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## **THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS ON STUDENTS' CHOICE OF CAREER IN THESE PRESENT OCCUPATIONAL CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

Decision-making in choosing a career is a very vital aspect of life, and it determines what the person will be in future. If taken wrongly, it has a great effect on someone's life which is why one needs to be careful in making a decision that pertains to a career. This career choice-making has become a major problem for students; most of them find it difficult to make the right decision; maybe they are not well guided. There is a need for parents to assist or guide their children when they are still young to enable them to make good decisions on career choices. Parents' roles in deciding on a career are of great importance to the students, so this aspect should not be overlooked by parents. The study looked at the roles and influence of parents on students' decisions on a career. One hundred and forty final-year diploma students were taken from Delta state university, Abraka, as the sample. One research question and one hypothesis were stated for the study. The study revealed that parents' roles influence their children's career choices.

**Keywords:** career choice, influence, parents, students

### **Introduction**

In every decision-making process, having confidence in oneself ability is of great importance. Much of the decision-making in the career process involves belief in oneself to perform an activity or carry out a task. According to Bandura, a student's self-belief about his capabilities is very crucial in the area of planning and executing steps to attain particular personal goals. These beliefs of oneself are dynamic and related to the environment, which is linked to the type of task itself, which can be obtained from four main experiential learning,

Students tend to avoid those outcomes that they expect to be negative and accept those outcomes they are expecting to be positive, not minding whether they possess high self-beliefs about their capability. Outcome expectations are the outcomes perceived by the individual, the consequences or effects of particular behaviours. Both self-belief about one's capability and expectations of outcomes are closely related. If a student's confidence in his ability is high to perform a task, then such a student may expect a positive outcome. If students expect positive outcomes, they are likely to feel or have more confidence which will motivate them to try that particular behaviour which will result in a positive outcome.

Making career choices in this complex world today demands believing in one's capability to carry out the profession. For this reason, it calls for parental guidance for them to make the right career choice. Parents have a great function to carry out in guiding their children. The marching decision-making process in a career with the requirements in education has become more complex with the advent of technological advancement in this present world when relating it to the past (Joel, Peter & Samuel, 2017; Onoyase & Onoyase, 2009).

### ***Students' challenges in career choice***

According to Olaosebikan & Olusakin (2014), a career is an action taken by a person throughout his lifetime, which has a relationship with his occupation. A career is composed of the job held, titles acquired, and work accomplished during a given period (Business Dictionary.com, 2020). A career is an occupation or profession especially when it requires special training; it is what a person undertakes as a life job.

Different researches have shown that many secondary school students are in a dilemma as pertains to the career decisions making process (Foxcroft & Els, 2010; Issa & Nwalo, 2008; Joel, Pete & Samuel, 2017; Macgregor, 2007; Watson, McMahan, 2010). Every student undergoing deciding on the career process is influenced by various factors such as social, economic and environmental factors, educational accomplishments and personal attitude (Joel, Peter & Samuel, 2017; Watson et al., 2010). International Labour Organization (ILO), (2011) attributed a lack of students' knowledge about career decision-making to the lack of school curriculum, which does not properly address and prepare the students early enough for a vocation. Many challenges that students encounter while deciding on a career in secondary schools originated as a result of ignorance, insufficient information, and lack of career exposure outlets (Austin, 2010; Joel, Peter & Samuel, 2017; Stikkelorum, 2014).

Some studies that were conducted in Kenya revealed that people get employed in different areas where they do not have professional training, which has no bearing on their profession, they choose to accept that profession because of availability not considering their skills or ability and personal interest (Godia, 2009; Joel, Peter & Samuel, 2017; Machio, 2007; Muigai, 2007.), and this may result in unproductivity and job frustration. Self-belief about one capability in deciding on a career represents the students' confidence in performing tasks or activities connected to selecting an appropriate career path (Crisan & Turda, 2015; Joel, Peter, & Samuel, 2017).

