
**CORRELATES OF CAREER CHOICE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ESAN WEST
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE**

BY

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Abstract

This study examined career choice correlates among secondary school students Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The correlational survey design was adopted in this study. The population of this study covered all the 3272 senior secondary school students in the 16 public secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 10 schools from the study area. A further random selection of 20 students per school was drawn. The research instrument used for the collection of data was designed by the researcher. The content validity of this instrument was carried out by my project supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Guidance and Counselling. The reliability of the instrument of the test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The Chi-square (χ^2) would be used to test hypothesis of the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The showed that there personal interest and parental decisions play influential role in determining students' career choice. Moreso, students' are more susceptible to the directives, suggestions and opinions of their peers on career matters. Consequently, peer pressure has significant influence on the vocational interests or career preference of school going children in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. It was recommended that parents should employ the assistance of professional career counsellors in helping their children to make intelligent career decisions.

Keywords: Career Choice, Personal Interest, Parental Decisions, Peer Pressure

Introduction

Senior secondary education is the education given after successful completion of basic education in Nigeria. The FRN (2013) succinctly spelt out that the objectives of Post-Basic and Career Development (PBECD) shall be to: a) provide holders of the Basic Education Certificate and Junior Arabic and Islamic Studies Certificate with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background; b) offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, disposition, opportunities and future roles; c) provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; d) provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development; e) develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage; f) inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence; g) foster patriotism, national unity and security education with an emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity; and h) raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour.

In other to attain the aforementioned objectives, the curriculum for Senior Secondary Education (Post-Basic and Career Development Education curriculum) as stated in the national policy on education (FRN, 2013) consists of four (4) fields of study namely: Science and Mathematics, Technology, Business Studies and Humanities. These fields of studies encompass several subjects that are designed to raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour. Aside

making learners appreciate the dignity of labour, Salami and Salami (2013) noted that the four (4) fields of study are aimed at preparing learners for the world of work. They added that these fields of study would not only help in preparing learners for the world of work but may also help to sensitize them towards important life issues like career decision making

Career according to Dick and Rallis (2018) is the totality of work - paid and unpaid that one does in his or her lifetime while the term “aspiration” simply refers to an expectation or intentions of an individual towards the attainment of a goal while career choice is a dynamic process that requires individuals to engage in the ongoing assessment and decision, analysis, and synthesis of information about the world of work and self. Dick and Rallis (2018) further stated that career choice is the decision of an individual on the totality of work – paid and unpaid – one does in his/her lifetime”. Thus, the foregoing shows that career choice embraces the decision of an individual on a sequence of positions, jobs or occupations which they hold or would like to hold, during his/her life time. Several factors have also been reported as predictors of students’ career choice in schools. These factors include but are not restricted to envisaged earnings which includes future earnings, long-term earnings, initial earnings, high earnings, and earnings, career opportunities including: availability of employment, job market conditions, limited job opportunity, plentiful supply of jobs, job availability, broad exposure to business, intrinsic factors, job satisfaction, self-employment opportunities, flexibility of career options, and allows private practice, career characteristics including structured career path, social status attainment, prestige, job requirements, variety in the work, works with numbers and advancement opportunities, characteristics of the major including years of education required, exciting field, interest in the field, interest in the subject, ease of earning a degree, and major with difficult courses (Dick & Rallis, 2018).

In regards to gender of learners, Mugenda, Kimani, Maina & Wainaina (2010) noted that girls are found to be influenced by female role models as well as that of their female parents/guardians and other female relatives and family friends. Boys on the other hand are influenced by peers and personal interest (Mugenda, *et al* 2010). Equally important is the family social-economic status in terms of the number of children, occupation and the economic status. Salami and Salami (2013) observed that family’s economic status impacts positively in children’s high occupational aspirations of youths. In most cases, the purpose of their schooling is to get prepared to work in the future. To ensure that this happens, many parents aspire to influence the choice of their children’s career. Aside the aforementioned factors, some physical or abstract factors in the environment of students can also influence their career decisions. These factors are made up of some variables which include peer groups, role models, mentors, social groups, socio-economic status, parental decision and influences which determines the nature of vocation undertaken by a youth, his/her choice of career, job or occupation (Britannica, 2002). National Career Development Association (2003) recognized this fact hence it advocates that the home is where positive societal contributions should first be communicated to children. Also, her policy advocates the family as a work place and all members of the family as workers and that within the home and family structure, pre-school age children can first be exposed to true work experiences as family members try to do something that will be helpful to other members of the family.

