

ASSESSMENT OF VOCATIONAL INTEREST AND CAREER CHOICE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DAMATURU METROPOLIS, YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

Umaru Abdullahi and Terhemba Godwin Atsua

Abstract

This study assessed vocational interest and career choice of senior secondary school students in Damaturu, Yobe State. Three research questions were answered and one hypothesis was tested. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all senior secondary schools in Damaturu metropolis, Yobe State. The sample for the study was drawn from 200 senior secondary school students in three public schools and one private secondary school (200 SSIII) students out of which 50 students male and female were selected using random sampling technique. A Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) by Bakare (1977) was used for this study. The results obtained revealed that, there was significant relationship between vocational interest and career choice of students in ten (10) vocational interest areas, there was significant relationship between students vocational interest and gender (in favour of male) students. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were made.

Over the years Nigerian adolescents have problem in making appropriate career choices. The vocational interest level of secondary school students is very crucial in their daily activities. There are evidences that majority of secondary school students lack necessary knowledge to make realistic choices. Kagu (1997) observed that many of the secondary school students express apparent ignorance about career choice. Still the greater majority of the students who are conversant with some professional career erroneously believe that one can find himself in any career as long as he attends a University.

Vocational interest is a developmental process and spans almost through a person's life which processes start from primary and secondary school levels. Career choice is a complex decision for students, since it determines the kind of profession that they intend to pursue in life. As students try to make career choice while in secondary school, they face problems of attaching their career choice with their abilities and school performance in the selected subjects they offer. Vocational choice preparation focuses especially on issues related to the world of work. Experience gained in a variety of work place situations will help an individual to prepare for transition to a work environment, or to post-primary school. It is based on this premise that Alutu (2011) observed that career development and choice should be initiated as early as the nursery school years through the primary, secondary and to the tertiary school level. It is against this background that Okon (2001) stated that vocational development or preference of youths and the preparation and guidance they receive for the world of work should be of interest to all. One is therefore, convinced that a better job of career guidance in our schools will help to solve some of the problems of alienation and relevance which face the school today.

Empirical evidence on vocational interest and career choice of secondary school students did not show a favourable result. Echebe (2000) reported that, the hopes of many students have been frustrated by wrong combination of subjects; some students do not seek advice on what combination of subjects to sit for in examinations and concluded that such students are not doing well in other subjects, which they do not really have interest in, and in the process, going into another career in life. Mburza (1992) found in his study that, about half of the students he worked on, were unaware about

occupations and world of work, as a result of this, they were unrealistic in their occupational choice. He further reported that, those who made choices of their careers only select from the occupation they knew because they were not given career counselling. A similar result was reported by Ofuani (1989) and Zulaikatu (1992) that students who made choices of their career only selected from the occupation they knew.

Occupational preferences among boys and girls have been reported by different researchers over time. Studies conducted in Nigeria on occupational choice of male and female did not indicate different result. Okonkwo (1980) for example, conducted a research on determinant of vocational interest and gender differences among Nigeria secondary school students. He found sex as a factor that determines career choice, because boys preferred engineering while girls preferred nursing. Adamu (2013) in his study found a remarkable gender difference in occupational choice of students. Males were found to have preferred courses in social, science, persuasive and artistic while females favoured courses in social, clerical and science. Mburza (2002) investigated the relationship between gender and occupational choice of secondary school students in Borno State and found that there was significant difference between parents' occupation and students based on gender. Momo and Ojugo (1999) carried out a study on gender difference in choice of courses on new entrants in Nigerian Universities; they found that there was a remarkable gender difference in choice of courses by new entrants into the Nigerian Universities. Males were found to have preferred courses in engineering, environmental studies, veterinary medicine and agriculture while female favoured courses in education, arts and administration.

Concerted effort by the Federal Government as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004) led to the establishment of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Nigeria to assist students find adequate and satisfying vocational interest and career choices that would lead to a successful future life. Available information on vocational interest and occupational choice of students has also revealed students' occupational preferences. What is not available are information on vocational interest and occupational choice of secondary school students in Yobe State. It is based on this observation that the study raised the following questions.

1. What are the vocational interests of senior secondary school students in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State?
2. What are the career choices of senior secondary school students in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State?
3. Do male and female students significantly differ on vocational interest and career choice in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State?

The third question was amenable to hypothesis testing.

H₀₁: Male and female students in Damature Metropolis do not significantly differ on vocational interest and career choice.

Methodology one thousand one hundred and thirty five

The study was an exploratory study that adopted a descriptive survey design therefore; it was not rigorous with respect to sampling. The population of the study comprised of seventeen senior secondary schools in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of two hundred students in four senior secondary schools in Damaturu Metropolis (one government boys' school with a population of 360 students, one government girls' school with a population of 315 students, one government mixed school with a population of 280 students and one private school with the population of 180 students). Samples of fifty students were randomly selected from each of the sampled schools for the study.

