

INFLUENCE OF CAREER AWARENESS ON CHOICE OF DEGREE PROGRAMME AMONG FINAL YEAR STUDENTS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD IN KATSINA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the influence of career awareness on the choice of degree program among Senior Secondary School Students of Science and Technical Education Board In Katsina. The paper discussed the problem of many Nigerian students leaving secondary school with neither the awareness of diversity of career available and nor do they have knowledge of jobs, education requirements, etc. talk less of one to develop interest on. The paper sees some of the impacts of vocational guidance on choice of degree programme as helping individual student with rudiment knowledge that will assist them in making intelligent decision and wise choice of careers based on their interest, ability, and personality. Emphasis is greatly placed on the importance of integrating guidance and counseling in all schools at all levels of education. The paper recommends that career awareness as an aspect of career development should include the employment of objectives and subjective means of collecting information's in order to know the area of strength and weakness of the learners with a view of addressing hem in order to avoid the unfortunate situations of making unrealistic career choice that can lead to frustration in life.

Keywords: Career, Awareness, Career awareness, Career choice

Introduction

The choice of career is a delicate matter that demands serious attention. The past and present societies have taken the sole responsibilities and interest in the exceptional future of youth. The youth were expected by traditions to acquire skills to take up one form of trade or the other and where such skills are absent, the individual is termed as failure and automatically an outcast in the society. Many students have become victims of circumstances of incorrect career choice due to lack of proper career guidance and information. The concerned of this paper is secondary education which represents the second stage in the current educational system known as 9-3-4 system of education which refers to as universal basic education (UBE) that implies every child to spend the first 9-years of basic and compulsory education up to junior secondary school level (JSS.3), another 3-years in Senior Secondary School, and 4-years in the tertiary institution. This system of education exposes the learner to as many disciplines as possible in the Senior Secondary School (SSS) and allows them to make choices of degree programme at university level. Therefore, for senior secondary schools students to be able to make choice of their career aspiration, career guidance should be well integrated in school system as necessary ingredients in the total educational process of the individual. For this reason, the Federal Government of Nigeria recognized the guidance and counseling services at all level of our education system namely: primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN, 2013).

Moreover, career awareness plays a significant role in shaping an individual's study behaviour in any higher education setting because it serves as motivation for the individual to achieve academic excellence. Mesa (2012) asserts that individuals with positive career awareness have high learning goal orientation because their characteristics of seeking to master new skills, complete tasks and overcome difficulties will be in line with their career pursuits. The choice of degree programme which is the second variables of this paper is an aspect of educational guidance and counselling which assist students in their curriculum and school life choice. Choice of subject is one of many important choice students will make that determines future plans and the decision is so significant because it has the capacity of affecting the entire life of the individual (Basavage, 2010). If the choice is properly made, it will guarantee some level of career success or satisfaction. However, if opposite becomes the case, there will be no career satisfaction, and this will definitely affect the entire life of the individual in negative way.

Career refers to work individual do in order to earn a living, it refers to primarily the sequence and variety of work roles, paid or unpaid, that individuals undertake throughout their lives; but it is also the construct which enables individuals to make sense of valued work opportunities and how their work roles relate to their wider life roles (Career Development Institute, 2017). Also, awareness is an information observed by an individual, it is also a concept about knowing, perceiving and being cognizant of events (Smith, 2020). Awareness can be described as a state where in a subject is aware of some information when that information is directly available to bring to bear in the direction of a wide range of behavioral actions. The concept is often synonymous to consciousness and is also understood as being consciousness itself (Chalmers, 1997). The states of awareness are also associated with the states of experience so that the structure represented in awareness is mirrored in the structure of experience. In addition, career awareness refers to information related to jobs opportunities Career awareness helps the student to be conscious of the relationship between self, educational opportunities, and the world of work as an important aspect of career planning (Ellis, 2009). Career awareness involves providing the students with adequate and appropriate career information that fosters continuous expansion of the student's knowledge of their career interests and awareness of the world of work (Lenz & Sampson, 2018). This is achieved by provision of accurate, understandable and usable facts that describe, explain, and interpret entrance requirements, opportunities for employment, working conditions, nature of work done, duties performed, opportunities for advancement, rates of pay, health hazard encounters, trends and outlook (Zunker as cited in Lenz & Sampson, 2018).