Several recent studies have been carried out on the relationship between personal interest and students’ career choice (Egwuchukwu, 2021; Fred, 2018; Nworah, 2018). Fred (2018) investigated the relationship between personality characteristics and vocational choice using Holland’s theory. The result from the study shows that: (a) 70% of the subjects had personality types that were congruent with their career choice; and (b) The relationship between career choice and sex membership was not significant. Egwuchukwu (2020) investigated the influence of personal interest on senior secondary school students’ career choice in Anambra State. The main aim of the study was to ascertain the jobs that appealed most to senior secondary school students in the state and also find out the factors that influence their job aspirations. The results indicate that: (a) students aspired most to Medicine, Accounting, Law, Pharmacy and Engineering in descending order of preference; (b) the subjects (students) aspired to these top five jobs mainly because of their high economic rewards, social value and high prestige; (c) the respondents (students) aspired least to Artistry, Architecture and Soldering in descending order of preference; (d) The respondents (students) aspired least to those jobs for religious, psychosocial and counselling because of personal interest.

Bellamy (2019) carried out a study on career aspiration, expectations and beliefs of African-american white and Hispanic male adolescents with Holland social personality types. Participants were 22 African- Americans, 38 white and 28 Hispanic Males, ninth graders from a Suburban High School. The results of the investigation showed that: (a) there were no differences in career aspirations and expectations either by race or by Holland's social personality type; (b) the only difference in career beliefs by race was that African-Americans scored higher than Whites and Hispanics in their beliefs that approval of others was not important in choosing a career; and (c) Differences in career beliefs by Holland social personality type were noted on four scales. High social personality types scored higher than low social personality types on all four scales, indicating the following beliefs: (i) a willingness to work harder despite facing uncertain futures; (ii) a greater inclination to persevere even in the face of failure; and (iii) Envisioning greater capacity to pursue job satisfaction even if it meant changing job in the process.

Empirical findings (Tella, 2020; Natalie, 2018; Oyamo & Amoth, 2018) have confirmed to a greater extent, the influence of parental decisions on a child's choice of career. Tella (2020) also found that parental decisions play an invaluable role in laying the foundation of their children's career. Trost and Levin (2018) opined that the parental influences the behaviour or character of a child and their area of occupational interest and career. They further noted that sometimes, children take after their parents' chosen career. Hence, it is not uncommon to find career doctors, lawyers, and engineers among others, raising up their children to take up the same profession. Natalie (2006) found that young adults through interaction within the context of the family or parents, learn about and explore careers which ultimately lead to their career choice. One consistent finding in research suggests that adolescents' own aspirations are influenced by their parent's aspirations or expectations. Parental support and encouragement are important factors that have been found to influence career choice. Children may choose what their parents desire simply to please them (Taylor et al, 2004). According to Oyamo and Amoth (2008), studies in Kenya show that rural students tend to seek help from parents more than urban students and that parents more than teachers play a major role in the career choice of students.

Studies have shown that peers play a major role in career choice of youths (Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa 2016; Stuart 2019). For example, Stuart (2000) found that peers' attitudes toward gender and ethnicity may increase or decrease a person's confidence in pursuing a career. Adolescents are easily influenced by their peers because they rely on their friends to provide validation of the choices that they make including career decisions. On the contrary, Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2016) found that peers were reported not to be marginally influential in career decision making among university youths. Rowe, Woulbrow & Gulley, (2019) in their study of 355 High school students in Kenya found that peer pressure is a significant factor in career choice of students. According to them, peer group are sources of pressures which induces the young adolescent into pre-determined occupations, sometimes with little or no considerations on the potentials, actual needs and ego of the child.

In the opinion of Morris and Levinson (2019); Pierce, McDermott, and Butkus, (2019), although intelligence is associated with career maturity and the development of decision making skills, factors other than skills, abilities, and personality play a major role in career development and satisfaction for people with mental retardation. Factors such as interests, social opportunities, emotional rewards, and economic benefits influence career choices (of most adolescents, including those with cognitive limitations) (Szymanski, Hershenson, Enright, & Ettinger, 2019).

