



THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON CAREER DECISION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU EAST SENATORIAL ZONE OF ENUGU STATE

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to look at the impact of personality characteristics on profession decisions among secondary school students in Enugu State, Nigeria. The survey design was used for the investigation. The research's sample of 200 kids was recruited from ten public schools in the study region using a stratified random selection procedure. The main data collecting instrument was the personality traits and students' career choices questionnaire (PTSCDQ), and the data obtained was analyzed using the independent t-test technique. At the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypotheses were tested. The findings suggested that attitude and perception personality characteristics had a substantial effect on secondary school students' profession decisions. Based on these and other findings, it was determined that students' profession choices are impacted not only by their parents and image models, but also by their attitude, perception, and individual attributes based on how they think about such careers. As a result, it was suggested that professional counselors, parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators work together to raise career knowledge and pay greater attention to the personality traits of attitude and perception demonstrated by students.

KEYWORDS: Personality Traits, Career Decision, Secondary School, Students Nigeria



INTRODUCTION

Students make career options at several points throughout their schooling experience. Some of them begin to make professional decisions throughout their secondary school education, as some occupational desires emerge by the time they enter their final year, but others have clear job aspirations and choices even before they enroll in school. Just as individual students' job choices varied, so do their associated qualities for such selections. Students' perceptions of a professional route, interest, self-concept, worry about a job, aptitude, and ability are all likely to affect these decisions.

In addition to these characteristics, the individual's intrinsic and extrinsic influences might influence the professional path he or she takes. Furthermore, some occupations have higher percentages of students admission than others, which influence career decisions. Another external aspect that impacts students' job selections is the individuals or role models in their lives and how they view these people. Parents, siblings, professors, counselors, and current employers are all examples of role models. Students may not have all of the knowledge they need about the job they want to pursue while deciding on a career. When a profession demanding more mathematics or science becomes available, a student who is underprepared and lacks the enthusiasm and competence for science may reconsider his selection and choose a more convenient vocation. Therefore, as counselors, appropriate information and tools that can help students in their decision are needed; these are career fairs, job shadowing, or internship and field trips. These expose students to different career fields and their hazards. Without this information and awareness, a lot of students go through college without knowing what career path they want and what is expected and involved in such a career (Anake et al., 2017).

Similarly, with the development of information technology, the onset of the post-industrial revolution, and employment competitiveness, career decisions have gotten more difficult. It was usual in the past for feudalism to turn one's profession into a family affair, with the son of a blacksmith bound to become a blacksmith and a nobleman born a leader. Industrialization and post-industrialization have enabled the average individual to become affluent as long as he or she possesses the necessary skills and information (Wattles, 2009). Wattles (2009) further observes that, today, one has not only to make due career planning but also exhaustive career research before making a career choice or decision, so as to adjust with the evolving socio-economic conditions.

Furthermore, most secondary school students lack reliable knowledge regarding vocational options, making it difficult for them to make good career selections. According to Kerka (2000), several variables impact professional decisions, including personality, interest, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support, and accessible resources such as knowledge and cash. According to McQuaid and Bond (2003), student career options are impacted by a variety of elements inherent in the person, including ethnic origin, year in school, degree of accomplishment, choice of science topics, attitudes, and disparities in work qualities. Based on these findings, the researcher was inspired to explore the impact of personality factors such as students' perception of a professional path, interest in a job, self-concept, ability, and attitude toward career on students' career decisions.



