GENDER VARIABLES AND STUDENTS PROFESSIONAL CAREERS CHOICE ON OCCUPATIONAL FUTURE PRESTIGE OF STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO

By

A. A. AGBAJE

Department of Educational Foundations,
Guidance and Counselling,
University of Uyo,
Uyo.

Abstract

Drawing on the relevant literature and the researcher's own experiences and works the study investigated the effects of Gender variables and Students Professional Career, Choice on occupational future prestige of students in the University of Uyo. One hundred and eighty randomly selected University students constituted the sample of the study. The sample consisted of 95 young adults men and 85 young adult women of University of Uyo. Their age ranged between 16 and 19 years with a mean age of 15.6 years and standard deviation of 0.64 years. Career factor inventory and career-decision-making self efficacy scales were the two main instruments employed in the study. Data were analysed using analysis of covariance. The results showed that there was a significant main effect of treatment on the occupational future of the participants. The two instruments were also superior to the control group on the measure of Gender variables and students' career choice of the participants. The results further indicate that career decision-making self-efficacy and the gender moderated the causal link between treatments and the criterion measure. Based on the findings, it was suggested that conscious efforts should be made by school counselors and relevant shareholders to adopt career planning course and career exploration intervention as tools for handling undergraduate students career-related-concerns. It was further observed that gender and career self-efficacy which are seen to impinge on the career behaviour of students should be taken into account when providing career counselling.

In our society today much importance is placed on the type of work an individual does. This is so because some careers enhance influence, prestige and monetary values than others. Career has been defined as one's occupational development and activities throughout the entire life span of man. Pietrofesa and Splate

(2006) affirmed that career development is a process occurring over one's life span. It involves the formation and implementation of vocational self concept.

The overall development of the society depends solely on the day to day activities of human endeavour. Past and present civilization has been built on work. However, the nature of work or career and the roles of the workers have changed in recent times. At one time, most work was done by hands, backs and brains but recently, technology has taken over all aspects of work. Any normal functioning human being must sooner or later find himself involved in one type of career or the other. When the morale of workers in a give societal establishment or organization is low, the social setting is in danger or disintegration because workers are the life wire or any establishment, organization and society at large.

In Nigerian economy and even the world over, male and female make up the labour forces who are employed either by private or public sector of the economy. It is surprising to note that despite the thick population of women over men; women who represent significant proportion of the labour force are grossly under-represented in scientific and technological career wheels of the economy. Careers in Engineering, technology and the armed forces enjoy limited patronage among the women folks. For instance, in 1983, only 3% of all engineers were women (Rowley and Home, 2006).

Nwagwu (2009) stated that education is the process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in its cultural setting and heritage in order to foster continuously the well-being of mankind ad guarantee its survival against the unpredictable, at times hostile and destructive elements and forces of man and nature. The importance of education in career training service and benefits cannot be over-emphasized. It is against this back-drop the government has set up formidable educational structures and programmes comprising primary, secondary and tertiary institutions with encompassing curriculum to cover all career training and development.

One of the educational problems of many educated youths in Nigeria is choosing a profession because the applicants are so many but the opportunities are limited. With this development, a student must make sure he chooses a course that is highly professional so as to fetch him a living even without being employed by a private or government ministry.

A profession is generally agreed to be based on systematic intellectual knowledge communicated through some sort of educational process. Entry into a profession is limited to people who have undergone some specified educational training or programme (Sally, 1998, Watts, 2007, and See, 2002).

Hermon (1991) and Being, Huat (2004) offered the attributes of a profession to include amongst others:

1. A body of knowledge and theory essential for professionals to master
2. A knowledge base results from prolonged study of training or socialization in the profession.
3. Application of knowledge and service to human problems.
4. The existence of professional organization.
5. Society holds the profession in esteem and
6. Expected level of educational achievement.

Observing the characteristics, one can conclude that Engineering, computer Technology and Architecture are professional courses to be studied in Universities. Unfortunately, career in major professional areas such as Engineering, Technology, Pharmacy and other mathematically related courses have suffered negligence from female students while male prominently dominate (Green, 2009).

Gender facts which influence our behaviour are perhaps one of the traceable factors that rise to this phenomenon. Gender influences human behaviour and preferences biologically and socially. Human behaviours are the product of man's biological activities. The foremost development in behaviour came out of psychology called "behaviourism" put forth by notable thinkers such as Skinner and Ivan Pavlov.

Gender facts in career choice could be viewed in social perspective. In some societies, government, culture and traditional background play greater role in choosing a career. There are social settings where women are not permitted to work and earn a living for their families; rather they give this opportunity to male alone. This inhibits women enrolment in schools and consequently choice of career in professional areas (Batatunde, 2003). Probably, this is the reason why outstanding achievements are rare in women than in men (Tyler, 2005).

Behaviour in this context are those character extractions passed down from our parents (gene), that makes us unique and different from the way we act, feel and see things in different perspectives. Behaviour unveils such traits as intelligent quotient, proper speaking, having good sight, walking properly and so on. Negative traits include: shyness, weakness, low intelligent quotient, fear and so on. These traits are inborn. They are not exhibited by environmental factors. They constitute major determinants of behaviour and vary according to male and female genders which consequently reflect on our choice for food, career, friends, life partners, just to mention a few that we keep, hence female drives for courses of single honours whie the male go for majors.

Social factors that determine gender's choice of career are parents. Parents often serve as a major influence in the lives of their male and female children. The career process of young people can easily be compared to rocks in a polisher. "All kinds of people grind away at them…but parents are the big rocks in the number (Otto, 2009). No other factor can replace the influence parents have on their sons and daughters' career plans (Hines, 2004 and Simpson, 2006). However, environment, peer-group, family, opportunities are some of the variables that influence choice in a particular field by men and women differently. Peers contribute directly or indirectly to the development of the adolescent self concept and choice of occupation. The searching for the place in the social world, and particularly in the world of work, make students to continually compare themselves with others, rating themselves on many characteristics, such as what they will want to do after schooling. So attitude of peers (towards colleagues) influences (their feelings about schools) their interest in the choice of course of study. Hence the female gender would influence her friends toward choosing what she offers which possibly will be a single honour programme. Social image and perception issue has been a matter of concern. Some professions have high esteem that others. Societal perception on a particular field serves to endear or repel students on such field (Tiamiyu, Akussah and Jackie, 1999).

Another factor that influences gender's choice of career is the bureaucracy bottleneck of admission into the university to study certain course as well as the duration for completing such study. Women by observation want to get out of school to fulfill their marital urges. For them to achieve this, they resolve for discipline that would give them opportunity to fulfill their purpose. Furthermore, the admission processes in such oriented profession is comparatively high compared to none-science too. This also goes a long way to reducing the number of female going in for these courses.

Based on this disparity in the choice of career between male and female, that this research is carried out to find the causes and possible solutions to bridge the gap. Gender differences continue to play a part not only in our economy, but also in the educational sector. Education has remained the medium through which men and women acquire skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for any career.

Several theories have been formulated to explain why and how different gender choose and enter different professions. These theories have also accounted for some of the difficulties which often arise in the process sof making and implementing a career decision. Theories of choice of profession outline the critical factors in career determination. The various theories that attempt to describe how different gender or male and female make career choices have diverse approaches and emphases. Some stress personality characteristics and others state that situational determinants are more

critical than personality factors. Although the influence of career choice may be too numerous and too complex for any single existing theory, the theories reviewed in this study present a comprehensive view of career determinants. Career theories provide roadmaps for interpreting choice process. For the purpose of this study, the trait factor and the need/personality theories were used.

The trait/factor theory is the first and the oldest theory to attempt to explain how one selects a profession. This theory was propounded by Frank Parson in 1909 and is still relevant to the present day. According to the proponent, the trait theory assumes that individuals possess capacities such as interests, aptitudes and personality characteristics. These traits are fairly stable and seldom change after an individual has passed the adolescent stage. Traits can be measured with objective psychological tests and inventories. When profiled, they indicate the individual's potential. Different professions also have unique characteristics and require a unique pattern of an individual's trait for success. Like individual trait profession can be profiled to show the quantity of individual traits they require. Therefore, if a student wants to select a choice of profession he is likely to succeed in, all that is required is to match his profession in which he is interested.

