

Full Length Research Paper

Factors affecting career development of senior secondary school students in Ethiope east local government area, Delta state, Nigeria

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This study investigated some of the factors influencing career development of senior secondary school students in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State. The study used senior secondary school students because they are at the critical stage of career decision making process. Relevant literatures that were related to the study were reviewed. The problem of the study is that some senior secondary school students are not able to make appropriate career choices. In order to be able to measure the variables for the study, four research questions were developed. Simple percentage was used to analyze the response to the instrument. The findings from the study indicated that career counseling is required for appropriate career development. Some of the factors that were observed to affect career development include psychological, sociological, educational, hereditary, and economic factors. These play significant role in the career decision making process of secondary school students.

Keywords: Career, Development, Students, Secondary School.

INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a helping relationship in which one person endeavours to help another solve his/her adjustment problems (English and English, 1971, cited in Okobiah and Okorodudu, 2004). This helping relationship originated from the very discovery that young people need to be guided in their career decision-making process. Okobiah and Okorodudu (2004) emphasise that counselling is a person-to-person process in which one person (the counselee) is helped by another person (the counsellor) to develop, increase in understanding and ability to solve his/her adjustment problems. They explained further that counselling requires a wide range of activities which should start from the infant stage of the child designed to aid individuals in solving their problems. The problems referred to in counselling are mostly those of decision-making and developmental problems. One of the benefits of counselling is that it helps the individual to develop, sustain a career and be adjusted in life.

Career, according to Okobiah and Okorodudu (2004), refers to a variety of work and non-work situations which usually span through the entire life of an individual. According to them, career is generally related to a pattern of decision, transaction and adjustments which affects one's role in work, education, family, community development and leisure. The National Career Development Association NCDA (2003) stated that "career is the totality of work – paid and unpaid – one does in his/her lifetime". Thus, career embraces a sequence of positions, jobs or occupations which an individual holds during his/her life time.

Career counselling is a field of counselling which gives relevant information regarding different careers. It is a process of helping and enabling people in their career development. Career counselling helps the students to select their careers according to their choices and interests. Career counselling is now being increasingly stressed as an integral part of education. According to Francis (2010), career counselling involves three steps, which are: self analysis, occupational analysis, and true reasoning or counselling to relate personal and occupational information.

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Furthermore, Tuckman (1974) sees career development as “a process which enhances a person’s ability to develop and become aware of concepts about himself, develop and become aware of his environment, including occupations, and make career choices”. It is noteworthy that Tuckman’s definition of career development addressed three primary areas which included self-awareness, career awareness, and career decision-making.

The National Career Development Association NCDA (2003) defined career development as “the absolute conglomeration or constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and chance factors which influence the nature and significance of work in the total lifespan of any given individual. It is a process by which individuals choose a career path or occupation, continue to develop in it throughout their lives, and have several major career changes as personal needs and interests change.

Drawing from the above definition of career development given by National Career Development Association NCDA (2003), it is obvious that there are various factors that need to be considered in the quest for appropriate career development, which has been categorised as ‘psychological’, ‘sociological’, ‘educational’, ‘physical’, ‘economic’, and ‘chance’ factors. A thorough study of these factors should reveal a highway towards appropriate career development.

In career development, individuals (counselees and counsellors) need to consider psychological factors such as interest, prestige, personality, values, norms, self-esteem, and all other factors that could be products of the mind or mental functions of the individual. It should be understood that these factors have been impressed on the mentality of the individual from other factors but have become a part of the reasoning and mind set of the individual. For instance, an individual’s interest would either make him/her to do something or not, even if he/she has the ability to do it. These factors could be categorised as psychological factors because psychology is a person’s mentality, way of thinking or mental characteristics/features. Furthermore, a person’s way of reasoning may have been developed genetically or sociologically.

Sociological factors that affect career development include peer groups, role models, mentors, social networks, socio-economic status of parents and family influences considering that sociology is the study of characteristics and behaviours of individuals in association or group. These group behaviours affect career development to a great extent. For instance, a child could develop interest in a particular career because the parents have laid the foundation for him, or rather because he has loved ones in that career and would not love to miss them or stay far from them.

