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The interaction of sex with career day on the career decision making of secondary school adolescent students

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The study investigated the interaction of sex with career day on the career decision making of secondary school adolescents. It reviewed relevant literatures on and the process of making career decisions and also on career day outcome. Three hypotheses were developed for the study which was an experimental study that had an experimental and a control group. 120 students were randomly selected from two secondary schools in Uvwie Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. The Career Decision Making Process scale which measures awareness of career indecision and commitment to make a decision, personal interests, needs and abilities of adolescent students, information about occupational prospects, making a career decision by arranging alternatives in an order of priority and implementing a career decision was used to collect data from the subjects. The treatment package was the career day. Analysis of data revealed that career day had significant impact on the career decision making of the adolescent students. However, sex was not a significant factor and had no effect on the decision making process of the adolescent students. It was therefore concluded that whether one is male or female does not matter today in making a career choice. Therefore, career day remains a good intervention strategy for career information and awareness.

Keywords: Career day, sex, career decision making, adolescent students.

INTRODUCTION

Researches have shown that educational issues and future vocational decisions are of great importance to adolescents. (Violato and Holden, 1988; Friedman, 1991, Egbochuku, 1997). The significant developmental process that takes place during adolescence results in improved cognitive abilities, which enhance decision-making capabilities. There are other factors that can influence appropriate career decision of adolescent students. Among these factors are family typology, self-concept, and gender. These are some factors that the adolescent relates to daily decisions and which have the capacity of influencing his/her career decision. Thus as the need to make significant decisions arises during adolescence, the ability to make them may develop as well. There are some treatments that could enhance the decision-making process of Nigerian adolescents. Among these are, career day and reciprocal peer tutoring.

Gender is a factor that has been known to affect the nature of career decision that students make. The studies of Emenyonu (1994) observed that there is a perceived restriction in the kind of career that girls were opportuned to choose. According to him, such careers excluded some of the technical, scienctific and professional occupations. If any girl, for example, were to study mechanical engineering, she was looked upon to be out of place in such occupation. This situation, according to him, can be a hindrance in girls' career decision-making. The differences in genders are very fundamental to the way an individual perceives himself or herself. These are emphasized from the moment of birth. Men and women play different roles in the society and such roles affect the way they perceive themselves and make career decisions (Obimba, 2000).

The phenomenon has been evaluated from different perspectives in terms of how they affect career decision-making over the years. The factor creates a stereotype which affects the decision-making process of adolescents. The phenomenon explains the fundamental differences in perception between male and female. People grow up to perceive themselves as either male or female. There are fundamental biological differences that exist in people.

The role orientation or stereotype has been identified to begin from childhood. The studies of Looft (1971), Phipps (1995), and Riley (1981) have identified early childhood gender orientation among youngsters.

When a child is born, the first question that is asked is if the child is male or female. From then on parental attitudes and expectations are tailored along that line. The children are expected to behave according to their respective es. Toys, clothes, subtle differences, parental attitudes all reinforce the values the of the child imposes on the individual. All of these contribute to the development of gender role stereotype. (Pringle, 1974)

Helwig (1998) using Kohlber's (1966) cognitive development theory, explained the impact of role development. Kohlberg believed that children had to acquire certain awareness and understanding about before their social experiences would influence them. identity according to him is developed at the age of three at which time the child is able to understand that he/she is either male or female. stability will occur later when the boy believes that he will be a man, and the girl believes that she will be a woman. Kohlberg went further to state that between the ages of 5 and 7, the child develops gender consistency, which is the belief that their will not change even though they may engage in cross activities. (Sigelman and Shaffer, 1995).

The social learning theory of Bandura (1986) has also been used to explain role stereotyping of careers by young people. Through differential reinforcement by parents, teachers, and older adults, boys and girls are taught to do boy and girl things, to pursue gender appropriate subjects, and to aspire to occupations that fit their own gender. (Sigelman and Shaffer,1995). Observational learning and imitation, and modelling have also been presented to account for why children tend to choose stereotypical occupations. (Franken, 1983, and Reid, 1995) in Helwig, (1998).

