

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE AMONGS SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ONITSHA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE**

**NWOKA NWANNEKA STELLA**

**Department Of Educational Foundations Faculty Of Education, Chukwuemeka  
Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igboariam Campus**

**&**

**OKAFOR CLEMENTINA OBIAGELI**

**Department Of Educational Foundations Faculty Of Education, Chukwuemeka  
Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igboariam Campus**

**&**

**NNUBIA JULIANA NWAKAEGO**

**Department Of Educational Foundations Faculty Of Education, Chukwuemeka  
Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igboariam Campus**

### **Abstract**

*This study was carried out to determine the Factors Influencing Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Four research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 1, 400 SS2 students in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. A total sample of 200 students were randomly selected and studied. The study used a 20 item questionnaire with a four-point rating scale ranging from Very Great Extent to Very Low Extent. The analysis of the data was done using mean scores. Findings from the study showed that, parental values and family background influence secondary school students' career choice to a great extent. Prestigious job syndrome influences secondary school students' career choice to a very great extent. The respondents reacted positively to the listed ways that can be used to solve problem of career choice of secondary school students to a very great extent. Based on these findings and their implications, recommendations were made, which include that, adequate information about career choice should be given to the students by professional guidance counselors among others.*

### **Introduction**

Career choice refers to the process whereby an individual makes up his mind in favour of a particular career or occupation at a given time after due consideration of other alternative careers. Choosing a career is not a trial and error exercise. It is a deliberate effort made at once. Choosing a career is like choosing a life partner in view of their implications for one's happiness or otherwise in future.

A career is an individual's journey through learning, work and other aspects of life (Mba, 2015). Decision making concerning appropriate choice of career or occupation to take is the most critical problem facing students in secondary school system and young school leavers. According to Mba (2015), secondary school is one means of delivering Education to the adolescents and is an intermediate school between elementary school and college, usually offering general, technical, vocational, or college-preparatory courses. A student is someone attending an educational institution like any secondary school.

Initially career decision-making was culturally based where individuals are expected to choose career in line with their heritage or values from their ancestors. They took to occupations like palm-wine tapping, weaving, goldsmithing, fishing etc that are devoid of technical skills or knowledge. A right choice of career tends to lead one to a happy, progressive and fulfilled life while a wrong choice may lead to disappointment and frustration. This justifies the fact that a person's career plays an important role in his life since his life is dependent on it.

Denga (2016) stated that a person's social status, income, style of life, his choice of friends, his mental and physical health are influenced by the type of job he does. If a career choice is important to life, then, the need to guide youths in planning for and making decisions cannot be over emphasized.

Career development is regarded as a sequence of development experience which culminates not only in vocation choice but also in a life-long career pattern as well. The educational information available at each stage of development helps the child to make career choice at the end of the process. This calls for proper vocational guidance and counseling at schools in order to make students understand themselves and the world of work.

Career education is therefore the series of educational experiences given to the child from cradle to old age that enable him or her to make career decision. It is not a one-spot education but life-long education. Thus, career education starts from the home where the child learns about different work skills that will influence his later career choice. Also career awareness starts from the home where parents and guardians relate the daily life of the child to the work skills exhibited.

Career itself can be interfered with by parental influence, family patterns impeding career growth of a child and student that go for career that are prestigious in the society. It is disheartening to know that majority of our students after secondary school education are still confused on the course to go for because of absence of proper career counseling services in the schools. Careful observations of the students show that most of them do not even have knowledge of their attitudes, abilities, aptitudes, interest, habits and strengths, weaknesses and personality traits (Chima 2015). Chima also pointed out that in secondary schools; we have children with wide range of abilities, different parental and family background, academic and empowerment problems. These problems constitute the factors that influence the choice of career.

Obi (2011) quoting Napier opined that vocational guidance is the process by which all the various factors affecting individual's occupational choices are sorted out, weighted and brought into focus and by which, the young person is helped to make his choice on the full knowledge of the facts about his own potential to them; so vocational guidance was organized as a social service to assist young people in choosing their career. More so, most cultures have demarcated

roles for boys and girls. Children are invariably initiated about their sex roles or sex identity by their parents. Parents initiated this role in the absence of career choice of their children thereby imposing a particular career on them. This stereotyping of roles affects the secondary school students on their choice of career. (Anagbogu, 2012).

