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Influence of Environmental Factors on Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis: Towards Enhancing Emotional Well-being of Adolescents

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Abstract
This study investigated the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state. The study also examined whether moderating variables such as class level, class type and gender would affect the respondents' views. The population consisted of 800 secondary school students that were randomly selected from Ilorin Metropolis. The researchers employed descriptive survey method for the study. The instrument used was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Career choice Questionnaire (CCQ). The t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 alpha level were used to test the hypotheses. The result revealed that environmental factors have a positive influence on career choice

f secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. Also, there was no ignificant difference on the influence of environmental factors on career hoice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the bases of lass level, gender and class type. Secondary school Counsellors should rovide career guidance to learners on a continual basis during their econdary school education, so as to make adequate career choices and to nhance their emotional well-being, was recommended.

Key Words: Environmental factors, Career Choice, Secondary School Students, Emotional Well-being.

Introduction

Career selection is one of the many important choices that students have to make in planning for their future. This decision has implications on how successful they can be in life. Career, according to Cambridge Advance Learners' Dictionary (2005) refers to "job or series of job that one does during one's working life". Thus, choosing a career simply means one is choosing a life job. However, all careers have their subject requirements, personality characteristics and personal abilities which are supposed to be fully assessed before an individual can be deemed qualified to go into specific careers (Onayase & Onayase, 2009).

Career choice of secondary school students has long been of interest to educational psychologists and professional counselors due to its significance in the life of individuals. Research evidence showed that the career choice of secondary school students is determined by a combination of personal abilities, personality type and certain environmental factors. This is why Smith (2002) suggested an investigation into environmental factors such as family background, school environment, religious institutions and even peer group and their influence on students' career choice.

The career choice could create a serious challenge for secondary school students in Nigeria. Irrespective of the class level that adolescents are, making career choice is inevitable. Often, secondary school students have mixed feelings; they have euphoria, confusion and fear. A lot of students in secondary schools believe the future is a glorious adventure in which they are bound to succeed. Many of them have the idea that

they would be able to work in the public or private establishments as soon as they complete secondary school education. Some have planned to become lawyers, engineers, medical doctors, accountants, etcetera. In the same vein, students in secondary schools like many other young adults are always worried about what they will do with their lives and the kind of adult they will become (Salami, 2008). They are concerned about early entry into the occupational world and finding productive and rewarding places. Unfortunately, Nigeria is a fast-changing society where employment is unlikely to be available on a scale sufficient to absorb more than a small fraction of the young people when they arrive at the labour market (Baruch, 2004). How students of secondary schools are able to meet future challenges will depend on their career choice. Helping adolescents to make good career choices is the responsibilities of parents, teachers and school counselor even though there are several factors affecting career choice of the students. Students need general orientation into the world of work through the curriculum (Johnson & Mortimer, 2002).

The environment is a term which has many connotations– it has physical, economic, social and cultural dimensions. From the environmentalist point of view, it is defined as the sum total of all social, biological, chemical and physical factors which compose the surroundings of man (Southwick, 2000). Esters and Bowen (2004) argued that there are three types of environment, namely: the natural environment, the biological environment and the social environment. Esters and Bowen (2004) claimed that the natural environment is made up of man's surroundings which are the product of natural processes. It consists of such natural phenomenon as air, water, land, mountains, rivers as well as climate and its element. Thus, the natural environment has some influence on man through weather condition, the source of income and mode of living (Bentz, 2004). In essence, an individual cannot be detached from the environment that he is; the environment will always have a certain influence on him.

The biological environment includes all living things, plants, animals including man himself and micro-organisms that surround him in an area. These living things are interdependent on each other and they ultimately

depend on the natural environment for survival (Hewitt, 2010). The social environment refers to all effects of man's interaction with man in the process of his living in the natural environment. Social environment includes all the patterns of social relationships and groupings as well as the educational, recreational, religion, technological, cultural and economic opportunities created by man in the environment for the use of mankind (Young, Valach & Collin, 2002).

