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**INFLUENCE OF VOCATIONAL
SUBJECTS ON CAREER CHOICE AS
EXPRESSED BY SENIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN
METROPOLIS**

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ABSTRACT

The choice of career is one of the most important decisions an individual makes. Owing to the fact of the down turn of the economy in Nigeria, vocational subjects are structured in a way which ensures that every senior secondary school graduate has acquired relevant functional vocational/entrepreneurship skills. Thus, this study investigated the influence of vocational subjects on career choice as expressed by senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis. The study considered the influence of variables such as gender, age, religion, school type and parents educational qualification. The descriptive survey method was adopted for this study. This study was carried out in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The target population were all senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis. Two schools (public and private) were purposely selected from each of the Four Local Government Areas (Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Ilorin West and Asa) in Ilorin metropolis. Systematic random sampling technique was used in selecting 25 students in the senior secondary section from each of the schools, which brings the total to 200 respondents. The instrument used for gathering data is a questionnaire titled "influence of vocational subjects on career choice Questionnaire" (IVSOCCQ) and this was developed by the researchers. Five null hypotheses were generated and tested using the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significant. The findings revealed

that most of the respondents agreed that vocational subjects influenced their career choice by stimulating their interest towards vocational profession. No significant difference was found in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice on the basis of gender, age, and religion and parents educational qualifications. However, a significant difference was discovered on the basis of school type. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that Government should employ trained teachers to teach vocational subjects in schools. It has been discovered that most secondary schools do not have competent hands to handle these subjects. The establishment of counselling centres in secondary schools cannot be overemphasized. These counsellors can assist students in making the right choice of career.

Key Words: Vocation, Choice, Career, Influence, Student.

Education is the transmission of culture from generation to generation. It aims at creating and transferring technology and at the same time develops people and resources. It entails training and acquisition of special skills, knowledge, attitudes and values needed by an individual to be responsible and contribute his/her own quota to the growth of the society. Education has the capacity to produce a refined mind, body and soul. A nation that ignores education in vocational skills and technology cannot be fully developed (Jekayinfa & Kolawole, 2010). Vocation plays a very fundamental and significant role in the life of an individual not only because they determine the pattern of income but also because they influence the personality of such an individual. Ohiwerei and Nwosuor (2009) defined vocation as the place where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need. Eze (2001) further explained that vocation is an occupation which a person is trained or qualified to do. Omotosho (2014) revealed that vocational choices are sequence of positions, jobs or occupation, which a person engages in during his working life.

According to Rainy and Borders (1997) a career is a sequence of positions held by a person during the course of his/her life time which comprises of series of work related activities. Rama (2011) asserted that career choice refers to the preference of student in choosing the course he/she wants. This can be as a result of his/her childhood aspirations, peer group influence, values in life and interest. Anyanwocha (2001) is of the view that economic benefits and incentives that go with a career dictate the choice of an occupation among students. According to Omotosho (2006), certain dynamic factors influence vocational career choice and these include intellectual ability, needs,

religious affiliation, interest, personality, self- concept, gender and environmental influence.

The Nigerian educational system has recently been restructured to match with the aims of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and Millennium Development Goals. The ideals of NEEDS and MDGs form the bedrocks upon which the new school curriculum was built (Orji, 2006). In the new curriculum, students are expected to offer at least one Trade/ Entrepreneurship subject from the list of 34 vocations. The rationales for the inclusion of vocational subjects in the curriculum include;

1. To attain the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)
2. To make secondary school education functional to the extent that school graduates have vocational, technical and entrepreneurial skills and competences necessary to generate jobs and create wealth, and in the process eradicate poverty.
3. To address the dearth of technical skills and a growing demand for services of the skilled workers in Nigeria.
4. Building of support for job creation, wealth generation and poverty alleviation.
5. It seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to successfully start and sustain a profitable business.
6. It offers training for self-employment and to meet the demands of the new global work-place.
7. It is hoped that the new breeds of school leavers would have the spirit of enterprise and industry (Orji, 2004).

