

# The Influence of Self-Concept on Adolescents' Career Choice among Public Senior Secondary School Students in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study examined the influence of self-concept on the adolescent career choice among public senior secondary school students in Ika North East L.G.A of Delta State. To achieve the purpose of this study, three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated. Related literatures were reviewed in this study. ex post facto research design was adopted. The population of this study was 2000 comprised of all public SS2 students in Ika North East Local Government Areas, Delta State. A sample size of hundred (100) students was used. The instrument for the study is a questionnaire, titled: self-concept scale, and career rating scale. The instrument was validated through expert judgment. Cronbach Alpha method was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.99. Frequency count and the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) contingency coefficient were used to analyze the stated research questions and hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that there was a statistical significant relationship between gender and the career choice of adolescent students. There was no statistically significant relationship between the career choice of adolescent students with a high self-concept and adolescent students with a low self-concept. There was no statistically significant relationship between location and the career choices of adolescent students. It was recommended among others, that since guidance and counselors play a vital role in assisting students to make choices concerning careers, the government should employ career guidance and counsellors in all secondary schools in the Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State.

**Keywords:** self-concept, gender, location, adolescent, career choice.

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## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period that is marked by different developmental changes in physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and moral life. It is a period between 12 years and 18 year. This stage witnesses dramatic changes in body proportions. Hirschi (2011) defined the adolescence period as a pivotal time for vocational preparation for future career development, with important implications for well-being and adjustment. This is because the adolescence period is characterized by unrealistic expectations. The majority of Nigerian adolescent students struggle to choose a career that defines them. A career is the individual's livelihood engaged in his or her lifetime. Nwoka et al. (2022) explain that "career choice" is the process of carefully considering other possible career paths before settling on one to pursue at a particular time. They argued that choosing a career is not a trial and error exercise but a deliberate effort made at once, because choosing a career is like choosing a life partner given its implications for one's happiness. According to Abdullahi and Atsua (2014), career choice is a complex decision for students since it determines the kind of profession that they intend to pursue in life. They further stated that as students attempt to choose a particular career while in secondary school, they face problems in attaching their career choice to their abilities and school performance in the selected subjects they offer. In line with the expression, this investigates influence of adolescent self-concept on their career choices. These sets of adolescent students are male and female students basically residing in the urban and rural settlement. As a result of this, this study will also examine if gender and location influence adolescents career choice among adolescent students. Self-concept defines students' awareness of their strengths and weakness. The existence of the self can be traced back to the medieval period of philosophical thought by Rene Descartes, who was deeply distressed by the disputes and doubts that surrounded all realms of knowledge. He posited that since we cannot be sure whether we are dreaming or awake, most of our knowledge is uncertain. He brought up that the first thing anyone can truly be certain of is their existence as a thinking being. This is well known as "COGITO ERGO SUM", meaning, "I THINK, THEREFORE, I AM". Therefore, knowing oneself is the ultimate. This could influence students' career choices.

Wehrle and Fabonder (2019) characterize self-concept as a complex, organized, and ever-evolving system of attitudes, beliefs, and judgments that individuals have about themselves. They further said that the

fundamental question, "Who am I?" is asked through the adolescence period of life and across diverse contexts, people strive to understand. It is a belief, and feeling an adolescent student has about his or her knowledge and ability. Every individual of all ages has feelings about his or her existence as a human being, but the question is deeper during the adolescence period of human development. According to Eric Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, the adolescent stage is a period of role identity and confusion. Proper identification gives the individual a sense of self-belonging, and the individual will become emotionally stable, happy, and easily adjusted. On the other hand, confusion may arise as a result of an individual identifying him or herself as an inferior before others (peers). The individual feels worthless and rejected, which is a lack of self-esteem, lack of self-idea, and self-image. This could have a negative influence on an adolescent's career choice or decision-making. Self-concept can be high (positive) or low (negative). The adolescent student with a positive self-concept is always optimistic, and pragmatic, and sees the challenging situation as a way of coming up with something novel. The individual is motivated to make a career choice that is suitable and adapts to the choice, while adolescents with negative self-concept or low self-concept might be prone to career confusion. This condition may cause adolescents to be unsure about their career choices.