Many researchers have acknowledged the influence of environment on career choice. Conclusions have been drawn that career choice is made based on family values and environment, with the vital impact of personality on the decision (Super, 1972). According to researchers such as Alberts, Mbalo and Ackermann (2003), environmental factors such as family, culture and community influence either positively or negatively, the career choice made by students. In a recent study, Toit and Bruin (2002) confirmed the great influence of parents on career choice. It has also been established that several societies across the globe emphasize collective identity and significance of family when choosing careers (Bentz, 2004). Abbott (2001) reported that developing countries guide students towards choosing careers that would be of benefit to the national economy, encouraging individuals through informal means such as family or group influence.

However, one of the most probable consequences of influence from family may be a student's alienation and dissatisfaction towards the career. While, Bakar and Othman (2009) contended socio-economic factors to be of significance, the study of Ituma and Simpson (2007) in relation to career choice made by medical doctors also corroborated the finding by revealing that most medical doctors, considered their domestic surroundings when choosing their areas of specialization. For a better career choice, it is imperative that such environmental influence does not override a student's individuality factors so as not to infringe on personal growth and satisfaction.

Perhaps the theory of Holland in 1966 on the importance of interrelation between personality and environment to career decision is one of the most extensive and popular literature on the topic. He stated that vocational behavior is the product of personality and

environmental characteristics. He divided both characteristics into six similar categories; realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. He had suggested that an effective career decision achieved through effective matching of personality and environmental characteristics. Family values, parental economic status, child's academic performance and interest affect the career choice of a particular child (Akomolafe, 2003).

Nigeria is rapidly developing her technological education, which has made the society more complex than it was in the past. The number of occupation has increased greatly and also there are many careers within one occupation. For instance, farming which was a simple occupation some years ago is now a very complex occupation within many careers to choose from (Bentz, 2004). This includes poultry farming, vegetable farming; fruit farming etc. the implication of this is specialization. This is why the family, peer group, school environment and even the larger society influences the decision any student might make in choosing a life career. This constitutes a challenge to students and they often make wrong choices which in turn lead to choosing the wrong career.

It has long been documented that making good career choices lead to satisfaction and emotional wellbeing. Individuals who choose careers of their interests are happier and healthier than those who are forced to choose their careers. People who are forced to a particular career do not progress on the job, they are less satisfied and have poor emotional wellbeing. To this end, this study examined the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis.

Research question and Hypotheses

1. What influence do environmental factors have on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis?
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students on the basis of gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students on the basis of class level.

4. There is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students on the basis of class type.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey method. This method involves collection of information concerning a problem from the representative sample of the group(s) and based on the information collected, conclusion were drawn about behavior of the entire population. In selecting samples for this study, the researchers adopted purposive sampling technique to select five (5) largely populated public secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 160 students who are in SS classes from the five (5) secondary schools. This made a total of 800 secondary school students that participated in the study.

The instrument used to collect data was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Career choice Questionnaire" (CCQ). The questionnaire consisted of two sections (A and B); Section A elicited personal information ranging from gender, class level and class type. They were however not requested to give their names to ensure confidentiality. Section B consisted of statements on the environmental influence on career choice. The respondents indicated their perception by ticking each statement under the Likert options "SA" (strongly agree), "A" (agree), "SD" (strongly disagree), "D" (disagree).The face, content and construct validity of the instrument were determined by five experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. These experts affirmed that the instrument was valid for this study. The reliability was ascertained through test re-test reliability method and using the Pearson Product Moment correlation formula, a coefficient of 0.61 was gotten which showed that the instrument was reliable for the study.

