THE INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP AND PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND ON CAREER CHOICE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ETHIOPE EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study seeks to examine the influence of peer group and parental socio-economic background on career choice of secondary school students. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, four research questions and four hypotheses were formulated. The study adopted the survey method of research and one hundred (100) students were sampled from five secondary schools in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State to make up sample for the study. The research questions were analysed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using both chi-square and spearman’s rank order correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between gender of the students and their career choice. There is a significant relationship between peer group and the career choice of secondary school students. The study further revealed that there is no significant relationship between parental socio-economic level and the career choice of secondary school students. That there is no significant relationship between parental educational background and the career choice of secondary school student. Based on the finding of the study, it was recommended among others that Parents, Teachers Guidance counsellors and significant others should continue to motivate both boys and girls by providing them with appropriate materials that will help them in career decision making, so that they can achieve self-actualization and self-fulfilment.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study
The occupational choice of secondary school students have become an area of interest to educational planners and educational psychologists. This is as a result of the awareness by stakeholders of the inherent dangers and frustrations suffered by secondary school students, who find themselves in wrong occupations.

Occupational choice is not a smooth process, when an individual is confronted with choice making in career, there are certain prevailing factors, which may determine his choice. Among these factors are personality, environment, experiences, religion, academic achievement, family socio-economic status and according to Roe (2006), the individuals needs also determine the kind of job he may like to engage in. based on the above factors, whether realistic vocational choices are made by our secondary school students their secondary school years should be a matter of serious concern to all educational agents.

There are many causes and effect issues in life and in the field of vocational choices these can observed in the various factors like external factors and values like parents, teacher, peer group that affect the choice of an individual’s vocation.
Several external factors like, parents, teachers, friends, radio, television and books surround the secondary school student in his day-to-day activities and they very much influence his way of life. His occupational choice often does not escape being affected. In the second angle are the values an individual holds. What a person regards as worthwhile makes him pursue certain goals in life. How these factors affect vocational choices has to be examined because of the significant effect an individual’s vocation has on his life. Actually, the choice of a vocation is one of the most important decisions an individual has to make in life.

Both parents and peers play an important role in the development of the adolescents. It has been observed that adolescents are less influenced by peers when they have close and involving relationships with their parents, the ability of peers to influence the behaviours and attitudes of the adolescents is magnified when adolescents perceive that their parental relationship is negative or deficient in support and guidance (Middleton and Loughead, 2013). Peer group influence is more influential in adolescence than at any other time in life. The quality of the relationship between adolescents and their peers, as well as the type of peers they associate with, play important roles in aiding or impeding their career choice.
Parents are the primary authority in influencing sex role, socialization, providing social skills training, promoting character development and developing a sense of responsibility. Parents' expectation and support are important factors in influencing career decisions, maturation and future educational/occupational attainment. (Guerra and Braungart--Rieker, 2009).

Poole, Langan, Fox, Gavarella and Omodei (2011), found that children are influenced by their families work values, attitudes and behaviors and as a result parents are often the primary source of children's work values and attitudes. Trusty (2006) found that high parental involvement, including an active interest in children's school subjects, homework, grades, activities, emotional well-being and future aspirations, predict positive attitudes towards school and the future, better grades and better career decision making skills. Active parental involvement in children's career development has contributed to children's ability to individualize and follow their own career aspirations later in life (Middleton and Loughead, 2013). Studies have shown that irrespective of parental and peer group influence, children choose jobs that are highly rated in the society (Oyebode, 2010). Alika and Osa-Edoh (2009) found that irrespective of parental and peer influences, adolescents choose careers for themselves especially in the sciences. Rowe, Woulbroun and
Gulley (2014) reported that the uniformity of behaviour and attitudes seen among adolescents who belong to the same peer groups cannot be attributed entirely to peer influences. They asserted that adolescent peer influences cannot by itself account for much of the unexplained environmental variance. Wentzel (2011) observed that associating with friends that serve as academic and social resources could have direct and positive influence on achievement outcomes at school. According to him, peers may have a less influential role than parents in influencing adolescents' career choice.

Occupation choice occupies a central position in the life of a man therefore, it is of paramount importance that youths at the early stage of their development be guided to make more relevant choices to their ability and interest so that they can be in harmony with chosen occupation in order to function maximally in it. Therefore, if an individual explores his abilities, capabilities, personality traits, interest, aptitude and other characteristics and utilize them in making a choice, there would be minimal dissatisfaction.

Guiding and counselling youths into making the right vocational choice should be more emphatically an ability and relevance. Ability is measured in terms of scholastic aptitudes, which may be otherwise referred to as academic
achievement. According to Chauhan (2006), valuing education is one of the essentials for making realistic” vocational decisions. Interest exerts a great influence in the choice of careers factors, which include parental socio-economic status.

