

# Relationship Between Parental Guidance and Students Career Choice in Secondary Schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja-Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship between parental guidance and students' career choice in secondary schools in FCT, Abuja. Two research questions were formulated in order to guide the study. Primary data was used with the use of questionnaire. A descriptive statistic was adopted for the study and the population of 12,650 students in public and private secondary schools who are scheduled to write the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination in six (6) Area councils of FCT. Stratified random sampling was used to selected one government school and one private school from each of the six Area Councils, total twelve (12) schools. Six (6) schools were selected from the twelve schools and a total of 375 samples were finally selected randomly from the six schools. The hypotheses formulated were tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study show that there was no significant difference between the guidance of parents on students from urban or rural areas of residence. However, parental guidance was higher on students' career choice in private schools than those in public schools. It was therefore recommended that Parents should avoid the attitude of pushing their children into pursuing those wishful careers they were unable to pursue or achieved rather, they should employ the assistance of professional career counselors in helping their children to make intelligent career decisions. Also, there is need for government and other relevant agencies in charge of educational planning to make a comprehensive review of programme/curriculum of career education which will involve learning and choice of career from primary school level.

**Keywords:** Career Choice, Parental Guidance, Secondary Schools Students

## 1. Introduction

The standard of education in Nigeria today is gradually falling, thus leading to lots of problems amongst scholars, policy makers, and educational planners. People wonder about the remote and immediate causes of the failure and the factors hindering the high standard of education. While we may blame governments, teachers and students, the family which the student comes from should not be left out. It is important to note that we cannot exonerate the family that a child comes from when talking about the students' choice of career in secondary school.

According to Maisamari (2005) one of the important functions of education is to guide the child while still in school for a right career choice. This choice plays a very significant role in the life of the individual child, not only because he or she determines the pattern of income, but also because it affects the individual's personalities, and career in life. In a nutshell, career development is the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future. It is of utmost importance to every individual as he or she prepares for the future.

The family can provide information and guidance directly or indirectly, to influence a young person's career choice. Parents offer appropriate support for certain occupational choices which tend to follow their own (Small & McClean, 2002). Family involvement also includes the extent to which parents give encouragement, responsiveness, approval and financial support in matters concerned with the career plans of their children (Salami, 2006).

Families treat boys and girls differently. Boys are shaped 14 and groomed into stereotypic masculine careers and are given more status in the family (Grant, 2004). However, Carter and Wojtkiewicz (2000) argue that female students receive more attention from parents than male offsprings. They attribute the parents' behaviour to the current emphasis on educational attainment for females. Students identify parents as the strongest influence on career and course decisions (Barnett, 2007). Teachers or counselors cannot replace the influence parents have on their sons' and daughters' career plans. Research shows that parents and caregivers influence student's career choices (Muthukrishna & Sokoya, 2008) with the mother being the most influential person the adolescent talks to concerning career choice (Otto, 2000). Mothers were cited as particularly influential because they provided support that eased the children's apprehensions about careers (Hairston, 2000).

According to Alutu (2004), career development and choice should be initiated as early as the nursery school years through the primary, secondary and to the tertiary school levels. Family influence factor found to be associated with career choice includes parents' socio-economic status, their level of education and biogenetics

factor such as physical size, gender, ability and temperament.

Since every career needs certain background, preparation and aptitude, only those having them can succeed. And it is common knowledge that many young men drift into their occupations, many shift about aimlessly from one wrong choice to another, others are anxious and troubled by indecision and tradition. Hence, participation in Career education has an effect on students' career choice. For example, many young individuals wear themselves out, becoming frustrated and defeated by a struggle for a place in an occupation for which they are unsuited. Attempt has to be made to match opportunities for work and service with individual interests and abilities. To realize the needs of individuals, for personal fulfillment in life both parents and guidance are necessary.

Choosing a career is an extremely important decision that impacts an individual's entire future. Career exploration is defined as the extent to which possible careers are researched and considered. Research, Navin (2009) has suggested that exploring career options before committing to a career increases future career success and satisfaction. Thus, variables that influence career exploration in secondary students should be identified and acknowledged.

