

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL VALUES ON CAREER CHOICE AMONGST PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS OF ADAMAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, MUBI

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Abstract

The paper titled, "The influence of personal values on career choice amongst Public Administration Students of Adamawa State University, Mubi: Implications for counselling and Human Development" is aimed at determining whether or not students are admitted into the department of public Administration, a professional course, based on the pre-requisite self-expression values. The purpose of doing this is to use the information generated to proffer counselling strategies and other stake holders of the university to assist the newly admitted students to make informed decisions on their future occupational environment. The Motivation for Occupational preference scale by Bakare was used to elicit information from the respondents. A total of 100 copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents using stratified sampling procedure. The data were collected and analysed using percentage score and Chi-square. The result revealed among other things that people oriented and personal values influence to a great extent students' vocational choice and aspirations. It was recommended that for students to make realistic choices, adequate career information should be provided to students. Counsellors should also be posted to UBE schools to handle adolescent career problems right at the formative stage.

Introduction

One of the fundamental roles of career guidance in educational institutions is to help students and undergraduates to grow, develop and realize their full potentials. This is based on the assumption that every individual has unique talents, skills, gifts and other personal characteristics that if nurtured and developed through academic training would serve as his determinant factors of career choice. Hence, the reasons for including all academic subjects, courses in primary, secondary and universities curriculum as reported by Okpede (1998) is to prepare an individual for a different job specifications within the world of work. It is therefore obvious that academic institutions assists in the process of career choice and development of students and on finishing their studies as reported by Olaniyi (1986), Okpede (1998) engage in an occupation that is commensurate with their abilities, skills and interest.

Unfortunately, many students erroneously enrolled into the study of a particular course without relevant and accurate occupational information about the program of study, entry requirements, and acceptability of the programme in the labour market and employment opportunities. This often leads to negative tendencies to academic exercise such as absenteeism, poor academic performance, and change of departments by students, cultism and other academic fraud. It is generally believed among scholars (Happiness and Christiana, 2006) that the Nigerian labour force is facing the problems of making unrealistic career choices, the bad effects of which is negative attitude to work, low productivity, absenteeism and frequent jobs mobility.

The researchers believe that to reduce this ugly trend, the students must be given adequate and accurate career information that will guide them into making an intelligent career choice that could lead them into the study of a course that would empower and introduce them into the world of work and gainful employment. Olaniyi (1986) provided an explanation on what kinds of people enter what occupation by providing a match between occupation and personal values like interest, skills, abilities, belief system, loyalty, human relation among others. In the same vein, Nwoye (1990) in his personal values theory reported that people choose vocations that match with their personal values. But in an event where the two are at variance the individual involved will be demoralised and his productivity will be low. Apart from personal values Nwezeh (1986) reported that most Nigerian adolescent seeking admission into institutions of higher learning are usually tempted to choose or regard certain

courses leading to certain occupations. Most vocationalists identify parental influence as the major reason influencing students' choice of courses irrespective of whether or not they possess the innate abilities. As a result of this parent-child socialisation, the adolescent often make their career choice in accordance with the aspirations held for them by their parents. Some occupational psychologists have shown that apart from parental influence, personal values, people-oriented and external oriented factors may influence the vocational aspirations and preferences of the Nigerian youth to a very large extent. As a practicing counsellor, experience has it that most of the youths that choose courses without regard to their occupational self-concept usually discover too late that they cannot cope with the occupational hazards and expectations. When such individuals enter the occupational world, they suffer all forms of frustration, unhappiness and low productivity.

Therefore, one can say with some degree of certainty that every occupation has its unique requirements. Nwankwo (2006) reported that in addition to the general requirements of a career Public Administrators, there are personal characteristics that are necessary for effective Public Administration. These include among others the desire to manage, communicating with empathy, possession of the qualities of integrity, honesty, hard work, good sense of judgement, modesty, probity and good oral and written communication. It is worthy to note here that if the above variables influence a student's choice of Public Administration as a field of study; such student would distinguish him/herself among his equals and on completion of his/her studies secure a job that would empower him/her socially, culturally, psychological and economically.