Okorodudu (2006) opined that the family is the first contact of the child in this world, and that interaction of

the child with members of the family which include father, mother, siblings and other relations, does internalise certain values, ideals, norms, and develop a sense of career in the child. Thus the first course of career development starts with the child at the family level, and it is always the primary duty of the family to develop and internalise a sense of career in the child. The National Career Development Association NCDA (2003) recognised this fact hence it advocates the home as where the positive societal contributions of all honest work can and should first be communicated to children. The National Career Development Association NCDA (2003) policy advocates the family as a workplace and all members of the family as workers, and that within the home and family structure, pre-school age children can first be exposed to true work experiences as family members try to do something that will be helpful to other members of the family. A solid foundation of career development at the family level is a good start-off in career development at all levels.

Economically, factors that affect career development include poverty, needs, wants, demands, and other factors that could be products of economic activities in the community. The individual may choose a career because of the needs of the society or his own personal needs. Here, his interest may not come into play, all he/she needs is to satisfy his needs and survive in the society. For instance, an individual that has suffered financial predicament may want to choose a career or job that pays financially at the expense of personal satisfaction which work provides.

Educationally, factors that affect career development include skills, experience, knowledge, information, and other factors that could be products of teaching and learning. This is because educational experiences that the individual has been exposed to could also act as an influential factor in career development. These educational experiences could be formal or informal. The informal education could be referred to educational experiences outside the four walls of a school. Formally, at the nursery, primary and secondary school levels, teachers and school staff do form partnership with parents to solidify the career development foundation that has already been inculcated in an individual at the family level (NCDA, 2003). It stated further that for teachers and counsellors to continue career development of the individual, some activities may be appropriate and vital, which include making the classroom a work place; teaching/reinforcing productive work habits; helping pupils understand career applications of subject matter; using community resource persons to emphasise both work and occupations; emphasising career awareness but not specific occupational choices; and reducing bias in career awareness.

According to Ajaero (2010), many secondary schools now offer a career week to address personal career development issues which is a continuation of the career

day. One or two days of the week is dedicated to introducing seniors to career options by seasoned professionals in the community. The rest of the career week is dedicated to assessments much like those offered by personal career development coaches. Furthermore, personal career development assessments allow secondary school students to explore their interests, values, strengths, and weaknesses. Once the secondary school students have completed the personal career development assessments and explored career options, each secondary school student ought to engage in a personal career development interview with a secondary school counsellor or personal career development coach. According to NCDA (2003), this interview allows the student to fully explore and discuss career options, and make a decision about the path that he/she wants his/her career to take. The counsellor or personal career development coach then provides the secondary school student with several resources to help them start on their path to personal career development.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The problem of the study is that some secondary school adolescent students are not able to make appropriate career choices due to a number of factors that affect their career development process. Such factors include psychological, sociological, physical, economic, educational and chance factors. This study investigated the relationship of these factors to the career development process of the secondary school students in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent is career counselling required for career development of secondary schools students?
2. To what extent will environmental factors affect career development of secondary school students?
3. To what extent will hereditary factors affect career development of secondary school students?
4. To what extent will educational factors affect career development of secondary school students?

RESEARCH METHOD

Design

The study used a descriptive survey method which systematically collects, organises, analyses and interprets data on a given population. This design is not interested in stating or testing hypotheses or carrying out experiments.

Population

The study comprised of two thousand five hundred and fifty-six (2,556) students in the twenty-four (24) senior secondary schools in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State. *Culturally the*

population being used for the study belong to the Urhobo tribe in the Niger Delta region. It is a semi-rural urban population. Majority of the people are farmers while a handful of them work in government offices and still others are private business men and women. It will be worthy of note the students being studied generally aspire to work in government offices and private firms and not in the farms.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. 20 students were selected from each of the five schools which gave a total of 100 students for the study.

Research Instrument

The instrument for the study is a questionnaire titled: FACTORS AFFECTING CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (FACDQ). The instrument is made up of two sections. Section A comprised of items that addressed the demographic variables of the subjects, otherwise known as personal data, while section B comprised of items graduated on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) to elicit responses on factors affecting career development among senior secondary school students. To ensure validity of the instrument, the instrument was subjected to scrutiny by experts in counselling and lecturers in the Department of Guidance and Counselling. For its effect and efficiency, the researchers personally administered and retrieved the copies of the instrument.