Again Helwig (1998) applied Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise (1981; 1996). Circumscription of career choice refers to one's perception of the type of jobs, prestige level of job, and the amount of effort necessary to attain an occupation. Compromise signifies job accessibility and the need to adjust the implementation of one's career choice.

Gottfredson (1996) used Super's theory of self-concept to explain career development and its relationship to stereotyping. He identified four stages of career development.

1. Three to five years: The orientation during this period is to size and power both of which they lack. They become aware of gender differences.

2. Six to eight years: The orientation here is to roles. Here they begin to associate gender with career. If they are asked to pick, they will necessarily pick an occupation of their own. Thus the circumscription process begins at this young stage.

3. Nine to thirteen years: The focus here is on values and the orientation is to social values and intelligence differences. They become aware of occupational status and social prestige. They pick occupations at their own level of social status. They also realise that the intellectual requirements of some occupations may be greater than they can handle. Here the compromise element begins to manifest.

4. Fourteen years and above: Here individuals choose careers that reflect their internal unique values. Here interest and personality factors guide the adolescent and older adults in their career decision.

Career decision-making for Gottfredson (1981; 1996) is influenced in an individual by perception of , social values and intelligence, and unique internal traits. Another implication from his theoretical development is that plays more significant role at a younger stage, while social values, prestige, and personality traits becomes more influential at later stages.

Some studies have identified differences in the career decision-making of males and females. Unlike women, men are not inhibited in anyway because of their gender in making career decision. Cultural expectations have also been known to be responsible for gender differences in career decision-making. Girls and women who tend to compete with male partners in academic and certain occupations are perceived to be less feminine. This discouraging social expectation makes gender influence in career decision-making significant. However with the growth of feminist movement across the globe, such influences of cultural biases and social expectations are beginning to lose their grip.

Men and women play different roles in the society. Such roles, which have been assigned to them by the society, have been observed to be part and parcel of their developmental process. The implication is that roles are to some extent dictated by cultural practices and child rearing patterns. The position here is that children learn from observation and imitation of adult roles in the society. In this way children learn traditionally accepted roles, which are gender stereotyped.

Another determining factor of stereotyping is occupational role perception. This is perception of the roles performed in a work setting by men or women. This role expectation affects career decision-making**.**

Stockard and McGee (1990) carried a study where they asked a group of young people in school about their preferences for 21 occupations, and the most powerful predictor of the preferred occupation was . Students' perceptions of other occupational characteristics such as earnings, importance, etc., were poor predictors of career choice. In another study of younger children in school, Franken, (1983) found that role stereotyping was greater at the younger ages and more for boys than girls. She suggested that role models were influential on students' career decision-making process.

A study of career choices and how they relate to personal and family variables was carried out by Sandberg, Enrhardt, Ince, and Meyer Bahlburg (1991). The purpose of the study was to determine whether career choices were influenced by the factor. That is, if males and females select different jobs because of their perceived gender roles. The study was carried in two stages. The first one was when the subjects were between the ages of 8 to 13 and the second stage was the same subjects were between ages of 13 to 18. They observed that the choices of the boys were typed at both stages, while girls' choices were not necessarily typed. This is because the girls chose male dominated jobs.

Lightbody and Durnell (1996) investigated the career aspirations of students to identify the differences in the career aspirations of males and females. Subjects were presented with a 34-item Q sample cards relating to career choice. No significant level of discrimination was found among the subjects.

Career day is a programme of activities that is organised in school with the sole purpose of providing career information to students. During the career day, experts from various fields are invited to talk on their various careers in terms of the advantages, disadvantages and requirements for entering such occupations. Such programme of activities brings public relation to the schools in terms of bringing to the knowledge of the public what such schools have to offer. It also broadens the horizons of such students by making them aware of occupational opportunities. This will enable the students to make comparisons in the process of making career decisions. Career day, or conference as the case may be, could impact positively on the career decision-making process of the participating students if it is well organised.

