

INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' CHOICE OF CAREER IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of demographic variables on senior secondary school students' choice of career in Imo state, Nigeria. Four research questions and four null hypotheses were asked. The design of the study is an ex post facto research design. The population of the study comprised all the 3400 SSII students in the 314 public secondary schools in Imo State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample size of 1020 students using 30% of the population. A self designed instrument titled 'Influence of Demographic Variables on Students' Choice of Career Questionnaire' (IDVSCCQ). The reliability of the instrument IDVSCCQ is 0.83 using cronbach alpha reliability statistics. Face and content validities were ensured. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the various research questions while the z-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance were used to test the null hypotheses. It was found out that religion, marital status and location does not significantly influence choice of career but gender does. It was also recommended among others that religious leaders and various homes should intensify preaching in the areas of career development and satisfaction.

Keywords: Demographic variables and choice of career.

INTRODUCTION

The high rate of dissatisfaction and disintegration in the work places is on the increase. This is ascertained by the mode and method of attention given to customers or clients on a daily contact. The crop of the working class in Nigeria as shown by researches and publications are to a great extent not properly positioned to their career posts probably as a result of wrong advice, poor orientation, and role modeling which did not better inform their choices in such decisions. Choice implies the ability to make decision in the mist of many options or no option. Every human being is obligated to make choice as long as such person is still leaving. In view of this, Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia (2015) stressed that choice involves mentally making a decision: judging the merits of multiple options and selecting one or more of them. Choice is primary based on the merit accruable from it as deciphered from what the values of the individuals are, therefore the duty of weighing the merits and demerits are not easy to go by. Choice, when not proper considered could be devastating in nature and leads to almost frustration and confusion.

It is consequential that every human being should have a direction of life that will bring to him/her self and societal actualization. The fulfillment in life is dependent on the decision that one makes towards the available opportunities close to him/her. The area of life of an individual is supposed to be one that the individual has acumen and acuity of excellence, therefore requires such a person to be critically and mentally sound and alert to delve into such decision. Career is a prominent and dominant aspect of human life that must be plausible at the point of inception. Bassey, Bassey and Omono (2012) reported that career refers to a job or profession that someone has been trained for and intends to do or pursue for

several years in his or her life time. Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia (2015) has it that career is an individual's journey through learning, work and other aspect of life. There is every tendency that a person's success in the career direction could be as a result of positive high relationship between the career choice and the person's personality, interest, values, skills and determination. Weinert (2001) reported that career can be defined as a pattern of work experiences comprising the entire life span of a person and which is generally seen with regard to a number of phases or stages reflecting the transition from one stage of life to the next. Career is just an area of life which an individual has totally tolled in order to make a leaving out of it. McQuerrey (2015) advised that choosing a career path can help you set professional goals and develop a strategy for getting where you want to be. If a student refuses to pick an interest in any professional path as a career, the same individual will turn out to be a loafer in the realm of representation. McQuerrey (2015) has it that when you have an idea of the career path you want to pursue, it can help you make the best decisions about your training and educations. Ferry (2006) opined that career development for most people, is a lifelong process of engaging the work world through choosing among employment opportunities made available to them. Each individual undertaking the process of career is influenced by many factors, including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes and educational attainment (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 2001). In line with the view above, it is pertinent to assert that the career choice that adolescents make is a decision that is influenced not only their development but also by the context in which they live (Chen, 1997). Initial career decision-making is a cultural, developmental task that adolescents are expected to have accomplished by the end of their high school year. (Super, Savicks, & Super, 1996).

Junior secondary education is the level of education where students are expected to have basic knowledge and learn all the relevant subjects irrespective of the area of specialization. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004; 18) has it that secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. This stage of education has 6-levels in all, but has 3 levels in the junior stage and 3 levels in the senior stage respectively. The students at the junior stage are the constituent of the basic education that is from primary one to primary nine. The senior secondary stage is the last 3 levels of secondary education. The broad goals of secondary education by FRN (2004) shall be to prepare the individual for: useful living within the society; and higher education. Therefore, if after passing through secondary education, one is expected to have tolled towards a particular career direction for useful living within the society.

Religion is a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs (Dictionary.com; 2015). Arbogast (2008) has it that individuals who are religiously extrinsically-oriented, either personal extrinsic or social extrinsic, will exhibit higher level of career commitment than those individuals who are religiously intrinsically oriented. Religion provides quiet reflection for decision making such as making career choice (Mathis, 2002).

Marital status has to do marital nature and affairs of individuals. Statistics Canada (2015) summarily classified marital status to include: married (and not separated), living common law (cohabitation), widowed (not living common law), separated (not living common law), divorced (not living common law) and single (not living common law). Wikipedia The Free

Encyclopedia (2015) stressed that a person's marital status indicates whether the person is married or single.