The context in which people live, their personal aptitudes, and educational attainment are other things that do influence people's career choice (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2019). Similarly, skills and values also affect peoples' choices. Values are the guiding principles that are ordered in importance and serve as standards for judging and justifying actions (Schwartz, 1992). In addition, Osakinle and Adegoroye (2008) identified factors that influence adolescents' choice of career as: sex, location of choice maker, environment, school influence (peer and curriculum content), and religious affiliation, child rearing and family values. Sociological factors that affect career development include peer groups, role models, mentors, social networks, socio-economic status of parents and family influences considering that sociology is the study of characteristics and behaviours of individuals in association or group. These group behaviours affect career development to a great extent. For instance, a child could develop interest in a particular

career because the parents have laid the foundation for him, or rather because he has loved ones in that career and would not love to miss them or stay far from them.

Okorodudu (2006) opined that the family is the first contact of the child in this world, and that interaction of the child with members of the family which include father, mother, siblings and other relations, does internalize certain values, ideals, norms, and develop a sense of career in the child. Thus, the first course of career development starts with the child at the family level, and it is always the primary duty of the family to develop and internalize a sense of career in the child. The National Career Development Association (NCDA, 2003) recognized this fact hence it advocates the home as where the positive societal contributions of all honest work can and should first be communicated to children. The National Career Development Association NCDA (2003) policy advocates the family as a workplace and all members of the family as workers, and that within the home and family structure, pre-school age children can first be exposed to true work experiences as family members try to do something that will be helpful to other members of the family. A solid foundation of career development at the family level is a good start-off in career development at all levels. Educationally, factors that affect career development include skills, experience, knowledge, information, and other factors that could be products of teaching and learning. This is because educational experiences that the individual has been exposed to could also act as an influential factor in career development. These educational experiences could be formal or informal. The informal education could be referred to educational experiences outside the four walls of a school. Formally, at the nursery, primary and secondary school levels, teachers and school staff do form partnership with parents to solidify the career development foundation that has already been inculcated in an individual at the family level (NCDA, 2003). It stated further that for teachers and counsellors to continue career development of the individual, some activities may be appropriate and vital, which include making the classroom a work place; teaching/reinforcing productive work habits; helping pupils understand career applications of subject matter; using community resource persons to emphasize both work and occupations; emphasizing career awareness but not specific occupational choices; and reducing bias in career awareness.

Several studies show that youths all over the world are usually faced with a dilemma in making a career choice and/or an employment decision in their lives (Bandura et al. 2019; Issa and Nwalo 2008; Macgregor 2007; McMahon and Watson 2005; Watson et al. 2010). In most cases, the choice of careers, subjects, and courses of study and the subsequent employment paths to follow are a nightmare for prospective undergraduate students (Issa and Nwalo 2008). Most often, choosing the right subject combination leading to the right profession can make the difference between enjoying and detesting the career in future. Each individual undergoing the process of making a career choice is influenced by such factors as the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, and educational attainment (Bandura et al. 2019; Watson et al. 2010). In their study, Watson et al. (2010) found that the majority of aspirations were for social type occupations followed by investigative type occupations, with boys aspiring more to investigative and girls more to social type occupations. The same study reported that more than 80 % of the total sample aspired to high status occupations (Watson et al. 2010). In his study, Ngesi (2003) found that poor financial base of students from disadvantaged communities deter choices of appropriate educational programmes and careers. Such students tend to avoid careers which appear to them to require long period of training their finance cannot support (Ngesi 2003).

This suggests that youths from lower socio-economic families are not given adequate space to make independent decisions on their careers. It is clear from these findings that despite the limited state resources available, the shortage of high-level skills and a pressing need to raise income levels among the poor, high student drop-out and failure rates are a major problem in South African universities. Studies have also investigated factors that influence career choice by high school students (Dick and Rallis 2018; Jawitz et al. 2000; Mudhovozi and Chireshe 2012; Southwick 2000). For example, in their study of socio-demographic factors that anchor career choice among psychology students in South Africa, Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012) found that the participants who attended rural-situated public schools made delayed career decisions. The same study also found that participants were mainly influenced by parents, teachers and friends to choose psychology as a career.