This is no doubt that the socio-economic status of the student has a great influence on the value or worth they place on education. The concept of socio-economic status represents one of the socio stratification, which arises out of recognition that in all societies, people are ranked in a number of levels on social class and is common to all.

One of the student’s greatest problems is that of decision-making and career choice. They place value on adult world of work and would want to acquire the required education that would accomplish their wishes. But some are eliminated due to the factors within and outside the individual which could be intra-personal (e.g. needs), inter-personal (e.g. family and peer group) and extra-personal (economy).

Education is seen as a means of achieving personal prestige, higher income means to position of power and authority, an assess entry into occupations that are satisfying and interesting. Most developing countries including Nigeria are very poor and Agulanna and Nwachukwu (2004), noted that their poverty is not shared equally by all and this is social inequality essential to distinguish between socio-
economic status. The introduction of school fees in Nigeria has made some people believe that continued education is meant for some privileged few rather that the right of every individual depending on their capacities.

Parental influence greatly contributes to the occupational preference of secondary school students. Most parents like to force their children to enter certain occupations against the children’s wishes and abilities. This might be due to the fact that they (the parents) want these children to either inherit their books for maintaining their status or live the life they themselves would have loved to live.

In the research, Deng  

a (1990) as cited by Osa-Edoh and Alutu  

(2011) pointed out that vocational interest of secondary school students are strongly influenced by the socio-economic inheritance may have a direct and greater effect upon the occupations open to him or which he finds attractive. Omrod (2004), reported that students’ choices of careers are influenced by friends and peer groups. This study thus intends to examine the influence of peer group and parental socio-economic background on career choice of secondary school students in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State.
Statement of the Problem

Observations have shown that many students in their school years choose subjects leading to careers for which they do not qualify in terms of ability while others choose those that are not relevant to any career. This phenomenon has led to lots of arguments amongst scholars, civil servants, educational planners, etc. as to what is the immediate and remote causes of these difficulties in choosing an appropriate career aspiration. While we may blame this on poor learning environment and the inability of the teachers to make learning interesting, the home which students come from lefted much more to be desired. Also, the peers the child associate with cannot be discarded as an influencing factor. It is important to note that we cannot exonerate the home that a child comes from when talking about the student’s choice of career in secondary school. This research therefore will examine the influence of peer group and parental socio-economic background on career choice of secondary school students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of peer group and parental socio-economic background on career choice of secondary school students. Specifically, the study will:
Examine the influence of gender on the career choice of secondary school students

Assess the influence of peer group on the career choice of secondary school students

Describe the influence of parental socio-economic level on the career choice of secondary school students

Discuss the influence of parental educational background on the career choice of secondary school students

Research Questions

The following research questions has been raised to guide the study:

i. Is there a significant relationship between gender of the students and their career choice?

ii. Is there a significant relationship between peer group and the career choice of secondary school students

iii. Is there a significant relationship between parental socio-economic level and the career choice of secondary school students

iv. Is there a significant relationship between parental educational background and the career choice of secondary school students
Research Hypotheses
The following research hypotheses has been formulated to guide the study:

i. There is no significant relationship between gender of the students and their career choice

ii. There is no significant relationship between peer group and the career choice of secondary school students

iii. There is no significant relationship between parental socio-economic level and the career choice of secondary school students

iv. There is no significant relationship between parental educational background and the career choice of secondary school students

Significance of the Study
The result of this study will be very used to the students, school guidance, parents, teachers and the government

The students will benefit from the finding of the study since they will be exposed to how their career aspiration can be influenced by their interaction with their friends and the need to make friends that will have positive impacts in their career aspiration.

The result of this study will enable the school guidance and counselling unit know the areas of emphasis when counselling the students on subject choices.
It will provide parents the insight into main problems of their children and how best to help them.

The study will also be useful to teachers in that it will expose them to the influence of parents and peer group on the career choice of the students so that they can contribute in finding a more lasting solution to making adolescents place more value on education and make realistic and more relevant occupational choices.

Lastly, it will be of help to the government as this will tend to explain how best to achieve the national objectives of reduction.

Scope/Delimitation of the Study
The study will focus on the influence of peer group and parental socio-economic background on the career choice of secondary school students. The study will be limited to Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State.

Operational Definition of Terms
Peer Group: This is a group of people of approximately the same age, status, and interests

Parents: This is a person acting as a father, mother or guardian
**PROJECT CODE:** 000299

**Socio-Economic Background:** This is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

**Career Choice:** This is the broad opportunities that exist for lifelong vocations. These vocations are set out in a framework of strategies moving toward personal goals.

**Secondary School:** This is a school which provides secondary education, between the ages of 11 and 16 or 11 and 19, after primary school and before higher education.

**Students:** This are learners who attends an educational institution.
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