### ***Parental roles and career choices of students***

Since the students find it difficult to choose a good career path, the parents should be involved in the career decision-making. The parents and their children must be close for this to take place. Researchers have revealed that the closeness of parents to children, which can be referred to as Parental attachment, correlates positively with career exploration (Navin, 2009). Navin (2009) defines Parental attachment (closeness of parent to children) as the degree to which a child feels close emotionally to his/her parents and is supported by his parents. Many factors influence the choice of a student's career. Researchers, counsellors and others who have an interest in a career choice of students have picked interest to ascertain the

root causes. Some people believed that students do not make career decisions on their own and that there exist other factors which determine vocational choices made by the students like the social and economic environment and parents of the students (Friesen, 1981 as cited in Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014). Friesen in Olaosebikan & Olusakin (2014) argued that students might make the right or fulfilling choice of career and unsatisfactory career choice, but the parents' guidance is very necessary.

Many parents wish that their children should be successful in their careers. They hope to see them go into an occupation that will bring joy and growth. The joy of every parent is for their children to progress in life. Parents have an important function to carry out during their children's development in career and occupational aspirations (Taylor, Harris, & Taylor, 2004). Sometimes students often find it difficult or unwilling to pursue a certain profession without the approval or support of their parents, but that does not mean that the parents take the sole decision for their children; the parents are to guide and play the function of a counsellor or an adviser.

The function of parents in their children's career choices is in the form of support and advice from their past experiences, and they do not want their children to fail in their future careers. And also, do this to avoid the same mistakes they made when making their career choices. The advice the parents usually give to their children is such as "I have made a mistake in choosing my career because of lack of advice and knowledge. I do not want you to make those same irreversible or regrettable mistakes". According to Badura, this is called verbal persuasion; it helps in building confidence in someone else; since the parents speak from their past experiences, this will or may influence the children in making choices or pursuing specific occupations.

Choosing a career begins at home, and continues from elementary school till tertiary institutions. What the child will become in future must be properly guided, which calls for parents' attention. The decision of whether to attend primary, secondary, or higher institutions or learn a trade should be the student's decision but must be judiciously guided by the student's parents not to make wrong choices. Because once a wrong choice is made in a profession, it may be difficult to reverse. This early-career decision-making affects the students' entire life. Therefore, it is important to know and understand the students' and the parents' roles in students' career development process.

### ***Influence of Parents on the career choice of students***

Many studies have been carried out; from these studies, it was discovered that many students quote their parents as a source of their inspiration in career choices and that their parents influence the career they are today (Knowles, 1998; Marjoribanks, 1997; Mau & Bikos, 2000). The researchers, educators and those concerned need to know and understand the degree of influence of parents on the education and students' career choice to assist, equip and develop effective or good strategies to support the parents in advising their children on how to select the good, satisfying and appropriate vocation.

According to Keller (2004) in Olaosebikan and Olusakin (2014), parents influence their children's career enhancement, and decision-making in a career and play a major role in influencing their lives. Keller (2004), in his findings, showed

that students are more confident to look for career information and make a career choice that would be beneficial, exciting and interesting to them when they feel their parents loved and supported them. According to Hairston (2000), family members, most especially parents, are the most influential determinant that influences students in their occupational aspirations and career choice-making process.

The parents' career aspirations can also assist students in making career choices or occupations. It can influence the students' professional knowledge and thereby provide them with the basic requirements and roles of the occupation (Hairston, 2000). Lee(1984), in Olaosebikan and Olusakin(2014) opined that parents' career or occupation orientations enable their children to be conversant with the values and the functions of occupation, which provide a conducive environment for learning that energizes or ginger the children's aspirations in going into a such occupation or career

