

INFLUENCES ON STUDENTS' DECISION TO PREPARE FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHING CAREERS IN NIGERIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to determine how parents influence Nigeria students' decision to prepare for vocational teaching careers. The following five parental influences would of course prepare students, for vocational teaching careers and specific vocational concentrations: desire to imitate parents' altruistic behaviour and role as community contributors; high academic and career expectations by parental support for academic and occupational endeavour; parents providing early exposure to vocational subject matter and/or the teaching field and parents aiding in the discovery of aptitudes and interest in vocational subject matter. Therefore, this paper is recommending that, the federal and state governments should as a matter of urgency; address the issue of shortage of vocational teachers in the country,

Introduction

The education of the Nigeria child is a tripartite responsibility - family, school and the larger society. But for the purpose of this paper, emphasis will be mainly placed on the parents because socialization process of the child begins with the family. Indeed, parents serve as major influences in the lives of their children. Of the factors that influence career plans, occupational aspirations and occupational expectations (Dobbin, 2000). Even if school had the resources with which to meet young people's career guidance needs, neither teachers nor counselors can replace the influence parents have on their sons and daughters career plans (I lines, 1997; Leong, 1995; Parham and Austin, 1994).

Although the literature is replete with factors influencing the career choice processes of individuals from various races and nationalities, research highlighted the influence and support of significant others as foremost factors in the career choices of African American (Parham and Austin, 1994). Nigeria parents could serve as main influences that define the career choice of youngsters.

Teaching is career that is widely available for Nigeria today. But it is evident that majority of the secondary schools and post secondary institutions in Nigeria lack vocational teachers. The shortage of vocational teachers becomes more evident when one considers the number of students that are preparing to become vocational teachers. Discerning the influence of parents over their children's career choices may be useful for addressing this shortage.

The vocational teacher shortage is extensive, thus finding solutions that will lead to solving the problem are imperative. Identifying adequate solutions may derive from identifying the influences of Nigerian who join teaching. If parents serve as major influences in the choice of Nigeria children, their influence may provide key determinants behind motivation to enter the specific field of vocational teaching. Thus, the focus of this paper is to determine how parents influence their children to prepare for vocational teaching careers.

Concept of Vocational Education

Image (2002), notes that vocational education or vocation education and training (VET), also called career and technical education (CTE) prepares learners for careers that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation, hence the term, in which the learners participates. It is sometimes referred to as technical education, as the learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology. He defines vocational education as training designed to advance individuals' general proficiency, especially in relation to their relation present or future occupations.

Generally, vocation and career are used interchangeably, vocational education might be contrasted with education in a usually broader scientific field which might concentrate on theory and abstract conceptual knowledge, characteristics of tertiary education (University, Polytechnic and College of Education) as credit however, it is rarely considered in its own form to fall under the

traditional definition of a higher education.

Up until the end of the twentieth century, vocation education focused on specific trades such as for examples, an automobile or welder and was therefore, associated with activities of lower social classes. As a consequence, it attracted a level of stigma. Vocational education is related to the age -• old apprenticeship system of learning.

However, as the labour market becomes more specialized and economies demand higher levels of skill, governments and business are increasingly investing in the future of vocational education through publicly funded training organization and subsidized apprenticeship or traineeship initiatives for business. At the post - secondary level, vocational education is typically by an institute of Technology, or by a local community college (Mile and Huberman, 1994).

Vocational education has diversified over the 20" century and now exists in industries such as retail, tourism, Information Technology an cosmetics, as well as in the traditional crafts and cottage industries.

Agbongiase (2007), quoting Omatseye (1995), defines vocational education as education designed to develop skills, abilities, understanding, altitudes, work — habits and appreciation. It involves knowledge needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment, on a useful and productive basis. It is an integral part of the total educational programmes which contributes towards the development of good citizenship by developing the physical, social, civic, cultural and economic competencies of the individual.

Okorie (2002), defines vocational education as a form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupation. In fact, vocational education is seen as a precursor of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specified occupation.

Vocational education according to the report of the commission for Africa (2005), as defined by UNESCO (2004), to mean programmes designed mainly to prepare students for direct entry into a particular occupation or trade. They emphasize that vocational training is appropriate for skills development and should therefore receive appropriate attention within the overall education system. It involves helping individual acquire skills that are directed to specific jobs.

Vocational education is a specialized education designed to prepare the learner for entrance into a particular vocation or to upgrade employed workers. The content of such education is usually drawn from the world or work through the analysis of the skills, understanding, values and the attitudes of successful workers in that particular field and environment (Okorie, 2000).

We, in this paper, consider vocational educational education as a programme of study designed to enable the learner to be theoretically and practically biased for the acquisition of necessary skills, abilities, knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes through a forma! educational system that will integrate the learner into the society in areas such as agricultural education, business education, home economics education and applied art education in order to earn a living.