One of the important functions of education is to guide the child while still in school for a right career choice. This choice plays a very significant role in the life of the individual child, not only because he or she determines the pattern of income, but also because it affects the individual's personalities, and career in life. In a nutshell, career development is the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future (Maisamari, 2005). It is of utmost importance to every individual as he or she prepares for the future.

Sociologists stress the forces in our society as the major determinants of vocational choice. Some sociologists consider the birth right of the individual as a most significant factor in career choice since it establishes the family, race, nationality, social class, residential district, and to a large extent the educational and cultural opportunities for the person. Sociologists argue that the range of occupations that an individual will consider in choosing a career is determined largely by the status expectations of the social class to which he belong (Friesen, 1981). Similarly, parents strongly influence their children in the choice of a career. In some cases, according to Friesen, children inherit their father's occupations (i.e., farmer's sons). In others, the children choose an occupation within the range acceptable to parental values, expectations and social class. In addition, educational opportunities clearly influence vocational choice. For example, students who drop out of high school restrict their occupational choices to manual work or in many cases to insecure white collar jobs, or the semi-skilled and unskilled service or clerical occupations.

The psychologist, in comparison to the sociologist, is interested in the inner world of the individual and the role personality plays in vocational choice. According to Friesen (1981) the psychologist believes that the career a person chooses is an expression of the personality of life style of the individual. Thus personality theory is particularly important in vocational counseling. Several theories of personality such as psychoanalytic, trait, self and developmental theories will be briefly discussed as follows: Trait theory, Friesen stated attempts to understand the person in relationship to his personal characteristics or traits which are considered to be behaviour manifestations of the individual. A person can be described as articulate, bright, dull, loving, sensitive, open, closed, extroverted, introverted, neurotic or psychotic. According to Friesen, the assumption of trait theory is that people differ in their personal characteristics and jobs differ in their requirements. Counseling is then an attempt to match traits with jobs. The counselor administers tests to clients and on the basis of the results of these tests and other information such as interview data, references and past performance, a matching process is undertaken. This method according to Friesen is also used in the educational admission process, and in the high school, university and employment service where matching the individual qualities with educational opportunities and jobs is taken for granted and practiced indiscriminately.

The problem of career choice between students and their parents is becoming an issue of concern crying out for solution. It is an act which seems to put students in senior secondary schools in a state of dilemma of leaving their career aspirations and yielding to the career preferred by their parents. This situation arises when parents' views differ remarkably from the career intensions of the students. When this situation happens, the result is conflict. This problem is traceable to the fact that most parents no longer play the supportive and complementary role of congruent assistance to the students in the career decision making. Rather they insist on a particular career for the students based on their age, educational qualifications, type of education and socio economic status. These accounts for the many cases of dropout of senior secondary school students who have reluctantly left their career aspirations due to pressure firm their parents.

The research questions emanating from the study are:

- i. Does parental influence on students' career choice in secondary schools on the basis of their location in Federal Capital Territory?
- ii. Does difference in parental influence on students' career choice in secondary schools on the basis of their school type in Federal Capital Territory?

## 2. Review of Literature

In Nigeria, every year, senior secondary school students in the first year (SS1) make their career choices before setting for the final Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE). The result of this final examination determines who joins university since admissions into various careers are determined by the grades obtained from the SSCE. When these students are then admitted to the universities, based on the career choices that they had made some of these students drop out of school without graduating while some of them enter into occupations that are totally different from the ones they had chosen or trained for. This is an indication that the students may have been pressured by their parents to choose what their parents desired simply to please them (Taylor, Harris & Taylor, 2004).

Agyei-Boakye, Isaac, Quayson and Nutassey (2014) in his explore of the furniture sector in Ghana observed that the role and importance of technical and Career education and training are not clearly understood by the citizenry. This has led to the misconception and poor image of technical Career education and training because many people still hold the view that technical and Career education is meant for dull students who do not qualify for admission into the universities. This has led to the dwindling number of students patronizing wood work and furniture design programme at this level of training they tried to explore the nature and implication of stigmatization using convenience sampling technique, data were collected from graduates from pre-technical and Career institutions in southern part of Ghana. The study revealed that parents and guardians dislike the low poor image of the furniture profession. It was further discovered that less than 50% of the respondents would be motivated to opt for the programme even if full scholarship is made.