Another assumption of this approach is a unique profile of personal characteristics required for success in any chosen profession. It follows that in similar professional groups, for example, engineering and Mathematics related course, the workers would possess common trait patterns. The theory further assumes that once an individual possesses test results of his traits and also information about career characteristics and retirements, he is on his way to choosing a profession in which he will be satisfied, (Oladele, 2000).

The trait/factor approach has made a significant contribution to career counsellign and will continue to do so for a long time to come. It is a cognitive approach which used, with caution, can help an individual become aware of his chances of success or failure in choosing a specific profession.

The implication of trait/factor approach suggests that personal characteristics like interest and aptitudes should be taken into consideration in choosing a career. However, the trait/factor theory focuses only on the relationship between trait and career choice. It neither explores how such factors develop over time nor does it emphasize other variables that influence choice. Therefore this theory should not be solely believed on, even though it has highlighted personal interest as a major variable that influences choice of a career. Attempt must be made to fuse it with other theories.

Roe and Hoppock's theory of career choice is need theory. They emphasized that needs or motivational factors play dominant role in one's career choice. Roe

focused on the need to examine family factors as an influence on career choice. Nigerian studies have emphasized influence of family on career choice (Achebe, 2002, Osuji, 2004). The family is an important and potent variable in the life of a Nigerian. However family variables may or may not influence the influence the individual's career in exactly the way Roe has postulated. We can confirm or reject this hypothesis through research.

Hoppock's (1976) Need theory is broad and while it assumes that one's career choice mirror's one's personality and needs, it points out that socio-economic and psychological factors also explain how one chooses his career. He noted that individual needs occur in a hierarchical order. An individual chooses a career which best meets his strongest needs. These needs may be social or economic. Hoppock's approach emphasizes that the fulfillment of one's need's are crucial in choosing a career. He also stresses that individual needs should be combined with other factors that influence career choice such as parents, peer groups, job opportunities and societal perception of the profession.

There are research findings to support the relevance of the need theories in Nigeria. The research findings as cited by Gesinde (1986). These are:

1. Elegbede (1977) found out that his subjects detested teaching because of poor salary and condition of service, while clerical work was detested on the ground that it is too common and dull (job attraction).
2. Gesinde (2001) in a study found that teachers dislike their profession because of negative public image of recognition by society (societal perception), poor condition of services (job attraction) and non-accordance of professional status to the teaching profession.
3. Adesuyi (2006) found out that nurses were unsatisfied with their work because of lack of prospects (job opportunities) and negative public opinion about their job (social perception).
4. Asagwara (2000) and Ologunleko (2000) found out that self-expression was the primary influence or need for career choice of his subject (personal interest).

Holland's personality theory has the basic notion that people choosing career are influenced by their particular interests and abilities. The intent of Holland's theory is to spell out the relationship between occupational environments and personal orientations. In his Model personal orientations, Holland postulated that people choose career that are congruent and in consonance with their personality (Ugwuegbulam, 1998). In one of the six occupational environments, he stated that social persons work more with people, are supportive and seek close interpersonal situations. Such persons include women who venture to profession that needs caring and comfort, such as nursing and counselling. Holland's theory suggested that personal interest is a major influence in choice of career.

Holland (1985) identified personal characteristics which could be linked with career choice, arguing that people, knowing their own interest and abilities, would actively search out an appropriate career. He promoted his idea, describing six main orientations, which were not intended to be mutually exclusive. These were realistic, linked with choice of outdoor and physical work, with few interpersonal demands, investigative, linked with thought and creativity, with minimum social demands; artistic, linked with disliking structure and requiring intense movement; social, linked with communication and helping others; enterprising, linked with power and needing management behaviour; and finally conventional, linked with high structure self-control and how interpersonal demand. For the purpose of this study, however, the attraction of Holland's theory is that it provides a means of students to express choice of choice of course of study and career preferences without a great deal of knowledge about individual professions.

The theories reviewed attempt from different vantage points to explain how one chooses a career, the factors which influence these choices, how efforts can be facilitated and sign posts to watch which might impede decision. Osipow (1968) stated that theories of career choice are too broad in scope and argued that we need miniature theories describing relatively specific aspects of career choice and decision making. The theories reviewed are significant and appropriate to the study as they focus on how and why different gender chooses careers. However, none accounts completely for all the variables involved in the choice process. Many factors which influence choice have been indicated by the theories examined. They include the gender career choice variable and other variables which include personal interest, work experience, parents, societal perception, job attraction, job opportunities, and peer group.

It cannot be overemphasized that the theories examined should be considered only as useful guidelines for career choice in Nigeria. Insights synthesized from a combination of the approaches need to be fused with observation of factors which are germane to Nigeria in order to fashion out a career model which attends to Nigeria culture peculiarly (Achebe, 2005):

a)   **Biological Model**

Taking first, a reproduction cycle approach, the biological explanations for female excesses of mood disorders have tended to focus on intervals of well defined hormonal changes such as experiencing menarche, menstruation, postpartum, and menopause. The implicit or explicit assumptions here are that changes in level of female reproductive hormones provide a general model or women's increasing vulnerability to psychological problems manifest in many ways including managerial skills. Secondly, the neurotransmitter model exists, associating difference between males and females with the availability of neurotransmitter in the brain. The differences in the rate of depression in women versus men are similar. Using the serotorium model, serotonergic

insufficiency causes depression more in men (Lepage and Stiainer, 1991, Szatowski, 2002). With these differences, corresponding differences in action and reaction to every event in life including management crises should be expected.

b)   **Social Model**

On a general note, the social mode/theories trace the differences between the male and the female to the process of socialization, with much regard to stereotypes. Sex stereotypical socialization practiced by caregivers is hypothesized to lead to gender differences in every aspect of life including self-concept (Ruble, Greulish and Pomeranttz, 1993). Invariably, one's self-concept affects how he/she views other and influences his/her management of their cases.

c)   **Psychoanalytic Theories**

These emphasize the extent to which biological sex significantly determines the personality difference between men and women. Nottleman (1995) incorporating gender socialization into psychoanalytic model has provided further explanation on women's vulnerability to depression with attendant behavioural problems. He observed that early childhood sexual abuse is a relatively common occurrence in early development of girls and constitutes a major risk for mood disorders in later life. He said an estimated thirty-seven percent of all females will experience sexual abuse by the age of twenty-one and this causes differences in the development of personality recognition. This may affect their ability to manage crises generally and more so when it involves people of opposite sex. By the foregoing, theories of conflict management points to how work place conflict can be managed technically, while theories of gender differences provide the basis for differences between males and females. By this study, it shall be found out whether gender facts have a way of influencing student choice of career in professional areas in the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Concept of Career Choice

Career choice constitutes selection of a career out of several existing careers. Such selection is influenced by such factor as interest, societal perception, gender and other factors that influence career choice.

The planning and readiness for a career is one of the most pressing developmental tasks of an adolescent (Dusek, 1977). In the past, one had to work based on the professions of the parents, and consequently, career choice appeared to be 'hereditary'. Children learnt work skills from parents and had little or no say in the choice of career. Be that as it may, Watts (2003) maintains that due to the changing nature of learning and work, career education and guidance is now assuming more importance on the public agenda than ever before. In the opinion of Watts, a structure has emerged in which education and employments are to a large degree mutually dependent; one works to learn, one learns to work. They are symbiotic and depend on each other.

In Nigeria, at present, it is pertinent to note that career choice is still not well guided. This career is usually done in haphazard manner (Makeri, 1999). Many a time, the youth make choices based on the prestige the careers render. Makeri maintains that when this phenomenon is taken care of by proper career guidance, the youth discover what their real interest and capabilities are and can at this juncture make realistic rather than fanciful choices of career.