The Executive Secretary, National Education Research and Development Council, Prof. Godswill Obioma, said the new curriculum for the nation's Senior Secondary Schools (SSS), will not just equip the pupils with skills needed to function in tertiary institutions, but also expose them to vocational studies. The curriculum is structured in a way that will ensure that every senior secondary school graduate is well prepared for higher education and has acquired relevant functional vocational/entrepreneurship skills needed for poverty eradication and job creation (Agbulu, 2011).

Azubuike (2011) opined that vocational subjects help students in the development of skills, knowledge, abilities and behaviour necessary for entry into a specific career. Students whose talent and abilities are in the area of manipulative skills can choose a career path through vocational subjects. The

new education curriculum is strategically designed and aligned to meet the national and global challenge of eradicating poverty. The curriculum is enriched with contents necessary for the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills, strategic communication skills and positive national values. By the time a student finishes basic nine, he/she is expected to have acquired relevant/functional skills. The trade and vocational subjects are designed to offer training for self-employment in order to match with the challenges of the new global work-place. It is believed that at the end of secondary school education students would have attained a form of training in a vocational trade. Orji (2006), in a study revealed that students affirmed that vocational subjects have helped to equip them with entrepreneurial skills. Naylor (1987) confirmed that vocational subjects give students a focus and prepare them for the world of work. Also Asche et al (1998) explained that vocational subjects can influence student's choice of career.

Statement of problem

Despite the efforts of the Federal Government in encouraging technological development, stakeholders are yet to pay attention to vocational subjects. Teachers and students seem not to understand the impact of vocational subjects in schools. As such vocational/technical subjects are neglected in schools. An average Nigerian parent does not encourage his/her children in vocational career because they believe that vocational careers are for the poor and underprivileged (Azubuike 2011). Students have been found to select occupations because of position and prestige thereby having no regard for their interests and abilities. Most secondary schools do not have qualified teachers and are not well equipped to handle these vocational subjects. Okafor (1999) affirmed that no nation can develop without placing optimum priority on education. The need for introducing entrepreneurship education in Nigerian educational system can easily be attributed to the scary unemployment statistics of the nation, the academic institutions are busy turning out graduates mostly regarded as unemployable by the employers of labour. Unemployment, according to Olaitan (1996) leads to frustration and disillusionment, which may result in crime or ill attempts to escape from the pains and humiliations of poverty and lack. Unemployment has posed serious problems not only to the welfare of individuals but also to that of the families. The current waves of terrorism in the country can also be described as a fall-out of improper or poor education. Vocational subjects in the school curriculum ensure that each learner has a chance to become an entrepreneur and each student is the architect of his / her fortune or destiny. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2012) put the figure of the unemployed Nigerian in the first half of the year 2011 at 23.9%, up

from 21.1% in 2010 and 19.7% in 2009. With 23.9% unemployment rate in 2011, it means that among the 165 million estimated population of the country; about 40 million Nigerians are living without job. Azubuike (2011) carried out a research on influential factors affecting the attitude of students towards vocational and technical subjects in secondary schools; Nwankwo (1998) worked on student's achievement in vocational/technical disciplines while Nwobassi (2011) looked at the role of technology and vocational education in enhancing entrepreneurship in a global economy. None of these scholars conducted a study that specifically focuses on the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students. Owing to the gaps identified above, the current researchers have tried to carry out the study.

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at investigating the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis. The study also sought to find out whether variables such as gender, age, religion, type of school and parent highest educational level had significant influence on the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the major influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis?
2. Are there differences in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of gender?
3. Are there differences in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of age?
4. Are there differences in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of school type?
5. Are there differences in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of religious affiliation?
6. Are there differences in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of parent's educational qualification?

Research Hypotheses

From the preceding research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated to be tested in the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of age.
3. There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of religion.
4. There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of school type.
5. There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of parent educational qualification.

