

Effect of Family, School, Environment and Personality Factors on Career Awareness and Preference of Secondary School Students in Niger State

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Abstract

One of the most challenging issues faced by school leavers is their frequent disappointment with the available job opportunities in the labor market. This often results from not meeting the minimum academic requirements for jobs or realizing too late that they have made poor career choices due to a lack of career awareness. This research aims to investigate the effects of family, school, environment, and personality factors on the career awareness of secondary school students. Primary data were collected by the researcher from seven secondary schools across four educational zones in Niger State, Nigeria, including Minna, Kontagora, Bida, and Suleja. The study employed two research instruments, the Career Awareness Rating Scale and the Career Preference Factor Rating Scale, administered to 382 students, consisting of 212 males and 117 females. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. The findings reveal a significant impact of family, school, environment, and personality on career preference and career awareness among secondary school students. It is recommended, among other things, that counselors should actively engage in providing guidance to parents about the factors influencing their children's career preferences.

Keywords: Career awareness; Environment; Family; Personality factors; School.

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Introduction

Career selection is an important decision that has a significant impact on an individual's life (Krass & Hughey, 1999; Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018; Gati & Kulcsár, 2021). One cannot choose what one does not know, and many career opportunities remain unknown to most students (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007). While some individuals might stumble upon the right career by sheer luck, wise career choices require accurate information. This information can be obtained through professional guidance and counseling in the field of careers. A career is not just a temporary job or position; it is a long-term process that provides steady income and satisfaction to an individual (Handoko & Rambe, 2018; De Vos et al., 2020; Davidescu et al., 2020). Therefore, career preference is a crucial necessity in life that must be considered seriously (Vondracek et al., 2019).

To achieve this, career awareness among students must be enhanced (Widowati, 2016). Awareness involves the act of knowing and understanding that something exists and is important (Carvalho et al., 2018; Palazzo et al., 2021; Soobard et al., 2020). Career awareness is a means to eliminate ignorance about the various career options available (Nota et al., 2020; Anisa et al., 2016; Lidyasari, 2019; Randi et al., 2022). It serves as an antidote to job dissatisfaction and workforce mismatch. By having a good understanding of the various career opportunities, students can make more informed and appropriate decisions that align with their interests and abilities (Hidayati, 2015; Atmaja, 2014; Lent & Brown, 2020). Career influence refers to the most desirable job one aspires to among various alternatives, and adequate career awareness will help students discover and choose the career path that best matches their aspirations and potential (Zamroni, 2016; Rahma & Rahayu, 2018).

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Sambo (2008), elaborated on career awareness as a program that facilitates career development by exposing individuals to the world of work through the word information. This is concerned with job facilities, job requirements, and job expectations. Career awareness has adequate information on career opportunities within society (Nuraini, 2022; Wardani & Trisnani, 2020; Sa'idah et al., 2021). It serves as a guide in the choice of a career that is suited to one's interests, aptitude, and personality traits. Career awareness helps in determining a suitable and gainful employment one would embark upon (Feldman & Bolino, 2000; Granovetter, 2018; Letlape, 2020). It helps in the relationship between colleagues and others in the cultural environment in other to enhance personal adjustment. Career awareness keeps the school fully and continuously acquainted with career opportunities and as such exceptional persons need economic empowerment for career awareness to be effect (Conley, 2010; Brown & Lent, 2012; Saptoto et al., 2024).

The most challenging issue that school leavers experience is that they are always disappointed with available job opportunities in the labor market (Tomlinson, 2007; Donald et al., 2018; Kogan et al., 2011). This is because either they do not have the minimum academic requirements for the jobs or they discover that they have ignorantly made a wrong choice due to lack of career awareness and preference. This development leads to unemployment and has become problematic to society at all level.

In the current context of Nigeria, unemployment has become a painful feature of the social and economic situation. Graduates from all levels of educational institutions face this challenge (Oyededeji, 2016). The purpose of career awareness is then to clarify what need to be done to alleviate this ugly situation''. Nigeria's society is dynamic, without career awareness, the school leavers would not be aware of the challenge in the environment. They will also be ignorant of the opportunities open to them in the society. The best place for students to receive this awareness is the school. Where the school fails to create this awareness there may be no realistic preference and eventual choice by the student. School is still the best place to provide a match between an individual's ability and the demand for a preferred career.

Method

The method used in this research is survey design description. Survey design description involves the steps used to design a survey or questionnaire (Mulyadi & others, 2012). This method includes selecting the population to be surveyed, setting survey objectives, developing questions, determining sampling techniques, and planning data analysis (Pakaya et al., 2023; Iskandar et al., 2023). The survey design description ensures that the survey can produce accurate and relevant data according to the established research objectives. It is a research strategy in education used for data collection from its primary source. The survey research design is highly adequate as it provides factual information to describe factors between or within variables (Rea & Parker, 2014; Nardi, 2018). In descriptive survey design, samples are selected from the entire population for research purposes(Firmansyah & others, 2022; Agustianti et al., 2022; Susanto et al., 2024). Descriptive research is a strategy that allows researchers to depict factors between or among variables (Tripodi & Bender, 2010).