The researchers were motivated to undertake this study in view of the fact that they hail from the society where many people because of inadequate or poor occupational information enter into what they called prestigious occupations just because of the glamour the society has attached to such occupations. More importantly, the researchers are lecturers in Adamawa State University Mubi where some students, because of lack of career information, for instance enrol into the study of Public Administration without the knowledge of whether or not they have the skills, ability, interest and basic requirements that can make them fit into the program. More worrisome is the fact that most of these students were admitted into the university to study Public Administration without an established fact that the program tally with the interests, aptitude and the capacity of the students. Consequently, these misplaced students witness mass failure in semester examinations. It is against this premise that this paper looks at the influence of personal values on occupational choice amongst students of Public Administration of Adamawa State University, Mubi.

Statement of the Problem

Career is a sequence of activities and jobs that a person does throughout his active years. Career choice is influenced by many factors, ranging from economic condition, cultural values, parental influences, personal values among others. Every occupation has its basic requirements. One of the major problems that seem to be facing the students with regard to career choice is their inability to understand who they are and what career or academic program they can fit into. In the Department of Public Administration Adamawa State University, Mubi; students are admitted based on the quality of their papers. Attention is not given to whether or not they possess the intrinsic motivation and occupational inclinations etc. This has become a problem to the department of Public Administration because Students often times on realising that they cannot fit into the department, develop negative tendencies such as absenteeism, examination malpractice, apathy, cultism and other academic fraud which leads to mass failure and consequently withdrawal from the university. This has given the department a bad name and has tarnished the good reputation of the lecturers. Happiness and Christiana,(2006) reported that young ones grope in darkness in their attempt to search for work. In the same vein Okpede (1998) observed that since such students are likely to contemplate a career that would tally with their personality, such students are likely not to succeed in their studies and future career because they will be found to be deficient in their occupation even if they manipulate their ways into the program or job as a result of a Nigerian factor.

Although much work has been done in an attempt to identify the factors that influence career choice, little attention has been paid on how personal values influence career choice and more importantly, no work has been done to find how these personal values influence career choice amongst Public Administration students of Adamawa State University, Mubi. The purpose of this study is therefore:

1. To investigate how personal values influence career choice amongst the students of Public Administration of Adamawa State University, Mubi.
2. To find out whether there is any significant difference between personal values and other factors in students' vocational aspirations.
3. To identify the major factors that influences the choice of Public Administration as a course of study in the university.

Significance of the Study

It is believed by the researchers that if the study is successfully carried out, its findings will be beneficial to the parents, students and lecturers of Public Administration and other sister departments, the University management and the admission office.

Research Questions

In order to have a thorough understanding of how personal values influence career choice amongst the students of Public Administration. This study will provide answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent does a personal value influence students' vocational aspirations?
2. Is there any significant difference between personal values and other factors influencing students' vocational aspiration?
3. What factors influence students' occupational preference in Adamawa State University, Mubi?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis below was formulated for the purpose of this study:

1. There is no significant difference between mean responses on personal values and other factors influencing students' vocational aspirations.

Method

The design for this study is the descriptive survey design. This is most appropriate because it enable the researchers according to Adederan (2004) to seek the opinion of representative sample of population upon which conclusions; inferences and generalisation are made on a contemporary phenomenon.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consists of 1000 undergraduate students of Department of Public Administration of Adamawa State University, Mubi. The target population consist of all 100-400 level students of the department of Public Administration of the University. A total of 100 students were drawn from 100 to 400 levels. 25 students were selected from each level using stratified sampling technique.

