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PARENTAL VALUE ORIENTATION AS A CORRELATE OF CAREER CHOICE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABIA STATE

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Abstract

The study was carried out to parental value orientation as a correlate of career choice among secondary school students in Abia Sate. The design of the study was correlational survey. The sample size for the study comprised of 340 respondents randomly selected while a researchers' self-developed questionnaire formed the instrument for data collection. Three experts validated the instrument in Psychology, Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation all in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike and a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient method was employed to ensure the reliability of the instrument, which yielded 0.81 coefficients. Three research questions were (analyzed using Pearson Moment Product Correlation) and three null hypotheses guided the study; while linear regression was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. Based on the data collected and analyzed, the study showed that parental value orientation to a very high positive extent correlates with career choice, there is strong and positive relationship between parental financial support and socio-economic career choice of in school adolescent, there is weak but positive relationship between career preferences (interests) of parents and career choice of in-school adolescents. It was therefore recommended among others that parent should desist from enforcing career choice, not suitable to their children's abilities on selfish sentimental or emotional ground.

Introduction

In our society today, students face a complex and rapidly changing society. It has been reported that regardless of great effort put forth by families, government agencies and nongovernment agencies, many young people encounter difficulties in the transition from the world of school to that of work. Career choice is the selection or choosing a career which an individual has the potentials of entering. Kolo (2022) postulated three conditions necessary for a choice to take place; choice supply, which refers to having two or more careers from which to choose, the incentive to make the choice, which indicates that the individual must be motivated to select, and thirdly is the freedom to choose without being restricted. All individuals must give serious thought to their abilities, interest and aptitude in vocational choices. Those who fail usually find themselves engaged in occupations for which they are ill

equipped. Unfortunately, some parents push children to select careers which they fancy (parents) regardless of the children's ability or interest.

Parents are very crucial in the early developmental process of the child. Through their efforts, the child can be helped to learn appropriate behavior, attitudes, values and skills which could help greatly in career choice in future. It is important for parents to know that by supporting and affirming a child's ability to succeed parents‟ can be more influential than an adolescent's peer group in career choice. It is likely that student may find themselves in a wrong choice of career, resulting in unhappy life because a happy life depends often on the choice of a suitable career. If people can fit into their right type of job it becomes possible they would work happily in full capacity. In line with this, Dauda (2021) stated that, can individual's success or failure in occupational choice has profound repercussions not only to the individuals‟ life but also to the society which he is to serve.

It is a well-known fact that in our society today, parents are the ones that nurture, raise, promote and support the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and career development needs of the students. They serve as significant interpreters for children of information about the world and children's abilities (Pitol and Regis 2022).The students on their part tend to seek help from parents to learn to interpret reality. The reliance invariably gives parents undeniable opportunities to make impact on the development of their children's future, aspirations and career choices. Sad enough, the researcher observed that parents due to some personal considerations fail to play this vital role well. This is because they shift focus from the child's interest and abilities to some personal factors peculiar to them in reaching decisions. This situation becomes a problem when the parental views differ remarkably from the career intentions of their children. When this happens, it might result to wrong career choices among secondary school students. Investigating factors that contribute to career choice is a topic of recurring interest in our schools today. These factors of parental values orientation include, honesty, accountability, respect, kindness, compassion, integrity, communication, family time, generosity, loyalty, patience, empathy, hard work, perseverance, caring for one another, flexibility and independence. To guide students in their career decision making, parental vales and expectations play a central role in this lifelong process (Pilot & Regis, 2022). Other factors include family, school, career guidance program, media and peers. In this study, the influence of family will only be investigated. Family involvement was found to be the most significant predictor of career choice in gender dominated occupations (Salami, 2016). Operational definition entails the criteria or standards used as a basis to determine which characteristics are most desirable for children to acquire in a family. However, parental values refer to the extent to which the parents or family members are involved in the career plans of children. According to Kniveton (2014), the parents can provide information and guidance directly or indirectly, to influence a young person's career choice. For

example, parents offer appropriate support for certain occupational choices which tend to follow their own (Small & McClean, 2022).