Denga (1985 and 2005) stated that students' career choices are influenced by family status. Ezewu (2002) equated the social status of children to parental encouragement. Gender has also been identified as another factor that affects career choice. Among those who hold this view are Redgroove (2006) and Shertzer (1977).

In his contribution, Redgroove observes that boys and girls choose careers as a result of sex stereotypes. To Shertzer, the influence of gender may seem a diminishing factor but the possibility of its effects on career choice cannot be absolutely ruled out.
Based on the factors that influence career choice, it should not be constituted as being static, they are dynamic and susceptible to changes as the economy, rate of industrialization and employment opportunities improve and also if guidance – counselling is made available to help students in choice of course of study.

Gender issues have become a topic for debate in all areas of human endeavour, including career decisions. Although Suleiman (1999) Akinboye (2003) Adeyemo (2006) indicated that gender has no significant influence on the selection of science subjects, gender stereotyping has seriously limited girls to careers seen to be feminine such as nursing, teaching and secretarial work. Although it may be argued that the present generation of girls have had better educational opportunities than their mothers and grandmothers, statistics show that despite this marked improvement, girls still lag behind in the choice of subjects seen to be boys-oriented such as law, medicine, and engineering (Arbona, 1991; Suora, 1999, Agbaje, 2005).

Nzotta (2003) found that male librarians outnumbered their female counterparts because of their interest in the job other studies like the National Library of Nigeria (1976), Aguolu (1977) have also noted that fact that generally, male Librarians greatly outnumber female librarians in Nigeria. Nzotta however notes that this is a sharp difference to the situation in developed countries, like the United States and Great Britain, where similar studies have consistently shown that male librarians outnumber their female counterparts. Okeke cited by Gesinde (1986) found out that females willingly followed their mother's occupation (nursing). A male dominated profession such as engineering tends to influence males' choice of the profession as against females' dominated professions like nursing in Nigeria.

Whitehead (1991) found out that women continue to be disproportionately underrepresented in science fields. A sample of 22:3 high school seniors from nine schools in Rhodes island were surveyed about their academic and career choices and the perceived influences on those careers. Pay was a more important factor in career choice for men in general, and genuine interest was a more important factor for women not choosing career in science. Gender as a factor in career choice is also influenced by other intervening variables such as pay and interest.

Several researchers have compared the occupational aspiration of adolescent women and men (Almquist, 1974; Noeth, Roth and Prediger, 1975; Suleiman, 1999). They reported that the females in their study aspired to a more restricted range of occupations roles: teachers, nurses, secretaries, and so on. Few indicated any interest in traditionally masculine occupational roles like engineers, business executive or scientists.

Women may fear succeeding in traditionally masculine work roles because they are afraid they will be rejected socially or lose their femininity. Arbona (1991) and Suora (1999) stated that societal expectations affect female career choices both directly, through sex role stereotypes, and indirectly, through the conditioning of psychological traits related to career decision-making.

Some researchers have compared the career aspiration of adolescent males and females (Taylor, 1994; Basit, 1996). The males tend to aspire to higher and more dignified jobs than females. A number of women's provide support for some aspects of traditional views of women's and men's career preferences (Leckey, McGuigan and Harrison, 1995). In their study of career choice and expectations in relation to gender, Leckey et al (1995) found out that females were motivated to greater extent by non economic goals (such as body beautification, fashion, jobs of less difficult, and so on, but could value good career progression. Hammond and Bringley (1989) in their study of career choices found that each sex career choice tended to follow traditional pattern with having lower career aspiration than boys. However, despite cultural norms and activities assigning women the responsibilities of their homes and families, there are some indications of change towards male's career preferences (Leckey et al, 1995).

In the developed countries like United States, Britain and Germany including the developing countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, the population of men and women engaged in different professions varies widely. Although this disparity may be due to discrimination, men and women may perceive limited career options as a result, different socialization of both sexes towards aspiring for and accepting occupational roles regarded as appropriate for their respective genders (Harren, Kass, Tinsley and Moreland (2009)).

Researchers have also reported no sex differences in career decision making (Harren, Kass, Tinsley and Moreland, 1978; Lunneborg, 1978). In some more recent studies, Holmes (1992), Gali, Osipow and Givon (1995), Broonan (1998) and Farmer, Rotella, Anderson and Wardrop (1998) found that gender significantly influenced career choice of secondary school students. O'Brien and Fassinger (1993), Goldin (1997) and Rainey and Border (1997) reported that gender significantly influence adolescents girls' career orientation and career aspiration.

Similarly, feminist image of librarianship exists in the United States of America and United Kingdom. Benge (1970) cited in Lawal (2002) states that:
We should not ignore the fact that professional status is adversely affected by feminization. It is possible (although a matter of confection) that the status of librarians in the U.S. is lower than in the U. K. because of the much higher proportion of women working in American libraries. In Britain, there has been a steady decline in the percentage of men joining the profession, a trend which seems likely to continue.

Ritchie's (1979) cited Lawal (2002) study on the career choice of women in British libraries supports Benge's views on the domination of the library profession by women. For instance, Ritchie found out that 73% of the library (staff) populations are women. These studies have implication on gender influence on student's choice of library and information, as this statistic may make the males shy from choice of the profession and the females attracted to it.

Certain careers seem to be aspired on the basis of gender consideration. In their investigation on career choice and expectation, Leckey, McGuigan and Harrison (2006) used a sample of 1439 subjects containing 580 males and 859 females. The procedure involved the use of ten items, which were operationalized anticipated of degree course. The three major dependent variables considered in the investigation were gender, age and faculty. Analysis of variance indicated that gender was not a significant factor in career choices. The inconsistency in the literature provides a basis for further investigation. Gender therefore becomes a worthy examining in the study in relation to student's choice of career in key professional areas.

Attitude is one of the biological traits that influences gender choice of career. Attitude means a person's disposition to something, idea, object, activity or discipline. It is based on one's feelings, modes, opinion or belief about something.

An individual's attitude whether male or female towards a thing can be favourable, unfavourable or neutral as a result of a number of factors such as previous knowledge, misinformation or misconception about a thing. Hence career choice across gender may be influenced by this factor. In this view most student attitudinal interest on professional areas due to attitude influential behaviours such as labour intensive and

tediousness of the profession, lack of flamboyancy and fantasy on the practitioners of those fields, unrealistic structure on ground for them to start off after graduation, these and other impact negatively on the student's choice of career either in male or female.

Parents have influence on their children's choice of courses of study in higher institutions of learning. The impact of the family, in which the child lives, its goals and objectives on the career choice of the child, cannot be over-emphasized. The family normally provides the child with first social experiences. Parents provide the model with which the child identifies. They can consciously set themselves up as advisors or they may be approached by the child for direct advice on a wide range of matters including choosing profession. Within the family, parents provide a variety of opportunity for role-playing. They are constantly transmitting behavioural traits, attitudes and value systems, which are basic to specific roles (Onyemerekaya and Uhegbu, 1998).

Okeke (1977) and Aghamalu (1980) cited in Gesinde (1980) studied the relationship between occupational preferences of parents and their children. Okeke found that 60% of the children were willing to take after their father's occupation (medicine, law) while 23% were willing to follow their mother's occupation (nursing).

One way parents influence the career aspiration and choice of their children is through modeling (Bell, 1969, Brunkan, 1965; Harrison, 2000; Lynch, 2002). Boys, who identify strongly with their fathers, tend to have traditional sex-typed interest and tend to use the father as a role model for career choice. Bell's research is very clear in this respect, and indicates that parents are the primary role models for career choice. Parents are important too, influencing their children's choice of career because children tend to follow in their footsteps (Dusek, 1977). Adolescents tend to choose careers that they know about and they certainly know more about their father's or mother's professions than they do others. Wertz (1968) compared parents and children's occupation for 76,015 high school students and reported that for a number of occupations, the children entered the same profession with their parents at a greater probability than would be expected to chance. Wertz attributed this to familiarity with parent's occupation, pressure from the parents to enter the specific profession that has been satisfying to them, and to identify with the parents. In some instances, such as medicine, it is also quite simple to take over the business from the parents; hence individuals who entered medical profession had fathers who were also doctors.

