



Perceived parent's social status as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools in anambra state

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Abstract

The focus of this study was to determine perceived parent's social status as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Five research questions guided the study. The accessible population for this study comprised of 2068 senior secondary school students (SS I) in Awka south LGA of Anambra state. The sample for this study comprises 600 SS I students. The multistage sampling procedure was adopted in sampling the respondents. The instrument for data collection was a 25-item structured questionnaire titled "perceived parents' social status as determinant of career choice questionnaire. The items are structured on a 4-point Likert scale response option of Strongly Agree-4, Agree-3, Disagree-2, Strongly Disagree-1. Three experts validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha statistics and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.803. Data collected through direct delivery approach was analyzed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation. The findings of this study revealed that students agreed to three (3) items out of five items raised on perceived parents' educational level as determinants of students' career choice, students also agreed to three (3) items raised out of five (5) on perceived parents' occupational level as determinants of students' career choice, students agreed to all five (5) items raised on perceived socio-economic status of the family as determinants of students' career choice, students agreed to three (3) items out of five on the perceived parents' values and expectation as determinants of students' career choice and finally, students agreed to all five (5) items raised on perceived parent-child relationship as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools Anambra state. Based on these findings it was recommended among others that school administrators should collaborate with the government as well as industries to promote school-industry collaboration programmes. Through this, seminar and excursions will be organized and adolescents will acquire hands on experience in their chosen career path.

Keywords: parents, social status, students, career choice, secondary schools

1. Introduction

The education system in Nigeria labelled 6-3-3-4 is one which the recipients spend six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary school, three years in senior secondary school and four years in a tertiary institution. At the primary school level, a general curriculum is offered with no options. However, at the secondary school level, a student may choose to pursue either science-based subjects or art-based subjects. This is the first instance when a student is faced with the task of choosing a future career path. This choice is further affirmed through the achievement in the Junior secondary certificate examinations (JSCE). Admission into various study areas (science or arts) in secondary class level is dependent on their achievement in the JSCE examinations. This achievement to some extent also influences the students career choices. According to Vaghela (2019) ^[9], the concept of career refers to a variety of work and non-work situations which usually span through the entire life of an individual. It is generally related to a pattern of decision, transaction and adjustments which affects one's role in work, education, family, community development and leisure. Career selection is one of many important choice students make in determining future plans, this decision will move them throughout their lives, the thought process and life-style of the student will revolve around what the student want to do with their life-long work. Students in secondary schools

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believe that their future is a wonderful journey in which they are bound to succeed and many of them have the idea that they would be able to work in the public or private establishments as soon as they have completed secondary school education. Some have planned to become lawyers, engineers, medical doctors, accountants and so on (Olamide & Olawaiye, 2013) ^[6].

However, career choice has been a difficult decision for secondary school students since it determines the kind of profession they intend to pursue in life. Students are faced with problems when trying to make choice on which career path to thread matching their preferences, abilities and academic achievement. In most cases, the choice of career subjects, course of study and the subsequent career path to follow seems to be a nightmare for the future, students more often choose the right subjects combination leading to the right profession can make a difference (Koech, 2016) ^[3]. Nevertheless, students in secondary schools like many other young adults are always worried about the manner of task they will execute after graduation, and how they will be employable. To undergraduates, career choice has become a delicate issue that requires caution and serious considerations, planning for tomorrow itself is primarily the responsibilities of the parents, teachers and school counselors since students need general orientation (Wattles in Vaghela, 2019) ^[9]. According to Brown

in Vaghela (2019) ^[9], the process of choosing a career is described as one of estimating one's ability and skills required for success in a given occupation, and estimating the work values that will be satisfied by the various occupational alternatives available. Furthermore, Brown added that, the essence of who the student is willing to be in future, revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work. Parents, teachers, the society, and the government as the whole recognize the needs for the proper career guidance and development. Students are concerned about future work and occupations but are not sure which factors like money or prestige should influence one's choice for job; in fact, career information which is obtained at school through career programs can help many students to make right career decisions and pursue subject combinations which can lead them to their dreams (Vaghela, 2019) ^[9].

Buttressing further, each individual undertaking the process is influenced by several factors including the context in which they live in their personal aptitudes, social contacts and educational attachments, factors that influence career choice can either be intrinsic or extrinsic or both, most of people are influenced by career that their parents favor while others follow career that their educational choices have opened for them and some choose their passion regardless of how much or little it will make them while others choose the careers that gives high income. Student perception of being suitable for particular job also has been found to be influenced by a number of factors including ethnic background, year in school, level of achievements, choice of science subjects, attitudes and differences in job characteristics (Mac Quaid and Bond in Vaghela, 2019) ^[9]. In a study conducted on career choice by Stebleton in Veghela (2019) ^[9], it indicated that students had an external locus of control and believes that there are numerous factors which influence their career choices; these factors include political and economic considerations, previous work experience and the influence of key individuals in person's life.