Several studies have used career day to enhance the career decision-making of Nigerian adolescents (Egbochuku, 1997, Agulana, 1985). Agulana conducted a study to find out the effects of career conference on the career choice competencies of secondary school students. The study revealed that exposure to career conference yielded higher scores from subjects on occupational information and planning measures. Also a study of differential effectiveness of three guidance techniques in fostering career maturity among secondary school adolescents by Egbochuku (1997) revealed that career day was significant in fostering career maturity among the population studied.

The problem

The developmental tasks during this stage are very often difficult and challenging. One of such developmental task is the need to make a career decision. There are so many factors that make the task of making a career decision very difficult for the secondary school adolescent student. One of such factors is the unemployment situation in the country today. In a world of uncertainty as ours where adolescents see adults who constantly loose their jobs with no hope of getting them replaced immediately, and the resultant struggle to make ends meet as they strive to meet the rising cost of living, makes the task of making a career decision problematic. The problem that emanates from the above situation is the question as to which career can they choose that will guarantee employment. This way of thinking has been observed to take them away from their primary area of interest and competence. This makes the career decision making process difficult.

The purpose of the study therefore was to find out the extent to which the interaction of sex and career day will affect the career decision making process of secondary school adolescent students.

HYPOTHESES

1. There will be no significant difference in the career decision-making of adolescents belonging to treatment group and control group in their career decision-making.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female adolescent students in treatment groups in their career decision-making.
3. There is no significant interactive effect of treatment by of adolescent students in treatment groups in their career decision-making.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design of study

The design of the study is quasi-experimental in nature. The study consists of three independent variables which are, career day and the control group. The dependent variable is career decision making. The purpose was to find out the degree to which the interaction of gender and career day will affect the career decision making of secondary school adolescents.

Design over variables

Population

The population of this study consisted of Senior Secondary School adolescents in Uvwie Local Government Area of Delta State. The Senior Secondary School adolescent were selected because it was thought that they were at the stage of selecting subjects that are pre occupational in nature.

Sampling and sampling technique

Two secondary schools were randomly selected from the secondary schools in Uvwie Local Government Area, Delta State using the simple random sampling technique. There are 14 Government owned secondary schools in the Local Government

Area. In each of the two schools, two groups of 30 students were randomly selected for each of the treatment packages from SSS II for the study giving a total of 120 students for the study.

Instrument

This study consists of one research instrument and one treatment packages. The instrument is the Career Decision Making Process Scale (CDMPS), while the treatment package was career day.

Career Decision-Making Process Scale (CDMPS)

Career decision-making process consists of the following components, which are very crucial to the process of making a career choice for the adolescent. The components are:

1. awareness of career indecision and commitment to make a career decision.
2. studying the social, economic, and geographic environment.
3. studying personal interests, needs, abilities, and work values.
4. creating occupational prospects, options, or alternatives.
5. collecting information about occupational prospects.
6. making career decisions by arranging alternatives in an order of priority.
7. implementing a career decision through training and education, work experience, getting job leads, writing resumes and cover letters, completing applications, researching work places, and conducting interviews

The Career Decision-making Scale was designed by the researcher to measure the adolescent's ability for realistic career decision based on the above major components The scale measured items covering the following areas of career decision-making; career planning, orientation, awareness, use of resources, knowledge of the world of works, knowledge of the principles of career decision-making. The instrument also measured issues of lack of motivation to engage in career decision-making, general indecisiveness concerning all types of decisions and dysfunctional beliefs. Finally the instrument also measured facilitators and barriers to career decision-making. The responses to the items were in a five point Likert Scale format ranging from most like me, like me, undecided, not like me, to most not like me. The instrument had 40 items which covered the various aspects of career decision making process.

In order to ensure the validity of the scores from the instrument, the intial questionnaire design was given to three experts in the field, and modifications were made based on their suggestions. The modified work was further subjected to the researcher supervisors' scrutiny for final correction and modifications. It was finally approved that the instrument measured what it was suppose to measure.