Methodology

Sample and Sampling Procedure

This study was carried out in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The target population were all senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis. Two schools (public and private) were purposely selected from each of the four local government areas (Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Ilorin West and Asa) in Ilorin metropolis. Systematic random sampling technique was used in selecting 25 students in the senior secondary section from each of the schools, which brings the total to 200 respondents.

Instrumentation: The questionnaire survey was used for data collection. The instrument was developed by the researchers from review of literatures. It was a self-report inventory with a four-point, Likert-type scale titled "Influence of Vocational Subjects on Career Choice Questionnaire" (IVSCCQ). Experts in the related field validated the questionnaire. It was later subjected to the test re-test method to further establish its reliability. For this purpose, 20 students of the same private secondary school were first served with the questionnaire. These students did not form part of the study sample. At an interval of four weeks, the same questionnaire was re-administered to the same group of students. The two sets of scores were compared using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.65 was obtained which was

significant at the 0.05 alpha (α) level. Hence, the instrument was statistically adjudged to be reliable and considered suitable for research use.

The questionnaire consists of two parts, Sections A and B. Section A required respondents to give some background information such as gender, age, marital status, religion, school type and parents' educational qualification level. Section B had 20 items through which respondents were required to indicate their perceptions by ticking the option that was most applicable to them on a four-point, Likert-type scale. For section B, 4 was the highest score for the "Strongly Agree" option while 1 was the lowest for the "Strongly Disagree" option. For any respondent, therefore, the lowest possible score was 20 (i.e. $1 \times 20 = 20$) while the highest possible score was 80 (i.e. $4 \times 20 = 80$). The range is 60 (i.e. $80 - 20 = 60$). Therefore the mid-point is 30 (i.e. $60/2$). Hence the cut-off point for deciding whether a mean value is low or high is either $20 + 30$ or $80 - 30$, which in either case comes to 50. As such, any mean score of 50 or higher is high while a mean score of less than 50 is low.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and mean ranking of mean. The mean scores and ranking were used to answer the main research questions, while the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools were employed to test the two null hypotheses. Adana (1996) affirmed that t-test statistical tool is a parametric test that is often used to compare the means of two groups. This statistical tool was used to test the first hypothesis. ANOVA is an inferential technique for comparing the means of three or more groups (Hassan, 1998). This was used to test the second hypothesis

Results**Table 1: Mean Scores and Rank Order on the Influence of Vocational Subjects on Career Choice**

Item No.	Statement of Items	Mean	Rank
	In my own opinion, vocational subjects has influenced my career choice by:		
1	stimulating my interests towards vocational profession	3.44	1st
13	understanding the prestige attached to different careers	3.35	2nd
18	understanding people's perception of vocational career	3.34	3rd
9	developing self confidence in my own ability to be self-employed if need be	3.29	4th
16	been aware of the intellectual requirements for each career	3.38	5th
14	been aware of the entry level requirements into various careers	3.27	6th
17	been aware of the ethical standard requirements of each career	3.26	7th
2	becoming aware of different kinds of career and their requirements	3.25	8th
10	gathering information about the various hazards associated with the career I want to choose	3.24	9th
19	appreciating the gender balance of each career	3.24	9th
20	developing good knowledge about each vocational career	3.24	9th
11	appreciating the relationship between my choice of subjects and the career I want to choose	3.22	12th
7	knowing the opportunities available in my careers	3.21	13th
3	developing my goals towards vocational profession	3.20	14th
12	been aware of the profitability level of each career	3.21	14th
15	been aware of the job security of each career	3.20	14th
4	learning how my career choice can affect my future way of life	3.17	17th
8	been skilled enough to earn a living from my choice of career	3.16	18th
5	identifying the course I should do at higher institution	3.15	19th
6	been successfully as a result of my choice a career	3.11	20th

Table 1 shows that Item 1 ("In my own opinion, vocational subjects have influenced my career choice by stimulating my interest towards vocational profession") had the highest mean score of 3.44 and was therefore Ranked 1st. Ranked 2nd was Item 13 with a mean score of 3.35. Item 6 was ranked last with a mean score of 3.11.