Components of Career Awareness

1. Ability to make decision
2. Self-assessment/ Knowledge and interest
3. Provision of information on career choice
4. Knowledge of the available job opportunities in the labour market and their education requirement.

Importance of Career Awareness

The transitional period from school to work is more essential in the life of students in the case that choice of course combination which can go a long way in determining future career is one of the most important life decisions which the individual students makes. Ipaye (as cited in) Lenz & Sampson (2018) opens that; "it's important that the trainee be able to understand his day to day performances, understand the interference that can be made on various tests results that he would be obligated to take, recognized the mistake he is making and learn how to correct them. It's also important that the trainee is prepared psychologically even as he is learning whatever skills his vocation calls for; This implies

that career awareness which is an aspect of career development should include the employment of objective and subjective means of collecting information from the learners and analyses this information in order to know the areas of strengths and weakness of the learners with a view of addressing them in order to avoid the unfortunate situation of making unrealistic career choice that can lead to frustration in life. Hoppock as cited in Lenz & Sampson, (2018) mention the importance of career guidance as:

- a. It helps an individual to know the stability and reasonability of an individual.
- b. Job satisfaction is inseparably tied up with right or wrong choice of career.
- c. It paves ways for an effective distribution of the society's manpower so that wastage will be reduced.

Maisamari as cited in Lenz & Sampson, (2018) support Hoppock's views by writing viz: if career guidance is given to human resources, wastage would be minimized because the youth would be helped to pick up jobs which strike a compromise between their strengths and limitations on one hand and available occupational performance on the other hand. He further explains that individuals possess unique interest and potentials that should be developed and tapped for the overall development of such individual and society. The development of individual's interest and potentials call for career guidance which may in turn lead to specialization based on proven attitude. The utilization of specialists in different faces of development in any country enables that country to progress. This implies that to ensure effective manpower distribution and utilization, we have to help an individual student to develop his potentials to the maximum through regards for individual ability and potential. This can only be done by placing priority attention to human dimension in our institutions of learning from primary up to the university level where each and every individual is regarded as important and respected for what he is and help to develop his potentials to the maximum. It also helps individual to select career field that's a good fit for his personality.

Also, career choice is an individual's interest towards certain occupation, it can be defined as a particular career an individual chooses from the alternative. A happy life depends often on the choice of a suitable career, few people can be happy in a job which does not employ their abilities to the full. It is true that modern industrial conditions do not make this possible for everyone, but it is still possible for a great many. If people can fit into their right type of job it becomes possible they would work happily in full capacity. In career development therefore, the important thing that comes to mind is to make a choice and that choice should be one which the individual is best suited by his physical structure, education, intelligence, natural aptitude and character. Different jobs demand different capabilities and every individual should discover what his or her capabilities are (Fortune, 2011).

Factors affecting Career Choice

Career choice is one of many important choices students will make in determining their future plans and this decision will impact on them throughout their lives, Borchert (as cited in Maxwell & Okwulehie 2019). In his research paper, Borchert observed that several factors influenced career choices of high school students. Identifying these factors would give parents, educators, and industry an idea as to where students place most of their trust in the career selection process. These factors include the students' immediate Environment, Opportunities available to the student and finally his/her Personality. He further observed that every student carries the unique history of their past and this determines how they view the world. This history is created in parts, by the student's environment, personality, and opportunity. Consequently, how a student perceives his/her environment, personality, and opportunity will determine the career choices that the student makes. Splaver (2011) observes that

students never perceive their environment, personality, and opportunity in the same way and this explains the different career choices they make. Some of the factors affecting career choice are:

