

Counseling Students on Choice of Careers in Professional Areas in Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt: Implication for Counselling

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Abstract

The study investigated final year students of Faculty of Technical and Science Education and third year students of Faculty of Sciences choice of career in 2011/2012 academic session in Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt. The instrument used for data collection was a self designed questionnaire administered on 260 student, 130 subjects from the Faculty of Technical and Science Education and 130 subjects from the Faculty of Sciences. Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt. Survey design was utilized, t-test statistics was used to test the three null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that hypotheses one and three were not significant at 0.05 level of significance, hence they were accepted. Hypothesis two was significant at 0.05 level of significance, it was therefore rejected. The implications of the findings were also discussed.

Keywords: Counselling, career choice, Professional areas.

Introduction

Career decision has been a serious problem facing students especially when the students may not have been exposed to any form of career counselling. The importance of guidance services among students in the tertiary institution with respect to their career choices cannot be over-emphasized especially when one views the presence of individual differences in intellectual abilities, rate of growth, interest, sex, traits, motivation and in the students' levels of aspiration.

From the beginning of 21st century, there has been a growing concern in the way people enter and voluntarily exit from the world of work and the observations can be attributed to lack of career satisfaction and inappropriate career choice. Career satisfaction provides opportunity for people to live a life worthy of emulation, being psychologically alright as well as providing them with status, recognition and self esteem in terms of employment. In any society, citizens at work show the potential progress and greatness of the nations. Thus, lack of job satisfaction leads to poor productivity which hampers the growth of the nation (Ordu, 2001).

Students' freedom to choose the kind of work they will pursue is determined by the type of society in which he lives. According to Hayes and Hopson (1997) there are examples of societies which contain a wide range of different occupations but where the individuals freedom of choice is restricted by strong sanctions compelling him for example, to work in the same occupation as his father or other relatives.

Argyle (1992) posits that in the most primitive societies, the main work was food gathering and the provision of shelter, but with the coming of civilization man moved progressively from food gathering to more traditional vocations such as agriculture, trade or craft, and a host of others. Fafunwa (1996) asserts that in most traditional societies, young people are not faced with the problem of making career choices; they take up their father's trade or assume the same responsibility their mother did. They could however be apprenticed to their relatives friends, and competent craftsmen for the acquisition of appropriate vocational skills. This means that in the traditional Nigerian society, the young person's career development and choice was an outgrowth of parental orientation stereotyping (Ipaye, 1983) and Imoukhome (1987).

Students in Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt are hardly provided with any type of education and vocational guidance leading to appropriate choice of career. Students are found to have chosen courses on the advice of their friends or insistence of their parents or entirely on their own initiative (Ghauhan, 1982:48). Sometimes, students are forced to offer courses because of non availability of particular group of subjects in the school. Most students in the rural schools offer particular courses without any planning of their future career in mind.

The choice of a vocation is based on some motivating factors which an individual considers to be vital to his/her satisfaction and performance on the job. He may be spurred by extrinsic factors like parents, teachers, counselors and few significant others, high salary, societal influence, environmental pressure,

chance, mass media, it would also be that the pressures, on him were mainly internal such as interest, ability, utilization, attractive reasons, values system, physique and sex (Denga, 1986:29-33).

In Nigeria, many inappropriate career choices are been made because of ignorance and illiteracy of parents. They have a fixed idea of the vocation that their children should follow irrespective of the child's intelligence, interest and other capabilities. Innumerable instances can be cited of poor choice of courses in relation to the student's ability combined with high ambition. Thus, sometimes, high ability coupled with low level of aspiration creates equally serious problems. Wrong choices have led to a great number of youths into untold psychological problems arising from series of academic failure or absence of job satisfaction for those in employment already. Abilities and interest for making vocation of choice change with time, especially in the contemporary societies. Ipaye (1978) believes that vocational choices made by young persons between ages 11 & 17 are tentative, Super and Hall (1978) maintained that choices of career of most adolescents are more stable at about age 17 and 18. It is also believed by Ipaye (1978) that most adolescent begin to think about their career plans early in adolescence and become more realistic as the time is moving into the world of work get closer. Studies reveal that young people are weak enough to be influenced with respect to their choice of career than the older people. Shertzer and Stone (1981), Okpara, (1983), Nwezeh, (1988) among others cite the family and social influences as the primary factors influencing vocational choice. Ipaye (1982), states that in the early stage of the young person, the family exercises the most influence but when the young person becomes more independent, he leans towards friends for vocational advice and eventual choice.

The choice satisfaction develops out of an individual's total life experience, a large part being his perception of significant people in his environment. In developing choice satisfaction, one might incorporate the behaviour and ideas of others coupled with the practical ideas of experience during the course. The researcher maintained that personal aspiration to implement self-concept can be very strong motivational indices to attaining life's goal. The problem which the present study sought to investigate is whether the students' perception in professional areas influence their after choice satisfaction?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between gender choice of career of males and females students'.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the students of different age groups in their career choice.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference between students of Faculty of Technical and Science Education and Sciences in their career choice.