Parents are likely to motivate their children to strive hard so as to choose what they want to study and become what they want him to be. Parental influence on career choice was further highlighted by Olayinka (1973) who found that 35,390 of the youths in the sample studied consulted their parents on the choice of profession. Durojaiye (1973) supported the importance of parents on choice of a career. He showed that a

significant number of students said that their parents explicitly expressed opinion about their choice of career. About 46.9% of his sample got career information from their parents.

Oladele (2000), reporting on the strong influence of parents on their children's choice of career, cited that a parent whose son was admitted to read veterinary medicine in a Nigerian University once retorted, "I cannot sponsor my child to study veterinary medicine as anybody who does not go to school can take care of cows and goats". This gives us insight into the nature of parental influence on career choice. This influence is felt explicitly when decisions such as subject choice of university entrance are being considered. Abubakar (2004) also identified parental influence as a factor in career choice among Nigerian students.

An investigation of influence on career decisions of high school graduates conducted by Sukovieff (1990) reveals that the persons who influenced students' career decisions with significant mean scores were parents. The graduates rated their mother's influence, 3.09, on a scale of 1 to 5, slightly higher than the father's 2.93. This was very similar to the study by Schadt (1975) who found that graduate' fathers and mothers were named almost equally as often as being very influential. Mothers were chosen by 41 percent and fathers by 40 percent by the graduates as having a great deal of influence on their choice of profession. Kotrilik and Harrison (1987) also found the respective parents the most influential persons. Other studies (Lisack, 1975, Leifir and Lesser, 1976; Alden and Seiferth, 1979; Mills, 1980; Russel, 1980; Daniels 1983, the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Universities, 1984; Por, 1993) also found that parents were the most influential persons in students' lives and on their choice of persons have influenced their choice of the university and course of study, parents placed first.

The students show that clearly parents are still the most important source of external influence on students' choice of course of study and career decisions. Parents help their children deal with uncertainty and the challenges that uncertainty offers. Parents need to provide means of improving the potentials for calculating probabilities of both success and failure in career choice. It is believed that the relationship between young people (student) and parents is probably closer than any other especially during their first 18 years of life and it is concluded that this close relationship has much to do with the perceived high level of parental influence on career decisions. We can deduce here that mothers could affect their girls' choice of career while fathers equally influence that of boys hence gender influence in career.

A study by Flody and South quoted in Gordon (1981) specifically investigated students' orientation to parents and peers. One questionnaire assessed the degree to

which the students were peer or parent-oriented. The respondents indicated the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with statements such as, "Prefer to grow up to be like my friends rather than my parents". This agrees with the findings of Moen and Heim (1988) that influence by friends was an important factor in the choice of career by students.

Bell's (1969) data indicated that students ranked peers high as influential role models for career choice. Peers make more or less unorganized and successful attempt to foster the achievement of their fellow adolescents and regulate their general behaviour towards their choice of career. Musgrave (1967) observed that by the age of ten or fifteen, peer group is very important. He further stated that that a child's peers profess values and exhibit behaviours that conflict with those exposed by the child's family. This reflects what Hilgard (1979) said that children's interaction with their age mates provides a major contribution to their career dreams.

This statement is quite true because peer interactions may occur in several settings including the school, organized group activities or informed relationship in the neighbourhood. As a result of peer relationship, adolescents come to learn that some peer share their thoughts and feelings although some others may not. This may be as a result of differences in their family background. Gordon (1981) asserted that adolescents from high socio-economic background may share thoughts and feelings different from those of low socio-economic background. This means that each social class of best friends seems to have a substantial effect on each other's career plans.

Denga (1982) noted that, adolescents are always ready to divulge certain kinds of personal information to their peers, which they are unable to discuss with anyone else. An awareness of these differences may have positive influence in helping adolescents through the provision of adequate information relating to choice of course of study.

Uba (1983) also noted that peers provide unique experiences for sharing feelings and emotional experiences. He emphasized that these experiences are important because they provide an arena for handling many of the challenges and difficult feelings associated with career choice. This contention may probably be responsible for Roger (1962) observation that peers force themselves to face what seems to them to be the realities of life. They teach what is acceptable and what is not, including making career choice (Mgfemele, 1997; Odoemelam, 2004).

It is however, important to note that peer groups have an external locus of control over themselves, which shape their attitude and values. These attitudes and values vary in their stages of development. In this regard Ginsberg (1972), a vocational

theorist, pointed out that individuals move in stages of career choice. Each stage represents a compromise between what is whished and what is possible. Expressing his view further, Ginberg stated that peers are influenced by their groups in making career choices.

In their work, Alberts, Mbalo and Ackermann (2003) agreed that as agent of socialization, peers serve the important function of providing each other's information about the kinds of career choices that are appropriate in various situations. This is to show that peer groups and friends provide the adolescents with an arena for much of the learning and career directions that occur in adolescent period.

In support of this assertion, Uche (1985) stated that values and attitudes of the child's peers help to shape a very broad spectrum of personality characteristics. For example; he goes further to say that adolescents are likely to raise or lower their educational and career goals so that these are in accord with the value of their peer groups, particularly their close friends. This indicates that the attitudes of peers towards their colleagues strongly influence the child's feelings about schools, as well as his career interests and choice.

The implication of the foregoing is that peers contribute directly or indirectly to the development of the adolescent self-concept and choice of courses of study and occupation. Moreover, in searching for their place in social world, and particularly in the world of work, students continually compare themselves with others, rating themselves on many characteristics such as what they would want to be after schooling.

Various schools of thought have defined the concept of perception. Scater (1981) defined it "as the first event in the chair that leads from the stimulus to action." Perception is a highly individualized affair; individuals perceive things differently. No person perceives objects, events or relationship in the same way like the other. For example, a trader selling his/her wares in an open ground and a farmer standing in his/her farm is likely to perceive rain in quite different ways. The same rain may cause a quite different perception for the same farmer at the harvest season. This is because perception is always influenced by the internal factors as well as psychological factors like attention, exception, motivation and past experiences with the stimuli etc. (Nedaso, 1998). Societal perception is a great influence for students' choice in professional areas of discipline.

One of the attributes of a profession, according to Hernon (1991) is that society holds the profession in esteem. Therefore, societal perception is a recognized factor that influences career option. Onyemerakeya and Uhegbu (1998) argued that individuals prefer one profession to the other due to the social prestige attached to it. It may be on

the basis of how the society views those in that particular profession, the ethics of the job or the respect according to the individual as a result of the profession. The society recognized the professions and respects those associated with them. Societal perception may imply mode of dressing, comportment and interaction with people.

Onyemerekeya and Uhegbu (1998) identified financial attraction as a factor influencing choice of career. Kotrilik (1987) and Hudson (1988) found the leading factors influencing students' in their career selection as "working condition" and "salary". The other job variables as propounded by Nzotta (1983) that enhance career choice among gender in our university includes attractive working environment, good salary, job security and promotion prospects. They are summed up as job attraction variable.

Nwakoby (1984) and Moen and Heim (1988) in their different studies reported "upgrade of professional skill" and "need to earn a living" respectively as factors responsible for choice of career. These are what Bello (1996) and Alakwe (1997) referred to as professional factors, which include stability and security of profession, satisfactory earnings and improved social status. Nwahunanga (2000) studied gender and adolescents' choice of science-related careers in Abia State Senior Secondary Schools and found out that "it gives more money" that is job attraction with 71 and 54 levels of agreement for boys and girls respectively. This study collaborates the works of Anderson and Strake (2001), engineering a career for young women in Toronto, Canada and Winston (1997), which found salary (job attraction) as an influential factor second to image (societal perception). These studies show that no matter the profession, job attraction in form of salary in Nigeria these courses (Engineering, Law, and Medicine) are dominated by male.