Pilot and Regis (2012) carried out a study titled Socio-demographic Factors Influencing Career Decision-making among Students in South Africa. Two-hundred participants (100 male and 100 female) took part in the study. They were randomly selected. A questionnaire was used to collect data and data were analyzed using the chi-square and t-test. The results of the study showed that demographic factors like type and location of school attended and parents' level of education influenced career decisions among students. The majority of the participants were influenced to choose of their career by the teacher, friend, mother and media. Gender of the student also influenced career decision among the students. Most of the participants made their career choice decisions at secondary level and during registration at university. More female students made early career decisions while more males made late career decisions.

Kochung and Migunde (2011) titled Factors Influencing Students' Career Choices among Secondary School students in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya. 2,464 students from four secondary schools were selected using stratified random sampling technique to select 332 students. Data for this study was collected using both structured and open ended questionnaire and interview schedules which were presented to students. Quantitative data was analyzed using One Way ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance and descriptive statistics. The findings of the study indicate that availability of advancement opportunities and learning experiences are the most influential factors affecting career choices among students. While males reported learning experiences and career flexibility as the most influential factors, females however reported availability of advancement opportunity and opportunity to apply skills as the most influential factors. However, no variance was reported for persons influencing career choice by gender.

Alike and Audu (2011) carried out a study on the influence of peers and parents on adolescents career choice in Egor and Oredo local government area of Edo state, Nigeria. The design of the study was correlation survey design. The population of study comprised of all the adolescents in senior secondary school. A sample of four hundred (400) students was used for the study. Three research instruments were used for the study namely; students' occupational cluster preference scale, peer pressure assessment scale and the parental influence assessment inventory. Data collected were analyzed using pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis procedure. The result showed that there was no significant relationship between peer group influence and career choice of students in all the occupational clusters while parental influence significantly influenced career choice of students especially with regards to the choice of medicine as a career.

Xuhua (2010) study family impact on Asian American career choice. In the study, he noted that Asian Americans were unevenly represented in certain professions in the United States. He noted that while, Asian Americans were commonly found in professions such as Medicines, engineering, computer technology, information technology, business, biochemistry etc. However, they were hardly found in professions such as social worker, musicians, entertainment, sports, theatre arts etc. Asian Americans just preferred those other careers to the arts and performing arts. He cited Holland's personality theory of vocation and stated that people chose career based on their interest and personality. The study discovered that Asian Americans did not choose their career based on their interest and personality. Rather they chose their career base on family pressure and control and the culture of Asians played a significant role in the selection of career by Asian Americans. The culture of Asians is such that family comes first, the Asians are brought up to value their family above all other needs even at the detriment of their comfort and convenience. Most of the Asian Americans who were in their present career did not have interest for that career; they were only forced to choose the career so that they will

please their parents.

## **2.1 Parental Guidance and Career Choice**

Many studies have stressed the importance of parental guidance on a young person's career development. Although much work has studied parental support such as the impact of parents on a person's career behaviour, this has usually been from a positive perspective but there is also the need to shed light through the findings of this study those negative parental influences which engender conflict. Based on this, the researcher reviews studies related to the one under investigation.

Ferreira, Santos, Fonsera and Haase, (2006) established that parental guidance is one of the multiple developmental contexts that have a bearing on the vocational behaviour of adolescents. Whiston and Keller (2004) also confirm that many studies have documented that young people perceive parents as influencing their career choice. Biggart, Deacon, Dobbie, Furlong, Given and Hinds (2004) in an analysis of the Scottish School Leavers Survey (SSLS) data report that parents are the most commonly reported catalyst for initiating the career choice process.

According to Otto (2000) about 21% of the students claim that their choice is made collaboratively with their parents and perhaps surprisingly about 2% of responses stated that their parents are the main drivers behind their actual decisions. He claimed that indeed parents serve as major influences in the lives of their children. He observed that of the factors that influence career choice processes, the family members particularly the parents are the most influential determinants career plans, occupational aspirations and occupational expectations. Even if schools had the resources with which to meet young people's career guidance needs, neither teachers nor counselors can replace the influences parents have on their sons and daughters' career plans.

