
EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AND SCHOOL SETTING ON SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICE IN EJIGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: *THE ARTICLE EXPLORES IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTOR AND SCHOOL SETTING ON SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICE IN EJIGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA. THE PAPER INVESTIGATES THE INFLUENCE SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS, SCHOOL SETTINGS, CURRICULUM AND GUIDANCE SERVICES ON STUDENTS' CHOICE OF CAREERS. INTERACTION BETWEEN SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AND SCHOOL SETTINGS IN SHAPING CAREER CHOICES AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN EJIGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA WERE ALSO EXAMINED IN THE PAPER. THE STUDY ADOPTS A DESCRIPTIVE SURVEY DESIGN. THE POPULATION COMPRISES OF ALL THE SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN EJIGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE. A SAMPLE SIZE OF FIVE SCHOOLS AND ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FIVE STUDENTS WAS RANDOMLY SELECTED FOR THE STUDY; TWENTY FIVE STUDENTS FROM EACH SCHOOL WERE RANDOMLY SELECTED. SELF-DESIGNED QUESTIONNAIRE WAS USED TO COLLECT DATA ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL AND SCHOOL SETTINGS ON SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICES IN THE EJIGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA. AFTER SCORING, THE DATA WAS ANALYSED USING SIMPLE PERCENTAGE. THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY SHOW THAT SOCIO-CULTURAL ELEMENTS SUCH AS FAMILIES' EXPECTATIONS, GENDER ROLES, SOCIETAL NORMS, FAMILY HISTORY, SOCIETAL OPINIONS AND HER EXPECTATIONS AFFECT THE CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF STUDENTS IN THE STUDY AREA. THE STUDY'S FINDINGS SHOW THAT THE SCHOOL SETTINGS, CURRICULUM AND GUIDANCE SERVICES PROVIDED IN SCHOOLS HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON DIFFERENT CAREER OPTIONS. THE STUDY ALSO SHOWS THAT SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AND SCHOOL SETTINGS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN SHAPING THE CAREER CHOICES OF STUDENTS IN THE STUDY AREA. IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT NETWORKS AND THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT ARE CRITICAL IN ASSISTING STUDENTS IN CHOOSING APPROPRIATE CAREER PATHWAYS. THE STUDY THEREFORE CONCLUDES THAT, UNDERSTANDING THESE FACTORS IS CRUCIAL FOR*



CRAFTING EFFICACIOUS CAREER ADVISORY INITIATIVES THAT ENABLE LEARNERS TO MAKE KNOWLEDGEABLE DECISIONS REGARDING THEIR PROSPECTS.

Keywords: CAREER CHOICE, SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS, SCHOOL SETTING, STUDENTS

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Introduction

Nigeria is a diverse country with various cultural practices, beliefs, and values that greatly influence individual career choices. Additionally, the school environment, including the curriculum and guidance services, plays a significant role in shaping students' career aspirations and decisions. Many people and society at large have set their sights on a basic standard of living and social standing. Making a wise professional decision is necessary for completing this mission. Low professional decisions consistently result in low quality of life, as seen by unemployment and maladjustment across a range of endeavours (Datar & Ahmad, 2019). Researchers are now interested in the topic of student career choice since it has caused concern among many people, including parents, teachers, educational officials, and many others. Therefore, it is important to direct students towards careers that suit them (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2012).

Career is a term used to describe a person's varied activities throughout their lifetime (Omeje, 2007). It includes a person's lifetime engagement in a series of related vocations, jobs, or occupations from birth to death or from one educational level to another (Omeje, 2007). In his words, Sear (2011) defines a career as the intersection of occupations involving tasks carried out by a person that may or may not be compensated. The author went on to say that people build their professional paths as they make choices concerning their education, jobs, homes, and other responsibilities over the course of their lives. A career, in the opinion of Maxwell and Okwulehie (2019), is a person's long-term pursuit of success that comprises all the key roles they play in their lives. As a result, a person's genuine identity will mostly depend on what they intend to accomplish with their careers. A person's career is operationally related to the attitudes and experiences they have had throughout their lifetime. However, contentment and life satisfaction depend on the informed professional choices that particular students make.

According to Hewitt (2010), career choice refers to the open employment options that are available for a permanent way of life. Michael (2002) emphasises that picking a career is a system that gives room for analysis of professional, intellectual, and sociological undertakings in order to fulfill one's personal, financial, and educational goals. Hewitt further states that these professions are picked so that one might achieve personal goals. According to Kazi and Akhlaq (2017), career choice comprises selecting elective courses, specialisation programmes, and prospective vocations.

