

Influence of parental factors on career choice among senior secondary school students in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study investigated the influence of parental factors on career choice among senior secondary two (SS2) students in Federal Capital Territory (FCT): The aim of the study was to ascertain whether parental factors such as parental educational level, parent's socio-economic status, parental values, parental work performance and parent-child relationships influenced career choices of students. Five research questions were raised to guide the study. Five null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 20,163 senior secondary two students (SS2). Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in the study. A random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 360 respondents selected from 12 public secondary schools across the six Area Councils in FCT. A self-structured instrument developed by the researcher titled "Student's Career Choice Questionnaire" (SCCQ) was used for data collection. A pilot test was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the instrument. A reliability co-efficient of 0.70 was confirmed using the split half method. Spearman Brown prediction formula was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency counts, percentages for demographic data, mean score and standard deviation to answer the research question. The study found that parental factors have significance influence on career choices of senior secondary students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. It was, therefore, recommended that teachers, parents and career guidance counsellors should take into cognizance the influence of these parental factors, as they guide students through the process of career selection.

Keywords: Abuja, career choice, parental factors, senior secondary students.

INTRODUCTION

Parenthood comes with a handful of decision making as such, parents want their children to be the best. Most of the time, parents' desire for the best, impacts pressure on their children or wards to perform and succeed, which causes severe stress. Depending on the parent's approach to this, the children can either be inspired to explore a diverse set of potential occupations or adhere to the path they believe will be approved by their parents (Guerra and Braungart-Rieker, 2003).

Career choice is a complex decision for students since it determines the kind of profession that they intend to pursue in life. For every student choosing the best course

can be a difficult decision as well as thinking about their future career. Some students know exactly which course to pursue while others do not know. According to Torres (2020), parents' attitude toward their children who are in elementary and high school has an impact on their desire to earn a degree and the kind of degree pursued. It may be concluded that a Nigerian student's future career is predetermined by the choice of subjects done at the secondary school level and the level of achievement at the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE).

To a measurable extent, this is true and as a result, many students in Nigeria end up in occupations that they

had not aspired for in the first place. Since admission into university courses is based on their performances, their interests are never considered and most of the students end up pursuing careers they just got into by chance. This study was, therefore, aimed at evaluating the impact parental factors have on the career choice of their children.

Parents often have an influence on the career paths of their children (Brownsom, 2014; Davis-Kean, 2005). For example, this project was conceived based on the personal life experience of the researcher. Being a parent, I was opportune to make a career choice for my little cousin by urging her to follow a career path that she has no desire for and the outcome was not pleasant, this is because she ended up acquiring a skill and it opened my eyes to the negative effects of parental influence on students career choice. Secondly, the researcher's personal interviews of likely parents concurred with the former, this indicates that parents have a significant influence on the career decision of their children, given that careers take up a significant portion of persons' everyday life, it is imperative that parents, teachers and career guidance counsellors should exercise caution during career process selection of the students. This gesture would assist students to maintain good mental health and emotional well-being as they make desirable career decisions in order to achieve their full potential and life goals.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of parental factors on the career choice of senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Specifically, this study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To discover the influence of parental educational level on career choice of students;
2. To examine how parent's socio-economic status influences the career choice of students;
3. To examine how parental values influence the career choice of students;
4. To examine how parental work performance influences the career choice of students; and
5. To determine the influence of the parent-child relationship on the career choice of students.

The following research questions were raised and answered:

1. What is the influence of parental educational level on the career choice of students?
2. What is the influence of parents' socio-economic status on the career choice of students?
3. What is the influence of parental values on the career choice of students?
4. What is the influence of parental work performance on the career choice of students?
5. What is the influence of the parent-child relationship on the career choice of students?

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the influences of parental educational level and career choice of students.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the influences of parents' socio-economic status and the career choice of students.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the influences of parental values and the career choice of students.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between the influences of parental work performance and the career choice of students.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference between the influences of the parent-child relationship and the career choice of students.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey. Descriptive survey design is concerned with collecting data from a sample of a population in order to describe conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing (Nworgu, 2006). The research design, therefore, was found suitable for the work as it enabled the use of questionnaire in collecting relevant data and information from respondents who were knowledgeable about the variables being investigated in the study. The dependent variable is the career choice of students while the independent variables were parental educational level, parents' socio-economic status, parental value, parental work performance and parent-child relationship.

The population for the study consisted of twenty-six thousand one hundred and sixty-three (26,163) senior secondary two students (SS2) in public secondary schools across the six Area Councils in FCT, Abuja (Secondary Education Board, 2019). The sample size for the study was made up of 360 respondents. A random sampling technique was used in this study. It is a subset of a statistical population in which each member of the subset has an equal probability of being chosen.

For analysis of data, both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were adopted. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the demographic data of the students. Research questions were answered using mean scores and standard deviation. The student's *t*-test statistic was used to test the five null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance (being a test of significant difference between two sets of measurement). A decision rule of 2.50 was used to determine responses that indicated agreement or disagreement over an item on the questionnaire. Thus, any mean score from 2.50 and above

was an indication of agreement, while any mean score below 2.50 was an indication of disagreement.