Method:

Survey technique was utilized. The population comprised of all the third year undergraduates of Faculty of Sciences and final year of Faculty of Technical and Science Education, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt for the 2011/2012 academic session. A sample of 260 students randomly drawn from the Faculty of Sciences 130, and Faculty Technical and Science Education 130 through a table of random numbers was used. The instrument used to collect data for this study was a research questionnaire. The questionnaire which was a four-point Likert type rating scale was designed to elicit responses on students' career choice. In the questionnaire item number 3, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 were statements of career choice while the rest of the items were statements of career satisfaction. There are two main sections: Section A contained questions on biographic data such as faculty, age, sex, etc. Section B is made up of 20 statements indicative of career choice and satisfaction. The validity of the instrument was established by giving the instrument to some experts in counselling psychology to scrutinize. Their comments and observations were utilized thereby restructuring some items of the instrument. A test-retest reliability was adopted to establish the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered on a sample of 50 final year students randomly selected from Faculty of Sciences and Technical and Science Education, University College of Education. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 was established. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved by the researcher on the spot. The t-test statistics was utilized to test the three null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results:

The various results of the three null hypothesis of the study are presented below:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between male and female students' choices of career.

Table 1: Career choices of males and females and satisfaction.

Sex	N	X	SD	df	Calculated (t) value	Critical(t) value	Level of Sign.
Males	130	71.2	17.34	238	- 17.41	1.96	0.05
Females	130	80.6	5.36				

*P<.05

Table 1 above shows that female respondents derive more satisfaction in their chosen career than their male's counterparts. This is so because of the observed female mean value (80.6) while that of males = 71.2. From the table 1, the calculated I value is -17.41 while the critical t value is 1.96 which indicated that the hypothesis one of no significant difference is accepted hence the alternative rejected, irrespective of the higher value of female mean. It is concluded that there is no significant difference between males and females career choice.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the students of different age groups in their choice of career and satisfaction.

Table II: Students of different age groups (18-28 and 29 and above) their choices of careers and satisfaction.

Age group	N	X	SD	df	Calculated (t) value	Critical(t) value	Level of Sign.
18-28	138	17.12	5.596.844	238 238	2.76		0.05
29-above	98	18.03					

*P<.05

Table II above shows that age group 29 and above had higher mean of (18.03) than those of 18-28 age group (17.12). The calculated t-value (2.76) is greater than the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and df of 238, therefore, Hypothesis two is rejected and the alternative accepted. This means that there is significant difference between the students' of different age group in their choice of career.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between students of faculty of Technical and Science Education and Sciences and their career choice and satisfaction.

Table III: Career choices of students of Faculty of Technical Education and Sciences and Science

Faculty	N	X	SD	df	Calculate (t) value	Critical(t) value	Level of Sign.
Technical and Science Education	138	71.64	10.61	238	17.88	1.96	0.05
Sciences	98	62.52	17.82				

*P<.05

Table III above showed that students of faculty of education derive more satisfaction from career (X = 71.64). It also showed that the calculated t- value (17.88) is greater than the critical t- value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is rejected and alternative accepted.

Discussion

The result of the first research hypothesis showed that there was no significant difference between males and females satisfaction in their career choice. This insignificant difference between males and females satisfaction in their chosen career led to the acceptance of hypothesis one. It could be attributed to sonic-factors controlling male and female skills in some professional areas. Although in some studies like Gesinde (1986), Osuagwu (1980), and Okonkwo (1980) have shown in their studies that significant relationship existed between sex and occupational aspirations, preferences and choices, and that sex differences were found to be

dominant factor in vocational preferences and satisfaction respectively. Fitzgerald and Crites (1980) disagree with them and move further to point out both similarities and differences in the areas of career development of women and men. Ibrahim and Nanram (1997) also disagree with them when they found in their study that both sexes (males and females) attain the same height in their professional of choice, there is no significant relationship between the sex of children and their academic performance and finally that there is no relationship between gender and occupational choice.

The result of the second research hypothesis showed that matured minds tend to make realistic career choices that tend to be associated with career satisfaction. It is so because, choice of career made at a very young age may not be very realistic as to lead to career satisfaction in later life. Okon (1984) in his study found that an over-whelming number of young people in Nigeria have false ideas about themselves, their abilities, interest and aptitudes, and that these youth express preferences for lofty or high status or professional occupations with no knowledge about the involvements of such occupations in respect of work requirements, work satisfaction, frustration, opportunities for advancement and promotions.

The result of research hypothesis three that career choice and satisfaction between students of the faculty of education, and health sciences, the statistical analysis showed a significant difference in career satisfaction between students of these faculties. The result showed that Technical and Science Education students derive more satisfaction than the science students; one would expect the same amount of career satisfaction from the two distinct faculties. Anyanwu (1992) found that students of Science would be least satisfied in their career. This she said was a case study of students of University College of Education. The low degree of career satisfaction among students of Health Sciences she said could be attributed to economic, external or intrinsic factors. Students of medicine stay a minimum of 7 years as against 4 year for education students. Such a long period could lead to a loss of zeal and interest and subsequently affect career satisfaction, especially, when such students face other problems either financial or emotionally. It could also be due to lack of adequate counselling before the students chose such career.

Implication For Counselling

The findings from this study and conclusion drawn are useful information that can help to show that intrinsic variables affect the choice of professional career than extrinsic variables. That is to say that people oriented values have significant effect on individuals who choose career that is satisfactory to them. There is the need for a well organized pre-counselling programme for students to enhance their career choice which can lead to their satisfaction.

Also, the findings will help to stimulate the active involvement of counselors in helping to reduce constant job insecurity, wrong planning vocational maladjustment and wrong career choice of students at Rivers State University of Science and Technology to establish Guidance and Counselling unit with a trained counselor, for the counsellor in Rivers State University of Science and Technology to be acquainted with the motivational factors behind the choice of the professional courses in Technical and Science Education and Sciences, understanding of what students expect from some jobs and what such jobs can offer as a way of fulfilling such expectations, will be of great importance to the career guidance counsellors misconception and directing youths to further vocational self-realization.

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