According to Hurlock (1979), self-concept is the composition of the picture of self-perception, that perception is belief, feelings, and attitudes about the values that are recognized by the individual as his traits. He further explains that the composition of self-concept is formed from a variety of experiences on the stage. This means that the composition is formed from experience since childhood. People's self-concept helps them define themselves in a specific role and focus their attention on a given context. This allows navigation in and adaptation to the environment (Wehrle&Fasbender, 2019). Anyamene and Nwosu (2019) noted that the main causes of low self-concept among secondary school students are illogical and irrational thoughts and that low self-concept hinders students from the opportunity to maintain a healthy personality.

According to Herrera and Al-Lal (2020), a positive self-concept acquired in the formative years could help in the development of the strategies and skills needed for confronting life challenges. Positive or high self-concept is a leading factor for success in life (Herrera & Al-Lal, 2020; Anyamene& Nwosu, 2019). Ackerman (2021) stated that our self-concept is accepted by how we feel about ourselves and how we judge our abilities, competencies, and worth as a person. He added that when putting some effort into self-evaluations, our self-concept will adjust to accommodate those changes. Self-concept is learned, organized, and dynamic. Self-concept changes with time and it affects every facet of an individual's life. Perception as a being or as a living being transformed an individual into a functioning organism.

Otta and Njoku (2012) found a meaningful correlation between self-concept and occupational interest. According to the pair, adolescents with strong vocational interests gravitated towards scientific, literary, persuasive, computational, and social service interest areas; whereas those with low vocational interests turned towards outdoor activities, mechanical, musical, and artistic areas of interest. They also found that there was no significant difference between the sexes in their vocational interests. Eremie and Ikpah (2017) conducted a study that revealed that self-concept has a strong connection with students' occupational aspirations. Those with high self-concepts tend to have different occupational aspirations than those with lower self-concepts. Sandeep and Rashmi (2017) study revealed that there was a positive relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement and that this relationship was stronger for female students ( $r = .28$ ) than that for male students ( $r = .17$ ).

Gender is another factor considered to influence career decision-making. Heiligers (2012) defined gender as aspects of sex related to behaviour and identity, which go beyond biological differences. In this study, gender refers to both males and females. According to Nadeem and Khalid (2018), "career choices" refer to a broad range of opportunities or prospects an individual has in deciding his or her future livelihood. They believed that female career aspirations differed from those of their male counterparts, and so did their career choices. Their study revealed that individuals had more conservative gender role attitudes and lower career aspirations. Melani and Ulistion (2020) study found that men had higher confidence than women with the greatest difference in procedures. Men who had higher confidence were more likely to pursue procedural careers, whereas no such association was observed for women. Malespina and Singh (2022) found that no gender differences in low-stakes assessment scores. Another study by Adigun et. al (2015) showed that even though the male students had slightly better performance compared to the female students, it was not significant.

Another factor that has a considerable influence on career decision-making among adolescent students is location. The type of occupation practiced in a particular environment will no doubt influence the choice of career of any individual. Anuja (2017) defines the environment as a complex physical factor that comprises our surroundings and, as a result, acts on us. His study revealed that the environment had a weak relationship with career choice. In this study, location is the physical environment where the school is situated. The location can be either a rural or urban environment. Alordiah et. al (2015) study showed that male students performed better than female students, urban students performed better than rural students, and students of parents with high SES performed better than students of parents with low SES. In another study by Ntibi and Edoho (2017) the results

showed that; there was no significant difference in the mean performance scores between urban and rural school students with positive attitudes towards mathematics and basic science.

A student that gained admission into a tertiary institution is considered to have chosen a career at his or her secondary school level. It is, therefore, assumed that the student is already in training for a particular career or occupation. But the majority of students have difficulty adapting to the course to which they have been admitted to study in the tertiary institution. This could be a result of a poor career decision made by the student. These sets of students were once in secondary school where appropriate career choices would have been made. The challenges of career decisions have made many students spend more than the duration of a course being admitted or even dropping out of school. A student's view of himself or herself would have been a factor to guide them in making a career decision. From the literature no study has on career choice among adolescent student in As a result of this observation by the researcher, the need to consider the internal factors of adolescent students in making career decisions becomes necessary. Since the self-concept of a student affects his/her emotions, vision, and ambition according to Eremie and Ikpah (2017). The problem of this study is that, could adolescent students' self-concept influence their career choices? The gender and location of students influence career choice among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State? Therefore the purpose of this study

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between the career choices of adolescents with high and low self-concept among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State?
2. What is the relationship between gender and career choice of adolescent among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State?
3. What is the relationship between location and career choice of adolescent among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between the career choices of adolescent students with high and low self-concept among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State.
2. There no is there a significant relationship between gender and career choice of adolescent among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State.
3. There is no significant relationship between location and career choice of adolescent students among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of self-concept on adolescents' career choices among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State.