RESULTS

In this section, data on parent educational level and parental income were presented. Table 1 shows the number of respondents on the parental educational level: primary school certificate holders were 66 (18.30%), secondary school certificate holders were 85 (23.60%), diploma holders 100 (27.80%), while parents with university degree holders were 109 (30.30%). This implies that there were more parents with university degrees in the study.

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by the parental level of income. Parents who fall within low-class income were 10 (2.80%), middle-class income 228 (63.30%), while parents with high-class income were 122 (33.90%). This implies that the majority of the parents of respondents that participated in the study belong to high-class income followed by middle-class income earners.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of parental educational level on the career choice of students?

Table 3 shows the influence of parental educational level on the career choice of students. The respondents agreed with all items on the influence of parental educational level on the career choices of students. The sectional means of 3.04 indicated that the career choice of students was influenced by parents' educational level.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of parents' socio-economic status on the career choice of students?

Table 4 shows the influence of parents' socio-economic status on the career choice of students. The respondents agreed with all items on the influence of parents' socio-economic status on the career choices of students. The sectional mean of 3.02 indicated that the career choice of students was influenced by the socio-economic status of their parents.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of parental values on the career choice of students?

Table 5 shows the influence of parental values on the career choice of students. The respondents agreed with all items on the influence of parental values on the career choice of students. The sectional means of 3.18 indicated that the career choice of students was influenced by the values of their parents.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by parent educational level.

Parent educational level	Frequency	Per cent
Primary	66	18.30
Secondary	85	23.60
Diploma	100	27.80
University degree	109	30.30
Total	360	100.0

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by parental income.

Parental income	Frequency	Per cent
Low class income	10	2.80
Middle class income	228	63.30
High class income	122	33.90
Total	360	100.0

Research Question 4: What is the influence of parental work performance on the career choice of students?

Table 6 shows the influence of parental work performance on the career choice of students. The respondents agreed with all items on the influence of parental work performance on the career choice of students. The sectional mean of 3.20 indicated that the career choice of students was influenced by the work performance of their parents.

Research Question 5: What is the influence of the parent-child relationship on the career choices of students?

Table 7 shows the influence of the parent-child relationship on the career choice of students. The respondents agreed with all items on the influence of the parent-child relationship on the career choice of students. The sectional mean of 3.18 indicated that the career choice of students was influenced by the parent-child relationship.

Summary of the findings

The following significant findings were made.

1. The study found that parental educational level influence career choices of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.
2. The study established that parents' socio-economic status influence career choices of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.
3. The study found that parental values influence career choices of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Table 3. Influence of parental educational level on career choice of students (N=360).

S/No.	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	My parents will oppose any career choice I make that is not in line with the type of education they want for me.	2.82	1.08	Agree
2	My parents do not know anything about the career I have chosen because of their type of education.	3.10	1.00	Agree
3	My parents cannot support my vocational preparation, because they know too little about different vocation.	2.87	1.09	Agree
4	My parents have their own ideas about my future vocation and try to influence me accordingly.	3.22	0.91	Agree
5	My parents allow me to make my career choice because they are educated.	3.19	0.93	Agree
Sectional Mean		3.04	1.00	

Table 4. Influence of parents' socio-economic status on career choice of students (N=360).

S/No.	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	My parents by virtue of their socio-economic status prefer me to pursue a career that will give them a greater reputation in the society.	3.06	1.03	Agree
2	I am always in constant argument with my parents over the career that I have chosen because of their socio-economic status.	2.92	1.11	Agree
3	I argue with my parents that my choice of career should reflect their socio-economic status.	2.89	1.03	Agree
4	My parent's income strength made me choose the career of my study.	3.21	0.79	Agree
5	My parents because of their position in the society want me to pursue a career that will give them a higher recognition.	3.02	1.11	Agree
Sectional Mean		3.02	1.01	

Table 5. Influence of parental values on career choice of students (N=360).

S/No.	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	My parents always warned me never to choose certain careers because of their opinions on the career lifestyle and that is why I am careful not to pick the one they won't approve.	3.04	0.97	Agree
2	I have chosen the career to pursue because my parents believe this career is for people who possesses integrity.	3.14	1.15	Agree
3	I would like to take after my father's occupation because I admire his work standards.	3.47	0.71	Agree
4	I would like to take after my mother's occupation because I admire her work standards.	3.17	0.95	Agree
5	My Parents would talk me out of a vocation they believe lacks work security.	3.07	0.79	Agree
Sectional Mean		3.18	0.91	

Table 6. Influence of Parental Work Performance on Career Choice of Students (N=360).

S/No.	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	I developed an early understanding of my career choice through observation of my parent's performance in their occupation.	2.97	1.08	Agree
2	My parent's attitude to work makes me dislike to choose their line of occupation.	3.48	0.67	Agree
3	I choose my choice of career because I already love doing things related to my parent's occupation.	3.18	0.87	Agree
4	My observation while assisting my parents in their work field inspired me to choose my career choice.	3.13	1.01	Agree
5	I developed desire of my career choice through observation of my parents work integrity in their occupation.	3.25	0.88	Agree
Sectional Mean		3.20	0.90	

Table 7. Influence of parent-child relationship on career choice of students (N=360).