The population of this study comprised all JSS III students in seven junior secondary schools from the four educational zones in Niger State. Random sampling was adopted in the selection of the seven secondary schools situated in all nooks and corners of the state. This was done in order to give each of the four educational zones in the state chance of been selected.

Three hundred eighty-two (382) respondents were randomly selected as the sample for this study. According to Boll & Gall (2004), for populations up to one thousand (1000), about 20% of the population should be sampled, and for populations up to ten thousand, about 5% should be sampled. Therefore, these three hundred eighty-two (382) respondents represent approximately 10% of the total population of 3834. Based on this, two hundred twelve (212) male JSS III students and one hundred seventy (170) female students were randomly selected from seven (7) secondary schools in Niger State. Schools with larger populations provided larger sample sizes.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents'

School	Students Population	Sample Size	Percentage	Sex	Class
G.S.S. Minna	613	61	16.1%	M	JSSIII
Government Girls Arabic College Dikko	602	60	15.6%	F	JSSIII
Maryam Babangida Girls Science College Minna	552	55	14.4%	F	JSSIII
Government Girls Secondary School Tungan magajiya	554	55	14.4%	F	JSSIII

School	Students Population	Sample Size	Percentage	Sex	Class
Government Science College, Izom	500	50	13.1%	F	JSSIII
Government Day Secondary School, Dabban	500	50	13.1%	M	JSSIII
Government Day Secondary School, Enagi	503	51	13.1%	M	JSSIII
Total	3824	382	100%		

Table 1 depicts the selected sample of two hundred and twelve (212) JSSIII male students representing 55.4% from G.S.S, Minna; Government Science College, Izom; Government Day Secondary School, Dabban and Government Day Secondary School Enagi respectively. The females comprised one hundred and seventy (170) samples from Government Girls Arabic College, Dikko; Maryam Babangida Girls Science College Minna and Government Girls Secondary School, Tungan Magajiya.

The instrument for data collection used two questionnaires. One was developed by Hajara Muhammad in Yusoff (2001) titled Career Preferences Factors Rating Scale (CPFRS) and Career Awareness Rating Scale (CARS), developed by Kolo (2003). The CARS measures the level of students' career awareness, while the CPFRS identifies factors influencing their career preferences. The Career Preferences Factors Rating Scale (CPFRS) consists of instructions and two sections, named A and B. Section A includes the respondent's biodata and a rating scale for indicating the strength of their responses. Section B contains 20 items divided into 4 clusters: five questions about Family, five questions about School, five questions about Environment, and five questions about Personality. The rating scale is as follows: Very Influential with a weight of 3, Influential with a weight of 2, and Not Influential with a weight of 1.

The Career Awareness Rating Scale (CARS) consists of three sections. The first section includes biodata, the second is the main scale measuring respondents' career awareness, containing 30 items divided into 7 clusters: Self-Awareness (6 to 10), Attitude/Appreciation (11 to 14), Decision Making (15 to 18), Educational Awareness (19 to 22), Economic Awareness (23 to 26), and Skill Awareness (27 to 30). The rating scale has six levels: Very much with a weight of 6, Much with a weight of 5, Average with a weight of 4, Little with a weight of 3, Very little with a weight of 2, and Not at all with a weight of 1. In the analyses of the variables, means scores and the observed correlation coefficient were used to provide answers to the research questions, while the Pearson Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for the test of the study's hypotheses. The entire test was carried out at the 0.05 probability level of significance.

The following are the hypotheses stated to guide the study and tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

H₀. There is no significant effect of Family Factor Affecting Career Awareness and Preference of Secondary School Students in Niger state.

H₀. There is no significant School Factor Affecting Career Awareness and Preference of Secondary School students in Niger state.

Results and Discussion

Result

The results of this study consist of the hypothesis test outcomes proposed to provide statistical validation for the solutions presented to the research questions in this study, as examined in this chapter. The hypotheses are stated in null form and tested as follows:

1. Hypothesis 1: There is no significant effect of Family factors affecting Career Awareness and Preference of Secondary School students in Niger state.

The scores of the students on family factors in career preference and career awareness were used in the test of this hypothesis. The Pearson product-moment Correlation procedure was used in the test. The summary of the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Test of the Relationship Between Family Factors in Career Preferences and Students' Career Awareness.