Instrument

Bakare's Motivation for occupational preference Scale (MOPS) was used by the researchers. This is because the instrument offered a great opportunity for the researchers to identify the various factors that usually influence vocational choice and aspiration among primary and secondary school children and adolescents. The instrument is divided into three sections A, B and C. Section A deals with personal information of the respondent while section B is concerned with occupational preference. The third section gives various reasons for the occupational preference indicated. In this section, the items are divided into four major areas indicating whether the occupational preference indicated was influenced by self-expression value, External influence, Extrinsic-Reward Oriented value or People-Oriented value.

Data Collection

A total number of 100 questionnaires were administered to students of Public Administration directly. The researchers sought permission from the Head of Department to administer the instrument. They proceeded to the lectures hall where the students were receiving their lectures and solicited for 20 minutes from the lecturers to administer the instrument.

They were immediately collected after completion, thus ensuring a 100% return.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as simple percentage, chi-square statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to answer research questions while Chi-square statistics was used to test the hypothesis formulated. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Research question1: To what extent does self-expression values influence students’ occupational preference?

Table1: Relative ranking and percentage of response of students on the influence of personal values on occupational preference.

| Statements | Rank | No importance | % | Little importance | % | Considerable Importance | % | Extreme Importance | % |
|--|------|---------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------------|------|--------------------|-------|
| Fondness of school subjects which bear upon the profession | 4 | 23 | 1.68 | 85 | 6.24 | 96 | 7.5 | 138 | 10.15 |
| Permit the use of my special ability or aptitude | 1 | 21 | 1.54 | 82 | 6.02 | 91 | 6.68 | 148 | 10.87 |
| Permit me to be original and creative (work with idea) | 2 | 20 | 1.46 | 81 | 5.95 | 13 | 6.83 | 143 | 10.49 |
| Permit me to use my hands extensively (work with things). | 3 | 19 | 1.39 | 79 | 5.8 | 102 | 7.49 | 141 | 10.35 |

Total: 100%

Table 1 shows the relative ranking and percentage of responses of students on the influence of self-expression values on occupational preference. With reference to the table, 10.87% of the respondents say that the chosen field of specialization arose from the desire to maximize one’s potentials.

Research question 2: What other factors influence students’ occupational preference in Adamawa State University, Mubi?

Table 2: Percentage scores showing the response of the respondents on the factors influencing their occupational preference

| | No. of response | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| A. External Influence | 163 | 18.76 |
| B. Extrinsic Reward Oriented Value | 224 | 25.78 |
| C. Self-Expression | 230 | 26.47 |
| D. People Oriented Value | 252 | 28.99 |
| Total | 869 | 100% |

Table 2 considers other factors that are likely to influence students’ vocational preferences and aspiration apart from personal values. The table identifies people’s oriented value as a major factor influencing occupational preference in the department of public Administration, Adamawa State University, Mubi. Self-expression values ranks a close second with 26.47% of the respondents.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between mean responses on personal values and other factors influencing students’ vocational aspiration.

Table3: χ^2 values showing significant difference between personal values and other factors influencing vocational aspirations.

The Influence of Personal Values on Career Choice amongst Public Administration Students of Adamawa State University, Mubi

| | Personal values | External influence | Extrinsic reward oriented value | People oriented Value | Total | X ² Calculated | X ² Critical |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Little influence | 80 (88.97) | 106 (77.20) | 82 (87.82) | 83 (96.14) | 351 | 19.37 | 7.82 |
| Considerable influence | 230(220.72) | 163(191.52) | 224(217.87) | 252(238.52) | 869 | | |
| Total | 310 | 269 | 306 | 335 | 1220 | | |

Table 3 shows that the x^2 calculated is greater than the x^2 critical. This shows that the hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected in favour of its alternative. It is therefore, concluded that there is a significant difference between personal values and other factors influencing vocational choices and aspiration.