As distal contextual career influencing factor, the parents' socio economic status (SES) sets a stage for experience that influences many dimensions of their children's lives (Liu, 2002; Liu et al., 2004; Maher & Kroka, 2002), including the educational and occupational opportunities available to that individual and the attainments that he or she achieves (Brown, 2002; Fouad & Brown, 2000; Gilbert & Kahl, 1993; Turner & Lapan, 2000). Parents' socio economic status variables usually interact with their proximal variables (parental support and barriers) to influence the development of their children's career interests, the selection of their career goals and their career behaviours Ali, Mcwhirter, and Chronister, (2005). Also Eccles (1993) suggests that parental education variables have an impact on the beliefs and behaviours of the parents indirectly leading to positive career outcomes for the young people concerned.

Ali et al (2005) in their research confirm that the absence of parental support can be viewed as a hindering factor from parents, forming parental barriers to particular career choices. Conversely, an increase of support from parents might decrease students' perceptions or barriers. In appraising this review, it is vividly clear that whatever affects and influences a person's career choice or decision is most likely to generate conflict. It is for this reason that attempt is made in this study to identify the determinants of conflict and conflict areas of occupational aspirations in the career choice of senior school students and their parents.

## **2.2 Theories of Career Choice**

### **2.2.1 Theoretical Framework**

Career choice theory provides roadmaps for interpreting career choice process. The most frequently cited career development choice theory which has long term tenure and developmental stages with adolescent progresses in shaping future career aspirations is Donald Super's Theory of Career Choice.

#### **Donald Super's Theory of Career Choice**

Donald Super is a developmental theorist. Super (1975) was influenced by self concept theory and Chacorlotte Buchelers's writings on developmental psychology. The basic principle of this theory is that career choice and development is essentially a process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept. In other words, this theory emphasized the role self concept plays. According to him, self concept is a product of complex interactions among a number of factors including physical and mental growth, personal experiences and environmental characteristics and stimulation. Super recognized that the self-concept changes and develops throughout people's lives as a result of experience.

According to Super, self Concept formation depends on the ability of the individual to recognize himself as a distinctive individual and at the same time to be aware of the similarities between himself and others. Hence he identified knowledge of oneself as crucial in making adequate and wise decision. Consequently, as the individual matures, he tests himself in many ways most of which have implications for educational and vocational decisions. As the individual goes through the entire process of vocational choice making he successfully refines his self-concept over time and application to the world of work crates adaptation in his career choice. Supper proposed a life stage developmental framework with the following stages, growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance or management and disengagement.

### Holland's Theory of Career Personalities in Work Environment

In the past few decades, the theory by Holland (1997) has guided career interest assessment internationally. The theory by Holland offers a simple and easy-to-understand typology framework on career interest and environments that could be used in Career guidance. Holland postulated that Career interest is an expression of one's personality, and that Career interests could be conceptualized into six typologies, which are: Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C).

If a person's degree of resemblance to the six Career personality and interest types could be assessed, then it is possible to generate a three-letter code (e.g., SIA, RIA) to denote and summarize one's career interest. The first letter of the code is a person's primary interest type, which would likely play a major role in career choice and satisfaction. The second and third letters are secondary interest themes, and they would likely play a lesser but still significant role in the career choice process. Parallel to the classification of Career interest types, Ogbodo (2012) postulated that Career environments could be arranged into similar typologies. In the career choice and development process, people search for environments that would allow them to exercise their skills and abilities, and to express their attitudes and values. In any give Career environment, there is a tendency to shape its composition so that its characteristics are like the dominant persons in there, and those who are dissimilar to the dominant types are likely to feel unfulfilled and dissatisfied.

### 3. Methodology

According to Howard and Sharp (1983), research is seeking through methodical process to add to one's own body knowledge and, hopefully, to that of others, by discovery of non-trivial facts and insights. Research problem is the first step in the progression of a research work, if this has been made known, then the aims and questions will follow suit. The priority is to show how the aims or objectives would be actualized (Walliman, 2011).