According to Osaat (2011), gender is a societal construct which separates the role expected of males and females in any organization or society. Gender is the biological and role differences that exist between individuals. This is the assignment of roles either by nature or by God in the day to day existence of mankind. Bosco and Bianco (2015) found out that maternal work patterns are significantly related to lifestyle choices for women and spousal lifestyle choices for men.

School location is the area where the school of students is sited. The school could be located in the urban, semi-urban or in the rural areas of the city. Where the school is located could in one way or the other influence the choice of students career because of what they see and experience on their way to school and in the school environment.

Statement of Problem

Despite the career day and activities that go on in our secondary schools across the nation. In the workplace, one still comes in contact with those that are not intrinsically satisfied with their job. This is made manifest in the way they talk to their clients, treat files and negligence of duty during work periods. The rate by which they request for bribe and stipends from costumers, go a long way to show that they are only extrinsically motivated to choose a career in that area. When these happen in an organization, there is high propensity that the organization cannot achieve fame, satisfy their costumer, and yield production as required. Therefore, career misfits and miscreants are at the verge of losing their jobs because of unruly behaviours that they exhibit knowingly or unknowingly, thereby adding up to the number of unemployed who have all the tendencies and wherewithal to unleash mayhem in the society. This has culminated into kidnapping, armed robbery, demonstration, rape, cultism and frustration. The researcher is therefore bordered whether this wrong career choice could be as a result of religious background, gender, marital status and school locations.

Objective of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- 1) To find out the extent religion (Christianity, Islam, and pagan) has influence on the choice of career of students in secondary schools in Imo State.
- 2) To ascertain the extent gender (male and female) has influence on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.
- 3) To determine the extent marital status (single, married, separated, widowed and divorced) has influence on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.
- 4) To determine the extent location (urban, semi-urban and rural areas) has influence on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

- 1) To what extent does religion (Christianity, Islam, and pagan) influence the choice of career of secondary school students in Imo State?
- 2) To what extent does gender (male and female) influence the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State?

- 3) To what extent does marital status (single, married, separated, widowed and divorced) influence the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State?
- 4) To what extent does location (urban and rural areas) influence the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State?

Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant influence of religion (Christianity, Islam, and pagan) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.
- 2) There is no significant influence of gender (male and female) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.
- 3) There is no significant influence of marital status (single, married, separated, widowed and divorced) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.
- 4) There is no significant influence of location (urban and rural areas) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

Methodology

The study adopted an ex post facto research design. The population of the study is all the 3400 SSII students in the 314 public secondary schools in Imo State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample size of 1020 students using 30% of the population. A self designed instrument titled 'Influence of Demographic Variables on Students' Choice of Career Questionnaire' (IDVSCCQ). The instrument has two parts. Part A consists of the demographic factors while part B contains non cognitive and non standardized items on choice of career. This section is structured after the modified Likert four points rating scales of Strongly Agree (4-points), Agree (3-points), Disagree (2-points) and Strongly Disagree (1-point). This section contains 20 items on choice of career of students. Face and content validities were ensured. The cronbach alpha reliability was used to establish internal consistency reliability of 0.83. Mean, standard deviation, independent sample z-test and One Way Analysis of Variance were used for data analysis.

RESULTS

Research Question One

- 1) To what extent does religion (Christianity, Islam, and pagan) influence the choice of career of secondary school students in Imo State?

Hypothesis one

- 1) There is no significant influence of religion (Christianity, Islam, and pagan) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.
- 2)

Table 1.a: Descriptive Statistics religion on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State

Category	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Christianity	350	46.7333	9.68897
Islam	135	42.5778	7.29595
Pagan	15	42.0944	7.73459
Total	1020	42.3667	7.68897

Table 1.b: One Way Analysis of Variance of religion on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	317.333	2	158.667	2.702	.068
Within Groups	29124.554	497	58.719		
Total	29441.888	499			

Table 1a shows the descriptive statistics on the responses. It was revealed that Christianity to a large extent has influence towards the choice of career with mean and standard deviation scores of 46.7333 and 9.68897, followed by Islam with mean and standard deviation scores of 42.5778 and 7.29595 and finally by pagans with mean and standard deviation scores of 42.0944 and 7.73459 respectively. Table 1b presents One-Way ANOVA with between group=317.333, within groups=29124.554, df (2,497), F=2.702, $p>0.05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant influence of religion (Christianity, Islam, and pagan) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

Research Question Two

To what extent does gender (male and female) influence the choice of career in secondary schools i Imo State?

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant influence of gender (male and female) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 2: z-test statistics of the influence of gender on the choice of career in secondary schools i Imo State

S/N	N	Mean	Sd	Df	Sig.	t-cal	remarks
Female	621	23.173	6.780	1018	0.00	3.97	sig.
Male	399	19.537	5.231				

Table 2 shows that female students have more influence on choice of career as shown in their mean and standard deviation values of 23.173 and 6.780. Given a df (1018), $t=3.97$, and $p<0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implication, there is a significant influence of gender (male and female) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

Research Question Three

To what extent does marital status (single, married, separated, widowed and divorced) influence the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State?

