

DETERMINANTS OF CAREER CHOICE AMONG NEWLY ADMITTED UNDERGRADUATES' IN UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Students (especially newly admitted undergraduates in Nigerian universities) career choice is determined by several psychosocial factors. This study examined the determinants of career choice among newly admitted undergraduates' of University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The study also investigated whether variables of gender and age would influence respondents' determinant of career choice. The research method adopted for this study was descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of all newly admitted undergraduates in university of Ilorin. An instrument titled "Determinants of Career Choice Questionnaire (DCCQ)" was used to obtain data from 400 randomly selected respondents. The instrument was validated by lecturers in the Department of Counsellor Education and the reliability was ascertained using test re-test method and a coefficient of 0.80 was obtained when correlated. Percentages mean and rank order analysis, t-test and (ANOVA) were employed for analyzing the data gathered in the study. The study revealed that determinants of career choice of newly admitted undergraduate in University of Ilorin include influence of parents; school teacher/lecturer; and friends and personality match as well as self employment opportunities in the career among others. The study further revealed that there is a significant age and gender differences in the determinants of the career choice of respondents. The implication of this is that people oriented values have significant effect on individual respondent's choice of career hence the need for a well organized pre-counselling programme for undergraduates as soon as they secure admission in to the university to assist them acquire necessary orientation. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that significant career influencers such as friend, parents, teachers/lecturers need to be equipped with correct career information through different media in order for them to guide students appropriately. Parents should also be encouraged to employ the assistance of professional career counsellors in helping their children to make intelligent career decisions irrespective of gender and age differences.

Keywords: Career Choice, Determinant of Career, Newly Admitted Undergraduates

Introduction

Nigerian students are faced with complex problem in the rapidly changing society. It has been reported that regardless of great efforts put forth by families, government agencies and non-government agencies, many young people encounter difficulties in the transition from the world of school to that of work (Pilot & Regis, 2012). Investigation and better understanding the myriad factors that contribute to career choice is a topic of recurring interest in career research today, this is because in Nigeria and world over, students career decision making is determined by several psychosocial factors including family and parental influence, type and nature of school, access to career guidance programme, media and peers influence among others (Pilot & Regis, 2012).

In the pre-industrial period, the task of choosing a career was quite predictable and predetermined. For instance, it was a common practice in the olden days to find feudalism converting itself into a family affair where the son of a blacksmith was destined to become a blacksmith and a feudal was born a leader. Conversely, career choice has become a complex phenomenon with the advent of information technology, area of specialisation and job competition. Industrialization and post industrialization has made it possible for a common person to be richer as long as she or he has due skills and knowledge (Wattles, 2009). In the recent times, one does not only need to make due career planning but also exhaustive career research before making a career choice so as to adjust with the evolving socio-economic conditions (Wattles, 2009).

Career can be conceptualized more broadly in terms of individual development in learning and work throughout life and this includes voluntary work and other life experiences (Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2008). Popoola (2004) described career as a job or profession for which one undergoes within a regulated education and training over a period of time and which one intends to follow for the whole of one's life. It is thus a chosen pursuit, life work and success in one's profession. Choice and preferences of an occupation is vital processes in the life of every individual. The student in the institutions of higher learning are fully involved in this process which requires critical thinking as well as taken into consideration several factors before choosing, planning and entering into a particular career (Okeke, 2007).

Concentrated thinking and consideration of all relevant factors are crucial for several reasons. Firstly, entering into the wrong career can adversely affect one's emotional and mental health as a result of dissatisfaction and unfulfilled dreams Secondly, a wrong choice of career may lead to constant or continuous job insecurity and lastly, it may lead to bad planning and wrong entry into a profession. This can mar one's happiness for life as a result of the resultant mal-adjustment which may also directly lead to emotional instability (Roe, 2004). The need for careful choice cannot therefore be over emphasized.

According to Kerka (2000), career choice is influenced by multiple factors including personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and finance. Similarly, Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli (2001) stated that each individual making career choice is influenced by several factors including their personal aptitudes, social contacts and educational attainment. In the view of Hewitt (2010), factors influencing career choice can either be intrinsic or extrinsic or both. Hewitt further stated that most people are influenced by careers that their parents favour, others follow the careers that their educational choices have opened for them, and some choose to follow their passion regardless of their unique interests while others choose the careers that give high income. People's perception of being suitable for particular jobs also has been found to be influenced by a number of factors including ethnic background, year in school, level of achievement, choice of science subjects, attitudes and differences in job characteristics (McQuaid & Bond, 2003).