### **The Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will help educators, teachers, and parents to understand the influence of self-concept on career choice among adolescent students. As a result, parents, teachers, and significant others should advise students on choosing a career of their preference.

This study will be useful to career guidance counsellors, and educational psychologists in providing career information for adolescent students. Since self-concept plays a major role in decision-making, educational psychologists will assist adolescent students in building a positive self-concept.

The findings of this study will help male and female adolescent students properly make career decisions that reflect their personalities. This will enable the students to adjust properly and progress in their choice of career.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research was anchored in Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986). Bandura believed that a person's (gender) identity interacts with relative factors such as culture, family, and location. Bandura opined that learning experiences in the environment influence beliefs and outcome expectations. According to him, this belief system in turn shapes people's interests, goals, actions, and outcomes. He further stated that environment as a factor determines our responses to a situation. This is true because an individual that grew up in an environment where carpentry is the dominant occupation may think of going into the job. This will also influence other occupations like trading, teaching, and other professional jobs like lawyers, engineering, banking, nursing, medicine, accounting, journalism, etc. Regardless of the dominance of occupations in the environment, students should be guided on how to make a career choice.

## Method

This study adopted an *ex post facto research design*. The population was 2000 comprised all public SS2 students in the Ika North East local government area of Delta State. A sample size of 100 adolescent students was used in this study. Ten (10) public schools were randomly selected through balloting techniques from the Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State. Students were proportionately selected based on gender in the study. The instrument for this study is a questionnaire. This questionnaire comprised of two sessions. Session A and B. Session A was made up of demographic variables of the respondents, such as gender and school location, while session B was made up of 8 numbers of career choice rating scale and self-concept scale. The self-concept scale was constructed by the researcher. It is made up of 20 items. The four (4) format was used in scoring items with options of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The questionnaire was adequately validated to ensure face and content validity. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, thirty (30) copies of the questionnaire were administered to students outside the population of the study. Cronbach's alpha reliability was applied to obtain the coefficient. The reliability coefficient value obtained was .99. This shows that the self-concept scale had a good measure of internal consistency. The researcher and his assistant directly administered the questionnaire to the students. A completed copy of the questionnaire was retrieved immediately to avoid the loss of the instrument. The Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) method and contingency coefficient were used to answer the research questions and test the stated hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### Research Question 1

What is the relationship between the career choice of adolescents with high and low self-concept among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State?

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between the career choices of adolescent students with high and low self-concept among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State.

**Table 1: Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ) Analysis of Career Choice of Adolescents Students with High and Low Self-Concept**

Variable	SELF-CONCEPT			Total
		High	low	
Career Choice Pharmacy	Count	2	0	2
	Expected Count	(1.1)	(1.1)	(2.0)
Medicine	Count	9	7	16
	Expected Count	(9.1)	(6.9)	(16.0)
Engineering	Count	8	11	19
	Expected Count	(10.8)	(8.2)	(19.0)
Nursing	Count	1	4	5
	Expected Count	(2.9)	(2.2)	(5.0)
Mass Comm.	Count	12	4	16
	Expected Count	(10.7)	(6.9)	(16.0)
Business Admin.	Count	7	4	11
	Expected Count	(5.8)	(6.9)	(11.0)
Accounting	Count	8	5	13
	Expected Count	(7.4)	(6.1)	(13.0)
Law	Count	10	8	18
	Expected Count	(10.0)	(7.7)	(18.0)
Total	Count	57	43	100
	Expected Count	(57.0)	(43.0)	(100.0)