To further establish the reliability of the instrument, the researcher carried out a pilot test using the split half technique. The split half reliability coefficient method is a measure of internal consistency. The questionnaire was administered to 30 respondents at the Delta State Demonstration Secondary School, Abraka. The questionnaire was separated into odd and even numbers and administered to the selected students. To establish the reliability, the scores from the two halves were correlated using the perason-product moment correlation coefficient (r) which gave a value of 0.67. This was then used in determining the relationship between the two halves of paired scores. Since the reliability coefficient was determined by correlating the scores of the two halves test, the Spearman Brown Prophecy formula was then applied to establish the reliability of the scores. The reliability coefficient for the whole instrument was then found to be 0.77.

Career day

Career day was organised to provide vocational guidance information of supplementary or preliminary nature to students to enable them make appropriate career decisions. For the purpose of this study, most frequently chosen careers by secondary school adolescent students as they aspire to pre-vocational choices in their selection of subjects have been grouped into five clusters. This grouping is adapted from the Occupation Clusters Preference Scale (Obiunu, 2003). The five clusters are, persuasive, medical, scientific, teaching, and engineering.

Persuasive cluster addressed issues around the legal profession, marketing, counselling, broadcasting and reporting, news writing, public relation workers, etc. Medical cluster addressed medicine, dentistry, ophthalmology, pharmacy, physiotherapy, biochemistry, laboratory technology, etc. Scientific cluster addressed agriculture, banking and finance, environmental science, administration, secretarial studies, business, town planning, etc. Teaching addressed different departments in the teaching profession. Engineering cluster addressed the different occupations under engineering which includes the following; automobile, aeronautic, mechanical, computer, electrical, and building engineering, etc.

Five resource persons were invited to give talks on each of the clusters. Each of the resource persons was given the following outline to guide them in their presentations.

- Descriptions of occupations
- Examples of services performed
- Wages
- Duration of working time
- Working environment
- , self-concept, and parenting style issues as they affect the work environment
- Preferred age of entry
- Educational requirement
- Senior secondary school subjects that are related to the occupations being discussed
- Recreational activities that may be related to the occupations being discussed
- Physical ability and attitudes
- Career planning
- Career decision-making elements
- Others

Adapted from Career Study Outline (Egbochuku, 1997)

Each resource person was given an hour to make the presentation, and 30 minutes for questions and contributions. There was 20 minutes break between each session. At the end of the sessions there was a summary of the main points presented in each of the sessions by the researcher

Control group

The researcher gave them attention by making them to read stories on English comprehension, which kept them busy during the period.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference in the career decision-making of adolescents in treatment groups in their career decision-making.

An examination of data in table 1 revealed that there is significant difference in the means scores of subjects in

Table 1. Distribution of mean scores for Career Decision-making (CDM)

Treatment	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Career day	76.4667	14.2001	60
Control	72.2500	16.3920	60

Tabe 2. Distribution of mean scores of Group by Gender

	Career Day	Control Group	Total
Male	73.11	70.81	76.95
Female	79.21	73.35	78.44

Table 2. 2-way ANOVA showing interactive effects of treatment and gender

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Treatment	4866.395	2	2433.198	13.289	.000
	166.878	1	166.878	.911	.341
2-Way Interaction					
Treatment*	604.970	2	302.485	1.652	.195

Career day (CD) and control group. While CD had a mean score of 76.46 the control had a mean score of 72.2500. While the mean scores indicate levels of significant differences, it also shows that CD had a higher score than control. This indicates that there is significant difference in the career decision-making of adolescents who participated in the various treatment programmes. With this result, hypothesis 1 is therefore rejected which stated that there will be no significant difference in the career decision-making of adolescents in treatment groups in their career decision-making. This also indicated that career day had significant impact on the adolescent students in their career decision making.

Hypothesis 2. There will be no significant difference between male and female adolescent students in treatment groups.

Table 2 indicates that the mean score for male in career day was 73.11, while control had a mean score of 70.81. The table also shows that for female in career day, the post test mean score was 79.21, while those in control had a mean score of 73.35. The total mean score for subjects in treatment groups for male is 76.95, while the total mean score for subjects in treatment groups for female is 78.44. The implication of the above result is that there is no significant difference in the career decision-making of adolescents in the treatment groups.