The instrument used for this study was *Vocational Interest Inventory (VII)* developed by Bakare (1977). The inventory classified individuals into ten clusters namely: Outdoor, Mechanical,

Assessment of Vocational Interest and Career Choice of Senior Secondary School Students in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State, Nigeria

Computational, Scientific, Persuasive, Artistic, Literary, Musical, Social and Clerical. The instrument utilizes 10 items in the form of activities which are performed in many different kinds of jobs. Each cluster is described by ten (10) items. The researchers adopted the instrument and used it in its original form without alteration or modification. The inventory was administered to 200 students (90 were female and 110 were male). Senior secondary school students in their third year (SS III) in the sampled schools were used for the study. Out of many arms of SS III, two arms were selected through simple random sampling. Altogether 200 students participated in the study; SS III students were chosen on the assumption that they have almost completed their senior secondary school and therefore, may have chosen their vocational and occupational preference.

The researchers explained the inventory to the students to find out their job interest areas. The researchers described each category briefly so that students understand the meaning of the clusters being referred to. With this understanding, they could then think out different jobs that correspond to the categories on the inventory. The inventory was administered to students in their classrooms. Students were required to respond to the items within two hours with a break interval of fifteen minutes. After administering the inventory, the students took part in plotting their interest areas. The researchers asked each student to find out as many jobs as possible that fall within his highest point of 50 and lowest point of 10. The primary objective was to expose students to knowledge of as many jobs as there are available in Nigeria. After completing the inventory, the researchers collected them back. Thus, 160 copies were successfully completed and dully returned while 40 copies were not successfully completed. The Cronbach alpha reliability of .796 for the instrument was determined using the formula given by Allen and Yen (1979).

The data collected were analyzed using frequency count and percentage to answer the research question raised while Chi-square statistical procedure was used to test the formulated hypothesis at the .05 level of significance. Chi-square statistic was used because the data were responses converted to frequencies. The Chi-square test explained whether the frequencies obtained were different from the frequencies one might expect on the basis of chance variance. Thus, the Chi-square (X^2) test compares obtained frequencies to expected frequencies and indicates that they are different.

Results

Research question one: What are the vocational interests of senior secondary school students in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State?

Table 1: Vocational Interest Preference of Students

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Outdoor	11	6.9
Mechanical	5	3.1
Computational	13	8.1
Scientific	31	19.4
Persuasive	8	5.0
Artistic	17	10.6
Literary	9	5.6
Musical	4	2.5
Social	49	30.6
Clerical	13	8.1
Total	160	100

Table 1 shows vocational interest preference of senior secondary school students with Social having 30.6%, Science 19.4% and Artistic 10.6% while Musical was the lowest with 2.5%.

Research Question Two: What are the career choices of senior secondary school students in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State?

Table 2: Showing the Career Choice Preference of Students

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Outdoor	4	2.5
Mechanical	8	5.0
Computational	4	2.5
Science	23	14.4
Persuasive	5	3.1
Artistic	15	9.4
Literary	10	6.2
Musical	6	3.8
Social	56	35.0
Clerical	29	18.1
Total	160	100

Table 2 shows career choice preference of senior secondary school students with social 35%, clerical 18.1% and scientific 14.4% while outdoor was the least with 2.5% respectively.

H₀₁: Male and female students do not significantly differ on vocational interest and career choice.

Table 3: Chi-square on Vocational Interest and Career Choice of Male and Female Students

Variable	N	X²	df	P-value	Remarks
Vocational Interest	160	8.74	9	0.461	Significant
Career Choice	160	10.71	9	0.05	Significant

The difference in vocational interest and career choice of male and female students were computed using Chi-square test. The result showed that, there was significant difference in vocational interest preference between male and female students with $X^2 = 8.75$ at the 0.05 level of significance. This statistically means that male and female students do significantly differ from each other on vocational interest preference.

Chi-square on career choice of male and female students was obtained with $X^2 = 10.71$ at the 0.05 level of significance. This revealed that, there was significant difference between career choice preference of male and female students. This statistically means that male and female students significantly differ in career choice preference. On the basis of these findings therefore, the null hypothesis has been rejected.