In a study conducted by Splaver (2011) ^[8], it was found that students never perceive their environment, personality, and opportunity in the same way and this explains the different career choices they make. A close scrutiny of the three factors above shows that they are all related to parental factors. As the child grows, the immediate environment which comprise of the nuclear family and the extended family including uncles, aunts, cousins, and grand-parents. Accordingly, these people will be expected to have a significant effect on the student's choice of career. The family and parents shape the future personality of the student as he grows up. Parents have a crucial task of preparing the child for education. Students from wealthy backgrounds are more likely to gain better education than those from poor backgrounds. In their task of socialization, the parents have influence on the child's development and future life choices and thus shaping their personality (Mwaa, 2016) ^[4].

Several studies have been reported by scholars regarding the career choice of students. According to Koech (2016) ^[3], the factors influencing career choices among undergraduate

students in public universities in Kenya was examined. The study used a descriptive research design. Two research questions guided the study. The targeted population was undergraduate students at the University of Eldoret. A study sample of 210 was obtained by using a convenience sampling technique. The data collection instrument used was a self-administered questionnaire. The instrument was validated and its reliability established. Descriptive statistics was employed in data analysis. The findings of the study showed that multiple factors such as parental influence determine career choices of undergraduate students. In a similar vein, Kala, (2023) ^[2] conducted a study on parental and peer influence on career choice among secondary school students in Mombasa Sub-County. Descriptive survey design was employed. One research question guided the study. The target population included form II students and parents who had schooled or were schooling children in secondary schools in Mombasa sub-County. Total respondents of 210 were used in the study. The study used the questionnaire and the interview guide as the major instruments for data collection. Data was analyzed descriptively with the use of Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0. The study found that parents who encouraged their children to follow their career path were major players in career selection of the student and the least influence of parental support was joining higher learning institutions.

In another study, Shumbal and Noan (2012) ^[7] examined factors influencing students career choice and aspiration in South Africa. The study design was a quantitative methodology. Two research questions and on hypothesis guided the study. A purposive sample of 133 students participated, the career aspiration questionnaire was also used and validated with a reliability coefficient of 0.752, and the data obtained were analyzed by using percentages and tables. The study found that the family influence, peers, the ability of the learner self to identify his/her preferred career choice and teachers were significant factors that influence the career choice and aspiration of students. Similarly, Olamide and Olawaiye (2013) ^[6] conducted a study on the factors determining the choice of career among secondary school students in Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The study used a sample of 100 students who were randomly selected from five secondary schools in Ogun state. The sample consists of 37 males and 63 females. A questionnaire designed on the basis of Likert scale was the instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated and its reliability estimate established with a 0.78 coefficient. Data collected was analyzed through percentages, mean, standard deviation and T-test. Significant differences were found on personality factors, opportunity factors and environmental factors. The results also show that both factors affect student's career choice in different ways.

Parents shape the personality of children by influencing the level of education or training that their children achieve; the knowledge they have about work and different occupations; the beliefs and attitudes they have to working; and the motivation

the have to succeed. Most of this is learned unconsciously as children and teenagers absorb their parents' attitudes and expectations of them as they grow up. According to Keller in Mwaa (2016) ^[4] the key parental influence on a student's career choice include; the attitude and behavior parents reward or punish, approve or disapprove of, the expectations parents have for their children's education and career. In the same vein, the examples they set for their children, the values they show to their family, friends and to society, the opportunities they offer their children to learn and develop themselves, and the kind of parent-child relationship they develop. Nonetheless in a report published in the Eric Digest No. 164, it was observed that young people form attitude towards work and career as a result of interaction with family. However, within each family, the level of involvement can vary, offering both positive and negative influences. As Williams (2016) ^[10] noted, if parents' jobs give them great satisfaction or provide a comfortable lifestyle, children see the perks early on, and may favor these careers over others. In contrast, if parents complain about their jobs or struggle to support the family on the income their jobs provide, children are more likely to seek more fulfilling or higher-paid roles. Stating further, the parental variables which influence a student's career choice include the parents' occupations, the activities they allow their children to participate in (for example like music or dance lessons or to pursue certain sports activities sometimes influence them to commit to those activities full-time), parental encouragement and expectations of their children, and the Parent-Child relationship. Other researches indicates that when students feel supported and loved by their parents, they have more confidence in their ability source for careers and choose a career path that is interesting and exciting. This unsatisfied need bothers these researchers among other stakeholders and there is need to determined perceived parent's social status as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state.

1.1 Research questions

This study is guided by the following research questions.