#### 3.1 Research Design

According to Okezie (2002), research design is defined as a scientific plan, drawing or scheme indicating the picture and functioning or workings of the research process before it is engaged in. According to Kumar (1997), research design is a plan of action and it entails the process of collection and analyzing of useful and concrete data in a well structured and effective way. Changes in the design are permitted and are in lieu with thinking during the process of the study.

#### 3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

According to Asika (1991), a population is made up of all feasible elements, subject or observation relating to a particular phenomenon of interest to the researcher. The population of the study was all the students in public and private secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory. The population of secondary school students (SSS 3) in the FCT at the time of the study was 12,650 who are scheduled to write the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination. Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 375 was determined. They provide a table of appropriate sample sizes for specific populations. The researcher adopted the stratified random sampling method to select six secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory.

### 4. Technique for Data Analysis

The research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant. The data analyzed are presented in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

**Research Question One:** Does parental guidance on students' career choice in secondary schools on the basis of their location in Federal Capital Territory?

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in parental guidance on students' career choice in Secondary Schools on the basis of their location in Federal Capital Territory.

**Table 1: t-test on Difference in Parental Guidance on Career Choice of Secondary School Students due to Location**

Location	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Urban	235	3.05	.163	.208	373	.836	Accepted
Rural	140	3.05	.163				

The test on table 1 was carried out to determine whether parental guidance on students' career choices differed significantly between urban and rural locations of students. A significant value of 0.836 (more than the 0.05 level of significance) shows that there is no significant difference. The hypothesis is therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in parental guidance on urban and rural students' career choice.

**Research Question Two:** Does difference in parental guidance on students' career choice in secondary schools on the basis of their school type in Federal Capital Territory?

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in parental guidance on students' career choice in Secondary Schools on the basis of their school type in Federal Capital Territory.

**Table 2: t-test on Difference in Parental Guidance on Career Choice of Secondary School Students due to School Type**

School Type	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Public	262	3.07	.143	3.317	373	.001	Rejected
Private	113	3.01	.197				

The test on table 2 was carried out to determine whether parental guidance on students' career choices differed significantly between students from public and private schools. A significant value of .001 (less than the 0.05 level of significance) shows that there is significant difference. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in parental guidance on public and private school students' career choice.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the response of the respondents on the relationship between parental guidance and career choices of secondary school students, majority of the students were however in the sciences while the minority in the artistic career choice. The mean clearly underscore the high level influence of parents on their wards on career choice in secondary schools. There was no significant difference between the guidance of parents on students from urban or rural areas of residence they indicated similar mean. However, parental guidance was higher on students' career choice in private schools than those in public schools.

The outcome of this research revealed that, parental guidance on students' career choice in secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja cannot be over emphasized. Furthermore, choice of their career was influenced by personal interest, skills and abilities, chance to be creative, intellectual ability and competence and types of school attended. The results obtained from hypotheses test also confirmed and supported positive relationship between parental guidance and students' career choice in gender, location and school type. However, there is no significant difference in parental guidance in terms of location (urban and rural) on students' career choice. Also, there is significant difference in parental guidance on public and private school students' career choice.

Even though it has been established that parents have great influence on students' career choice in secondary schools, they should desist from compelling their children into taking of careers that are of little or no interest to them.

The study therefore recommends the following:

- i. There is need for government and other relevant agencies in charge of educational planning to make a comprehensive review of programme/curriculum of career education which will involve learning and choice of career from primary school level.
- ii. Career influencers such as friend, parents, and members of the community and media personnel should be equipped with correct career information for them to guide students appropriately.
- iii. Career counselors should provide students with experiences that expand the exploration process and a wide range of career information on all the available careers so that they can explore widely before making their choices.
- iv. There is need to revamp the career guidance programme in schools especially where there is a significant lack of career information.
- v. Parents should cautiously avoid the attitude of pushing their children into pursuing those wishful careers they were unable to pursue or achieved rather, they should employ the assistance of professional career counselors in helping their children to make intelligent career decisions.

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