Southwick (2000) observed the trend towards a decline in graduate enrollments in health-related fields and in science and engineering. Palmer (2005) also noted the reduction in the numbers and calibre of students seeking admissions into engineering education in Australia. The poor image of the engineering profession generally and the poor understanding of engineering in schools were identified as contributing factors for the poor calibre of students. In his study of career choice of Nigerian youths, Salami (1999) found that many youths made wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers, or as a result of prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling. Similarly, Sax (1994) examined students' initial interest in science careers, factors influencing career choice during college, and how these factors differ between men and women students. Sax found that men who abandon career aspirations appear to be driven by financial concerns while women were more concerned with the social good of their career choice. In a similar vein, Perry (2006) asserts that adolescent career choice is influenced by life context, personal attitudes, and educational attainment.

Other studies have separately examined the influences of each parent on the career choices of their sons or daughters and have found that mothers tend to have more influence on the career decisions/aspirations of their children than fathers. For example, in their study of 70 young adults in 1986, Mickelson and Velasco (1998) found that mothers were the most influential and that daughters' occupational aspirations were often similar to their mothers' chosen professions. In similar studies, students were asked items such as, "What do you want to do with your life?" and to indicate if they agree or disagree with statements such as "My mother (father) encouraged me to make my own decisions." The students' responses were similar to those of their parents (Mickelson & Velasco 1998; Wims 1994).

These studies also found that students wanted to discuss career planning primarily with their mothers. Similarly, in a study of factors that influence children's career choices, Muthukrishna & Sokoya (2008) found the mother as the most influential person adolescents talk to concerning their career choice. Mothers were cited as particularly influential because they provide support that eases children's apprehensions about careers (Hairston 2000). For example, in their study of career choice among a sample of South African students, Bojuwoye & Mbanjwa (2006) reported that their parents had a significant influence on their career decisions but mothers were more influential. This implies that mothers play a major role in career choice of their children. Research studies show that families, parents and guardians in particular, play a significant role in the occupational aspirations and career goal development of their children. Without parental approval or support, students and young adults are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities. Several studies (Knowles 1998; Mau & Bikos 2000; Wilson & Wilson, 1992) have found that college students and young adults cite parents as an important influence on their choice of career.

In a similar vein, some studies have found that the family plays a critical role in a child's career development (Guerra & Braungart-Rieker 2019). Some of the variables that influence students' occupational goals include the family, level of parental education, school, peers, personality, and socioeconomic status (Crockett & Bingham 2018; Wilson & Wilson 1992). There are varying opinions and findings, however, as to which specific family characteristics influence career aspirations. For instance, conflicting data exist regarding the influence of socioeconomic variables. Other studies (Mau and Bikos, 2000) suggest that both parent education and income influence career aspirations, whilst other studies (Hossler and Stage 1992; Wilson and Wilson 1992) show that only parent education is an influence. Other family variables that have been shown to influence career aspirations include the parents' occupation (Trice 1991) and family size (Downey 2019; Marjoribanks 1997; Singh et al. 1995). The father's occupational status is highly correlated with his son's occupation (Conroy, 2018). Family size also appears to influence adolescent career aspirations because parents with large families tend to have less money to aid the older children in attending college, while younger children may receive more financial assistance since the financial strain is less once the older children leave home (Schulen-berg et al. 1984).

On the contrary, other studies (Boatwright et al. 2019), found that each of these family variables to be insignificant in influencing aspirations. Nevertheless, most studies have been consistent and suggest that adolescents' own aspirations are influenced by their parents' aspirations or expectations for them. This implies that when adolescents perceive their parents to have high educational expectations for them, adolescents are more likely to have higher aspirations for

themselves. A 1998 Sylvan Learning Center report indicates that parents' and children's views about career aspirations are more compatible than incompatible. Parents are influential figures with whom, whether intentionally or unintentionally, children become aware of and get exposed to occupations or career opportunities and implied expectations. In a similar vein, some studies suggest that children are influenced in their career choice by socio-demographic factors and these factors include family, school and peers.