- What is the perception of students on parents' educational level as determinants of their career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state?
- What is the perception of students on parents' occupational level as determinants of their career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state?
- What is the perception of students on family socio-

economic status as determinants of their career choice in secondary schools in Anambra State?

- What is the perception of students on parents' values and expectation as determinants of their career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state?
- What is the perception of students on parent-child relationship as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state?

2. Research methods

The research design for this study is the descriptive survey research design. This research design type is aimed at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics of, features or facts about a given population (Nworgu, 2015) ^[5]. This study is carried out in Anambra state. The accessible population of this study comprises 2068 senior secondary school I students in 18 secondary schools in Awka south LGA. The sample for this study comprises 600 SS I students. The multistage sampling procedure was adopted in sampling the respondents. Firstly, simple random sampling technique of table of random digits was used to select 10 secondary schools from the existing 18 secondary schools in Awka-south LGA. Secondly, disproportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select 60 SS I students from each of the secondary school sample earlier. The instrument for data collection is a 25-item structured questionnaire titled "Perceived parents' social status as determinant of career choice questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by experts to determine the face and content validity of the instrument. The reliability was established using the Cronbach alpha statistics. The coefficient reliability was 0.80. The administration of the questionnaire for data collection was done through direct delivery approach. Data collected were analyzed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation. The interpretation of the respondents' rating is based on the criterion mean of 2.50. Mean values greater than 2.50 will be termed Agree and mean values less than 2.50 is termed Disagree. The standard deviation scores determined the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the response. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 26 was used in the analysis of data.

3. Research results

The arithmetic means and standard deviation computation on student's perception of parents' educational level as determinants of their career choice.

Table 1

S/N	Item statements on parents' educational level	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My parent is not literate but I love education	2.67	1.07	Agree
2	My parent has friends who are educated that's why I am in school	2.31	.94	Disagree
3	My parent are degree holders and I have chosen a career like theirs	3.61	.92	Agree
4	My choice of career is not based on my parents' education level	3.73	1.14	Agree
5	My parent are decision makers in my school and with this my future career choice is secure.	1.39	1.13	Disagree

The arithmetic mean results shows that students agreed to three (3) items out of the five items raised on perceived parents'

educational level as determinants of students' career choice. The standard deviation scores show homogeneity in the

respondents rating (.92 - 1.14). The arithmetic means and standard deviation computation on student's perception on

parents' occupational level as determinants of their career choice.

Table 2

S/N	Item statements on parents' occupation level	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I will like to take after my parent occupation, because I admire it	3.11	.99	Agree
2	My parents are politicians and that is why I am in the art class	1.78	1.08	Disagree
3	My parents are both academic doctors and I want to be same	2.68	1.02	Agree
4	I have access to employment in my family business	2.43	.63	Disagree
5	I will not like to go for my father/mother occupation instead I'll go for a better one	2.77	.92	Agree

The arithmetic mean result revealed that students agreed to three (3) items raised out of five (5) on perceived parents' occupational level as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools. The standard deviation scores show

homogeneity in the students' response (.63-1.08).

The arithmetic means and standard deviation computation on student's perception on family socio-economic status as determinants of their career choice.

Table 3

S/N	Item statements on parents' socio-economic status	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I will not consider working after secondary school because my parents can sustain me	3.02	1.01	Agree
2	My parents do not need support from me, so I don't need to work	3.11	1.30	Agree
3	My parents have provided the relevant career opportunities for me	2.78	1.30	Agree
4	My parents find it difficult to associate with the general public	3.51	1.12	Agree
5	My parents' level of finance is affecting my choice of career (undecided at the moment)	2.57	1.01	Agree

The arithmetic means result shows that students agreed to all five (5) items raised on perceived socio-economic status of the family as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools. The standard deviation result shows homogeneity in

the students rating (1.01-1.30).

The arithmetic means and standard deviation computation on student's perception on parent's values and expectation as determinants of their career choice.

Table 4

S/N	Item statements on parents' values and expectations	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My parents always remind me of the value my career choice has on the family	2.61	.95	Agree
2	My parent encourages me to be involved in extra-curricular activities	3.00	.80	Agree
3	My parents are uninterested in my career choice	2.11	.99	Disagree
4	I have access to magazines and history books on respective careers	3.46	1.20	Agree
5	My parents are ignorant of career opportunities	2.43	1.19	Disagree

The arithmetic mean results reports that students agreed to three (3) items out of five on the perceived parents' values and expectation as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools. The standard deviation result shows

heterogeneity of the students rating (.80-1.20).

Arithmetic mean and standard deviation on student's perception on parent-child relationship as determinants of their career choice.