Parental values and other family involvement also include the extent to which parents give encouragement, responsiveness, approval and financial support in matters concerned with the career plans of their children (Salami, 2016). Families treat boys and girls differently. Boys are shaped and groomed into stereotypic masculine careers and are given more status in the family Grant, 2014). However, Carter and Wojtkiewicz (2020) argue that female students receive more attention from parents than male off spring. This tends to be same in most families in Abia State. Students identify parents as the strongest influence on career and course decisions (Barnett, 2017). Teachers or counsellors tend to find it difficult to replace the influence parents have on their sons' and daughters' career plans. This may be attributable to love and confidence children have with their parents. Research shows that parents and caregivers influence student's career choices (Muthu-krishna & Sokoya, 2018) with the mother being the most influential person the adolescent talks to concerning career choice (Otto, 2020). Mothers were cited as particularly influential because they provided support that eased the children's apprehensions about careers (Hairston, 2020).

In Africa and Nigeria to be specific, poor financial base of parents seem to deter choices of appropriate educational programmes and careers of students. Such students tend to avoid careers which appear to them to require long period of training their finances cannot support (Ngesi, 2023). This suggests that students from lower socio-economic families are hindered from making independent decisions on their careers. Hairston (2020) stated that parents' education, parents occupation and parents monthly income play a role in shaping students career decisions. It appears that higher socio-economic status, including higher family income and parental education; tend to have a positive impact on career choices. Religion may play a role in career choice. Some individuals may perceive and follow a religious or spiritual call to a career, which can influence their decision-making process. Protestants in particular are more likely than Catholics or Jews to sublimate taboo desires into motives to pursue creative careers. A study by Salami (2016) shows that the higher the attitude towards religion, socio-economic status, achievement motivation and other family involvements the more students tend to choose gender dominated careers like nursing and engineering. The researcher further stated that most of the females who chose engineering were from high socio-economic status parents while feminine stereotyped occupations were chosen by females from parents of lower socio economic status homes. This trend suggests that parents with higher socioeconomic status have more opportunity structures like financial and material resources, wider information and horizons about occupations.

In view of the above, career choice tends to be a persistent problem for the students in the contemporary society. That is why it is not uncommon for students to

get into occupations that are not suitable to their abilities. What is usually obtained in the end is job dissatisfaction, disillusionment and depression, which with their associated psychological problem such as; frustration, malfunction and inefficiency, all translating into National economic crisis. This study, therefore is to be undertaken so as to find out how parental value orientation correlates with the career choice of secondary school students in Abia State.

Statement of the Problem

Choosing a career is often considered a major turning point in a young person's life. The decision to choose a career has the potential to open the door for success or close the door of opportunity (Jungen, 2018). While career choice is often perceived to be an individual thing, Hairston, 2020) research suggests that a variety of influences are likely to manipulate one's ultimate career decision and choice such as parental value orientation. Students report that parents have the greatest influence on which career they choose (Kniveton, 2014). It is therefore important to explore the issues regarding adolescent career choice and the role that parents play in this decision. This is an important topic because parents may not realize the major impact their norms, values and gender roles have on career choice, and yet parental influence on students' career selection may present opportunities or obstacles for students during the career exploration process. Implications of lack of parental values in the choice of career among secondary school students includes absence of emotional support, guidance and encouragement this may lead to floundering, inability to develop and pursue a specific career focus. It is upon this basis that this research project aims to explore the extent to which parental value orientation correlates with the career choice of secondary school students in Abia State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which parental value orientation correlates with the career choice of secondary school students in Abia State.