Job opportunity is one of the factors that influence career choice. The marketability of a profession influences its choice. Chapman et al (1999) in a graduate school of communication and information in Los Angeles determined what led the students to opt for field of study. From the responses based on job opportunities, it seemed that everyone felt good about job prospects for the profession. With 16% of the respondents answering "great", 61% answering "good" and 24% answering "fair", it was clear that the communication information science profession had great prospects for them which make them feel that more opportunities will open to them in the field upon graduation.

The availability of positions and job opportunities has been seen as another factor that appears to be a positive asset or 'selling point' for students' choice of professional areas. The expanding number and types of positions in construction and technology science especially now that Nigeria and other African countries are

developing are likely to be an attractive inducement for those who are selecting it as a career field (Winston, 1997; Hallam and Partridge, 2005).

Another study by See (2004) and Hallam and Partridge (2005) that identified job opportunities such as working conditions, promotion opportunities as seen to influence students' in their choice of career. Professional fields offer a wide range of opportunities both in private and public establishment with other benefits attachments. Since the students (male) perceive themselves as the bread winners, they venture in these areas so as to help the benefit thereof.

Factors which constitute an external lure or influence have been thoroughly investigated by researchers and include nursing, hair-dressing, home economics and modeling. Most female students do not need any advice on choosing their career. Since they have a good dexterity in the professions or career while at home, they would instinctually go for these career. Previous knowledge therefore becomes a guide for gender choice of career.

Work experiences were also found to a relevant and influential on students' choice of career (Sukovieff, 1990). Due to economic and finance of few parents in Nigeria, most students' especially male work for a while after their secondary school before proceeding to the university. During this period, their experience in a field would automatically influence their choice of career. A draughtsman in an engineering company when furthering his education will surely pursue engineering to continue in draughtsmanship he is already acquainted with.

Personal interest and aptitude are essential factors that influence a student choice of career especially in professional fields. The two factors are not mutually exclusive.

Interest refers to the likes and dislikes of an individual, which determine his preferences for choosing an occupation or a profession (Shertzer and Stone, 1981). Females are likely interested in careers that involve frequent interactions with people and they depict their love of dealing with people by being friendly, helping, understanding and sympathetic towards other people. There are many careers in which people with the above personal qualities can derive satisfaction (Olayinka, 1983). But the reverse is the case with men who have flare for career that makes them outstanding, give respect and firm, make them lord over others and so on. He should have a good sense of humour, and devotion to duty. On the other hand, a person who has no patience and cannot stand incessant worries of clientele and is not helpful ought not to choose librarianship as a career.

Writing on aptitude as an influencing factor in choosing a career, Uba (1983), Onyemerekaya and Uhegbu (1988:206) said that it is one thing to be interested in a

profession and another thing to have an aptitude for the courses that lead to the profession. According to them, aptitude or special abilities determine the level of an individual's performance in a given profession. The individual needs to understand or have knowledge of his aptitude and if a profession requires capacities in which one is deficient, one may find it difficult and frustration may set in leading to lack of job satisfaction and maladjustment (Ipaye, 1986). Typically of such courses are mostly professional field in which this study is basically examined. In women, mathematics has been one of the hindering subjects towards choosing professional careers. Their attitude and interest in mathematics related is very low hence vocational counselors have a duty in correcting this stereotype behaviour.

Sukoveiff (1990) found out that factor other persons found to have the most significant influence on career selections were 'own interests'. 'Own interest' was scored a mean of 4.52 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 meaning 'very influential'. As students complete their higher school years (post-primary), they realize they must have their own interest. They develop interest on the basis of their abilities, aptitudes and likes, and these interests become relevant in choosing their professions. In this realistic period, people are able to synthesize an appropriate career plan based on their personal interests and situational influences (Shertzer, 1973; Krumboltz and Hamel, 1980). Some youths are drawn into certain disciplines and careers as a result of interest, attitudes and ability (Egbughara and Balogun, 1984; Obanya, 1985). The belief that one could do well in a career spurs the individual into the career. Such a belief is held in consideration of personal interest.

Engels and Bank (1980) and the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Universities (1984) also found students' selection. Schadt (1975) reported that graduates studied identified themselves (94%) as having a '"great deal" of influence in their post-secondary choice of course of study. Self perception is the process which individuals infer their attitudes, emotions and other internal states from observations of their own behaviour (Stang and Wrightman, 1981). Self-perception leads to development and modification on self-image. The way people see themselves, consider themselves and evaluate themselves constitute their perception of themselves and such determines their interest or indifferences in certain careers. Thus, the perception people hold of themselves tends to influence their choice of career (Nnachi, 2000). The influence of self-perception or personal interest on career choices is well documented (Adeniran, 1985; Buttlar and Caynon, 1992; Sax, 1994). Women perceived to be feeble who do not have the stamina to stand rigorous engineering profession. For instance, the plight of standing in the sun, being on drawing board for hours, mounting construction equipments. This perception defers them from these professional areas.

Individuals perceive certain professions as simple or difficult. This variance in perception among gender also brings about variance in choices among gender in career choice thus in professional areas.

Empirical Framework

This sub-study will capture previous scientific studies and result of related literature on the topic under focus into bringing to bear whether there is any existing study on career choice and gender and more so for confirmation of postulations.

A good number of studies (Archer and Freedman, 1989; Archer and Macrae, 1991) have demonstrated that disciplines are sex-stereotyped. Males and females tend to choose careers that are related to be disciplines they are stereotypically inclined (Colley, Comber and Hargreaves, 1994). In a study of 14 schools in England and Wales and using a sample of 342 (193 girls and 147 boys), Whitehead (1996) found that boys appeared to be more influenced by stereotypes than girls in career choice.

Niche (2000) surveyed 600 senior secondary students' achievement, self-concept and gender as correlates of science career preferences and attitude to science and found that achievement, self-concept and gender has 3,977, 0.691 and 5,668 observed F-ratio using the multiple regression analysis. Clearly, gender has the greatest influence on students' science career preference than the other two variables.

In Nigeria there is evidence that there are significant influences of gender on the adolescents' career choice (Asimugo, Ejiogu, 1991; Onivehu, 1991; Salami 1997; Adeyemo, 1999 and Uwe, 1999). Salami (2001) examined influence of gender and sex-role stereotype on career decision making self efficacy of 250 SS3 randomly selected from 6 co-educational secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State and found out there was significant difference between the male and female adolescents' career decision making. This finding supports those of Holmes (1998), Gali, Osipow and Givon (1995), Salami (1997), Brosron (1998), Farmer, Rotella, Anderson and Wardrop (1998) who found that gender significantly influenced career choice and career decision-making of their adolescent samples.

Joshua (1994) carried out a study on career choice of senior secondary school students in Calabar municipality. He used a sample of 280 students randomly selected from four schools in the municipality. He found out that youth aspired to more largely to more prestigious jobs, with 28.6% aspiring to Medicine, 25.4% to Law; 15.4% to Business/management, 14.6% to Accountancy/Banking, 9.6% to Engineering and 6.4% to Education. Youth had their highest aspiration in Medicine and the least aspiration in teaching, an indication that societal perception and prestige constitute significant influence on career choice of youth.

Purpose of the Study

Looking at the centrality of this research, the gender effects and the choice of professional careers, the present study sought to enhance viable information from the youths so as to emphasis the needs of counselling psychology. It is observed that refocusing the therapeutic approaches in counselling psychology immensely contributes to developing the spirit of self-tactics in professional career choices, reality of gender effects and poverty eradication. Also of interest to this is the possible influence gender has on the causal relationship between independent and criterion variables.

The specific purposes are:

1. The extent to which gender facts influence the choice of professional careers in male and female students of University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
2. The extent to which gender facts influence the student choice of career with a view to scholastically stream-lining issues relevant to continuous.
3. To ascertain factors influencing students choice of career across genders.
4. To determine the impact of the choice on the students institution and the society at large.

Statement of the Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of this study, the following hypotheses were tested at .05 alpha level.

- There is no significant difference in the Biological facts about male and female students and students' professional careers choice course.
- There is no significant difference in the biological variables and the students' professional careers choice course scores of participants treated with career exploration and the control group.
- There is no significant difference in the gender variables and students professional careers choice course scores of students treated with career choice planning course and the control group.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to analyse the data. It was used owing to its capacity to take care of the initial differences among the participants.