In his study, Salami (2016) found that family involvement as the most significant predictor of career choice in gender-dominated occupations. Similarly, Kniveton (2014) found that the family provides information and guidance directly or indirectly and influences young people's career choice. For example, parents offer appropriate support for certain occupational choices which tend to follow their own (Small and McClean 2002). The school where one is educated plays an important influence on one's career choice (Weishew and Penk 2019). Garrahy (2019) in his study noted that schools are social institutions that reinforce gender-appropriate behaviour, interests and occupations. Such constructs including curricular subjects, quality of teaching, student participation in school activities, school practices and policies and learning materials for the student were found to impact on career choice among learners (Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa 2016). In his study, Spade (2019) found that gender difference in the learners' experiences starts at pre-school and continues throughout their educational careers. Teachers like parents are viewed as key players in the career paths that young people eventually pursue especially girls (Barnett 2017).

In her study in Nigeria, Denga (2014) found that sex-role stereotypes exist among boys and girls in primary schools as they aspire to traditional occupations. This implies that parents' and teachers' beliefs influence their children's self-perceptions of ability and consequently career choice. In fact, studies show that some teachers encourage students to take certain subject options that are congruent with aptitudes and abilities that they identify (Falaye and Adams 2018). Similarly, Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2016) found that career choices of tertiary students from previously disadvantaged schools are negatively impacted by lack of finance, lack of career information, poor academic performance and unsatisfactory career counseling services. Another study by Maree and Beck (2014) indicates that in disadvantaged communities, schools with career counselling programme were under-utilizing the facility which was also viewed as too expensive. In his most recent study, Maree (2019) found that many learners passed Grade 12 without having received career counselling in any form and consequently denied the opportunity to apply for acceptance into sought-after fields of study at tertiary training institutions.

Students' choice of career is one of the most important decisions they make or have to make. The decision is so significant because it has the capacity of affecting their entire life and even influence the type of subjects they offer at school. If this choice is properly made, it will guarantee some level of career success or satisfaction. However, if the opposite becomes the case, there will be no career satisfaction, and this will ultimately affect the entire life of the student in a negative way. Such situations abound today among adults and young adults who do not find fulfillment in what they are doing at the moment. The implication is that a student, who understands himself or herself in relation to what they will want to do in life, will make a choice that revolves around their personality (Mugenda, *et al* 2010).

However, many reasons or factors could be responsible for the choice student makes on their future career. Mugenda, *et al* (2010) stated that young people make career decisions based on the prevailing economic situation of the society they live and the prospects of material and financial rewards on the career. Studies undertaken in Nigeria by Ogunsanwo (2000), and Salami (2004), revealed that the need for good salary, attractive financial package which will determine his social class, attractive working conditions and a secured future are very important factors that could influence students' career choices. Therefore, there has been lack of consensus on the factors influencing career choices of students. Moreso, a knowledge gap exists on the factors influencing the choice of career among secondary school students in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. Hence, this study shall be undertaken to identify the factors influencing secondary school students' choice of career in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State.

Hypotheses

The following are the research hypotheses formulated for the study:

1. Personal interest has no significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State
2. Parental decision has no significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State
3. Peer pressure has no significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State

Methodology

The correlational survey design was adopted in this study. The population of this study covered all the 3272 senior secondary school students in the 16 public secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 10 schools from the study area. A further random selection of 20 students per school was drawn. This gave a total of 200 secondary school students drawn from the population. The research instrument used for the collection of data was designed by the researcher. The questionnaire titles: Students Career Choice Questionnaire (SCCQ) was self-designed to obtain the necessary information needed from students in the institutions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections and categorized into sections A and B. Section A contains questions relating to the demographic characteristics of the students such as: the name of faculty, their sex and level of study. Section B was designed to elicit information from students on factors influencing their choice of career. The instrument has 15 items namely: personal interest (items 1-5) parental influence (items 6-10) and peer pressure (items 11-15). The items were rated on a four point likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA)-4, Agreed (A)-3, Disagreed (D)-2 and Strongly Disagreed (SD)-1.

The content validity of this instrument was carried out by my project supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Guidance and Counselling. This was done to ensure that the items in the questionnaire are relevant, clear and precise so that the items in the instruments measures what it is intended to measure. In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The Chi-square (χ^2) would be used to test hypothesis of the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Result of the analysis of research question and test of hypotheses are presented in the tables below:

Hypothesis 1: Personal interest has no significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State

Table 1: Chi-square (χ^2) analysis of personal interest and students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State

Variables	n	Cal. χ^2	χ^2 p-value	Remarks
Personal Interest				
	200	54.489**	0.000	Null hypothesis is rejected (p<0.05)
Students' Career Choice				

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Data in Table 1 indicates that the calculated χ^2 of 54.489 is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that personal interest has significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State.