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice on the basis of gender

Table 2: The t-test Showing the Influence of Vocational Subjects on Career Choice on the Basis of Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value
Male	94	67.70	10.44	198	1.70	1.96
Female	106	65.93	8.06			

Table 2 shows a calculated t-value of 1.70 and a critical t-value is 1.96. The calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value. The hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice of secondary school students on the basis of gender.

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice on the basis of age*

Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Influence of Vocational Subjects on Career Choice on the Basis of Age

Source	Df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-value	Crit. F-value
Between Groups	2	342.913	171.45	2.00	3.00
Within Groups	197	16865.442	85.61		
Total	199	17208.355			

Table 3 shows the F-value calculated of 2.00 and a Critical value of 3.00. The calculated F-value is less than the critical F-value. The hypothesis is accepted because there is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice of secondary school students on the basis of age.

Hypothesis Three: *There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice on the basis of religion*

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Influence of Vocational Subjects on Career Choice on the Basis of Religion

Source	Df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-value	Crit. F-value
Between Groups	2	237.333	118.66	1.38	3.00
Within Groups	197	16971.022	86.14		
Total	199	17208.355			

Table 4 shows the F-value calculated of 1.38 and a Critical value of 3.00. The calculated F-value is less than the critical F-value as such the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Four: *There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice on the basis of school type*

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Influence of Vocational Subjects on Career Choice on the Basis of School Type

Source	Df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-value	Crit. F-value
Between Groups	2	583.338	291.669	3.46*	3.00
Within Groups	197	16625.017	84.391		
Total	199	17208.355			

Table 5 shows the F-value calculated of 3.46 and a Critical value of 3.00 and because the calculated F-value is less than the critical F-value, the hypothesis is therefore rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice of secondary school students on the basis of school type.

In order to determine the mean value(s) that led to the significant difference observed in the ANOVA results of Table 10, the Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was used as a post-hoc test. The results of the DMRT procedure are displayed in Table 5.

Table 6: Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) Showing the Difference in the Influence of Vocational Subjects on Career Choice on the Basis of School Type

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	School Type
A	45	67.82	3	Mixed schools
B	134	64.32	1	Day schools
C	21	62.19	2	Boarding schools

Table 6 showed the Duncan Multiple Range Test indicating the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 6. Group 3 (Mixed Schools) with a mean score of 67.82 differed significantly from Group 1 (day Schools) with a mean score of 64.32 and Group 2 (Boarding Schools) with a mean score of 62.19 respectively. All the groups differed from one another but the significant difference noted was as a result of the mean of Group 3 (Mixed Schools), hence the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 6 and thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This thus implies that the respondents from mixed schools are more of the view that there is a high influence of vocational subjects on career choices.

Hypothesis Five: *There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice on the basis of parent educational qualification*

Table 7: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Influence of Vocational Subjects on Career Choice on the Basis of Parent Educational Qualification

Source	Df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-value	Crit. F-value
Between Groups	2	123.487	161.74	0.71	3.00
Within Groups	197	17084.868	86.72		
Total	199	17208.355			

Table 12 shows the F-value calculated of 0.71 and a Critical value of 3.00. The calculated F-value is less than the critical F-value. The hypothesis is therefore accepted because there is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on the career choice of secondary school students on the basis of parent's educational qualification.

Discussion

The distribution of respondents based on gender indicates that 94 (47%) of the respondents were males, while 106 (53%) of the respondents were females. Based on age, 8 (4%) of the respondents were between 10-13 years, 123 (61.5%) of the respondents were between 14-16 years, while 69 (34.5%) of the respondents were 17 years and above. 117 (58.5%) of the respondents were Christians, 80 (40%) of the respondents were Muslim, while 3 (1.5%) of the respondents were of the African Traditional Religion. The school type showed that 134 (67%) of the respondents were Day students, 21 (10.5%) of the respondents were in a boarding school, while 45 (22.5%) of the respondents were in mixed schools. 26 (13%) of the respondents' parents had primary education, 38 (19%) had secondary certificate, while 136 (68%) went to tertiary institutions.