S/No.	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	My parents talk to me about my vocational interests and abilities.	3.22	0.80	Agree
2	My parents help me feel better when I tell them I am worried about choosing a career.	3.06	1.07	Agree
3	My parents cannot support my vocational preparation, because they are too busy.	3.14	0.91	Agree
4	My parents understand my feelings about various careers.	3.27	0.69	Agree
5	My parents understand my opinions about various careers.	3.24	0.77	Agree
Sectional Mean		3.18	0.85	

4. Parental work performance influence career choices of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.
5. Parent-child relationship was equally found to influence career choices of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

DISCUSSION

The first finding of this study shows that parental educational level was found to influence the career choice of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Some students in the study area indicated that their parents opposed any career choice they make that was not in line with the type of education they want for them. Some students in the FCT pointed out that their parents do not know anything about the career they have chosen because of their type of education. Also, some students in the study area were of the opinion that their parents allow them to make their career choice because they are educated. This finding corroborates the work of Udoh and Sani (2012), who found that parents' level of formal education exerts influence on the career choice of students.

The second finding of this study shows that parents' socio-economic status was found to influence the career choice of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. From the findings, it was discovered that many parents by virtue of their socio-economic status prefer their children to pursue a career that will give them a greater reputation in society. Also, some students' choice of career was due to their parent's position in society; as such their parents want them to pursue a career that will give them higher recognition. The finding gave credence to the findings of Attah (2008) who noted that secondary school students with parents in middle and high socio-economic status (SES) had higher educational and occupational aspirations and expectations than students whose parents were in the low SES class.

The third finding of this study shows that parental values influence the career choice of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Some students reported to said that they were careful not to pick a career that their parents would not approve of because their parents always warned them never to choose certain careers because of their opinions. Often times, students were found to take after

their father's or mother's occupation because they admired their work standards. This further echoed the work of Alphonse (2016) who showed that parental values and expectations influence the career choice of students in Nairobi County. Similarly, it echoed the work of Holland (1985) and (1997)

The study further established that parental work performance influences the career choice of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The majority of the students in the study area developed an early understanding of their career choice through observing their parents' performance in their occupations. Some students also observed their parents' attitude to work which makes them dislike their line of occupation. Most respondents choose their career because they already love doing things related to their parent's occupation and assisting their parents in their work field. This helps them develop interest in that career. This supported the findings of Alphonse (2016), who found that parental work performance influences the career choices of students.

The study also found that the parent-child relationship was equally found to influence the career choice of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The majority of the students in the study area indicated that they talk with their parents about their vocational interests and abilities. They also agreed that their parents helped them feel better when they told them about their worries in choosing a career (Halstead and Taylor, 2004). Also, some students stated that their parents cannot support their vocational preparation, because they were too busy to have a conversation with them about their career choice. This finding supports Alphonse (2016), who showed that the parent-child relationship influences the career choice of students in Nairobi County.

Conclusions

This study concludes that parental factors such as parental educational level, parents' socio-economic status, parental values, parental work performance, and parent-child relationship have significant influences on the career choice of senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Students' career choices, therefore, have roots in parental influences.

Recommendation

In view of the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Educated parents while providing good and informed guide to students on career choices should also know that interests and abilities of the students count. Therefore, parents generally, should be cautioned against imposing their own goals onto their children, they can act as a guide. This is because adolescents need to discover who they are on their own.
2. Rather than seeking career choices for children in high-income earning areas, effort should be made to provide children with the opportunity to make career decisions that is self-fulfilling.
3. Positive values should be encouraged as the basis for the career choices of students. Parents should deliberately communicate their values and expectations to their children without being overly persuasive.
4. Good and honourable work performance lifestyle should be used to guide the career choices of students. Hence, parents should serve as role models in maintaining outstanding records and performance in their occupations and work places.
5. Positive, reinforcing parent-child relationship should be encouraged to allow career choices of students to be entrenched in good sense of self and confidence building areas.
6. Teachers, career guidance and counsellors should realize that parental educational level influences students' career choices and should therefore pass on the importance of higher education to the students in relation to their careers, through the classroom learning process, seminars, workshops and, career day.
7. Parents should be appreciative of some good thoughts of their children by giving words of encouragement of some better achievements were attained as well as not condemning them, bear with them when they do something wrong especially as it involves future plans.
8. Teachers should recognize that parents from FCT were willing to support the education and career choices of their children. In this regard, it is recommended that the teachers should motivate the students to achieve their utmost potential since the parents are able to support any career choices of their children.
9. A strong parent-child relationship is essential in shaping the students' career choices. Hence, parents should take time to discuss different career choices with their children. Whenever necessary, the parents should express satisfaction with the child's decision.
10. Counsellors should provide the students with relevant literatures, career magazines, seminars, workshops and career day to share information on variety of choices for the students to choose from.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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