Statement of Problem

An individual is confronted with the question of occupational or job choice at various phases of development. Students in the secondary level, when required to make choices on their study programs leading to their prospective careers, seek help from their parents to select their careers, or teachers, career officers, or psychologists who offer career guidance to students as part of their dues. The importance of a professional selection may be appreciated by the impact it has on an individual's income, standard of living, social position, social connections, emotional health, and feelings of self-worth. Once selected, a career will almost certainly have an impact on an individual's life. Making appropriate professional selections entail reducing wastage of resources in school and training, that is, preventing one from moving from one occupation to another. Secondary school students lack enough knowledge on career development, thus their selections are based on their perceptions of the perfect profession and curriculum requirements. Students are seldom given information about the dangers and training. Similarly, students' personality qualities, how they interact with others, and their choices are frequently overlooked by parents and instructors leading to poor career choices and regrets. Thus, the purpose of this study is to assess the impact of personality characteristics on secondary school students' profession selections in Enugu East Local Government Area, Enugu State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students' Attitudes and Career Decision

Attitudes are the proclivity to react favorably or adversely, with worry or enthusiasm, to a specific concept, object, person, or situation. An individual's attitude determines their actions and reactions to challenges, motives, and rewards. Making a professional decision is an important phase in a student's career choice, and it is tied to an individual's mentality. According to Wendlandt and Rocholen (2008), the duties of this age group have become more complex since choosing a job provides distinct and unexpected problems. Many college graduates feel unprepared for the changed realities of the workforce as a result of these issues. This decision on the choice of career is accompanied by a number of activities, such as formal internships, jobs and volunteering which may affect their post-college decisions. The mentoring and counseling they receive as well as the skill-building they undergo during college could also affect their career decision-making in the future. To establish the impact of these activities on students' views and job choices, researchers looked into a variety of other factors, including personal demographic information (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001), family background (Harley, 2009; Greenbank, 2009), religion (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010), social stigma perception (Ludwikowski, Vogel & Armstrong, 2009), and students' attitudes about career decisions (Keiner, 2006).

Hartley (2009) investigated whether these assumptions are true for first-generation college students, in particular, the researcher found that negative career thought, certain vocational interest, and career indecision considered to be part of first-generation college students' identity actually do not differ from that of their college students. The views of Greenbank (2009) in his study disproved assumptions made about working-class students. These students are said to have a pessimistic view of life, low aspirations, and future goals, as well as a preference for



informal information sources rather than formal ones. Through in-depth interviews, researchers found that the majority of these qualities are not characteristics of working-class students. Hence, working-class students do have a preference for informal information sources which may be an indication of reluctance to seek help from career counselors.

Furthermore, Nyamwange (2016) in her study examines the influence of attitude on career choice decision among first-year university students in public and private universities in Kisii County, Kenya. To address the objective, the researcher utilized two hundred and ninety-six (296) first-year students selected from six universities. The respondents were selected using purposive as well as systematic sampling approaches within the descriptive survey design. They responded to a specially designed questionnaire and the data collected were analyzed descriptively using the statistical package for social science as the main tool of analysis. The result revealed that 272 (91.9%) of all respondents indicated that having prior knowledge of what a career entails is important to developing an interest in a career. It prepares an individual for job requirements, expectations, job personalities, and potential earnings or gains. Hence, the decision would be made based on the awareness, interest, ability, and skill acquired. In addition, prior knowledge acts as a lens through which one views and absorbs new information. It is compared to knowing where one wants to go before the start of a journey. The individual's attitude is motivated which leads to accomplishing goals and objectives and exploring one's interest.

Perception And Career Decision

In the workforce today, it is becoming more difficult for college graduates to get jobs in their field of specialization. They get discouraged and disappointed when entering the world of work where they cannot find a job related to their major area. Sometimes the economy limits the number of jobs available to recent college students (Nabi, 2003), as students may have to wait for a long period of time for a job in their chosen career, resulting in settling down for jobs that are lower paying and out of their interest. Employers, according to Lee (2008), are becoming more selective in their search for new employees, often acquiring more years of experience as a criterion.

Luzzo and McWhirter (2001) identified students' perceived barriers as another reason why students may experience difficulties in the transition to adulthood. The study found that women and ethnic minorities perceived more career related barriers than their male and European-American counterparts. Ethnic minorities also perceived that they have less self-efficacy to cope with career related barriers. Thus, there is discrepancy in the literature as to the relative importance of personality identity characteristics in the career search process which invariably influences decision.