Data analysis

Data gathered in the study were tabulated against each of the items of the instrument, using simple percentages. The positive responses comprised the Strongly Agreed (SA) and Agreed (A), while the negative responses comprised Strongly Disagreed and Disagreed (D).

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent is career counselling required for career development?

From the data presented in table 1, responses to items 1.2.3.4 and 5 indicated a percentage value of 60percent on the positive side. This means that counsellors, parents, teachers, mentors and friends are significant agents for career development. However, from the data presented above, responses presented to items 6, 7, 8, and 9 have a percentage value of over 50 percent on the negative side. This means that the school authorities do not see career week, career day, field trips, vocational counselling as important activities that encourage career development.

Research Question 2: To what extent will environmental factors affect career development of secondary school students?

From the data presented in table 2, responses to items

Table 1. Percentage analysis of the effect of career counselling on career development

S/N.	ITEMS	Positive Responses	Negative Responses
1.	Career counselling is required for appropriate career development.	90%	10%
2.	Informal counselling should come from parents because formal counselling alone is not adequate for appropriate career development.	91%	9%
3.	Informal counselling should come from teachers because career counselling alone is not adequate for appropriate career development.	80%	20%
4.	Informal counselling should come from friends because career counselling alone is not adequate for appropriate career development.	87%	13%
5.	Informal counselling should come from mentors because career counselling alone is not adequate for appropriate career development.	70%	30%
6.	The school authority sees career counselling as necessary hence it organises career week in favour of appropriate career development.	15%	85%
7.	The school authority sees career counselling as necessary hence it organises career day in favour of appropriate career development.	37%	63%
8.	The school authority sees career counselling as necessary hence it organises field trips in favour of appropriate career development.	27%	63
9.	The school authority sees career counselling as necessary hence it organises vocational counselling in favour of appropriate career development.	17%	83%

Table 2. Percentage analysis of environmental factors affecting career development

S/N.	ITEMS	Positive Responses	Negative Responses
Psychological Factors			
10.	Interest affects career development.	91%	9%
11.	Prestige affects career development.	75%	25%
12.	Personality affects career development.	88%	12%
13.	Norms and values affect career development.	45%	55%
14.	Self-esteem affects career development.	60%)	40%
Chance Factors			
15.	Opportunities affect career development.	25%	75%
16.	Privileges affect career development.	35%	65%
Sociological Factors			
17.	Peer group affects career development.	65%	35%
18.	Role models affect career development.	29%	71%
19.	Mentors affect career development.	77%	23%
20.	Social groups affect career development.	43%	57%
21.	Governmental policies affect career development.	57%	43%
22.	Political associations affect career development.	30%	70%
23.	Socio-economic status of parents affects career development.	59%	41%
24.	Tribal sentiments affect career development.	38%	62%
25.	Position of individual in the family affects career development.	32%	68%
26.	Family affects career development.	48%	52%
27.	Age of the individual affects career development.	32%	68%
Economic Factors			
28.	Poverty affects career development.	87%	13%
29.	Wealth affects career development.	343%	57%
30.	Needs affect career development.	70%	30%
31.	Demands affect career development.	61%	39%
32.	Wants affect career development.	71%	29%

Table 3. Percentage analysis of hereditary Factors that affect career development

S/N.	ITEMS	Positive Responses	Negative Responses
33.	Physique (physical appearance) affects career development.	58%	42%
34.	Aptitude affects career development.	59%	41%

Table 4. Percentage analysis of educational factors affecting career development.