Most of the respondents agreed that vocational subjects have influenced their career choice by stimulating their interest towards vocational profession. Omotosho, (2010) clearly stated that information received from vocational courses can encourage an individual to pursue a relevant vocational career.

The gender of the respondents notwithstanding, they all perceived the influence of vocational subjects on career choice the same way. Migunde, Agak and Odiwuor (2012) in their study revealed that nowadays male and female students choose similar careers. In other words, gender does not influence their choice of career. However the, this finding contradicts that of Myburgh (2005) who discovered that gender role played a significant role in vocational choice. The researcher explained that despite the knowledge of vocational subjects, gender discrimination in certain professions prevent students from choosing certain career.

On the basis of age, respondents agreed that vocational subjects influences career choice. Azubuike (2011) emphasized that vocational subjects offered in school helps students of various age group to develop their skills, abilities and understanding about their career pursuit. This in turn can influence the choice of their career. According to Omotosho (2014), one major factor contributing to wastage of human resources is unrealistic academic and occupational aspirations due to lack of information about vocational career alternatives. This can lead to misplacement of interest and priorities among the youth. When students make unrealistic occupational choices at the adolescent stage, frustration and re-allocation of talents into alternative or less acceptable field is inevitable.

The religious affiliation of the respondents did not influence their perception. Irrespective of the religion of the respondents, vocation plays a very fundamental and significant role in the life of an individual not only because they determine the pattern of income but because they affect ones personality and concepts in life (Olaitan, 1996). On the other hand, Edward and Quinter

(2011) noted that religious commitment and one's faith plays a critical role in career choice.

Most of the respondents differ in their view on the basis of school type. This finding corroborates the study of Gesinde (1986) who found a significant difference in the career preference of secondary school students. Dlamini, Ngenya and Dlamini (2004) in which the outcome of their study showed that school streaming influence student's career choice. Azubuike (2011) emphasized that the kind of school attended by individual, the nature of teachers teaching vocational subjects and parental interest can influence students' career choice.

The study also revealed that despite the different educational qualification of parents, they do not differ in their perception. Nwakwo (1986) explained that the educational qualification of the parents and the knowledge of vocational subjects influence the kind of career a child will choose. A child whose father is a medical doctor may fancy becoming one in the future just to be like his or her father. The influence of parents in the development of students' interest in vocational/technical subjects cannot be over emphasized. This is because parent seems to have much influence on children's choice of educational career. Mkpa (1986) opined that the family into which a child is born exerts a profound influence on the child's career, whereas illiterate parents are less bordered about the choice of career and vocational subjects.

Conclusion

1. There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of age.
3. There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of religion.
4. A significant difference was found in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of school type.
5. There is no significant difference in the influence of vocational subjects on career choice of senior secondary school students on the basis of parent highest educational qualification.

Counselling implication

This study is an eye opener for counsellors in training and vocational counsellors. Specifically, the findings of the study imply that counsellors in training must be enlightened on the salient issues related to vocational subjects and its influence on career choice. This can be achieved through a broad base counsellor

education vocational curriculum for all counsellors in training. Professional counsellors can help identify the student's area of vocational interest, work skill, abilities and values through the administration of vocational interest and aptitude inventories. As such counsellors should provide adequate information concerning various vocational subjects as it relates to career choice.

Recommendations

Government should employ trained teachers to teach vocational subjects in schools. It has been discovered that most secondary schools do not have competent hands to handle these subjects. The establishment of counselling centres in secondary schools cannot be overemphasized. These counsellors can assist students in making the right choice of career. Also, adequate supervision should be put in place to ensure the provision of necessary vocational guidance services to students.

Seminars, workshop and career talks can be organized by counsellors in collaboration with government, philanthropists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in order to provide awareness to these growing youth as it relates to vocational subjects and career choices.

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