Career selection is one of many important choices undergraduate students will make in determining future plans. This decision will impact them throughout their lives. The essence of who the student is will revolve around what the student want to do with their life- long work. The choice of career has been a serious problem among undergraduates in Nigeria. No matter what one's age is, the choice of career or desire is an important question for everybody (Alutu,

2004). A lot of fresh students admitted in the university got confused about their future career once they got admission for the course they do not like and worried of what they will do with their lives, the kind of graduate they will become (Alutu, 2004).

Mild studies existed on the research endeavour but the few ones in relation to the study shall thus be reviewed. For example, a study by Myburgh's (2005) worked demographic influence of career motives questionnaire. 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 psychology by the teacher, friend, mother and media. Gender of the student also influenced career decision among the students. More males were influenced to choose psychology as a career field by friend, teacher and media while females were mainly influenced by the mother, father and member of community. 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.

Another related empirical study is a study by Kochung and Migunde (2011) titled factors influencing students' career choices among secondary school students in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya. The findings of this 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.

The problem associated with decision making as regards career choice among fresh undergraduates is a pressing issue in the contemporary Nigerian society. It appears that due to these problems, hundreds of students in Nigeria universities enter into disciplines, other than the ones they would prefer under normal circumstances. In most Universities for instance, it is a common affair for a great number of students to embark in struggle to faculties offering professional courses like Law, Medicine Engineering, Accountancy and other such professional courses (Okeke, 2007). Most of these students after scrambling for the limited spaces in these professional courses and eventually loses the chances of being admitted end up taking courses that they did not plan for or have interest in doing. On many occasions, they settled down for courses in the University due to fear of losing out of the school system totally, parental pressures and economic influence among others. This study therefore, finds out the determinant of choice of career among fresh undergraduate students in the University of Ilorin.

Research Question

The following question was raised to guide the conduct of the study

- (i) What are the determinants of career choice among newly admitted undergraduate students of university of Ilorin?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the determinant of career choice among fresh undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria based on gender.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the determinant of career choice among fresh undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria based on age.

Methodology

This study is basically a survey research. The population of this study consisted of all undergraduate students in University of Ilorin while target populations for this study were selected fresh undergraduate students drawn from different department in the University of Ilorin. Random sampling and proportional sampling techniques were used to select 400 fresh undergraduate students across various departments that will serve as the respondents for the study. Proportional sampling technique was adopted to draw a total of 400 respondents based on population of students. The research instrument that was used to gather data for this study is researcher-designed questionnaire tagged "Determinants of Career Choice Questionnaire (DCCQ)" which comprised of two sections (A & B). Section A elicits the demographic information of the respondents. Section B comprised of 20 items which focused on the determinants of career choice. The items in sections B was scored on a Four-point scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The instrument was validated by five (5) experts in the areas of Counsellor Education and Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Ilorin and its reliability was ascertained using the test-retest method which yielded a coefficient of 0.80. Section "A" which consisted four items dealing with demographic data was analysed statistically using percentage and frequency count. Section 'B' which contained 20 items on the determinants of career choice was scored using the format of a four point rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD). All items in section B were constructed positively. The mid cut-off point is 2.50 (i.e. $4+3+2+1/4$) and any item that scored 2.50 and above was considered determinants of career choice.

The data obtained from the administered questionnaire was subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. Data collected was analyzed using percentage and mean and ranking hypothesis 1 was tested using independent t-test while hypothesis 2 was tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Results

Demographic Data

The demographic data of the respondents' entails the distribution of respondents by the variable of the study i.e. gender and age. Therefore, this section presents the results of data obtained from the respondents in percentages.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Age

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentages%
1.	Gender		
	Male	254	63.5
	Female	146	36.5
	Total	400	100.0
2.	Age Range		
	16-20years	136	34.0
	21-25years	191	47.8
	26years and above	73	18.3
	Total	400	100.0

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender and age. The table shows that 63.5% (254) of the respondents were male while 36.5% (146) of the respondents were female. This indicates that female participated more than male in the study. The table also shows that 34.0% (136) of the respondents were between the ages of 16-20 years old, 47.8% (191) of the respondents were between the ages of 21-45 years, while 18.3% (73) of the respondents were 26 years above.