Design

The researcher utilized pre-test posted-test experimental and control group quasi-experimental design with 3 x 2 x 3 factorial matrix. There were two treatments programmes and the control group in the row. The column has gender varying at two levels and career choice self-efficacy categorized as high and low.

Participants

       A sample of 180 participants, made up of fresh students and parts two and three students respectively in the University of Uyo, Uyo. The participants were randomly drawn from the Faculty of Arts, Education, Pharmacy, Science and Social Sciences. Both sexes were equally represented since they have same population. Each Faculty has a sample size of thirty-six (36) participants, eighteen males and eighteen females respectively. The participants were so involved in this study because the five faculties are described as Town Campus established in the same site. Their age ranged from 17 to 19 years with a mean age of 15.2 years and a standard deviation of 0.66 years. All the participants in the two experimental groups participated fully in the training programmes, but those in the control group were not given any treatment. The groups that received treatments were compared with the control group to test for treatment effects.

Instrumentation

       Two instructions were used in the study, they were: career factor Inventory and Decision-Making Self-efficacy. Career factors, Inventory was developed by Chartrand, Robbins, Merral and Boggs (1990) it is a four factor inventory with a total of 21 items. The need for career information and the need for self-acknowledge subscales which represented information factors were utilized for the study. Typical items on the subscale are: "Before choosing or entering a particular career area l still need to attempt to answer who am I". The response format of the scale ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The two subscales have a total of eleven items. The whole instrument has a test re-test reliability values ranging between .79 and 84 and a Cronbach Alpha index of between. 73 and 86. The internal consistency for the total inventory was .87.

       As indicated by the authors a client CFI profile configuration might saddest specific intervention for enhancing career information seeking behaviour. The suggestion provides the rationale for adopting the scale for use in this study. The second scale us4ed in this study is career decision-making self-efficacy scale developed by Adeyemo (2001). The instrument has five subscales, namely (a) Self-Appraisal (b) Occupational Information (c) Making Plans (d) Problem-solving and (e) Goal-setting. It has a total of thirty eight items with response format the use of 'Not sure' has by been argued against check statistics textbooks, current works are based on a 4-point scale, Revisit. The instrument has theoretical values of between 38 and 100. The self-appraisal subscale has a total of nine items with a coefficient alpha of .75. Occupational information subscale has eleven items (.85). Problem-solving subscale has six items (.77). Making plans subscale has six items (=.85) and Goal-setting subscale also has five items (=.77). The overall scale has a Cronbach Alpha Value of .79. The instrument was used to identify levels of self-efficacy of the participants.

Procedure

Securing the permission of the Deans in all the faculties of the University, students were addressed at the Convocation park. The focus of the speech was on the importance of gender and students choice of careers. Sequel to this, interested students were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in the programme. Ballot method, a king of random sampling technique, was used to select participants for the study. The participants were thereafter randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups.

The study was carried out over a period of eight weeks in three different avenues (CBN, Ugochukwu Hall and Bank PHB Rooms). The training came up once in a week and each session lasted for an hour. Two avenues served as experimental groups while the other one was used as control group. Two instruments, career factor Inventory and Career-Gender Self-efficacy scales were administered to the participants as pre-test. Career factor Inventory was also used as post-test.

The experimental group one was exposed to career exploration intervention training while experimental group two was treated with career-planning course. However, the control group was not treated but was given a brief study skill counselling after the post-test. A post-test in career factor inventory was administered to the three groups.

Results

Ho$_1$: There is no significant difference in the biological facts about male and female students and students professional careers choice and occupational information seeking behaviour scores of participants treated with students professional careers choice exploration intervention (CEI) career planning course (CPC) and control group is presented below:

Table 1: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on Biological Variables and Students Professional Careers Choice of the Experimental Participants and Control Group

Variables	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean	F	p	Decision
Gender variables and students professional careers choice	Row	742.94	2	341.47	1225.42	<.05	S Reject Ho$_1$
	Columns	18.74	2	9.35	30.86	<.05	
	Integration	5.87	4	1.47	4.85	<.05	
	Within	1036.73	171	.303			

As indicated in Table 1, the analysis of covariance of participants post-test scores on biological variables and students professional choice shows that there is a significant main effect of treatment ($F_{(1, 1314)} = 2443$, $p < 0.05$). Consequently, the null

hypothesis which posited that there is no significant difference in the biological variables and students' professional careers choice and the control was rejected. The inference that could be drawn from this result is that significant difference existed in biological variables and the students' professional careers choice of the treated participants and the control group. It is also noted that there is moderating effect of gender on participants, biological variables $LF_{(2, 171)} = 30.86$, $P < 0.05$). The interaction of treatment with gender and students professional careers choice was also significant $L_{(4,171)} = 4.85$, $P < 0.05$).

Ho$_2$:   There is no significant difference in the biological variables and the students' professional careers choice scores of participant treated with career exploration and the control group.

Table 2:Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Showing the Effects of Career Exploration Intervention on Biological Variables and Students Professional Careers Choice

Variables	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean	F	p	Decision
Gender variables and students professional careers choice	Row	556.11	1	566.11	2443.67	<.05	S Reject Ho$_1$
	Columns	15.81	2	7.91	33.95	<.05	
	Integration	4.38	2	2.19	9.42	<.05	
	Within	531.00	114	.23			

The result in Table 2 shows that there was significant effect of career exploration intervention on the gender variables and students professional careers choice of the participants ($F_{1, 114}$ 2442.67, $P < .05$). Sequel to the this result, it is concluded that career exploration intervention was superior to the control. Furthermore, both gender and students professional careers choice influence the relationship between the causal variable and the criterion measure ($F_{(2,114)} = 33.95$, $P < .05$). There was also significant interaction effects of rows and columns ($F_{(2,114)} = 9.42$, P. 05).

Ho$_3$:   There is no significant difference in the gender variables and students professional careers choice scores of the students' treated with career choice planning course (CPC) and the control group is presented.

Ho$_3$:   There is no significant difference in the gender variables and students professional careers choice, course scores of students treated with career choice planning course and the control group.

Table 3: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Showing the Effects of Career Planning Course (CPC) on Participants Gender Variables and Students Professional Careers Choice

Variables	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean	F	p	Decision
Gender variables and students professional careers choice	Row	543.10	1	543.10	2060.93	<.05	S Reject Ho_1
	Columns	6.71	2	3.35	12.74	<.05	
	Integration	4.28	2	2.14	8.13	<.05	
	Within	600.83	114	.26			

As shown in Table 3, there was significant difference in the gender variables and the students' professional careers choice scores of participants exposed to course planning course was very much effective in fostering gender variables and students professional careers choice of the participants. Again gender variable and students professional careers choice moderate the relationship between treatment and the criterion measure ($_{(2,114)}$ = 2060.93, P < .05). This shows that career planning course was effective in fostering gender variables and students' professional careers choice of the participants. Again gender variable and students professional careers choice moderate the relationship between treatment and the criterion measure ($_{(2, 114)}$ = 8.13, P. <.05).

Table 4: Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) of Gender Variables and Students Professional Careers Choice Scores by Levels, Treatment and Gender

Grand Mean = 28.49

Variable Category	+	N	Unadjusted Deviation	ETA	Adjusted for Covariance Deviation	BETA
Levels:						
HSF		60	5.71		4.22	
MSF		60	.54		.48	
LSF		60	-6.36	.46	-4.70	
Treatment:						
SPI		60	6.44		6.52	
BMS		60	6.43		6.24	
Control		60	-12.87	.84	-12.86	.84
Gender:						
Male			2.08		1.68	
Female			-2.08	19	-1.68	.16
Multiple R^2						.959
Multiple						.979

Table 4 shows the multiple classification (MCA) of the adjusted variable plus the covariance. The adjusted deviation value of 6.52 is an indication of the effectiveness

of career exploration intervention in enhancing gender variables and students professional careers choice of the participants. Career exploration intervention demonstrated superiority over career planning course and control group, groups with adjusted deviation values of 6.34 and -12.86 respectively. Nonetheless career planning course was effective in fostering gender variables and students professional careers choice of the participants when compared with the control group. The MCA also indicate there was high degree of correlation between gender variable and students professional careers choice and the treatment as evident by the multiple R^2 value of .959. By implication 95.9% of the variance of the criterion variable (Gender variables and students professional careers choice) is attributable to career exploration intervention and career planning course.

