailing traditional norms, values and beliefs in their vicinity.

The current parental occupation of respondents was also found to influence their role to about 74 % in compelling their wards to select career while that was the case with 26 % of other respondent parents whose present occupational engagement did not influence their choice of career for their children.

The socio-economic status of parents was found to significantly influence a greater percentage 75 % of parents in choosing career for their children. Most of them assume they cannot afford the cost of certain career and as such compelled their children to go for less expensive and short time career. However, 42 % of other respondent parents differ on this subject matter as their socio-economic background did not influence their choice of career for their children.

DISCUSSION

Whitson (2004) suggested that perceived parental expectations had a stronger influence than socio-economic status, but the influence was indirect through the variables of students' occupational expectation, which in turn affected their career choice. The findings of Edicott, 1984 indicated that students' perception of parental expectations is an important factor in career choice as a parental influence.

Parental influence exerts a lot of influence on the educational attainment of the adolescent especially the socio-economic status of parents. Hairston (2000) notes that parents career aspirations aid their children in selecting occupation goals, influence their knowledge of occupations.

Kibera (2012) asserted that students from high class social economic households preferred to enter professional jobs while those from low income households, were comfortable with clerical jobs. Some of the parents intentionally implemented or enforce their personal ideas about their children's occupation regardless of their wishes (Young et al., 2001).

According to Williams (2016), a parental occupation influences children's career choices both internally and inadvertently. A parents approach to this can either inspire teenagers to explore a diverse set of potential occupations or stick to a path they think of their parents approval.

Hahs-Vaugh (2004) explored the influence of parental education level on college students by examining the differences in the experiences of students whose parental level of education was high to those students whose parental education level was low. The parental education appears to have an effect on the academic and social development of students. Aswani (2012), also noted that parental level of education had significant positive influence on the pupil's educational and occupational aspiration. Mugenda (2010) established that the mothers' level of education contributed more to the girl-child aspiration for higher education more than their male counterparts. On the contrary, Roach (2010) stated that career selection and self efficacy was the highest level of parental education did not have an impact on career selection by college students.

The study findings had revealed that career decision making among secondary school students is significantly influenced by parents or guardians. Specifically, fathers and mothers play a major role in choosing career for their wards. Generally, in developing countries, male parents are the primary bread winners for their families and are considered as heads of the family. There are mostly educated experienced and more exposed with more contacts and knowledge on contemporary issues than their wives, thus they tend to maneuver career choices and decision making for their offspring. In most other cultures, women are considered as secondary family decision makers even though they are more educated, gainfully employed, academically and economically more buoyant than their husbands. It is interesting to note that in most developed nations and societies, students make their own career choices and career decision independently and largely devoid of parental influence or interference. This scenario is quite the opposite of the findings of this present study. It is clearly seen that students' career choices are hinged on the variables explained in this research study including parental occupational level, educational level, expectations and values as well as their socio-economic status. Mothers play subordinate roles as observed from this study in most culture. In recent times, students in developed countries are much aware of the dangers associated with parental influence on career choice. Hence, since the decision making behavior in career choice is much more better than students' in developing nations which is primarily attributed to personal autonomy, child right acts enforcements, economic status, exposure to technological advancement and media role. Thus in underdeveloped countries, due to poverty, cultural barriers, low level of awareness, child abuse and molestation, religious intolerance, high cost of education and many other barriers, there is significant influence of parents in students career choices.

CONCLUSION

Parental influence exists in career decision making amongst secondary school students in the study area and this has serious effects on the choice of career the students prefer. From the findings, it shows that parental occupation, socio-economic status, educational level, expectations and values are amongst factors controlling parental influence on career choice for their wards. It was also gathered from the study that parental influence on career choices for their wards had consequently led to societal ills ranging from high crime rate, cultism, gangsterism, occultism, armed robbery, school dropout, high rate of failure, societal migrants, scolombo, teenage pregnancies, and many more societal ills. The study therefore advocated for the withdrawal of parental influence on students career choices.

Recommendations

- It was thus recommended that parents should desists from compelling their children into taking those career that they do not possess such capabilities, talents, interests of aptitude for.
- Parents should also desists from persuading their children to pursue those wishful careers they were unable to achieve themselves with a view to correcting their past presume mistakes.
- Students should be allowed to pursue their own interests and career choices, for which they have absolute advantage, knowledge, interest and relative natural endowment.
- Schools and parents should employ the help of professional counselors who will be able to guide and counsel these students on careers that are suitable and meets their abilities and capabilities.
- There is the urgent need for career development studies both at the secondary and tertiary levels as this studies will fully equip the students with vocational skills and aptitude and knowledge on the various careers to choose from as proper orientation will be given.
- Parents and students can approach counselors or experts in the specific field to choose right career of study/profession to overcome career choice dilemma.
- School administrators can focus on arranging counseling and guidance activities, educational fairs and campaigns, parental counseling and provide resource materials to enhance knowledge and awareness among students.
- Teachers, school counselors, academic advisors and resource persons can engage in the sensitization and creation of awareness for the purpose of resolving problems prevailing among students.

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