Hypothesis 2: Parental decisions has no significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State

Table 2: Chi-square (χ^2) analysis of parental decisions and students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State

Variables	n	Cal. χ^2	χ^2 p-value	Remarks
Parental decisions	200	64.809**	0.000	Null hypothesis is rejected ($p < 0.05$)
Students' Career Choice				

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Result in Table 2 indicates that the calculated χ^2 of 64.809 is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that parental decisions have influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State.

Hypothesis 3: Peer pressure has no significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State

Table 3: Chi-square (χ^2) analysis of peer pressure and students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State

Variables	n	Cal. χ^2	χ^2 p-value	Remarks
Peer Pressure	200	42.036**	0.000	Null hypothesis is rejected ($p < 0.05$)
Students' Career Choice				

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Result in Table 3 indicates the calculated χ^2 of 42.036 is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that peer pressure has influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State.

Discussion of Results

The result showed that personal interest has a significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. This result could be as a result of students' personal desire to fulfil their dreams and aspirations despite possible interferences from parents, friends, relatives and significant others. The result is in line with the findings of Nworah (1997) who found that personal interest influences students' choice of career. Similarly, the result corroborates with that of Fred (1995) who opined that there is a relationship between career choice and sex membership was not significant. Furthermore, the result agrees with that of Egwuchukwu (2007) who stated that the influence of personal interest on senior secondary school students' career choice in Anambra State.

The result showed that parental decisions have a significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The result corroborates with that of Tella, 2003; Natalie, 2006; Oyamo & Amoth (2008) who found out that the influence of parental decisions on a child's choice of career. The is in line with that of Tella (2003) who opined that parental decisions play an invaluable role in laying the foundation of their children's career. The result agrees with that of Trost and Levin (2000) who opined that the parental influences the behaviour or character of a child and their area of occupational interest and career. The result corroborates with that of Natalie (2006) found that parental support and encouragement are important factors that have been found to influence career choice. The result agrees with that of Oyamo and Amoth (2008) who opined that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The result is in line with that of Stuart (2000) who found that peers' attitudes toward gender and ethnicity may increase or decrease a person's confidence in pursuing a career. The result agrees with that of Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2016) found that peers were reported not to be marginally influential in career decision making among university youths.

The result showed that peer pressure has a significant influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The result corroborates with that of Rowe, Woulbrow and Gulley (1994) who found out that peer pressure is a significant factor in career choice of students. According to them, peer group are sources of pressures which induces the young adolescent into pre-determined occupations, sometimes with little or no considerations on the potentials, actual needs and ego of the child. The result agrees with that of Wentzel (1991) who attested that peers may have a less influential role than parents in influencing adolescents' career choice. The result is in line with that of Eckerman & Didow (1998) who attested that cooperative interactions between peers begin in toddlerhood and that the most frequent were acts that imitated the actions of the peer models, which continues all through childhood and adolescence.

Conclusion

Based on the outcome of this study, it is evident that personal interest and parental decisions play influential role in determining students' choice of career. Moreso, students are more susceptible to the directives, suggestions and opinions of their peers on career matters. Consequently, peer pressure has significant influence on the vocational interests or career preference of school going children in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State.

Recommendations

Based on findings from the study, it is recommended that:

1. Parents should employ the assistance of professional career counsellors in helping their children to make intelligent career decisions.
2. The government and other relevant agencies in charge of educational planning and development should work towards the development and implementation of a comprehensive programme/curriculum of career education or career development from the primary school level to help students acquire sound vocational development. This would further help provide students with the career information they could need in making career decisions.
3. Parents should be sensitized on the need to acquire adequate vocational information and discuss same freely with their children so that they may be able to make well informed decisions about their future careers.
4. Parents should desist from compelling their children into taking up those occupations that they do not possess the required capacities, talents, interests, and/or aptitudes for.
5. Parents should cautiously avoid the tendency to push their children into pursuing those 'wishful' careers they were unable to pursue, putting them on the line as it were to accomplish their own failings.

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