Making a job choice is one of the major obstacles that students face in life. This process is influenced by a wide range of intricately interconnected elements (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). This suggests that picking a career is a difficult and challenging decision. Today, selecting a job requires not only the development of measured plans but also in-depth career advice due to the constantly changing socio-



economic environment. Since practically all secondary school students lack precise knowledge about work options to help them choose a professional path, their life expectations are impaired (Ombaba, Keraro, Sindabi, & Asienyo, 2014). These children are more susceptible to external influences due to a lack of occupational information. In a nutshell, many factors can influence students' decisions on their career choice, such as societal culture factors, parental influences, and environment.

Socio-cultural factors such as parental and peer influence are vital in moulding students' career choices. According to Ong (2018), students' career choices are oftentimes influenced by their parents or other family members. Yohanna and Tarfa (2018) reveal that parental influence was the most significant predictor of career choices among senior secondary students in Plateau State, Nigeria. This finding is consistent with previous studies that indicate parents' level of education, occupation, and income is essential in shaping students' career choices (Ijaiya, 2015; Oguntimehin & Ajisafe, 2019). The study conducted by Sarwar and Azmat (2013) shows that a person's family is almost always a major factor in that person's life. Most parents think that in order for their children to have a happy and secure future, they must work consistently and earn a fair wage. According to Ferry (2006), children may imitate their parents' professional choices because they may gain important knowledge and expertise about potential careers from their parents. Parents frequently provide additional support for career options that align with their children's interests (Kniveton, 2004). According to Clutter (2010), parents have a greater impact on their children's career development than do educators, faculty members, and career counsellors, who have a deeper understanding of the desired job field. When deciding which career to pursue, children rely on their parents more than anybody else.

Williams (2016) makes the point that if a parent's employment provides them with a high level of job satisfaction or allows them to live comfortably, then the child may prefer that job over another. Children are more likely to go for more rewarding or well-paying careers if their parents complain about their jobs or struggle to support their families with the money their jobs generate. Williams argues that a student's choice of career is influenced by a number of factors, including a parent's occupation, the extracurricular activities their children are allowed to participate in, such as music or dance lessons or sports, which can occasionally encourage them to devote their time to those activities full-time, as well as parental support and expectations for their children. The socioeconomic level and educational background of parents have an impact on their children's profession choice, according to Ukwueze and Obiefuna (2017).

According to Akosah-twumasi, Emeto, Lindsay, Tsey, and Malau-Aduli (2018), the family, the social environment, peers, societal values, the growth of technology in society, and religious affiliation are just a few examples of the social-environmental components. Hewitt (2010) agrees that the majority of teenagers choose careers that appeal to their parents. Nyarko-Sampson (2013) contributes to the conversation by emphasising the emotional strain parents experience as they choose a career route. Additionally, peers' influence is also crucial in shaping students' career choices. Oluwabamide (2017) notes that peer influence can increase the likelihood of students pursuing careers in areas that align with their peers' interests. Similarly, Adedokun and Lawal (2018) found that peer influence was a significant determinant of students' career choices in Ondo State, Nigeria.

In their study, Johnson and Brown (2019) investigate how sociocultural elements affect high school students' decisions about their careers. It looks into how students' professional goals are influenced by their upbringing, peer pressure, and community beliefs. The study sheds light on how sociocultural factors influence profession choices by using a comparative analysis of data gathered from various educational contexts. Smith and Jackson (2017) investigate how extracurricular activities, teacher support, and school climate affect students' career decisions. Using surveys and interviews done over a three-year period, the study offers insightful information about how school environments influence career choices. The study shows that educational environments have the power to affect students' job



decisions. Students' job aspirations will inevitably be shaped by a well-developed curriculum and efficient assistance services (Thompson & Peterson, 2015).

Schools also play a crucial role in students' career choices. Sanni and Lawal (2017) highlight that students' access to information and guidance in schools helps them make informed decisions regarding their career choices. Adeyemo (2019) notes that school facilities such as career guidance and counselling centres and libraries significantly contribute to students' career choices. According to research by Akosah-twumasi et al. (2018), secondary school students still heavily rely on their instructors, guidance counsellors, and other school-based educators when making career decisions.

However, the teachers' role is imperative in shaping students' career choices, as they have to give the appropriate guidance and support to develop students' interests and aspirations (Ong, 2018; Yohanna & Tarfa, 2018). In communist nations, teachers are viewed as significant people who may have the power to shape students' career choices in ways that are geared towards their development (Howard, Ferrari, Nota, Solberg, & Soresi, 2009; Cheung et al., 2013). Teachers in Hong Kong are thought to be far more effective at job advising than parents due to their inferior educational backgrounds (Cheung et al., 2013). Students also depend more on their teachers than they do on their peers or parents, as shown by Cheung and Arnold (2014).