The specific objectives are to:

1. find out the relationship between parental value orientation (accountability) and career choice of secondary school students.
2. determine the relationship between parental socio-economic and career choice of secondary school students in the study area.
3. find out the relationship between career preference (interests) of parents and career choice of students

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study if published would be of immense benefit to the following group of persons; school counsellors, parents, students, ministry of education, schools and further researchers.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between parental value orientation (accountability) and career choice of secondary school students in Abia State?
2. What is parental financial support and career choice of secondary school students?
3. What is the relationship between career preferences (interests) of parents and career choice of students?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between parental value orientation (accountability) and career choice of secondary school students

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between parental financial support and career choice of secondary school students.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between career preferences (interests) of parents and career choice of students

Methodology

The design of the study was correlational survey. The sample size for the study comprised of 340 respondents randomly selected while a researchers' self-developed instrument titled: Parental Value Orientation and Career Choice of Secondary School Students (PVOCCSS) questionnaire was used for data collection. Three experts validated the instrument in Education Psychology in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture. A Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient method was employed to ensure the reliability of the instrument, which yielded 0.81 coefficients. Three research questions and hypotheses each were answered and tested using Pearson Moment Product Correlation respectively at 0.05 level of significant.

Result Presentation

Results

The results of the descriptive and inferential analyses were presented in Tables as follows.

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between parental value orientation (accountability) and career choice of secondary school students Abia State?

Data for answering research question 1 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Parental Value Orientation (accountability) and Career Choice of secondary school students

		PVO	CC
PVO	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.831* .000
	N	340	340
CC	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.831* .000	1
	N	340	340

Parental value orientation, Career Choice

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 1 indicate a correlation coefficient (r) of .83 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of ± 0.81-1.00. This indicates that parental value orientation (accountability) to a very strongly extent correlates with career choice among secondary school students in Abia State.

A corresponding hypothesis formulated to further address the research question is:

Hypothesis 1

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between parental value orientation and career choice of secondary school students.

Data for testing hypothesis 1 are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis of the Relationship between Parental Value Orientation and Career Choice of secondary school students

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	11.543	1	11.543	311.973	.000[b]
Residual	32.852	340	.037		
Total	44.395	340			

Df= degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Data in Table 2 show that the calculated F-value of 311.973 has a probability value of .000 which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means that there is a strong significant relationship between parental value orientation and career choice of secondary school students in Abia State. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between parental value orientation and career choice of secondary school students was rejected.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between parental financial support and socio-economic career choice of secondary school students in the study area? Data for answering research question 2 are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Parental Financial Support and Socio-Economic Career Choice of secondary school students

		PFS	**SECC**
PFS	Pearson Correlation	1	**0.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	340	340
SECC	Pearson Correlation	**0.657**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	340	340

Parental Financial Support and Socio-Economic Career Choice *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The data presented in Table 4.3 revealed that the Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient (r) between parental financial support and socio-economic career choice of secondary school students as 0.657. This indicated that the identified parental financial support predicted about 66% of socio-economic career choice of in-school students. Therefore, there is strong relationship between parental financial support and socio-economic career choice of secondary school students in the study area.

A corresponding hypothesis formulated to further address the research question is:

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between parental financial support and socio-economic career choice of secondary school students in the study area.

Data for testing hypothesis 2 are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression analysis of parental financial support and socio-economic career choice of secondary school students

Model	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig. (p-value)**	**Decision**
Regression	202.718	1	202.718	181.088	0.000	**S*** (Reject $H0_1$)
Residual	538.453	388	1.119			
Total	741.171	340				

a. Dependent Variable: Socio-Economic Career Choice

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parental Financial Support

Level of Sig. = 0.05; **S*** = Significant

The result of the regression analysis presented in Table 4 above showed that the t-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 level of significance. This implied that there is strong significant relationship between parental financial support and socio-economic career choice of secondary school students. Therefore, the hypothesis ($H0_2$) of parental financial support does not have significant relationship on socio-economic career choice is rejected.

Research Question 3

What is the relationship between career preferences (interests) of parents and career choice of students?