Discussion

The participants in the treatment groups scored significantly higher on measure of gender variable and students professional careers choice than their counterparts in the control group. Both (CEI) and (CPC) were effective in enhancing the participants choice. This finding corroborates the assertion of Adeyemo (2006) that career exploration has a positive impact on the decision-making process in job search, placement and occupational placement and attainment. It also concurs with that of Akinboye (2003) who posited that career exploration predicts the competence to generate career opinions and that it is a significant predictor of career decision-making.

One possible explanation for the effectiveness of (CEI) in improving gender variables and students professional careers choice of the participants is that it exposed the participants to various avenues through which they could seek for career information. Besides, the method widens their knowledge on various available careers existing in the society and beyond. The effort has gone a long way to remove the veil of ignorance of the participants.

In the same vein, the effectiveness of CPC could be attributed to the fact that it was presented as another interesting school subject which is characterized by good-teacher-student interaction where all participants were free to express their opinion, had their misconceptions corrected/clarified and new information was given to broaden their knowledge about what career planning is all about. The effectiveness of professional careers choice was supported by the study of Agbaje (2005) who discovered that young adults who took a CPC at their evening school classes had less career related indecision at the end of the course than the comparison group.

In the second hypothesis, the result indicates clearly that there existed significant difference gender variables and students professional careers choice of CEI participants and the control group. This result attested to the effectiveness of the

treatment programme. The finding is in lines with the previous studies of Osuji (1974), Egbaghara and Balogun (1984), Oladele (2000) and Salami (2004) and they concluded that vocational exploration produces favourable results in terms of career development, mainly when individuals, explore significant and useful information in relation to their proximal career development task. This finding was also in agreement with Otto (1989) and Akinboye (2003) they asserted that career exploration has a significant impact on vocational maturity and students professional careers choice. They further explained that career-exploration has an impact on the decision-making process in job research and in occupation satisfaction and attainment.

As regards the third hypothesis it was further ascertained that there was a significant difference in the gender variables and students professional careers choice scores of participants exposed to CPC when compared to those in the control group. This is rooted in the fact that the treated participants were exposed to a comprehensive CPC treatment. The finding corroborates the assertion of Otto (1989) and Salami (2001) who established that occupational training programme could be effective in broadening the occupational outlook as well as improving the vocational maturity of students.

The moderating influence of career self-efficacy was of greater interest on the casual link between the intervention programmes and the criterion measures. Self-efficacy has been established as a critical factor in career decision-making process and its influence was reported to be stronger than that of interest. (Achebe, 1983 and Adeyemo, 2006). In making career decision, series of tasks are involved and the appropriateness of such decision would to a large extent be influence by the extent to which a person believes in himself or herself to execute relevant vocational task. This explanation probably holds for the participant in this study. The interaction effect of gender on the treatment outcome is a validation of the general notion that gender plays a crucial role in career behaviour. The preponderance of evidence in the literature (Achebe 1983 and Adeyemo, 2006) is either that males are better than the females in certain occupational task or vice versa. Occupation stereotyping is indeed a common feature in career literature. The present finding is therefore an affirmation of the influence of gender on vocational behaviour.

Educational and Career Counselling Implications

It is evident from the results that CEI and CPC were quite effective in enhancing gender variables and students professional careers choice behaviour of the students professional careers choice behaviour of the students irrespective of their sexes. This study therefore has some implications for counselling psychologists, teachers, career and vocational counselors, education policy makers, educational administrators, parents and government.

It is obvious from literature reviewed that the two treatment methods (CEI and CPC) have been used separately in different situations and occasions to enhance positive attitude in gender facts and students professional careers choice through numerous avenues as well as getting a right information and knowledge that will equip them to make appropriate careers choice, choose right subject combination, studying relevant courses in tertiary institutions and these in excess would facilitate their entry into the world of work. The implication therefore is that counselling psychologist and career vocational guidance counselors should familiarize themselves with these two techniques whose efficacy had been experimentally and empirically validated.

Besides, the result has clearly indicated that gender variables and students professional careers choice could be enhanced. The implication therefore is that curriculum planners, educational administrators and policy makers should fully integrate these two treatment methods in our schools to brighten the path of the students in careers choice.

Considering the centrality and the cruciality of self-efficacy in careers decision process it is thus important for school counselling psychologist to develop intervention programmes to enhance career decision molding self efficacy of students. Truly speaking, a viable career counselling programme can ill-afford to ignore the role of self-efficacy in career development process. Even if occupational stereotyping is really waning, gender for a very long time to come would still be an issue in career decision-making and career counselling generally. Thus counselor would therefore need to be gender conscious in the course of performing their professional duties.

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THE RELEVANCE OF ACTION ORIENTED METHODOLOGIES IN SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION

By

IMOH-OBONG INYANG INYANG
Department of Social Studies,
College of Education,
Afaha Nsit.

And

UBONG JAMES AKPAN
Department of Social Studies,
College of Education,
Afaha Nsit.

Abstract

The paper emphasizes the need for enhancing teaching-learning interaction by adopting the action-oriented, learner – centred methods in the Nigerian educational system. The paper examines the meaning of action-oriented methods and the state of Social Studies teaching/learning processes in Nigerian schools. The paper also focuses on the relevance of action-oriented methodologies in Social Studies education for quality assurance in education. Conclusion and recommendations are made.

The educational system in Nigeria is the architect of the enlightenment that has constituted myriad of problems to the environment. This is a direct reference to the final product of our educational system. It then implies that the situation could return to normal if the avenues necessary for ensuring the expected good quality output from the system are explored. One major way of achieving this is by producing generation of teachers who would be well equipped with the right type of knowledge, attitudes and skills in arresting the learner's interest by making him an active participant in the teaching learning process in the school. A learner who learns by doing will always find what to do in the larger society for his own good and that of the society in which he lives, hence quality assurance in education is being developed. Therefore this paper looks at the relevance of action-oriented methods in Social Studies education for quality assurance in education.

The Meaning of Action-Oriented Methodologies

This is an approach to teaching/learning processes in which the learner, as the central focus and major determinant of the subject-matter and learning experiences to be provided; gets actively involved for at least 50% of the lesson period. In such situations, the teacher acts as a facilitator who may introduce the lesson for the day and then allows the learners to carry out the bulk of the work themselves (Mkpa, 2003). In this direction, Mezieobi (1994:14) suggested that the action-oriented methods could be carried out through a good number of techniques and methods including: (a) Discussion in small groups or whole class group (b) Simulation (c) Role play (d) Dramatization (e) Field trip or excursion (f) Mock trials (g) Questioning (h) Dalton plan (i) Inquiry and (j) project methods.

Each of these mentioned above qualifies for a technique in the action-oriented teaching method because they emphasize activity and involve the learner in one form of action or activity. A teacher who is well educated in the use of action-oriented methods will always find it convenient to use any of these methods/techniques at any particular point depending on the subject matter and the level he has in view.

For instance, discussion, field trip/excursion, project, inquiry and questioning techniques could be convenient for the students in tertiary institutions, though they also must be exposed to the technicalities of using the rest of the techniques in their preparation to meet the younger learners in the primary and secondary schools.

The State of Social Studies Teaching/Learning Processes in Nigerian Schools

Almost all teachers in the primary and secondary schools in the country are still very much involved in their long-standing practice of teacher-centered, role learning and memorization methods. We live in an era of advanced technologies, which consequently exposes the learner to objects requiring manipulation and activity, even from a very tender age as they play around with toys. Hence, a learning situation in which he is forced to be a passive recipient of knowledge would rather turn out to be too dull and boring for him. Most importantly, a learner who is denied the opportunity of being actively involved in the teaching/ learning processes would definitely not be able to acquire sufficient practical experiential competencies that would enable him to fit into the fast changing society and thereby not be able to acquire quality assurance education.