In a study of business school students' career perceptions and choice decision by Hyuryoo (2012) at the David F. Miller Centre for Retailing Education and Research, University of Florida (UF), a total of 162 business students participated in the study; most of the participants were juniors (41.9%) and seniors (51.0%). The study was aimed at understanding the students' career expectations, their perceptions of retailing careers and the factors that determine their career choice. Email invitations soliciting participation in the career choice study were sent out to all business school students at the university. As an incentive, \$25 was provided to 20 participants who best answered an estimated score for a Gator football game. A total of 186 business students responded to the email invitation and 162 students completed the internet



survey. As expected, students who participated in the study were mostly juniors and seniors, who might have seriously thought about their career upon graduation. Freshmen and sophomores consist of only 7.1% of the sample. The findings of this study indicated that UF students have a more positive attitude toward retail career than student's perception in previous studies; retailers need to keep working on disproving negative retail career images such as dullness and boringness. It further showed that in general, degree related curriculum materials, work experience and exposures to firms on campus were the three most influential sources affecting students' career decision. Finally, attitude and perception (personality traits) enumerated in this study have been found to be of great influence on students' career decision on previous studies reviewed. The researchers are therefore faced with the responsibility of investigating whether or not the same findings could be obtained in the area of study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Carl Jung's Personality Type Theory

Carl Jung's personality type theory, published in 1921, is connected to this research. He believes that attitude is a person's proclivity to act in a specific way and that there are two opposing attitudes, extroversion and introversion, which are commonly reflected in a person's inner world rather than his or her surroundings. The extrovert pays greater attention to what is going on outside of his inner world. His inner cognitive processes are frequently pushed aside as he is impacted by his surroundings. For this type of individual, objectivity is more important than subjectivity. Carl identified four key personality functions, which he listed as follows:

1. Feeling: This is the recognition of the value of one's conscious acts;
2. Thinking: This causes a person to discover the significance of something;
3. Sensation: This lets the person realize that something exists; and
4. Intuition: This means knowing about something without a cognitive grasp of where that information came from.

In summation, when these four functions are joined with one of the two attitudes, the outcome is eight distinct varieties of personality. These personalities then influence the manner and quality of a person's actions, especially job decisions. The foundations of this theory are pertinent to this study since they highlight an individual's capacity to make suitable professional decisions without being influenced by variables outside of himself while being aware of those external effects.

METHODOLOGY

Enugu state, Nigeria, is the location of the research. There are eight (8) selected communities in the region. The study's target audience consists of 16 public secondary schools throughout the state. As of the 2019/2020 academic year, the overall enrolment in these institutions was 8,716 pupils, with 4,624 in the junior section and 4,092 in the senior secondary school (SS 1 - 1,604, SS 2 - 1,385 and SS 3 - 1,103). To represent the research's available population, the study was restricted to just senior secondary class two (SS 2).



The survey research design was used for the investigation. The study's ten schools were chosen using a basic random selection procedure. Using 14.5 percent of the total senior secondary class two (SS 2) students in the area, a total of 200 SS2 students from the 10 sampled schools were chosen for the study; with an average age of 17 years and of both sexes.

The questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents for the study. This was divided into two sections: section A sorted information on respondents' personal data, and section B was based on a 20-item, four-point likert scale questionnaire divided into two parts. Part 1 focuses on students' perspectives on personality qualities (attitude and perception). Part 2 focuses on student responses to career selections.

The suitability of the instrument's content was confirmed through content and construct validity by measurement, assessment, and psychology experts who evaluated the questions and variables under research and made modifications before administering the instrument. The test retest reliability approach was used to assess the instrument's dependability. The produced data was used to calculate the reliability coefficient, which varied from 0.60 to 0.87, showing that the instrument was reliable in measuring the variables under inquiry. The instrument was administered with the assistance of research assistants at the selected schools, and a complete collection of the questionnaire was obtained with careful monitoring and completion.