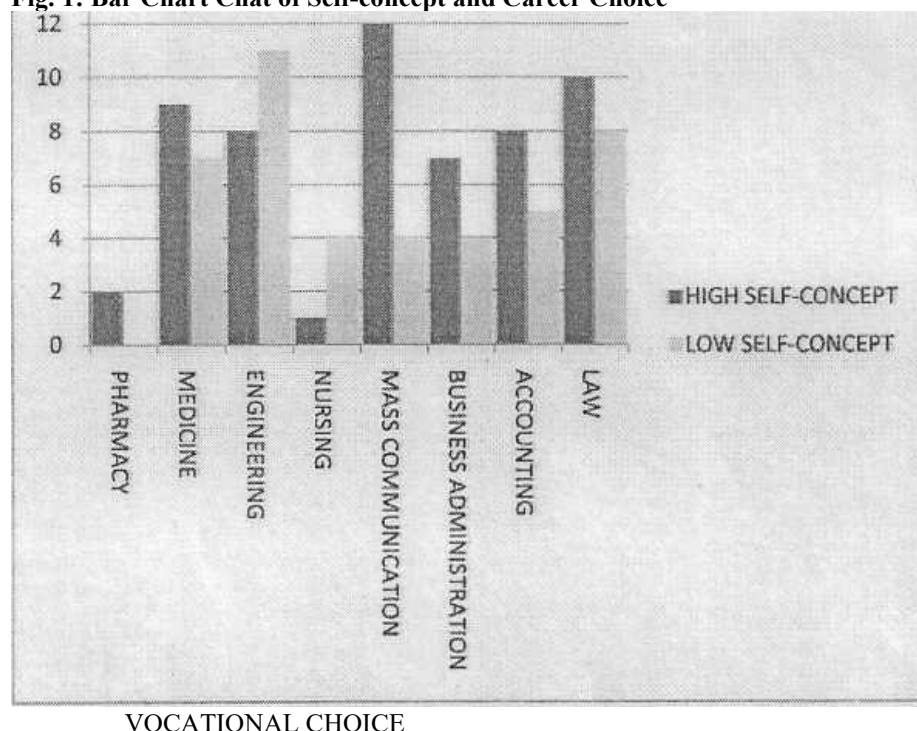
Table 2 above indicates that 57% of the adolescent students that responded to the questionnaire have a high self-concept, while 43% of the respondents have a low self-concept.

**Table 2 : The Contingency Coefficient and Symmetric Measures of Career Choice of Adolescents Students with High and Low Self-Concept**

	Value	Asymp. Std.	Approx Error <sup>3</sup>	Approx Sig.
Nominal by Nominal Phi	.291			.294
Cramer's V	.291			.294
Contingency Coefficient	.279			.294
Ordinal by Ordinal Gamma	.057	.135	-.423	.673
N of Valid Cases	100			

Table 2 shows the Contingency Coefficient = (.279) > .05 level of significance. The calculated contingency of .279 was not significant at 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between the career choice of adolescent students with high and low self-concept, was retained. The conclusion was drawn that there was no significant relationship between career choice and adolescent students with high and low self-concepts.

**Fig. 1: Bar Chart of Self-concept and Career Choice**



VOCATIONAL CHOICE

**Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between gender and career choice of among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State?

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant relationship between gender and career choice of adolescent among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State.

**Table 3: Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) Analysis of Gender and Career Choice of Adolescents Students**

Variable		Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
Career Choice				
	Pharmacy			
	Count	1	1	2
	Expected Count	(1.1)	(9)	(2.0)
Medicine	Count	6	10	16
	Expected Count	(8.5)	(7.5)	(19.5)
Engineering	Count	18	1	19
	Expected Count	(10.1)	8.9)	(19.0)
Nursing	Count	1	4	5
	Expected Count	(2.7)	(2.4)	(5.0)
Mass Comm.	Count	3	13	16
	Expected Count	(8.5)	(7.5)	(16.0)
Business Admin.	Count	7	4	11
	Expected Count	(5.8)	(5.2)	(11.0)
Accounting	Count	6	4	5
	Expected Count	(6.9)	(6.1)	(13.0)
Law	Count	11	7	18
	Expected Count	(9.5)	(8.5)	(18.0)
Total	Count	53	47	100
	Expected Count	(53.0)	(47.0)	(100.0)

N = 100

Table 1 above revealed that 53% of the adolescent students that responded to the questionnaire were male, while 47% that responded to the questionnaire are female.