Data for answering research question 3 are presented in Table 4.5

Table 5: Correlation Matrix of the extent to which Career Preferences (interests) of Parents and Career Choice of secondary school students

		CPIP	**CC**
CPIP	Pearson Correlation	1	**0.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.548
	N	340	340
CC	Pearson Correlation	**0.327**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.548	
	N	340	340

The data presented in Table 5 showed that the Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient (r) between career preferences (interests) of parents and career choice of in-school adolescents was 0.327. This indicated that career preferences (interests) of parents predicted about 33% of career choice of secondary school students. Therefore, there is weak relationship between career preferences (interests) of parents and career choice of secondary school students in the study area.

A corresponding hypothesis formulated to further address the research question is:

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between career preferences (interests) of parents and career choice of students.

Testing hypothesis 3 is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of Career Preferences (interests) of Parents and Career Choice of In-school Adolescents in Abia State

Model	Sum Squares	of Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
Regression	.557	1	0.557	0.362	0.548	**NS** (Accept $H0_2$)
Residual	740.614	338	1.540			
Total	741.171	340				

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice
b. Predictor: (Constant), Career Preferences (interests) of Parents
Level of Sig. = 0.05; NS = Not Significant

The result of the regression analysis presented in Table 6 above revealed that the p-value of 0.548 was greater than 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that a career preference (interests) of parents does not have strong significant relationship on career choice of the students. Hence, the hypothesis ($H0_3$); There is no significant relationship between career preferences (interests) of parents and career choice of students is accepted.

Discussion of Results

The findings of the study were discussed based on the major findings of the study.

The finding of the study shows that parental value orientation to a very highly positive and significant extent correlates with career choice among in-school adolescents' in Abia State. The finding of the study is in line with the finding of Taylor, Harris and Taylor (2014) who conducted a research on parents who have a say about their college age children's career decisions in the University of North Carolina, America. The findings revealed that parents perceived themselves as the most influential figures in their children's career development and decisions. The similarity of the present study with the past study is that both aimed at finding the influence of parents on career.

The finding of the study shows that there is strong significant relationship between parental financial support and socio-economic career choice of in-school adolescent. The finding of the study is in line with the finding of Henry (2020) on parental influence on career development of children in Niger State. The findings revealed that by supporting and affirming a child's abilities to succeed, parents can be more influential than an adolescent's peer group.

The finding of the study shows that there is weak but positive and significant relationship between career preferences (interests) of parents and career choice of in-school adolescents. The finding of the study differed with the finding of Taylor, Harris and Taylor (2014) who conducted a research on parents who have a say about their college age children's career decisions in the University of North Carolina,

America. The findings revealed that parents perceived themselves as the most influential figures in their children's career development and decisions.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, one can therefore conclude that there is moderate relationship between parental value orientation and career choice of secondary school students in Abia State. Result from the study further leads one to conclude that a high parental educational value has an influence on the career choice of students. In this respect, it is concluded that the parent's level of educational value influenced the students' future career choice more than that of the father. In addition it can also be concluded that, students in Nigeria would choose careers that are different from those of their parents, siblings and close relatives.

However, it can further be concluded that the father's occupation had a more significant influence on the students' career choice than that of the teachers. It was found that there was no significant relationship between the socioeconomic status of the family and the students' career choice. It may therefore be concluded that the socio-economic status of the family did not have an influence on the students' career choice.

Recommendations

1. Parents should desist from enforcing career choice, not suitable to their children's abilities on selfish, sentimental or emotional ground.
2. Government should equip parents with skills on parenting, through seminars, workshops and media by professionals, on the use of appropriate nurturing styles, for the best result on their children's career choice.
3. For parents/guardians to exert the right type of influence they should closely monitor and encourage their children/wards, abilities, education and activities, so as to be in the right position to offer proper guidance.
4. Parents should continue to guide them regardless of their sex, so that they do not make a lifelong error in their career choice.

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