Table 5

S/N	Item statements on parents' educational level	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My parents always tell me how proud they are of me	3.53	1.02	Agree
2	My parents ignore anything that pertains to career decision	3.60	1.02	Agree
3	My parents encourage me to stand out and take my own decisions	3.60	1.25	Agree
4	I have learnt about difficult decisions from my parents	3.93	1.02	Agree
5	I feel better when I discuss career decisions with my parents	3.53	1.02	Agree

The results report that students agreed to all five (5) items raised on perceived parent-child relationship as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools. The standard deviation scores show homogeneity in the students rating (1.02-1.25).

Discussion

Parents' educational level as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools

Data presented in Table 1 shows that students agreed to three (3) items out of the five items raised on perceived parents'

educational level as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state. This finding is in agreement with the Kala (2023) ^[2] who found that parents who encourage their children to follow their career path were major players in career selection of the student and the least influence of parental support was joining higher learning institutions. In justification, studies have found that parents with postsecondary education tend to pass along its importance to their children. Such parents are more likely to offer their children an opportunity of a better education by enrolling them in good schools and in disciplines of their own choice. Female students talented in mathematics related careers viewed their career choices as reflective of interests that stemmed from early family influence and educational opportunities. This implies that parental level of education significantly influences their children achievement in school and consequently their future careers.

Parents' occupational level as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools

The result presented in Table 2 has it that students agreed to three (3) items raised out of five (5) on perceived parents' occupational level as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state. In conformity to this, Williams (2016) ^[10] noted thus; it's no surprise that many people are the third or fourth generations of their families to work in the same profession. They have an insider's glimpse into their parents' occupations, making it easier for them to break in to the industry. If their parents' jobs give them great satisfaction or provide a comfortable lifestyle, children see the perks early on, and may favour these careers over others. In contrast, if parents complain about their jobs or struggle to support the family on the income their jobs provide, children are more likely to seek more fulfilling or higher-paid roles.

Socio-economic status of the family as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools

Result presented in Table 3 shows that students agreed to all five (5) items raised on perceived socio-economic status of the family as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state. This slightly is in agreement with Shumbal and Noan (2012) ^[7] who found that family influence, peers, the ability of the learner self to identify his/her preferred career choice and teachers were significant factors that influence the career choice and aspiration of students. Justifying this, it is because families with limited economic resources tend to direct them first to the males of the family, giving less hope and encouragement for further education to the daughters in the family. Parents whose socio-economic status is low may hold values that place girls in the homemaker role and reflect less emphasis on occupational career preparation. Given this disposition, it is understandable that the self-efficacy of girls with respect to career opportunities is linked to the economic support they can expect to receive from their parents. For low-income families, a large family will make the parents spend less money to aid the older children in attending school, while younger children may receive more

financial assistance since the financial strain is less once the older children leave home.

Parents' values and expectation as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools

Result presented in Table 4 reveals that students agreed to three (3) items out of five on the perceived parents' values and expectation as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state. This finding disagrees with the report of Hellmann (2012) ^[11] which indicated that secure maternal attachment predicted secure peer attachment and high self-efficacy in young adults. Higher level of self-efficacy was positively correlated with environmental exploration and negatively correlated with career indecision. This imply that maternal attachment has an indirect influence on young adult career exploration and decision making. Justifying this finding it could be said that, expression of parental values and expectations can be in the form of parental support and guidance on specific career or educational suggestions as well as experiences that indirectly support career development, such as family vacations, provision of resources such as books, and modelling of paid and nonpaid work roles.

Parent-child relationship as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools

The result presented in Table 5 shows that students agreed to all five (5) items raised on perceived parent-child relationship as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools Anambra state. This finding agrees with Olamide and Olawaiye (2013) ^[6] who found significant differences between personality factors, opportunity factors and environmental factors. The results also show that both factors affect student's career choice in different ways. Justifying this, it is likely that parental values and expectations are conveyed within each household, the strength of their influence may be reliant upon the parent-child relationship. This includes parental attachment over time and daily interactions in the home. Both of these factors play a role in children's identity development and their career aspirations. Using a secure parenting style, proactive parents help children learn to be autonomous and successful in shaping their own lives. They also transmit values about work and teach important lessons in decision making, work habits, conflict resolution, and communication skills, which are the foundation of career success. Parents' influence on career development stems from the continuous process of relationship with their children.

Conclusion and recommendation

This research paper concluded that parents serve as role model to their children and they are expected to teach and nurture them to adulthood, however, practices engaged in by parents in the upbringing of these children is also equally essential. The findings from the study projected that, students agreed to items raised on perceived parents' social status as determinants of students' career choice in secondary schools in Anambra state. In view of the conclusion, it was recommended that; students

should be taught career related subjects in secondary schools. Through this, their knowledge of a particular career pursuit will be widened and they can improve on any chosen career programme. More so, school administrators should collaborate with the government as well as industries to promote school-industry collaboration programmes. Through this, seminar and excursions will be organized and adolescents will acquire hands on experience in their chosen career path.

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