Components of Vocational Education

Vocational education is a specialized education designed to prepare the learner for entrance into a particular vocation or to upgrade employed workers. the content of such education is usually drawn from the world of work through analysis of the skills in that particular Held and environment. Vocational education consists of the following components. Agricultural education Business education Home economics education Fine and Applied Art education

Agricultural Education

According to Ugbomah (1998), agricultural education is both a universe and a subset. As a universe, agricultural education is the totality of education given in the universe of agriculture so that productivity would be increased in order that enough food is produced for the totality of the nation's population for a healthy and sustainable life. This connotes the concept of food security. Food security is the access of the population of a country It) enough food for active and healthy life all the year round. Consequently, food security is the ultimate aim of all nations of the world.

As a subset, agriculture education, is concerned not only with teaching and security the

adoption of particular improved practices by the young farmers, but it is also concerned with changing the outlook of these young farmers, to the point where they would be receptive to and on their initiatives, seek means of improving their agricultural business or occupation. Vocational agricultural individuals are trained in certain aspects of agriculture of their choice for gainful employment in jobs requiring knowledge and skills in agriculture. This means that the emphasis which a country places on vocational agriculture would depend on the extent to which that country's economy depends on agriculture.

Generally, vocational agriculture involves training at the primary school level. All these would depend on the importance being given to agriculture in a particular economy.

Business Education

Business education has been given a medley of definitions by many authors. While some see business education as business studies, others defined business education as engaging in the study of certain subject that will confer knowledge to the recipient in commerce, accounting, shorthand and typing and other business subjects like statistics, economics and auditing.

The importance of business education cannot be over emphasized. Apart from job opportunities, business education offers individuals vocational and professional preparation for career in business education and in teaching business subjects such as bookkeeping, typing, computer, shorthand etc. It also offers individuals the opportunity to develop these skills, activities and understanding that will enable them handle quite completely their own personal affairs and assume their citizenship responsibilities. (Okorie, 2000),

Home Economics Education

Okorie (2000), states that the philosophy of home economics education is centered on the acquisition of knowledge and skills that can be applied for purposeful living. It is also aimed at identification and the development of fundamental skills that will be effective for personal and family living notwithstanding the particular circumstances of the individual or family. Home economics education ensures that individuals are knowledgeable in the following areas: Food and nutrition, home management, clothing and textiles, consumer education decoration and family living.

According to Okorie (2000), opportunities exist for teachers of home economics education in teaching industry and in research. Those training in the home economics education could work in restaurants, cafeteria, food processing concerns etc. In Germany for example, school children are taught to cook and to take care of the home because marriages in Germany are becoming increasingly unstable with the emergence of single parents. What is happening in Germany is also becoming a feature in the world over including Nigeria where family-leaving is both becoming increasingly unstable.

Fine and Applied Arts Education

Ebony (2004), defines art as a human activity, or the product of that activity, intended to stimulate human beings and therefore art is an action, or a collection of both created with the intention of transmitting emotions or idea. Beyond this description there is no general agreed upon definition of art, since defining the boundaries of art is subjective, but for art is often called human activity.

Quality of artwork is normally assessed by the amount of stimulation it brings. Its impact, the number of people who can relate to it, the degree of their appreciation, and the effect of influence-it has or had in the past, all accumulate to the "degree of art". Most artwork widely considered to be masterpiece possess these attributes. Something is not generally considered art when it stimulates only the sense, or the mind or when it has different primary purpose than doing so. Some contemporary art challenges this idea.

Therefore, art education is a term referred historically to the intensive training given to artist for professional or personal purposes. The three principle contexts for this institution have been within the apprenticeship system, in specialized institutions such as art academics or art schools, and more recently, as an aspect of a wider curriculum offered in colleges, art and craft school, universities and private educational institutions.

In this century, with increased public access to art process and the changing definition of a work of art, two other developments affecting art education have occurred: the establishment of

professional pedagogical specializations and degree in art practice, art history and theory, and the teacher training within the universities and the evolvement of programmes initiated by art institutions such as museums and galleries to educate the general public and to help them understand and appreciate the changes that have occurred in the field of art. Other branches of art education are graphics, textiles, ceramics and performing art all these culminated in programmes called fine and applied art education.

Apart from the teaching of the art education, art teachers have the opportunities to work in places such as Ministry of Art and Culture, Media Houses, Print Media House, Art Galleries and Museums.

How Parents Influence Students' Decision to Prepare for Vocational Teaching Careers in the 21st Century in Nigeria

Dobbins (2000), identify the following factors influencing students' decisions to prepare for specific vocational concentrations

- a. Desire to imitate parents' altruistic behaviour and role as community contributors.
 - b. High academic and career expectations by parents.
 - c. Parental support in academic and occupational endeavour;
 - d. Parents providing early exposure to vocational subject matter and/or the teaching field.
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- e. Parents aiding in discovery of aptitudes and interests related to vocational subjects.
 - f. Desire to Imitate Parents' Altruistic Behaviour and Role as Community Contributors,

Parents' role as community contributors will influence students' desire to give to others through the general career teaching, as well as through the specific teaching concentration of vocational education. Feelings of pride will be evident as students refer to the numerous contributions of their parents within local communities. Consistent references to parents' community contributions. Through work, church, social and civic organization will highlight the impact of these contributions. Like parents' students will be eager to make notable contributions to the community by becoming vocational teachers.