**Table 4: The Contingency Coefficient and Symmetric Measures of Gender and Career Choice of Adolescents Students**

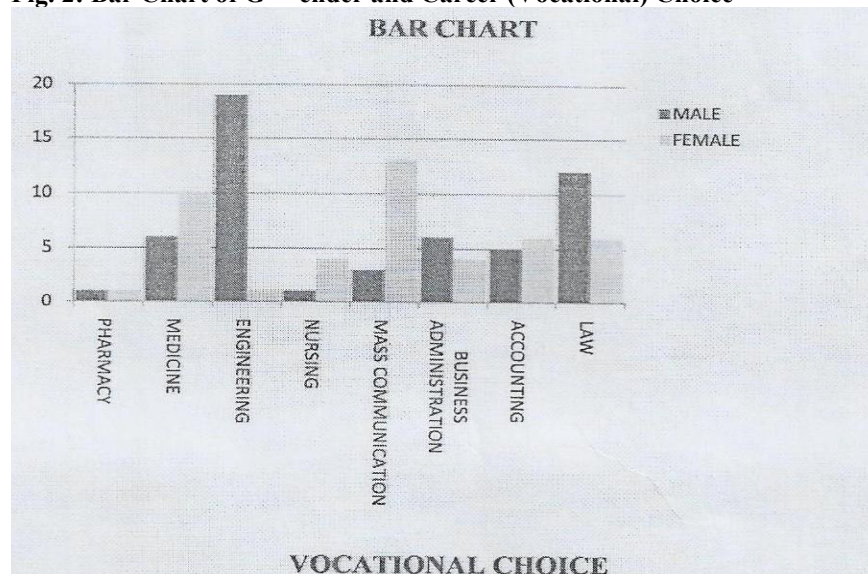
	Value	Asymp. Std, Error <sup>3</sup>	Approx b <sup>1</sup>	Approx Sig.
Nominal by Nominal Phi	508			.001
Cramer's V	508			.001
Contingency Coefficient	453			.001

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 4 indicates Contingency Coefficient = .453 < .05 level of significance. The calculated contingency of, 453 was significant at 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between adolescent gender and career choice was rejected. The conclusion was drawn that there was a statistically significant relationship between adolescent gender and career choice.

**Fig. 2: Bar Chart of Gender and Career (Vocational) Choice**



### Research Question 3

What is the relationship between location and career choice of among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State?

### Research Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between location and career choice of adolescent among students in public senior secondary school II (SS2) in Ika North East, Delta State.

**Table 5: Chi-square (X<sup>2</sup>) analysis of location and career choice of adolescents students**

Variable		Location		Total
		Urban	Rural	
Career Choice	Count			
	Expected Count			
Pharmacy	Count	1	2	
	Expected Count	(1.1)	(1.9)	(2.0)
Medicine	Count	13	3	16
	Expected Count	(8.6)	(7.4)	(16.0)
Engineering	Count	11	8	19
	Expected Count	(10.3)	(8.7)	(19.0)
Nursing	Count	0	5	5
	Expected Count	(2.7)	(2.3)	(5.0)
Mass Comm.	Count	9	7	16
	Expected Count	(8.6)	(7.4)	(16.0)
Business Admin.	Count	4	7	11
	Expected Count	(5.9)	(5.1)	(11.0)
Accounting	Count	5	8	13
	Expected Count	(7.0)	(6.0)	(13.0)
Law	Count	11	7	18
	Expected Count	(9.7)	(8.3)	(18.0)
Total	Count	54	46	100
	Expected Count	(54.0)	(46.0)	(100.0)

N = 100

The table 3 shows that 54% of the adolescent students that responded to this questionnaire are from urban locations, while 46% of the adolescent students that responded to this questionnaire are from rural locations.