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant influence of marital status (single, married, separated, widowed and divorced) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 3a: Descriptive Statistics on the influence of marital status on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State

Category	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Single	250	39.3333	13.41189
Married	535	41.1282	12.05072
Separated	150	38.4667	11.53227
Widowed	50	40.4835	11.08161
Divorced	35	39.6853	11.86587
Total	1020	199.097	59.94236

Table 3b: One Way Analysis of Variance of the influence of marital status on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	353.577 ^a	2	158.667	.662	.619
Within Groups	311522.158	1018	58.719		
Total	311875.735	1020			

Table 3a shows that married a large extent has the highest influence of choice of career on the students followed by widowed, divorced, single and separated. The ANOVA table shows that $df(2,1018)$, $F=.662$ and $p>0.05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. By implication, there is no significant influence of marital status (single, married, separated, widowed and divorced) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

Research Question Four

To what extent does location (urban and rural areas) influence the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State?

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant influence of location (urban and rural areas) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 4: z-test calculation on the influence of location (urban and rural areas) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State

Category	N	Mean	Sd.	Df	z.cal.	Sig.	remarks
Rural	489	9.9820	2.45205	101	.447	.683	Not sig.
Urban	531	10.2733	2.58891	8			

Table 4 shows that rural parents has mean and standard deviation scores of 9.9820 and 2.45205 while urban parents have mean and standard deviation scores of 10.2733 and 2.58891. This shows that the choice of career is influenced more by urban parents than the rural parents. With a degree of freedom of 1018 and z-calculated value of .447, the null hypothesis is accepted. By implication, there is no significant influence of location (urban and rural areas) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study are discussed as shown below

Influence of Religion on Choice of Career

It was found out that Christianity to a large extent has influence towards the choice of career with mean and standard deviation scores of 46.7333 and 9.68897, followed by Islam with mean and standard deviation scores of 42.5778 and 7.29595 and finally by pagans with mean and standard deviation scores of 42.0944 and 7.73459 respectively. Table 1b presents One-Way ANOVA with between group=317.333, within groups=29124.554, df (2,497), $F=2.702$, $p>0.05$. The null hypothesis shows that there is no significant influence of religion (Christianity, Islam, and pagan) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State. The finding is in disagreement with Arbogast (2008) when he reported that individuals who are religiously extrinsically-oriented, either personal extrinsic or social extrinsic, will exhibit higher level of career commitment than those individuals who are religiously intrinsically oriented. The finding of Mathis (2002) that religion provides quiet reflection for decision making such as making career choice is against the finding of this study.

Influence of Gender (Male and Female) on the Choice of Career

The finding shows that female students have more influence on choice of career as depicted in their mean and standard deviation values of 23.173 and 6.780. Given a df (1018), $t=3.97$, and $p<0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implication, there is a significant influence of gender (male and female) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State. This is emphatically stated by Bosco and Bianco (2015) that maternal work patterns are significantly related to lifestyle choices for women and spousal lifestyle choices for men. Moreso, National Science Board's and Engineering Indicators in Dick and Rallis (1991) that only 13% of the nation's scientists and engineers are women (26% and 4%).

Influence of Marital Status (Single, Married, Separated, Widowed and Divorced) on the Choice of Career

The finding revealed that married to a large extent has the highest influence of choice of career on the students followed by widowed, divorced, single and separated. The ANOVA table shows that df (2,1018), $F=.662$ and $p>0.05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. By implication, there is no significant influence of marital status (single, married, separated, widowed and divorced) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State.

Influence of Location on Choice of Career

The result shows that rural parents have mean and standard deviation scores of 9.9820 and 2.45205 while urban parents have mean and standard deviation scores of 10.2733 and 2.58891. This shows that the choice of career is influenced more by urban parents than the rural parents. With a degree of freedom of 1018 and z-calculated value of .447, the null hypothesis is accepted. By implication, there is no significant influence of location (urban and rural areas) on the choice of career in secondary schools in Imo State. McQuerrey (2016) has it that geography can have an influence on career path decision in a number of ways.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that religion, marital status and location does not have a significant influence in the choice of career among secondary school students in Imo State while gender has a significant influence on the choice of career of the students in Imo State.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusion of this study it is therefore recommended that:

- 1) Religious leaders and various homes should intensify preaching in the areas of career development and satisfaction.
- 2) The marital status of parents of the students should be used in career counselling for career placement.
- 3) Professionals in different areas of specializations in their full regalia should from time to time in their numbers visit schools in the rural areas and have words with the students.
- 4) Students should be properly educated that they can choose any career in any field of specialization irrespective of their gender.

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