Environmental Factors: Environment has a momentous role in the career choice students make and the position the student attains in various ways. Environment is a term which has many connotations – it has physical, economic, social and cultural dimensions. The environment being referred to here is a factor that is used to foster decisions in career choice. According to Sear and Gordons (as cited in) Maxwell and Okwulehie (2019) since 1960s, sociologists have explored how career decision making is affected by the social environment. Some of these components of social environment factors include; family, social economic status, general economic conditions, societies stereotypes about specific occupations, and peer groups, all influencing career choice. Socio-economic Status: Social and economic background has some bearing into family's resources. According to Bolles (2011) as cited Maxwell Eremie and Chiamaka Okwulehie, you at one point inherit from your parents certain financial and other resources that, to some extent, influence your career choices. Family financial status determines things like where one lives and which school he does attend. In turn, these can affect one's values, occupational expectations, opportunities, and gender role expectations. For example, students who have lived in a hospital environment may choose a career dealing with medicine. On the other hand, they may hate the hospital environment and consequently don't choose a career that has anything to do with a hospital.

Family Influences: According to Herbart (as cited in) Maxwell and Okwulehie (2019) home with healthy environment are essential for evolving abilities to heights, close to capacity heights. This is because teenagers raised in homes with a healthy environment where parents live in harmony with other family members, are bound to make a well-informed career decision, as the family tend to speak in agreement concerning how he/she makes her choice while also giving them the necessary moral support to succeed.

Occupational Stereotyping: Our society deems certain types of work appropriate to either men or women (Hooley, 2012). Men are encouraged to explore wider variety occupations, yet the areas of child care and nursing are seen as not appropriate for men. Women from the other hand are discouraged from seeking education and training in science and mathematics related courses or in trade such as construction, manufacturing, and transportation (Hewitt, 2012).

Peer Groups: Peer group effect is an important component in the determination of students' outcome. A typical student learns from discussion with his peers and can be affected by their personality and attitude towards learning. Peers can also be motivated by working together. It is well established that the quality of peers could affect a wide range of student outcomes from school performance to health conditions or even juvenile criminal behavior. Economists have investigated the peer effect for a variety of peers include proximity-based peers such as schoolmates. In many occasions' students visualize what they intend to become through subject selection while playing among their colleagues. Eventually, they end up pursuing their intention through peer influence or pressure (Tella, 2017).

Personality factors: students have seen themselves in a role in which personality determining the factor that may influence a chosen career. Some careers demand that you have the personality to match the qualities of the occupation. For example, sales people have to be outgoing. According to Sears and Gordon (2012), for instance, if one is outgoing and assertive and works in an environment where he is not permitted to express his personality, he may have to tone down his vivaciousness, and consequently be unhappy at work because unable to be acting real. Certain personality characteristics are important in career decision making. Gregarious is a good example, a gregarious person does better as a politician or a sales representative than would a more quiet and shy person (Hooley, 2012). It is more helpful for

one to know more about his or her personality because this increase one's self-awareness and may help one in identifying preferred career choice.

Interests: Interests are a person's likes and dislikes which is characterized by the Person's intensity of feelings about a subject or thing (Hooley, 2012). Interests are learned from parents, in schools, from friends, and from lifelong experiences. For instance, when one engages in various activities he reacts with specific feelings or attitudes. Students continue to acquire interests throughout their life and this in return affects the reasoning and choices one makes including career choices (Hewitt, 2010). Interest can change, as students experience life and meet more people; they become interested in new things and discard some of their old interests. They also develop more complex thinking and understanding process, and may even seek new interest and activities with hope of improving themselves and making life more exciting.

Skills: Hewitt (2010) defined skill as the ability to do something many people find it difficult to operate. Skills can be many in one's life-time that sometimes are probably taken for granted. Sometimes you might be unsure of your skills and under-rate or minimize them. Most of the students have difficulties in identifying their skills. Skill may be natural abilities or may be acquired through education and training. In the college, one acquires life skills like finance management, organization and time management as well as skills to help you earn a living. There are different types of skills; transferable skills are those that can be utilized in several different occupations. Example of these skills includes, teaching in school and training sales workers, both requires instructional skills. Other examples of transferable skills include analyzing, negotiating, communicating, clarifying and evaluating, so skills acquired by someone can affect his career decision.

Education: There are those students who are privileged to have access to the best quality of education and even to the highest level of education whereas others do not. Those who access to quality education are most likely going to make their career choices early according to Hooley (2012) determines the socialization of an individual. The well cultured and socialized class you are, the well informed and informed career choice one is likely to make.