**Table 6: Contingency coefficient and Symmetric Measures of location and career choice of adolescents students**

	Value	Asymp. Std, Error <sup>3</sup>	Approx b <sup>1</sup>	Approx Sig.
Nominal by Nominal Phi	.372			.054
Cramer's V	.372			.054
Contingency Coefficient	<b>.348</b>			.054
Ordinal by Ordinal Gamma	.171	.130	1.309	.190
		N of Valid Cases		100

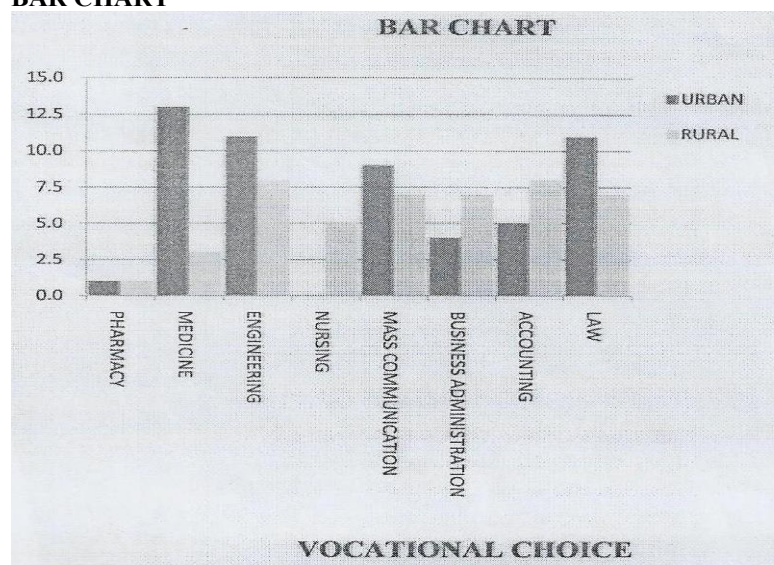
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 6 reveals Contingency Coefficient = .280 > .05 level of significance. The calculated contingency of .280 was not significant at 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between adolescent location and the career choice of adolescent students, was accepted. A conclusion was drawn that there was no significant relationship between adolescent location and career choice.

## BAR CHART



## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### Relationship between Career Choices of Adolescent Students with High and Low Self Concept

Hypothesis 1 showed that there was no significant relationship between the career choice of adolescent students with high self-concept and low self-concept. Contingency Coefficient = .279) >.05 level of significance. This indicates that differences exist between the career choices of adolescents with high self-concepts and adolescents with low self-concepts. According to Nwosu (2019), the main cause of low self-concept among secondary school students is illogical/irrational thinking, and that low self-concept hinders students' opportunity to maintain a healthy personality. This study agreed with the study of Eremie and Ikpah (2017), who found a significant difference between students with high self-concept and their occupational aspirations. A positive or high self-concept has been discovered to be a leading factor in life success. Parents, teachers, and significant others should assist the adolescent in developing a positive self-concept. This is because adolescents with low self-concepts are more likely to pursue a career that does not match their abilities.

### Relationship between gender and career choice of the adolescents

Hypothesis 2 indicates that, there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and career choice. Contingency coefficient = .453) <.05 level of significance. This finding indicated that career choice of male and female students are similar. That is why in the society day, male individual are found doing the same occupation with their female counterpart. Most cases, some occupations are considered more masculine and feminine and as a result of this, female and male individuals choose a career that describes their gender. But due to the changes in the society and educational factor, this stereotype that society has recognized some work as too masculine and some works as feminine is gradual diminishing in the present day society. That is why some women are found doing painting work, bricklayer work, transportation business and so forth. Although, this finding disagreed with Khalid (2018), who found that female career aspirations differ from those of their male counterparts, and so do their career choices. This finding was supported by Otta and Njoku (2012) who found that there was no significant difference between the sexes in their vocational interest.

### Relationship between Students' Location and Career Choice

Hypothesis 3 revealed that there was no significant relationship between adolescent location and career choice. Contingency Coefficient = .280) > .05 level of significance. The finding of this study contradicted the work of Anuja (2017), who found that the environment had a weak relationship with career choice. This contradict the work of Ntibi and Edoho (2017) whose results showed that there was no significant difference in the mean performance scores between urban and rural school students with positive attitudes towards mathematics and basic science.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that gender based is related to the choice of career or occupation choice of adolescent among the students in the study. Career choice does not depend the location students in the study. High and low self-concept are separation in term of choice of adolescent among students in the study. Based on this, recommendations were made as follows:



1. Career guidance and counsellors should be employed in all public secondary schools in Ika North East by the government.
2. A career day should be organized for the students every term to expose them to different professions so that they can be properly guided in making career decisions. This will enhance both male and female students' career decisions.
3. Students should be exposed to excursions so that they can have first-hand knowledge of the career they want to go into.

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