The questionnaire forms were administered to the respondents by the researchers. The researchers were personally involved in giving the respondents in order to establish rapport with them and be able to explain the items that may not be clear to the respondents. The questionnaires were collected immediately after completion the same

day. The t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical methods were used in analyzing the data collected at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Class level, Gender and Class Type

Variables	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Class Level:	SS1	308	38.5
	SS2	260	32.5
	SS3	232	29.0
	Total	**800**	**100**
Gender	Male	480	60.0
	Female	320	40.0
	Total	**800**	**100**
Class Type:	Arts	320	40.0
	Commercial	376	47.0
	Sciences	104	13.0
	Total	**800**	**100**

Table 1 showed the distribution of the respondents on the basis of class level, gender and class type. The table shows that 38.5% of the respondents are in SS1, 32.5% of the respondents are in SS2 while, 29.0% of the respondents are in SS3. The table also shows that 60.0% of the respondents are male while, 40.0% of the respondents are female. The table shows that 40.0% of the respondents are in Arts class, 47.0% of the respondents are in Commercial class while, 13.0% of the respondents are in Science class.

Research Question 1: What influence do environmental factors have on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis?

Table 2: Mean and Tank Order of Influence of Environmental Factors on Career Choice of the Respondents

Item No	My career choice is influenced by	Mean	Rank
1.	My parents' educational level	3.88	1st
4.	School counsellor's advice	3.84	2nd
7.	Socio-economic status of my parents	3.73	3rd
9.	My academic ability	3.69	4th
15	Economic condition of the country	3.68	5th
13.	The kind of school I attended	3.65	6th
3.	Advice from peer group	3.50	7th
6.	My class type	3.44	8th
10.	My gender	3.43	9th
11.	The quality of work environment	3.40	10th
12.	Salary of workers in the job	3.38	11th
8.	My interest in a particular occupation	3.22	12th
14.	Prestige attached to the job in the society	3.18	13th
2.	School teachers' encouragement	3.16	14th
5.	Advice from other members of the family	3.00	15th

Table 2 showed the mean and rank order on the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. Item 1 which stated that my 'parents' educational level' ranked 1st with mean score 3.88. Item 4 which stated 'school counsellors' advise' ranked 2nd with mean score 3.84. Item 7 which stated socio-economic status of my parents ranked 3rd with mean score 2.73. Item 9 ranked 4th with mean score 3.69 and it stated 'my academic ability'. As shown in the table, the mean scores are above 2.5; this indicates that environmental factors have a positive influence on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of class level.

Table 3: ANOVA Showing the Influence of Environmental Factors on Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of Class level.

Source	df	SS	Mean Squares	Cal. f-ratio	Crit. f-ratio
Between Group	2	196.6700	98.335	0.20	3.00
Within Group	197	95631.2328	485.437		
Total	199	95827.9028			

Table 3 showed that the calculated f-ratio of 0.20 is less than the critical f-ratio of 3.00. This means there was no significant difference on the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of class level thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of gender

Table 4: showing t- test result on the Influence of Environmental Factors on Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of Gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-val.	Crit. t-val.
Male	120	76.70	5.31	199	1.23	1.96
Female	80	74.66	5.72			
Total	200					

Table 4 showed that the calculated f-ratio of 1.23 is less than the critical f-ratio of 3.00. This means there was no significant difference on the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of gender, thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of class type.

Table 5: ANOVA Showing the Influence of Environmental Factors on Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of Class Type.

Source	df	SS	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio
Between Group	2	186.6780	93.339	0.19	3.00
Within Group	197	95641.2248	485.488		
Total	199	95827.9028			

Table 5 showed that the calculated f-ratio of 0.19 is less than the critical f-ratio of 3.00. This means there was no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of class type, thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of the Findings

It was found that environmental factors have positive influence on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. Respondents agreed that parents' educational level, school counselors' advice, socio-economic status of their parents, their academic ability among others influence their career choice. This finding tallies with that of Smith (2002) who found that environmental factors such as family background and peer influence have a positive influence on career choice. The finding also corroborates the submission of Akomolafe (2003) that family values, parental economic status, child's academic performance and interest affect the career choice a particular child. This could be that environmental factors which can be found everywhere are numerous and strong such that individuals cannot escape from their influence in which the respondents of this study are not an exception.