Discussion of Result

According to occupational psychologists, human beings have certain values and beliefs which seem to influence their lives. These personal values propel them to choose occupations that tally with their emerging life values. Table 1 lends credence to Nwoye's (1990) views that people's choice of vocations is governed primarily by their desire to enter into an occupational environment that would give them the opportunity to develop their human potentials to the fullest. These special abilities, however, are supposed to be manifested in students' performance in relevant subjects. Unfortunately, this is not backed by the table in view of the fact that only 1.68% of the total respondents are interested in the courses leading to the profession. One wonders therefore how students of Public Administration of the University would become potential Public Administrators after graduation if they have poor motivation to excel in the courses offered. This finding is contrary to Nwoye's (1990) position that students usually choose courses of their interest and score very high in examinations. This therefore, calls for serious counselling strategies aimed at addressing the problem.

Research question 2 tried to find out what other factors apart from personal values that influence vocational choice and aspirations. The table revealed that people oriented values is a dominant factor influencing the choice of Public Administration as a course of study in the University. This means that most students who choose the course have intense desire to serve humanity irrespective of whether or not such decisions tally with those of parents, teachers, peers and the prevailing conditions. This decision can only be valid and reliable if the appropriate psychological tests are used and occupational information well disseminated to the respondents (Happiness and Christiana, 2006).

An attempt was also made by the researchers to test the hypothesis of no significant difference between personal values and other factors influencing vocational preference and aspiration amongst the Public Administration students of the University. The hypothesis was rejected in favour of its alternative which concluded that a significant difference exists between self-expression values and other factors. This means that students of Public Administration of the University like other students across the globe are controlled by a number of significant factors when it comes to the issue of charting for themselves a specific career line (Nwoye, 1990). It is therefore clear from the table that while some factors have little influence on some students, others have considerable and extreme influence.

Implications for Counselling and Human Development

Career development and decision making is one of the core areas of counselling psychology. It requires valid and relevant information in order to carry out its work. Without current information on all jobs available in the occupational world, the individual will find it difficult to make realistic occupational choice. It is against this premise that counselling identifies the grey areas and offer effective counselling to transit smoothly from the learning environment in to the world of work.

To help students of Adamawa State University, Mubi, counselling psychologists and vocational psychologists should make available to the students adequate information on the various occupations, particularly Public Administration as a profession. Career talks should be organised for them so that they are exposed to the innate and acquired qualities of a Public Administrator,

occupational environment, the goodies and hazards of the profession and the marketability of the course. This will help them to appreciate or otherwise the relevance of the course and its expectations and strategies for achieving their personal goals and aspirations. The vocational counsellor can achieve this through the following services: Career talks/seminars, group counselling, use of psychological tests, work experience or apprenticeship (Abel, 2010 Happiness and Christian, 2006). Joseph (2009) advocates for quality technical and vocational skills development together with basic education as a precondition for the development of human resources.

Conclusion

The researchers were motivated to carry out a research on the influence of self-expression values in vocational choice and preferences of Public Administration students of Adamawa State University, Mubi and the need to consider the counselling implication on human development. This became necessary in view of low motivation and poor performance arising from the placement of students to read the course without due regard to whether or not they possess the pre-requisite personal qualities of being functional administrators after graduation. The paper took a look of the extent to which personal values and other related factors could influence one's vocational choice and aspirations. Counselling strategies and appropriate recommendations were made in relation to the issues raised by the study.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are given to help take care of the findings of the study:

1. Counselling as a profession should be recognised by all stakeholders in the education industry by employing professional counsellors to work in our primary and secondary schools. The current effort made by Adamawa State Basic Education Board to train para-counsellors to handle these children and adolescents in junior secondary schools while efforts are being made to employ professional counsellors is worthy of emulation.
2. Career clubs should be formed in all junior secondary schools so as to provide valid information needed on relevant occupations that would lead to wholesome vocational development of students.
3. Adamawa State University should expand her programmes so as to give enough opportunities for students to choose courses that match with their goals and aspirations.

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