Statement of the Problem

Different studies have shown that many secondary school students find it difficult to choose a decent career. This is evident, among other things, from poor academic performance, a poor attitude towards learning, and frequent academic dropouts. In order for students to make the thoughtful employment decisions necessary for survival in the real world, it is thought that such social environments will not provide them with any professional information during their formative years. Students usually consult non-professional sources, such as their friends and family, when choosing appropriate job pathways because they lack alternatives to professional choices that do not complement their inherent strengths. Due to this, many students select careers by accident rather than doing a thorough and objective search to find a match that takes into consideration all elements of their personality and abilities. The career choices made by senior secondary students in Ejigbo Local Government Area are influenced by various socio-cultural factors and school settings. However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of the specific socio-cultural factors that have the greatest influence on career choices in this context. Additionally, the extent to which school settings, including curriculum and guidance services, play a role in shaping career decisions remains unclear. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the socio-cultural factors and school settings that influence career choices among senior secondary students in Ejigbo Local Government Area and explore the interaction between these factors.

Objectives of the Study

The study's main goal was to examine the socio-cultural factors and school settings that influence career choices among senior secondary students in Ejigbo Local Government Area. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the socio-cultural factors that influence career choices among senior secondary students in Ejigbo Local Government Area.
- ii. explore the impact of school settings, including curriculum and guidance services, on senior secondary students' career choices.
- iii. analyse the interaction between socio-cultural factors and school settings in shaping career choices among senior secondary students in Ejigbo Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the objectives of the study:

1. What are the socio-cultural factors that influence career choices among senior secondary students in Ejigbo Local Government Area?
2. How do school setting, curriculum and guidance services influence senior secondary students' career choices in Ejigbo Local Government Area?
3. What is the interaction between socio-cultural factors and school settings in shaping career choices among senior secondary students?

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises Ejigbo local government secondary school students in Osun State. A sample size of five (5) secondary schools and 125 respondents were selected by using random sampling techniques, respectively.

Self-designed questionnaire was used to collect data on the impact of socio-cultural and school settings on senior secondary students' career choices in the Ejigbo Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. The data collected from the respondents was coded, scored, and graded appropriately. The collected data was analysed using a descriptive statistical tool. Research questions 1, 2, and 3 were analysed using simple percentages (%), respectively.

Results

Research Question One: What are the socio-cultural factors that influence career choices among senior secondary students in Ejigbo Local Government Area?

Table1: Responses on socio-cultural factors that influence career choices among senior secondary students in Ejigbo Local Government Area

Influence of Socio-Cultural factors on choice of career	Number of Agree & Percentage	Number of Disagree & Percentage
My family's expectations influence my career choices	70(56%)	55(44%)
Cultural norms affect my career aspirations	60(48%)	65(52%)
Societal opinions and her expectations impact my career decisions	80(64%)	45(36%)
Traditional gender roles are a significant factor in determining my career choices	80(64%)	45(36%)
My professional decision is influenced by my parents' socioeconomic status.	85(68%)	40(32%)

Source: Authors, (2023)

From Table I above, the result reveals that 70 (56%) of the respondents agreed that their families' expectations influence their career choices, while 55 (44% of them disagreed). The result also shows that 60 (48% of respondents) agreed that cultural norms affect their career aspirations, while 65 (52% of them) disagreed with the statement. The result also reveals that 80 (64% of the respondents) agreed that societal opinions and her expectations impact their career decisions, while 45 (36% of the respondents) disagreed. The result reveals that 80 (64% of the respondents) agreed that traditional gender roles are a significant factor in determining their career choices, while 45 (36% of the respondents) disagreed. The finding finally shows that 85 (68%) of the respondents agreed that their

parents' socioeconomic background influences their career choice, while for 40 (32% of the respondents), it has a considerable impact.

Research Question Two: How do school setting, curriculum and guidance services influence senior secondary students' career choices in Ejigbo Local Government Area?

Table II: Responses on impact of school setting, curriculum and guidance services on Choice of Career among Secondary School Students

Influence of School Setting, Curriculum and Guidance Services on Choice of Career	Number Agree Percentage	Number of Disagree & Percentage
I am satisfied with the availability of career guidance services at my school	35(28%)	90(72%)
Curriculum offered in school adequately prepares me for my desired career	40(32%)	85(68%)
My career decision is influenced by society's perceptions of various professions	70(56%)	55(44%)
Teachers and school counselors provide enough information about different career options	35(28%)	90(72%)

Source: Authors, (2023)

As seen in Table II above, 90 (72%) of the respondents were not satisfied with the availability of career guidance services in their school, whereas 35 (28%) were satisfied. The outcome also reveals that 40 (32%) of the respondents agreed that the curriculum offered in school adequately prepares them for their desired career, while 85 (68%) of the respondents disagreed. Regarding the question of whether their career decision is influenced by society's perceptions of various professions, 70 (56%) of the respondents agreed that their career decision is influenced by society's perceptions of various professions, as opposed to 55 (44%) of the respondents. The finding also shows that 35 (28%) of the respondents agreed that teachers and school counsellors provide enough information about different career options, while 90 (72%) of the respondents disagreed.