How Career Awareness Influence Choice of Degree Programme Among Final Year Students

Career awareness is the becoming conscious of the differences types of jobs, educational training and leisure activities that can be available to individual throughout life" and this kind of awareness demands an in-depth understanding of self and the world of career one is hoping to enter after completion of his/her educational career. This information about careers equipt individual/students with rudiment knowledge in making intelligent decision and wise choice of career based on interest, ability and personality. Lack of relevant and adequate guide on the choosing career could lead to wrong choice of degree program, leading to studying a course that does not match their interest ability, and personality leading to unsatisfactory, poor academic performance, school dropout as well as frustration in life.

Career awareness is the provision of accurate, understandable and usable facts that describe, explain, and interpret entrance requirements, opportunities for employment, working conditions, nature of work done, duties performed, opportunities for advancement, rates of pay, health hazard encounters, trends and outlook, Zunker, (as cited in Lenz & Sampson, 2018). Abdullah (2012) noted that students who have awareness of their career do well in their course of choice than their counterpart who did not. Ali (2014) conducted a study to ascertain the significance of awareness about selection process in students' career choices. Analyzed 572 surveys received from students of 9th grade to sophomore of three different schools, out of which two were situated in urban area and one was in rural area. By applying

regression analysis results indicate positive and significant relationship between awareness of selection and recruitment process and students' career decision making and career choices. Also significant impact was observed on the familiar influences, social influences on students' career decision making, choices persistence and selection of college majors. Researcher identified and discussed a set of limitations, recommendations and future perspective studies in conclusion.

Gacohi, Sindabi and Chepchieng (2017) aimed at determining the influence of career information on choice of degree programme among students in public universities in Kenya. The study used the ex post factor design that adopted the causal comparative research technique and data was collected from 500 randomly selected students using questionnaires. Percentages, means and standard deviations were used to describe the quantitative data and independent samples t-test was used to analyze the data and to test hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that career information had a high influence on the choice of degree programme of students in public universities. Further analysis of the results indicated that no statistically significant differences existed between the mean scores of influences of career information between regular and self-sponsored students. The study concluded that provision of career information was a significant factor in influencing the choice of degree programme of all the students in public universities. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education (MoE) ensures that in all secondary schools in Kenya, the career guidance department is functional with adequate career information resources and activities, to facilitate career development among students. The study also recommended the training and equipping of career guidance counsellors in schools to enhance their competence in assisting the students in making career decisions.

According to Parsons (1909) Trait and Factor theory on career awareness proposed that choice of a vocation depend upon: An accurate knowledge of yourself, through knowledge of job specifications, and the ability to make a proper match between the two.

He stated that "In the wise choice of a vacation there are three broad factors:

- i. A clear understanding of yourself, your aptitude, abilities, interest, ambitions, resources, limitations;
- ii. A thorough knowledge of the requirements and condition of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work;
- iii. True reasoning on relations of these two groups of fact" (Parsons, 1909 & 1989).

Williamson (1999) and others expanded this theory through the use of test and other assessment task to measure people's traits and the traits required in certain occupations.

The major assumptions of traits and factors theory are: Individual and job traits can be matched, and Close matches are positively correlated with job success and satisfaction. These ideas are still part of our career counselling approach today.

Conclusion

This paper attempt to analyses the influence of career awareness on choice of degree programme among final year Student of Science and Technical Education Board in Katsina State Nigeria. The concept of career, awareness, career awareness, components of career awareness, importance of career awareness, concept of career choice, factors affecting career choice and how career awareness influence choice of degree programme has been identified.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that:

- i. Career awareness as an aspect of career development should include the employment of objective and subjective means of collecting information from the learners and analysis this information in

order to know the area of strength and weakness of the learners with a view of addressing them in order to avoid the unfortunate situations of making unrealistic career choice that can lead to frustration in life.

- ii. Training and equipping career counselors in school to enhance their competence in assisting the students in making career decisions.
- iii. Guidance and counseling should be well integrated in schools at all levels of education namely primary, secondary, and tertiary level.
- iv. Career offers and counselors should be appointed to post primary institutions since qualified personnel in that category are scarce.

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