Variables	X	SD	DF	r-cal.	P	r-critical	Decision
Family Factors of Career Preference	12.70	3.31	762	-0.503	0.000	0.159	Rejected
Career Awareness	11.40	4.68					

The test in Table 2 revealed that the student’s family factor in Career Preference was significantly correlated with their Career Awareness. However, the two variables were found to be negatively correlated. This means that the Family factor of the student’s Career Preference is inversely related to their Career Awareness in the Senior Secondary Schools. The observed correlation coefficient for the table is -0.503 at 381 degrees of freedom and the significant level obtained in the test is 0.000 ($P < 0.05$). This means that the null hypothesis could be rejected. In other word the family factors in the career preference of students in Niger State Junior Secondary Schools could significantly influence their career awareness.

2. Hypothesis 2: There is no significant School factor affecting Career Awareness and Preference of Secondary School students in Niger state.

In the test of this hypothesis, the student's score on their school’s factor in career preference was correlated with their score in career awareness with the aid of the Pearson product Moment Correlations procedure. The result of the test is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Test of Relationship between Schools Factors in Career Preference and Career Awareness of Students in Niger State Senior Secondary Schools.

Variables	X	SD	DF	r-cal.	P	r-critical	Decision
School factors in career preferences	14.75	13.35	0.063	0.075	762	0.159	Retained
Career Awareness	11.40	4.69					

The two variables school’s factor in students' career preference and their Career Awareness as not significantly correlated as indicated in the table ($P > 0.05$). The observed correlation coefficient of 0.063 is higher than the critical value of 0.159. This means that the null hypothesis that there will be no significant relationship between the school factors in Career Preference with the Career Awareness of Students in Niger State Senior Secondary School could not be rejected. The implication here is that the student's school factor in career preference does not really have a major influence on their career awareness in the state.

From the hypothesis testing and data analysis results in this study, the findings obtained are as follows: Family is the main factor determining students' career preferences. School is the primary factor influencing students' career awareness and preferences. Environmental factors affect students' career awareness and preferences. Students' personality factors influence their careers, awareness, and preferences.

Discussion

In the statistical analysis of the data collected for this study, it was observed that the major components of Career Preference by Students were significantly correlated with their Career Awareness in the state Senior Secondary Schools. Of the six components of Career preference examined, five were found to significantly correlate with the student’s career awareness. This finding is consistent with the definition of Maisamari (2005) where career awareness was defined as the totality of varied and accumulated experiences proceeding, including and extending beyond an individual's engagement in a specific job. The individual observations from the statistical test of the relationship between the component variables and the student’s career awareness in the respective hypothesis are discussed below.

The test of the hypothesis I revealed that the Family factor of Students' Career Preference is negatively correlated with their career awareness in the state Secondary Schools. Family factors such as poor socio-economic status matched with the high degree of ignorance of the parents, and influence the requisition of Career choice on students. This could be in the form of the imposition of Career choice on students. This may arise where parents have positive and negative views on certain designated careers and thus, inculcate such ideas to their children who grow up with them. Since career awareness is not a special area that is taught in a normal class, the influence of parents could have predominance on the student's mind even if such consideration did not tally with the respective student's academic capabilities. The findings agreed with Super (1976), who described the family as an economic entity because it provides a range of services for its members.

In the test of the second hypothesis of the study, no significant relationship was observed between the student’s school factors of Career Preference and their career Awareness in secondary schools. This could be interpreted to mean that the school factor does not really influence the student’s career awareness. A number of factors could be responsible for

this development. Among such factors are the absence of Career counselors, the inability to invite resource persons for effective career week for Junior Secondary school students, and a host of others outside the scope of this study. This finding is consistent with the report of DuBois et al. (2002) where it was maintained that the objective of any guidance program should be, to provide the youths with a realistic educational career. The absence of this will make the Students ignorant of adequate information about the available courses in relation to available careers.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Conclusions

This study found that the career awareness of public high school students is significantly correlated with the main components of their career preferences. Out of the six components analyzed, five showed a significant correlation with students' career awareness. Career awareness is defined as the totality of varied and accumulated experiences, according to Maisamari (2005). The first hypothesis revealed that family factors, particularly socioeconomic status, are negatively correlated with students' career awareness. Factors such as parental ignorance and specific views on careers can influence students' career choices, often not aligning with their academic abilities. Conversely, the second hypothesis indicated no significant relationship between school factors and students' career awareness. This may be due to a lack of career counselors and other supporting resources in schools. These findings are consistent with DuBois et al. (2002) report, which emphasizes the importance of realistic career guidance programs for students. Overall, this study highlights the importance of the family role and challenges in schools in shaping students' career awareness and preferences.

Suggestions

Here are some suggestions for future researchers:

1. Future researchers can develop more comprehensive and detailed research instruments to measure the factors influencing students' career awareness and preferences.
2. Expand the research sample by involving students from various types of schools, such as private schools, vocational schools, and schools in rural areas.
3. Encourage collaboration between researchers, educators, career counselors, and policymakers to design effective strategies for enhancing students' career awareness and preferences.

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