Table 4a: Percentage Response of Male and Female Students According to Vocational Interest Preference

S/No	Variable	Male		Female	
		F	%	f	%
1	Outdoor	4	5.0	8	10.0
2	Mechanical	3	3.8	8	10.6
3	Computational	6	6.7	9	11.2
4	Science	18	22.5	13	16.2

Assessment of Vocational Interest and Career Choice of Senior Secondary School Students in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State, Nigeria

5	Persuasive	8	10.0	5	6.2
6	Artistic	11	13.8	10	12.5
7	Literature	3	3.8	5	6.2
8	Musical	4	4.5	1	1.2
9	Social	20	25.0	19	23.8
10	Clerical	3	3.8	2	2.5
	Total	80	100	80	100

Table 4a shows that male and female students differ on vocational interest preference. As male students 25% preferred social, only 23.8% female students had interest in social. On the other hand, students having outdoor interest were mainly females 10% only 5% of male students preferred outdoor. Although more males 22.5% preferred science to females 16.2%, it was found that female students 6.2% preferred literature to 3.8% male students and about 11.2% of the students with computational vocational interest were also females while only 6.2% were male.

Table 4b: Percentage Response of Male and Female Students According to Career Choice

S/No	Variable	Male		Female	
		F	%	f	%
1	Outdoor	0	0.0	2	2.5
2	Mechanical	4	5.0	1	1.2
3	Computational	0	0.0	1	1.2
4	Science	12	15.0	6	7.5
5	Persuasive	3	3.8	4	5.0
6	Artistic	6	7.5	8	10.0
7	Literature	2	2.5	7	8.8
8	Musical	4	5.0	6	7.5
9	Social	32	40.0	31	38.8
10	Clerical	17	21.2	14	17.5
	Total	80	100	80	100

Table 4b shows that students whose preferred choice social career were male students 40.0% while female students were 38.8%. Also male students 21.2% preferred clerical career choice to 17.5% female. On the other hand 10% of female students preferred artistic to 7.5% of male students. Interestingly only female students preferred outdoor 2.5% and computational 1.2% career choices.

Discussion

The finding of the study in respect to the first and second question revealed vocational interest preferences of students in areas of social, science, artistic, computational, mechanical and outdoor while occupational choice preferences of students were in the areas of social, clerical and science. This finding collaborates that of Mburza (1999) who found similar trend among secondary school students. The finding is in consonance with that of Ofuani (1989) and Zulaikatu (1992) who all reported that students make choices of their career only from the career they know. This explains why some of the areas like musical, mechanical, and persuasive as well as literary were of little interest to the students. It further explains students' little or no clear understanding of career opportunities in these areas.

The study found a significant difference between male and female students on vocational interest and career choice of secondary school students in Damaturu Metropolis. This finding is in line with that of Momoh and Ojugo (1999), Mburza (2002) and Adamu (2013) who also found similar results. These findings underscore the importance of concerted effort made by the Federal

Government as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004) that led to the establishment of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Nigeria to assist students find adequate and satisfying vocational interest and career choices that would lead to a successful future life. It is therefore left for schools to ensure that counselling services are provided to students before they embark on making any career choice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. School counsellors should provide information to secondary school students on vocational career choice based on their needs, interests and capabilities.
2. Gender difference should be considered in counselling services for appropriate career choice and preferences.
3. State ministry of Educations should employ Para - counsellors who will be used as stop gap, while efforts are being made to train professional counsellors.

References

- Adamu, M. (2013). Vocational interest and career choice of senior secondary school students in Zing Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. *Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation, University of Maiduguri.*
- Alutu, N. G. (2011). Parent's socio-economic status and its effect in students' educational values and vocational choice. *Europe Journal of Educational Studies* 3 (1) 45 – 56
- Allen, M. J. & Yen, W. M. (1979). *Introduction to measurement theory*. California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company Belmont
- Echebe J. K. (2000). *The place of groups in guidance instruction in schools*. Port Harcourt: Emhai Printing and publishing Co.
- FGN. (2004). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Kagu, B. (1997). *Preparing for a career: A guide for Secondary School students*. Maiduguri: A publication of National Union of Borno State students.
- Mburza, A. (1992). Motivation interest in relation to occupational choice among secondary school students in Borno and Yobe States. *Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation, University of Maiduguri.*
- Mburza, A. (2002). Relationship between gender and occupational choice of secondary school students in Borno State. *Unpublished P.hD Thesis, University of Maiduguri.*
- Momoh, S. O. & Ojugo, A. I. (1999). Gender difference in the choice of courses of new entrants in Nigerian Universities: Implications for counselling. *The Counsellor*, 17(2), 91 – 96.
- Ofuani, J. O. (1989). An assessment of occupational aspirations of students in secondary schools in Borno State. *Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Maiduguri.*
- Okon, S.E. (2001). *Education and work: Career planning and decision making*. Zaria: A.B.U. Press.
- Okonkwo, U. K. (1980). Fostering realistic school subject choice of secondary students in Nigeria. *Journal of Research in Counselling Psychology*, 3, 109.
- Zulaikatu, U. M (1992). The effectiveness of group counselling on occupational information among secondary students in Borno State. *Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation, University of Maiduguri.*