Several scholarly reports and researches have noted with grave concern the classroom mal-functioning of school subjects including Social Studies education in Nigerian schools. This unwholesome situation in Social Studies teaching have prevented the attainment of outlined goals. For instance, Goof and Okam (1990) in a study noted that copying of laborious notes and memorization of simple unrelated facts

characterized most Social Studies classes or lessons. This was attributed to the traditional chalk-talk approach adopted by teachers during instructions. Similarly, Kadiri and Aliju (1992) reported that questions asked and exercises given to learners which required no serious thoughts were far from developing needed attitudes and actions emphasized in the subject. They further observed that Social Studies teachers do not apply the inquiry method central in the teaching of Social Studies. Further more, Ololobou (1994) in a survey of class-room practices in social Studies education in junior secondary schools in Kano municipality reported a great divergence between what Social Studies expected and the actual actions taken in the classroom. Over 80% of the teachers in the survey affirmed that they know they were to teach Social Studies using the inquiry method yet the approach is ignored in the actual delivery of instruction. There was a further observed non-challence and ineptitude among the Social Studies teachers.

In another study by Falayajo (1997) focusing on subjects liked best by primary schools pupils, Social Studies was ranked among the least. The subject was described generally as dull, boring and uninteresting. The basic reason given for this state of affair was the teacher factor.

Most of the teachers lacked enthusiasm and never portrayed the utilitarian value of Social Studies to life after schooling. Thus, even though Social Studies is organized to provide learners with insight into the use of various knowledge structures and processes relevant to living, its teaching fell short of the functionality principle (Okam, 2002). The process of enquiring, decision-making processes, critical thinking and problem-solving are all relegated to the background. Thus, the positive social orientation to citizenship to aid quality assurance in education is almost defeated. Also, Okam (2002) noted that Social Studies is not functioning adequately because of the low level of citizenship education to which learners are exposed in its teaching. The nation indeed is not succeeding in providing the solid foundation in schools in forging a stable and cohesive society to support nation building. The teachers' wrong use of teaching approach is a major source of the ills against the functional dispensation of Social Studies education for quality assurance in education. It is in the light of this that urgent steps need to be taken to recreate Social Studies education in the area of its methodology so as to achieve its noble goals for quality assurance in education.

The Relevance of Action-Oriented Methodologies in Social Studies Education for Quality Assurance in Education

Content materials in Social Studies are presented through the use of appropriate teaching procedures so as to achieve quality assurance in education. Action-oriented techniques conceive teaching as a joint venture between teachers and learners. They directly involve the learners with materials, objects and equipments to experiment,

construct, observe, practice skills, and understand an abstract principle in greater depth in such a way that they take responsibility for their own learning. The use of action-oriented methodologies in the teaching and learning of Social Studies will enable the learners to acquire skills of information location data gathering and analysis, so as to make inference and draw conclusions. They should also embark on projects, surveys, interviews, guided observations, inquiry, experiments and organized study trips that focus on problems in the society. When all these are done, quality assurance in education will be achieved by the learners that will lead to the educational development of a nation.

The adaptation of action-oriented methodologies in the teaching and learning of Social Studies will change the role of the teacher from being an authoritative source of information to that of being a guide initiator, adviser, director and motivator of learning activities. On the part of the learners they will get actively engaged in the instructional process interacting with one another and the environment. The result is that the learners will develop their potentialities, the spirit of perseverance, and work towards making the most rational decisions among competing alternatives. This being the case, quality assurance in education is achieved by the learners for the educational development of the country.

Quality assurance in education can be achieved by the learners when action-oriented methods are used in instructional process in Social Studies education that will help to develop in the life of the learners the following areas;
(i)   Self-realization
(ii)   Improved human relations
(iii)   Economic recovery
(iv)   Civic responsibility

In the area of self-realization, the use of action-oriented methods in the teaching and learning of Social Studies give room for experiences that bring about personal growth. The learner develops the inquiring mind through a consideration of vital issues and problems involving man as he relates with his physical and social environment. Through this teaching approach, opportunities are provided for learners to develop, use and strengthen group work skills, intellectual skills, communication skills, study skills in dealing with the problems of concern to group life. The use of these skills will help to meet individual needs thus helping the learners to improve their competencies in individual and group enterprises. Self-direction, co-operation, responsibility and similar other behaviours encouraged through the use of such teaching approaches, help the learners increase their personal effectiveness in living and working with others. The end product of this kind of education is preparation of the learners for life in society by

being patriotic, self-reliant and productive, thereby achieving quality assurance in education.

Quality assurance in education can be achieved through the use of action-oriented methods in the teaching and learning of Social Studies thereby bringing about improved human relations. The use of action-oriented methods require learners to work in groups to achieve a common purpose thus teaching interdependence among members and parts of the society. Respect of other views, courtesy, appreciation of home and family ideas, and community living are emphasized as the group approach is adopted in carrying out investigations. Democratic values and ways of working together characterize group processes in the use of action-oriented approaches. These experiences acquired in Social Studies instructional process are translated into practical living by learners to encourage warm human relationship, co-operative community living and national and political stability paving way for productivity in all facets of national life – hence quality assurance in education is assured.

Action-oriented teaching methods facilitate economic-efficiency in learners thereby bringing about quality assurance in education. This is because they provide experiences that build attitudes, understanding and skills essential for effective workmanship. Effective work habits, study skills and perseverance are emphasized in carrying out individual and group responsibilities. Attention is given through group planning on the requirements of various tasks, ways of achieving them and the role each individual would play in accomplishing responsibilities. In the use of this teaching methods, room is not created for any one to be a passenger because each has been assigned task that must be accomplished and sometimes even defeated using certified data. Furthermore, the community becomes a living resource centre and laboratory for various kind of experimentation such that learners study various groups, appreciate the work of those in the community and contributions they make to productive living. As the learners grow and mature, they become familiar with problems, needs and aspirations of the community. They also develop the needed background information on the economic activities, problems of production, distribution and consumption so that they can become competent workers at home, community and nation (Michealis, 1964).

Social Studies education is for the production of an effective citizenry for quality assurance in education. These entail citizens who are informed and can make reasoned and national decisions, willing to defend and even pay the supreme price. The use of action-oriented methodologies provide opportunities for learners to work as responsible members of groups to achieve group purposes and it is a basic fundamental aspect of growth in civic responsibilities. In addition, appreciating the opinion of others, upholding group standards, loyalty to democratic ideals, working to shape the

behaviours of learners for adult role in society, will help to foster quality assurance in education in Nigeria.

However several obstacles exist within the school system that may pose threat in achieving these. They include: rigidity of the school time-table, inadequate facilities and resources, unprofessional altitude of some Social Studies teachers.

Conclusion

Quality assurance in education is the foundation and most basic tool for any nation desirous to produce patriotic, self-reliant and productive citizens. When the human resources are developed through Social Studies education to think and act critically and creatively, the stage would have been set for a stable and virile society. Teaching to elicit curiosity, interest, attention and scientific attitudes require the use of action-oriented methodologies that help to bring about quality assurance in education. The use of such approaches will lead to learners making discoveries and inventions that will benefit them and society. Although the processes involved in the use of these methodologies may be demanding, the benefits to be derived is worth all the efforts.

Recommendations
1. Social Studies should be encouraged to use action-oriented methods through the provision of materials and resources.
2. Since the orientation of the social science discipline is different from Social Studies, teachers trained in those disciplines should not be allowed to handle classroom delivery of Social Studies.
3. Teacher training institutions should endeaviour to provide qualitative training for teachers of social studies to improve their efficiency.
4. There is need to relax the school time-table to create room for learners to carry out investigations and experiments.
5. Assessment procedures should lean towards less formal techniques which are progressive, continuous and guidance oriented. This is to prevent the teacher rushing through the syllabus adopting transmission approaches.

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