Research Question Three: What is the interaction between socio-cultural factors and school settings in shaping career choices among senior secondary students?

Table III: Responses on Interaction between Socio-Cultural Factors and School Settings in Shaping Career Choices among Senior Secondary Students

Influence of School Environment on Choice of Career	Number Agree Percentage	Number of Disagree & Percentage
My choice of career has been affected by the subject offered in my school	90(72%)	35(28%)
My family's expectations align with the information provided by my school regarding career choices	75(60%)	50 (40%)
Socio-cultural factors and school settings play a significant role in shaping my career choices	75(60%)	50(40%)
My school takes into consideration socio-cultural factors when providing career guidance	90(72%)	35(28%)

Source: Authors, (2023)

According to Table III above, 90 (72%) of the respondents agreed that the subjects offered in their schools have influenced their decision to pursue a particular vocation, whereas 35 (28%) do not agree. The results also suggest that 75 (60%) of respondents agreed that their family's expectations align with



the information provided by their school regarding career choices, while 50 (40%) of respondents disagreed with the statement. The findings of the study also reveal that 75 (60%) of the respondents agreed that socio-cultural factors and school settings play a significant role in shaping their career choices, while 50 (40%) of them disagreed. The result also reveals that 90 (72% of the respondents) agreed that their schools take into consideration socio-cultural factors when providing career guidance, while 35 (28% of the respondents) disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

Research question 1 examines the influence of socio-cultural factors on career choices among senior secondary students in Ejigbo Local Government Area. The finding of the result shows that families' expectations have an impact on career choices. The results presented in Table I also reveal that cultural norms affect the career aspirations of students in the study area. Societal opinions and expectations also have an impact on their career decisions. Traditional gender roles are a significant factor in determining the career choices of students. The study is consistent with the findings of Akosah-Twumasi, Emeto, Lindsay, Tsey, and Malau-Aduli (2018), whose work suggests that the family, the social environment, peers, and societal values affect the choice of careers of students.

The second research question explores the impact of school settings, including curriculum and guidance services, on senior secondary students' career choices. The study's findings show that the students were not satisfied with the availability of career guidance services in their school. The outcome of the study also reveals that students were not adequately prepared with the curriculum offered in school for their desired career. This shows that the curriculum was not well developed, and the view was in line with the study of Thompson and Peterson (2015), which submit that the students' job aspirations will inevitably be shaped by a well-developed curriculum and efficient assistance services. The study also indicates that the students' career decisions are influenced by society's perceptions of various professions. This shows that the study's findings are in line with those of Sear and Gordon (2002), who found that a community's or society's values have a significant impact on the type of vocation that students pursue. The study finally shows that teachers and school counsellors did not provide enough information about different career options.

Research question three analyses the interaction between socio-cultural factors and school settings in shaping career choices among senior secondary students in the Ejigbo Local Government Area. The results of the study show that students' career choices are influenced by the courses offered at their schools. The study also shows that families' expectations aligned with the information provided by their school regarding career choices. The study also shows that socio-cultural factors and school settings play a significant role in shaping the career choices of students. The study reveals that schools take into consideration socio-cultural factors when providing career guidance.

Conclusion

The study's findings demonstrate the important impact that sociocultural elements and the educational environment have on secondary students' career decisions in the Ejigbo Local Government Area. The study shows that socio-cultural elements such as families' expectations, gender roles, societal norms, family history, societal opinions and her expectations affect the career aspirations of students in the study area. The study also reveals that the school settings and guidance services provided in schools have a significant impact on different career options. The study equally shows that socio-cultural factors and school settings play a significant role in shaping the career choices of students in the study area. It has been demonstrated that educational support networks and the school environment are critical in assisting students in choosing appropriate career pathways. The study therefore concludes



that, understanding these factors is crucial for crafting efficacious career advisory initiatives that enable learners to make knowledgeable decisions regarding their prospects.

Recommendations

According on the study's findings, the following recommendations were made:

First, government and curriculum developers are to consider the impact of sociocultural factors and the educational environment on secondary students' career decisions before the construction of curriculum.

Second, the impact of school settings and guidance services should not be taken with levity. Therefore, for students to choose correct choices of career, government and other stakeholders should make the school environment conducive for learning, and school counsellors should be provided. Offering students access to a range of career exploration options and mentors by schools counsellors will extend their horizons and encourage them to follow their passions

Also, cooperation between educational institutions, families, and the community is required in order to offer thorough career counselling.

Government should also stress how crucial it is to incorporate career education into the curriculum in order to guarantee that students have the abilities and information required for the careers they have selected.

Finally, in order to improve their ability to successfully guide students, the article recommends that career counsellors and teachers must engage in ongoing professional development.

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