S/N.	ITEMS	Positive Responses	Negative Responses
35.	Educational status of parents affects career development.	27%	73%
36.	Position of students in schools affects career development.	55%	45%
37.	Educational status of peers affects career development.	27%	73%
38.	Skills affect career development.	58%	42%
39.	Experience affects career development.	45%	55%
40.	Knowledge about a particular occupation affects career development.	29%	71%
41.	Lack of Information about a particular occupation affects career development.	45%	55%

10, 11, 12, and 14 indicated a percentage value of over 60 percent on the positive side. This means that psychological factors in terms of interest, prestige, personality, self esteem, play a significant role in career development. However, from the above, responses to items 15 and 16 have percentage value of over 60 percent on the negative. This means that chance factors like opportunities and privileges do not play a significant role in career development of secondary school students. Further more, from the data presented in table 2 above, items 17, 19, 21, and 23 indicated a percentage value of over 50 percent on the positive side. This means that, sociological factors like peer groups, mentors, governmental policies are important in career development. However, responses to items 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27 have percentage value of over 50 percent on the negative side. This means that factors like role models, social groups, political associations, tribal sentiments, family, age, do not play a significant role in career development. of secondary school students.

Finally, analysis of economic factors revealed that items 28,30, 31 and 32 have a percentage value of over 60 percent on the positive side. This means that factors like poverty, needs, demands, wants, affect career development of secondary school students. However, response to item 29 indicated a percentage value of over 50 percent on the negative side. This means that wealth of parents does affect career development of their children significantly.

From the data presented in table 3 above indicated that responses to items 33 and 34 revealed a percentage value of over 50 percent on the positive side. This means that, hereditary factors like physical appearances, and aptitude affects career development of secondary school students significantly.

From the table 4 above, responses to items 36 and 38 indicated a percentage value of over 50 percent on the positive side. This means that educational factors like status and skills of the individual affect career development of secondary school students significantly. However, response to items 35, 37, 39, 40, 41 have a percentage value of over 50 percent on the negative side. This means that educational status of parents, peers, experience of students, knowledge and lack of information concerning a particular career do not affect career development of secondary school students.

DISCUSSION

The findings from research question one stated that parents, teachers, friends and mentors are important agents for career development. While it was also observed that school authorities do not encourage career day, career week, field trips and vocational counselling as important activities for career development, because of the absence of these activities in the school system. A possible explanation for the above results is that students look up to parents, teachers, guidance counsellors as mentors who could suggest to them possible careers that they can pursue in life. On the other hand, it is not surprising to observe that school authorities do not encourage career activities that support students career development because of the absence of guidance counsellors in schools and non utilization of guidance counsellors where they are present. The study of Okorodudu (2006), NCDA (2003), and Ajaero (2010) supports the position that parents, teachers, counsellors, and mentors are important agents for career development of secondary school students.

Research question two revealed that psychological, sociological and economic factors affect career development of secondary school students significantly. The studies of Francis (2010) and NCDA (2003) support the above findings. This means that for the average secondary school student, issues of psychological, sociological and economics affect them in their career development.

Further more, the findings for research question three stated that hereditary factors affect career development of secondary school students. This means that physical appearance and aptitude affect the career development of secondary school students. The reason is that certain careers require some specific physical appearance either in the form of size or one's capability.

Finally, the findings of research question four stated that educational factors affect career development of secondary school students. This means that a student's position in school and skills acquired affect career development significantly. Tuckman (1974) support the above position when he stated that career development is a process which enhances a person's ability to develop and become aware of concepts about himself and his environment, including occupations and make career choices.

CONCLUSION

From all that has been discussed, it has become obvious that there are some factors which affect career development. Some of these factors include psychological factors (interest, prestige, personality and self esteem), sociological factors (peer group, mentors, governmental policies and socio-economic status of parents), economic factors (poverty, needs, demands and wants), hereditary factors (physical appearance and aptitude) and educational factors (position of students in schools and acquired skills). Guidance counsellors therefore should be aware of these factors as they provide vocational counselling for secondary school students.

Besides the above it was also observed that career counselling is very significant for career development of secondary school students. This is because the average secondary school adolescent student needs help to be able to make appropriate career choice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study it could therefore be recommended that:

1. Career development should be seen as inevitable to the happiness and self-actualisation of the child and as such, the home, classroom and the community at large should be seen as a workplace and all members as workers (NCDA, 2003);

2. Career counselling should be seen as imperative to appropriate career development and as such should be given priority in school administration;

3. Considering the importance of counselling, parents, teachers, friends, mentors and all capable members of the community should act as support groups, for appropriate career development;

4. Professional counsellors or otherwise, should harness discriminately, the factors highlighted in this study for counselling students with respect to appropriate career development.

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