In respect of altruistic nature of parents, students will tap into their personal desires of benevolence which of course may galvanize them into acknowledging their parents' role as helpers then cite their personal desire to help children through teaching. With vocational education, more than other subject areas would provide opportunities to help others because of the natural tie between vocational subject and community involvement.

1). High Academic and Career Expectations by Parents

This theme is derived from parental expectations regarding educational endeavour, academic achievement, career goal success. Here, parents will push their children to earn outstanding grades as opposed to being contents with average grades. Expectations of academic achievement will affect children's perceptions of their vocational teaching career goals. Furthermore expectations of outstanding grades will make students set personal expectations during the teacher preparation process. Because parents expect them to excel during vocational teacher preparation, they will diligently work to achieve the career goal of vocational teaching.

When parents engage their children in positive socialization and emphasize the importance of hard work, a good education, pride for survival in the society and high academic expectations will plunge them to excel during the vocational teacher preparation process. With this belief the children will know that their parents view academic success as key to occupational success and their chances of successfully becoming vocational teachers.

c. Parental Support in Academic and Occupational Endeavour

Children sense of parental support for the vocational teaching career choice - support will strongly encourage them to seek and complete pursuit in the field of vocational teaching. Career choice apprehensions by children will be eased when parents approve of their decision to prepare for vocational teaching career. Furthermore, parental support indicated career choice approval and elicited expressions of pride among students as they witness their parent's esteem for vocational teaching. Parental support is additionally motivating when parents show interest, support and

involvement in vocational organization activities.

d. Parents Providing Early Exposure to Vocational Subject Use Matter and/or the Teaching Field

It is evident that exposure to the field of teaching in general often related to preparing for vocational teaching specifically. Thus, this time theme is based on teaching related and/or vocational related experiences gained during childhood. Vocationally related experiences are those that can be associated with specific vocational concentrations.

Children with parent educators are strongly influenced to join teaching. Their parents help them gain an understanding of the field through direct, frequent and early exposure to the profession. At the young age, they develop an understanding of the duties, responsibilities and the lifestyles of a teacher and eventually began to consider teaching. Farrell (1998), in a research conducted, observed that one respondent preparing to become a marketing teacher explained:

Just hanging out around my mother's school, just getting a feel for what teachers do. I liked it... that whole background and involvement made kind of interested in teaching (p.8).

When children are introduced to vocationally - related experiences during early ages, would proper them to enter the specific vocational concentration they associated with the experience they shared with during childhood. They would remember the first toy purchased by a parent would create initial interest in vocational subject areas (Simpson, 1996).

Simultaneous introduction by parents to vocationally - related and to the general career of teaching will extremely be influential. Herein, lies the link between the choice of the general field of teaching and the choice of vocational teaching specifically. The notion of being surrounded by the teaching profession, intermingled with exposure to vocational activities, would lead children to an understanding of teaching as well as to an understanding of vocational content. An agricultural education student recalled experiences with his parent educator that influence him to prepare for vocational teaching career in agricultural education (Kimbrough and Salomone, 1993):

Dad, he always surrounds me with some kind of farming activities. At two or three I would ride out with my dad and feed cattle, play with the little baby calves, just with do different things. He (dad) always had me traveling around with his students to different future farmers of America (FFA) consist. He would take me up to the meeting of the (state). Department of Agriculture when I was 12 years old; I was always surrounded by or (agriculture) in some shape or form (p. 18).

King (1993), notes that early decision about teaching, as a career choice is one of the most influential factors affecting a career choice of teaching. He indicates that:

That more familiar an individual is with the requirement and rewards of the work world the better equipped they are make a career choice (p. 204).

e. Parents Aiding in Discovery of Aptitudes Related to Vocational Subject

When parents encourage the pursuit of activities associated with vocational concentrations, students begin to discover aptitudes for technical areas within specific vocational concentrations. Students who discover strengthens and interest in the hands - on aspects of vocational subject matter with their parents will be interest in continuing those interest later in life.

Recommendations

The paper therefore, recommends as follows:

1. Parent-child interactions and learning environments fostered by parents should be duplicated specifically by those who closely interact with Nigeria students such as vocational educators, guidance counselors, administrators and college and school system recruitment personnel.
2. Vocational educators should exhibit pedagogy of care and concern for Nigerian students' personal and educational success.
3. Vocational programmes at the secondary and post - secondary levels should be promoted by

emphasizing participation in co - curricular organization activities.

4. Federal and state government should as a matter of urgency, address the issue of shortage of vocational teachers in the country.
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Conclusion

The five parental influences, which include parents serving as role models of altruism, parents support for career goal achievement, high grade expectations, introductions to the positive aspects of teaching and vocational subject matter, parent involving children in hands - on learning experiences and the creation of environments that nurture the discovery of vocational content are all important in creating vocational education and vocational teaching. Each factor serves, as a necessary element that creates excitement in vocational subject matter and incites desires to be a part of vocational teaching. It may not be possible to duplicate all of the parental influences presented in this paper, but emphasizing and utilizing these influences may provide ways to motivate Nigerians to become vocational teachers and may provide answers to alleviating the shortage of Nigerian vocational teachers.

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