Analysis of data in table 3 showed the F-ratio for the effect of on treatment outcome was found to be F = .911, df (1, 120). This was not to be significant at $p > .05$. The result above shows that has no effect on the career decision-making of adolescents in the various treatment groups. Hypothesis 2, which stated that there will be no significant difference between male and female adolescent students in their career decision-making of secondary school adolescents at post-test is therefore accepted. The conclusion therefore is that there is no significant difference between male and female adolescent students in their career decision-making. Hypothesis 2 measured the effects of the of adolescent students in treatment groups in relation to career decision-making at post-test. The findings of this present study observed that is not a significant factor in the career decision-making of adolescent students in treatment groups at post-test. This was based on the fact that hypothesis 2 which stated that there will be no significant difference between male and female adolescent students in treatment groups in their career decision-making at post-test, was accepted, which meant that is not a significant factor in career decision-making. This implies that your does not really affect your choice of career. It has been observed today that is no more a barrier to choice of occupation. Most occupations today are uni, which means any member of either can pursue them. If that is the case then your does not really matter.

The conclusion that is drawn from hypothesis 4 that is not a significant factor in career decision-making is not consistent with the studies of Stockard and McGee (1990), Mwaba (1993), and Maxwell, Maxwell, and Krugly Smolsks (1996), who found out that can be a significant factor in occupational choice. However true the findings of these previous studies may be, things are changing fast as both male and female students have equal educational opportunity, which may have accounted for the results that may have been generated from this present study.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1 measured significant difference between the subjects in the treatment group in their career decision making process. Career day is a programme that is organised to provide vocational guidance information of supplementary or preliminary nature to students to enable them make appropriate career decisions. (Shertzer and Stone, 1976). This programme has been widely used by many researchers all over the world in enhancing career decision-making skills in secondary school adolescent students. Such empirical works include those of Egbochuku (1997), Agulana (1985), and Stockard and McGee (1990). They all reported significant improvement in the career decision-making of the adolescent students.

The results of the findings of this study, which also indicated that career day had significant impact on the career decision-making of adolescent students in the treatment group, support the findings of earlier studies in the area. Career day then remains a useful counselling intervention technique for enhancing career decision-making.

Hypothesis 2 measured the effects of the of adolescent students in treatment groups in relation to career decision-making at post-test. The findings of this present study observed that is not a significant factor in the career decision-making of adolescent students in treatment groups at post-test. This was based on the fact that hypothesis 2 which stated that there will be no significant difference between male and female adolescent students in treatment groups in their career decision-making at post-test, was accepted, which meant that is not a significant factor in career decision-making. This implies that you does not really affect your choice of career. It has been observed today that is no more a barrier to choice of occupation. Most occupations today are uni, which means any member of either can pursue them. If that is the case then your does not really matter.

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Hypothesis 3 measured the interactive effect of treatment by of adolescent students in treatment groups in their career decision-making at post-test. The findings of this study indicated that there is no significant interaction effect of treatment by of students in the treatment groups in their career decision-making at post-test. Earlier discussion of research findings for hypothesis 2 stated that of students is no longer a strong variable in career decision-making. This is however not consistent with earlier research findings. The reasons advanced was that adolescent students no longer think in terms of their es, they think in terms of available opportunities and how they can use those opportunities. It has been observed that most occupations today are uni. There is hardly any occupation that any member of either cannot perform. is no longer a barrier to pursuing any occupations. Apart from the religious life where only men can be Rev. Fathers, and only women can be Rev. Sisters, all other occupations are uni. If this holds true, then the results we find for hypothesis 2 and 3 are not surprising. The conclusion therefore is that may not be a strong factor in career decision-making.

CONCLUSION

From the study, it has been observed that career day is still a good treatment technique for enhancing career decision making among secondary school students. While is no longer a significant factor in career decision making. Anyone can aspire to any career today. That is why have members of the opposite in almost every occupation today. Though there are some careers that will necessarily pose some challenges because of gender differences of people, it is also true that a lot of people have found ways of dealing with such situations.

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