One of the influential determinants as regard parents' influence on students' career choices is the students' desire to emulate or be like their parents. When students observe that their parents' career is beneficial or satisfactory, they show an interest in going into such a career. Students would study their parents if they discovered that their parent is making it in life; they try to choose that same vocation. But if the student's parents are a failure in their profession, no advice, the parents will give to convince that child. According to Hairston, in his findings, it revealed that those students who went into teaching vocation are a result of their parents' impact or contributions to the society; therefore, they were influenced to also go into the teaching career to impact people's life. Olaosebikan & Olusakin(2014), in their findings, discovered that parents' influence will not significantly have an effect on a student's choice of a career and that perceptions of occupation satisfaction of parents will not have an effect on the student's career aspirations based on sex, and type of school. Dobbins (2000), in his findings, reported that parents' career aspirations assist the students in choosing their goals of occupation, influence occupational knowledge and acquit them with the occupation function and requirements.

## **Methodology**

The correlation design was adopted for this study. This was used to establish the correlation between parental roles and the choice of students in careers. One hundred and forty final year Diploma students of Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria, were the sample for this study. This sample was drawn through the use of random sampling. The questionnaire was the instrument used to gather data on parents' roles and students' career choices. One research question and one hypothesis were used for this study. At the same time, SPSS was used for the analysis.

The following research question was stated to guide the study:  
How do Parents' roles influence the choice of students in careers?

## **Findings and Discussion**

### ***Hypothesis***

The following null hypothesis was stated and tested at a 0.01 level of significance

1. There is no significant influence between parents' roles and students' career choices.

Table 1. Parents' roles and career choices of students

|                               | Mean    | Std Deviation | N   |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------------|-----|
| Students' career choice (SCC) | 25.2357 | 5.13643       | 140 |
| Parents' Roles (PR)           | 22.1643 | 5.23905       | 140 |

The results presented in table 1 above show that the mean difference between Students' Career' Choice (SCC) and Parents' Roles (PR) is 3.0714, which is in favour of Students' career choice (SCC).

Hypothesis:

There is no significant influence between parents' roles and students' career choices.

Table 2. Parents' roles and students' career choices

|                               |                     | Students' career choice (SCC) | Parental Roles (PR) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Students' career choice (SCC) | Pearson Correlation | 1                             | 0.540**             |
|                               | Sig(2-tailed)       |                               | 0.000               |
|                               | N                   | 140                           | 140                 |
| Students' career choice (PR)  | Pearson Correlation | 0.540**                       | 1                   |
|                               | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.000                         |                     |
|                               | N                   | 140                           | 140                 |

The correlation between Students' Career Choices (SCC) and Parents' Roles (PR) shows 0.540, and this indicates a high positive correlation. The p-significant value associated with the correlation was found to be 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ). This means that the correlation was statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant influence between parents' Roles and students' career choices, was rejected.

From table 2, we discovered that there is a significant influence between parents' roles and students' career choices since the null hypothesis was rejected. Career choice-making is a complex decision since many factors determine students' choice of career. The students should be properly guided for them to make a good decision on a career. The influences of parents' roles on students' choice of career cannot be overemphasized. In support of this study, Keller (2004) in Olaosebikan & Olusakin (2014) emphasized the parents' roles in students' choice of career, and he stated that the parents influence the making of decisions and children's career development and also stated that parents have a major function to play in influencing their children. To support this study, Lee (1984) cited in Olaosebikan and Olusakin (2014) stated that parents' occupation influences the students' career choice since they observe their parents progressing in their profession. Parents influence the students through advice, counselling, as a model, career they are into etc. From the findings, we can conclude that parents' roles and influence are paramount to the choice of vocation students.

## Conclusion

The importance of parental attachment and guidance cannot be overemphasized. In the aspect of students' choice of vocation, there are so many people today that are finding it difficult to make a good choice in a career. Some who were able to choose a career are not happy or comfortable with the choice they made due to the wrong choice. It is necessary and important for parents to start nurturing and guiding their children right from home before entering the school system, so as not to regret it in future to come.

The researcher recommends that courses on the choice of career should be built and taught in our various schools to assist the students overcome career choice problems. The teachers can also help in their part in guiding the students on their career paths. When this is done, it will help both the parents and students.

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