Research Question: What are the determinants of career choice among newly admitted undergraduate students of University of Ilorin?

Table 2: Mean and Rank Order on the Respondents' view on the Determinants of Career Choice among Newly Admitted Undergraduates' in University of Ilorin

Item No.	In my opinion, the factors that determined my choice of career includes:	Mean	Rank
20	influence of the parents	2.85	1 st
2	influence of my school teacher/lecturer	2.70	2 nd
1	influence of friends	2.67	3 rd
18	correlation with my personality	2.63	4 th
15	self-employment opportunity	2.60	5 th
11	opportunity to apply skills and knowledge in the career	2.57	6 th
10	prestige associated with the career	2.56	7 th
13	area of residence	2.56	7 th
9	career flexibility	2.56	9 th
19	guidance received about the job	2.55	10 th
17	need to improve my social status	2.55	10 th
14	type of school attended	2.52	12 th
5	working conditions available in the career	2.51	13 th
7	job design (scope, depth, interest, perceived value)	2.51	14 th
12	my gender	2.50	15 th
4	previous working experience related to the career	2.49	16 th
16	job low hazard	2.47	17 th
6	perceived long-range opportunities in the career	2.46	18 th
3	influence of my family	2.44	19 th
8	levels of aspiration and need achievement	2.43	20 th

Table 2 presents the mean and rank order of respondents' view on the determinants of career choice among fresh undergraduate students in university of Ilorin. The table indicates that item 20 which states that factors that determined my choice of career includes "influence of the parents" ranked 1st with a mean score of 2.85. Item 2 which states that "influence of my school teacher/lecturer" ranked 2nd with a mean score of 2.70. Item 1 which states that "influence of friends" ranked 3rd with a mean score of 2.67. Ranked 4th is item 18 with a mean score of 2.63 and states that "correlation with my personality". While item 15 which states that "self-employment opportunity" ranked 5th with a mean score of 2.60 among others.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the determinant of career choice among newly admitted undergraduates in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria based on gender.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on the Respondents' view on the Determinants of Career Choice among Newly Admitted Undergraduates' in University of Ilorin Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. value	t- Crit. value	t- P-value
Male	254	51.71	5.352	398	2.92*	1.96	.004
Female	146	50.05	5.646				

*Significance, <0.05 alpha level

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 2.92 and the critical t-value of 1.96 with corresponding p-value of .004 which less than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the determinant of career choice among fresh undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria based on gender is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the determinant of career choice among newly admitted undergraduates in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria based on age.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the Respondents' view on the Determinants of Career Choice among Newly Admitted Undergraduate in University of Ilorin Based on Age

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. ratio	F- Crit. ratio	F- P-value
Between Groups	2	301.791	150.896	5.06*	3.00	.007
Within Groups	397	11820.586	29.775			
Total	399	12122.377				

*Significance, <0.05 alpha level

Table 4 shows that calculated F-ratio of 5.06 and critical F-ratio of 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of .007 which is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 alpha level of significant, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected hence there is significant difference in the determinant of career choice among fresh undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria based on age. Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was used as a post-hoc test. In order to determine the mean value(s) that caused the significant difference observed in the ANOVA results of Table 4. The results of the DMRT procedure are displayed in Table 8

Table 5: DMRT Showing the Magnitude of Differences in the Respondents' view on the Determinants of Career Choice among Fresh Undergraduate Students in University of Ilorin Based on Age

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Age Group
A	73	50.20	1	26 years and above
B	191	51.92	2	21-25 years
B	136	51.95	3	16-20 years

Table 5 shows that group 1 with means score of 50.20 is significantly different from groups 2 and 3 which are slightly different each other with the mean score of 51.92 and 51.95 respectively. All the groups differed from one another but the significant difference noted was as a result of the mean of Group 1, hence the significant difference noted in the ANOVA result on Table 4 was brought about by respondents who were 26 years of age and above therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion

The study revealed that determinants of choice of career of newly admitted undergraduates' include influence of parents; school teacher/lecturer; and friends. Family background is an important agent that helps in achieving optimal socialization. The finding of the study is in line with the submission of Ezewu (2003) who asserted that parents in the family utilize their styles of parenting to train and inculcate acceptable norms and values into their children so that they can be able to socialize and become productive citizens. It is a fact that parents influences children's career choice either positively or negatively. A well-to-do family will have positive interest in the education of their children (Ajila & Olutola, 2000). Also Arbona and Novy (1991) noted that career choice of students sometimes influenced by teachers/lecturers. They stressed that teachers are considered the most influential social forces for bringing changes in the behaviour from ordinary decision regarding career choice. Issacson and Brown (1993) asserted that "classroom teacher has both an opportunity and responsibility to assist in this respect of pupils maturation and development". The more the teacher understands the process of career choice and the world of work in general, the more he/she can assist pupils or others who come to him/her to develop healthy attitudes towards work. During the adolescent period, it is argued that peers are more important than parents, teachers and the school counsellors and influencing decisions of peers can have long-lasting consequences on youth.

According to Wonacott (2002), the influence of peers could be geared towards positive aspects of students' career decision/academic performance. Similarly, Adeola et al (2002) observed that peer group is one of influential factors adolescents' career choices. It can be concluded that the parents or family members, teachers or lecturers, friends are involved in the career plans of children which could have negative or positive influence on students' career choice.

Hypothesis one revealed that there was significant difference in the determinant of career choice among fresh undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara state based on gender. This implies that male and female respondents' expression were different on the determinant of career choice. This finding corroborate with the findings of Middleton and Loughead (1993) who found a statistical significant different perception in the influential factors determining male and female career decision making among students. Carter and Wojtkiewicz (2000) also found that female students receive more attention from parents than male off

springs in terms of career decision making. The difference could be due to the fact that males are viewed to be stronger compare to females and thus families are usually more interested in the females and they tends to provide information and guidance directly or indirectly, to influence the female child career choice.

Hypothesis two revealed that there was significant difference in the determinant of career choice among fresh undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara state based on age. This implies that expression of respondents were different on the determinants of career choice based on age. The finding of the study is in line with the submission of Edwards and Alldred (2000) who found that age and personal interests of students is the most important factor influencing career choice. Similarly, Kerka (2000) found that age as one of the socio-demographic factors influence career choice of adolescents. Respondents who were above 26 years of age contributed to the significant difference noted in the study. This may be due to that fact that respondents who were above 26 years are matured enough to make career decision by themselves. It could also be that most parents tends dictate choices for their children and by virtue of their age make their children who are below 25 years to suppress what they want. The reason for this may also be because the age of admission into university in the present day falls within 15-17 years, undergraduates in this age bracket can hardly make career choices by themselves without the influence of parent and other significant others.

Conclusion

This research work examined the determinants of career choice among fresh undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The result showed that determinants of choice of career of fresh undergraduate students include influence of parents; school teacher/lecturer; friends; personality; and career that provide self-employment opportunity among others. Also there is a significant age and gender differences in the determinants factors of the career choice of respondents.

Implications for Counselling

Clearly the results of this study have implications for counselling generally, as well as for further research. The findings from this study showed that factors that determined choice of career among undergraduate students includes influence of the parents; influence of school teacher/lecturer; and influence of friends. This means that people oriented values have significant effect on individual respondent's choice of career. There is the need for a well organized pre-counselling programme for undergraduates as soon as they secure admission in to the university to assist them acquire necessary orientation which would help them have adequate knowledge of the career prospect and challenges in their chosen profession. Also, Counsellors need to assist in sensitizing parent and teachers of the challenges job insecurity, wrong planning vocational maladjustment and wrong career choice through different mediums such as on radio and television programme, internet and in talk show and meeting such as the PTA gatherings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

- (i) Significant career influencers such as friend, parents, teachers/lecturers and media personnel need to be equipped with correct career information through different media in order for them to guide students appropriately.

- (ii) Parents should employ the assistance of professional career counsellors in helping their children to make intelligent career decisions irrespective of gender and age differences.
- (iii) Counsellors in the university counseling centre should collaborate with different organizations and students association to mount career guidance programme for students in the university most especially the fresh and graduating students.
- (iv) Most of the students in the school secure admission through hit or miss, hence their choice of course is not due to their innate interest therefore, counsellors in each faculty should identify such students and provide necessary intervention.

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