The first hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of class level was accepted. This means there is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of class level. The view of Ituma and

Simpson (2007) found no difference in the factors influencing students' choice of career based on class level. The finding negates that of Onayase and Onayase (2009), who found a difference based on class level. This finding could be that despite their different class level, the respondents are still in their growing stage where everything that happens around them makes a lot of meaning and could influence their choices.

The second hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of gender was accepted. This implied that gender does not have any influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. This buttressed the findings of Bakar and Othman (2009) and Hall (2010) who found no difference in the expression of adolescents as regards career choices based on gender. Despite different gender roles and perceptions, gender does not affect the expression of the respondents of this study; this might be that career choices have to do with life roles that are strongly affected by environmental factors and not gender.

The third hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of class type was accepted. This also means that there are no significant difference on the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the basis of class type. This disagreed with the findings of Hewitt (2010) and Salami (2008) who noted the difference on the basis of class type in their study. Although the class type usually influences the career choice of young secondary school students in this study, it could be that the environment that the respondents find themselves in has a highly hypnotic effect on them. Conclusively, environmental factors have a positive influence on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. There no significant difference on the influence of environmental factors on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis on the bases of class level, gender and class type.

Recommendations

It was concluded that environmental factors have a positive influence on career choice of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis therefore in enhancing emotional well-being of adolescents, counselors, the school administrators, teachers, adolescents and parents have lots of work at hand. The findings of this study challenge counsellors to intensify efforts on adolescents counselling. This will enable them to help students build self-concept, social relationship and assertiveness as they grow older and would be able to make wise decisions and make right career choices. Professional counsellors should harness discriminately the situational factors highlighted in this study for counselling with respect to helping secondary school students make appropriate career choices. Career counsellors should also be conscious of environmental factors when guiding the students in order for them to make appropriate choice as regards to their career and future stability. On a regular basis, counsellors should organize career day for the students. The career day should focus on subject combinations that lead to different careers and the types of personality traits that fit different careers. Counsellors should provide adequate counselling to students and guide them in choosing an appropriate career. They should provide all information needed for the students to have more understanding about the career they are about to choose. Counselors should make appropriate consultations by inviting parents, teachers, house masters and mistresses to gather information about the students so as to place the students into a suitable career. In addition to these, they should provide information through the use of psychological testing and they should be available to students when they are in need at all time.

Teachers who are the in loco parents of students should support the counsellor at all time to assist the adolescents. They should relate their subjects to relevant career to arouse the interest of the adolescents. They should always relate, support and cooperate with the school counsellor by giving them adequate information about students, to help in the placement of the students into an appropriate career. The teachers should use varied teaching methods that would cater for all adolescents of different learning paces; this might boost their academic performances

towards desired careers. They should support the counselor in all ramifications. In all, teachers should create an enabling and friendly environment for students to learn and make right choices. The school administrator should provide adequate facilities needed by the counselors and teachers for proper placement of the students.

Adolescents should not choose a career on a monetary basis and they should not give chances to be influenced by peer group against their interest and wishes. They should liaise with counsellors to assess themselves to know their interest, strengths and weaknesses and explore their personality type to know if they can survive the challenges that surround the particular profession they want to choose. Adolescents should appreciate the effort of school counsellors by seeking for professional guidance for proper placement. Adolescents should explore the environment to build their interest and to know more about careers. Parents should not force their children into career against their wishes. They should support their children in any career they choose. Parents should provide a friendly environment at home for the children to enhance emotional wellbeing and to be able to make good career choices. Parents should cooperate with the school counsellor and teachers by giving them adequate information about their children, in order to help the counsellor in proper placement of such children.

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