RESULTS

The study's findings were based on hypotheses tested at the .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: Students' attitudes do not significantly impact secondary school students' profession choices. Students' attitudes are the independent variable, whereas career decisions are the dependent variable. The independent t-test technique was used to assess the hypothesis. The analysis findings are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of students' attitudes and career decisions among secondary school students

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-Value
Students' Attitude	200	20.62	3.16	198	8.70
Career Decision	200	17.33	2.06		

* P < 0.05 level; df = 198; critical t-value = 1.978

The computed t-value of 8.70 is more than the crucial t-value of 1.978 evaluated at a 0.05 level of significance with 198 degrees of freedom, as shown in Table 1. As a consequence, all null hypotheses are rejected, indicating that students' attitudes have a considerable effect on professional decisions among secondary school students.

Hypothesis 2: Students' perceptions have no major impact on job decisions among secondary school students. The perception of students was the independent variable, while the choice was the dependent variable. The hypothesis was investigated using an independent t-test analysis, and the findings are shown in table 2 below.



Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of students' perception and career decision among secondary school students

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-Value
Students' Attitude	200	20.47	3.02	198	8.57
Career Decision	200	17.33	2.06		

* P < 0.05 level; df = 198; critical t-value = 1.978

The computed t-value of 8.57, as shown in Table 2, is more than the critical t-value of 1.978 tested at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degrees of freedom. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was retained, indicating that students' perceptions had a considerable effect on profession selections among secondary school students.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The discussion of the findings of this study was based on the result of the analysis of data from the research conducted under the following:

A. Students' attitude and career decision among secondary school students

The examination of data on the effect of students' attitudes on career decisions among secondary school students revealed that students' attitudes had a considerable influence on career decisions. The findings are consistent with those of Nyamwange (2016), who investigated the impact of attitude on job choice decisions among first-year university students in public and private institutions in Kisii County, Kenya. She discovered that having prior knowledge of what a vocation requires is crucial in building a good attitude and enthusiasm in a career for 272 (91.9 percent) of all respondents. The findings were also consistent with the observations and reports of Wendlandt and Rochlen (2008), who noted and reported that the task in this age group has become more complex since the choice of a vocation provides unique and unexpected problems. Many college graduates may feel unprepared for the changed realities of the workforce as a result of these issues.

B. Students' perception and career decision among secondary school students

The result of the hypotheses indicated that students' perception has a significant influence on career decisions among secondary school students, which is consistent with the findings of Hyunjoo (2012). A total of 162 business students participated in the study, with the majority of the participants being juniors (41.9 percent) and seniors (51.0 percent). The study sought to better understand the students' career aspirations, perceptions of retailing occupations, and the variables that influence their career decision. According to the conclusions of this survey, while UF students appear to have a more positive attitude about retail careers than students' impressions in earlier studies, retailers must continue to concentrate on disproving negative retail profession stereotypes such as tedious, monotonous, and routine. Overall, research demonstrates that degree-related curricular content, job experience, and exposure to companies on campus were the three most significant elements influencing students' career choices. However, in order of relevance, exposure to companies on campus through information sessions and guest speakers, past or present employer, and personal experience as a customer were the sources that positively influenced interest in pursuing retail professions.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following counseling suggestions were provided based on the findings and results:

1. Because personality factors like attitude and perception impact job decisions, the counselor and school administrator should foster positive student-counselor/teacher relationships. This would assist students in assessing themselves and making proper career decisions based on their talents, interests, skills, and attitude toward their job when necessary.
2. Ample knowledge about professional concerns and occupations should be gathered. This career information must be refreshed in the future to reflect current conditions and needs for various occupations and specialties.
3. Counselors and others involved in teaching and learning should strive to pay more attention to the personality traits displayed by students, as well as their attitude and perception on career decisions through their actions and desires, and to provide them with learning experiences that will encourage the development of a positive attitude and approach towards their career aspirations.
4. Counselors should also be assigned to all secondary schools in the research region. This will make students, parents, and instructors aware of career counseling and workforce information.
5. The professional career counselor should advise, direct, help, and keep student's parents and instructors up to speed on job availability, fundamental subject combinations, and related occupations. This will allow students to understand the fundamental courses that they must master and pass at the credit level before enrolling in higher education.

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