Research findings by Obi (2011) have revealed that sources of difficulty said to confront students and school leavers in particular include, lack of information, awareness and orientation. Lack of knowledge, training and opportunities about the activities in different careers or vocation is the most problem confronting students in senior secondary schools. This critical problem led to lack of understanding of job seekers strategies among school leavers.

Students select career mainly because of the position, profits and prestige attached to such careers or jobs and not as a conscious assessment of the individual's potentials, interest and ability to perform in such a given career or occupation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of unemployment faced by the Nigerian school leavers, coupled with the economic uncertainties which is aggravated by inadequate career information and thus makes students to lack knowledge in making career choice. There are other problems as a result of ignorance in choosing career, as a result students make many mistakes which includes: choosing profession according to their names even when they have not gotten the intelligence to match such careers. Students overlook the advice of the professional counselor regarding career choice in the interest of economic and social changes in the society. Students face the problem individual differences. They also face the problem of social changes. Governments' regular change in policy on education affects students' choice of career which results to unemployment of school leavers. Shortage of vocational guidance counselors and lack of career educational personnel's in the schools. Lack of counselling centers or departments in schools is equally a problem. Parental influence, occupational prestige, economic prospects and peer group influence affect students' career choice other than high achievement and excellence.

These wrong choices lead to frustration and job dissatisfaction and as frustration exists, the professionals may want to change their jobs and learn new ones where they are more competent and well suited. Only at a great cost to Nigeria in terms of scarce resources, waste and misallocation. It is against this background that the present study sets to find out the factors that influence career choice in secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence career choice of secondary schools students in Onitsha North Local Government Area. Specifically, the study aims at determining:

1. Extent to which parental values influence career choice of students in secondary schools.
2. Extent to which family background influence career choice of students in secondary schools.
3. Extent to which prestigious job syndrome influence the secondary school student career choice.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do parental values influence career choice of students in secondary schools in Onitsha north local government area of Anambra state?
2. To what extent does family background influence career choice of students in secondary schools in Onitsha north local government area of Anambra state?
3. To what extent does prestigious job syndrome influence the secondary school students' career choice in Onitsha north local government area of Anambra state?

### **Method**

The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design in collecting data for this study. This is a type of research design that describes and interprets what it seeks to find out, the conditions or relationship that exists, opinion that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing (Akuezuilo & Agu 2013). This design was considered appropriate for the present study because the study sought the opinions of senior secondary class 2 students in Onitsha North Local Government Area on the factors influencing career choice of secondary school students.

Onitsha North is located at the central part of Onitsha. Onitsha North Local Government Area is the major local government of dominated by the Onitsha indigenes. In Onitsha North is situated with the major and most popular features of Onitsha which include the General Hospital, stadium, Onitsha main market, Shopp rite shopping complex, private enterprises and so many schools, both primary and secondary. It is an urban area in which inhabitants are predominantly traders, civil servants and entrepreneurs. Onitsha North Local Government Area has Igwe's palace. Onitsha North has 16 secondary schools, 3 boys' secondary schools, 6 girls' secondary schools and 7 mixed schools.

The target population of this study consists of 1400 senior secondary school students of the SSII class in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The SSII students were chosen because they were those who would choose their course in school in view of their respective careers..

The sample of 200 respondents were selected and studied. Simple random sampling techniques was adopted to select the sample for the study. There are sixteen (16) secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area. Out of the (16) sixteen schools, ten (10) schools were selected for the study. The ten schools were selected randomly as the sixteen schools were written out on pieces of papers and folded, then the researcher randomly selected ten from the sixteen school. In each of the ten selected schools, twenty (20) SSII students were selected at random totaling 200 respondents for the study. They were randomly selected starting from the first person in class and next after the tenth person until the twenty of them has been selected.

A structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The study used a 20- item questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to the 200 students for the study. The questionnaire has two parts: part 1 was concerned with the personal information while part 2 dealt with the issues of the research questions. Part 2 is divided into clusters. Cluster A contains item on parental factors, cluster B contains item on family factors and cluster C contains items on prestigious factors. The instrument is structured and was designed with options on a 4 point scale of Very Great Extent, Great Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher gave the instrument, research questions, and purpose of study to two experts, one educational psychologist and one guidance

counselor to comment on the suitability of the questionnaire to the topic and or otherwise make suggestions where necessary. The suggestions they made was that the researcher should remove age and social economic factors that influence career choice of secondary school students before the production of the final draft of the instrument.

The test re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. The first test was administered on a sample of 20 students in Idemmili North Local Government Area that were outside the sample and study area. The second test was administered two weeks after the first on the same sample. The two sets of scores were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistics. The correlation coefficient value of 0.84 was obtained. The value was considered high enough to confirm that the instrument is reliable.

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher. In each of the selected schools, the respondents were assembled in a classroom after randomly selecting them and with the permission of the school principal. They were instructed on how to complete the questionnaire and to give information to the best of their knowledge. They were also assured of confidentiality as no name or identity to trace them is required and emphasis were also made, that the study is for academic purpose. They were allowed to study and respond to the questions. The questionnaires were collected as they were returned.

In data analysis of this study, statistical weighted mean was employed in answering the research questions. The cut-off point for accepting mean score of items as great extent (GE) or low extent (LE) was 2.50 given the four-point rating scale of very great extent (VGE), great extent (GE), low extent (LE) and very low extent (VLE).

**Decision rule:** the decision rule was that, any item with mean score of 2.50 and above was taken as great extent (GE) while items with mean score below 2.50 were regarded as low extent (LE).

## Result

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do parental values influence career choice of students in secondary schools?

**Table 1: Mean ratings of the respondents on the extent parental values influence students' career choice.**

| S/N ITEM STATEMENT | MEAN | DECISION |
|--------------------|------|----------|
|--------------------|------|----------|

|   |                                                                 |      |    |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|
| 1 | I choose career simply to please my parents.                    | 2.98 | GE |
| 2 | I consider my parents' decision while choosing my career.       | 3.12 | GE |
| 3 | My parents force me to choose a particular career               | 3.00 | GE |
| 4 | My parents have great influence on my choice of career.         | 3.07 | GE |
| 5 | My parents want me to choose a career that suits their desires. | 3.17 | GE |

CLUSTER MEAN 15.34

CLUSTER STUDENTS DEVIATION 3.07

Data in table 1 showed that all item attracted positive responses from the respondents with mean ratings above 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.04 indicated that the respondents agreed to a great extent that parental values influence career choice of secondary school students.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does family background influence career choice of students in secondary schools?

**Table 2: Mean ratings of the respondents on the extent family background influence career choice of students.**

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT<br>DECISION                                                       | MEAN |    |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|
| 1   | The popular career of my family yields great influence on my choice of career.   | 3.16 | GE |
| 2   | Success in particular career choice influence the way of life of a family.       | 3.07 | GE |
| 3   | The way of life of a family has great influence on career choice of its members. | 3.06 | GE |
| 4   | My family's social status influenced me in my career decision making.            | 3.30 | GE |
| 5   | My family's economic status influenced my career choice.                         | 3.48 | GE |

CLUSTER MEAN 16.07

CLUSTER STUDENTS DEVIATION 3.21

Data in table 2 showed that all the items had positive responses from the respondents with the mean rating above 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.21 indicated

that the respondents agreed to a great extent that family background influences career choice of secondary school students.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does prestigious job syndrome influence the secondary school students' career choice?

**Table 3: Mean ratings of the respondents on the extent prestigious job syndrome influences career choice of students.**

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT                                                                                                             | MEAN |    |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|
| 1   | Students choose career that will lead them to the job the society considers prestigious. e.g Medicine/Pharmacy.            | 3.34 | GE |
| 2   | Students opt for certain career because of promotions and high-heaven connection.                                          | 3.53 | GE |
| 3   | Students opt for prestigious career like Engineering though they may not be good in the field.                             | 3.34 | GE |
| 4   | Students choice of certain careers like medicine and law is basically because of the prestige they command in the society. | 3.27 | GE |
| 5   | The security of a career as viewed by members of my society determines my choice of career.                                | 2.75 | GE |

CLUSTER MEAN 16.23

CLUSTER STUDENTS DEVIATION 3.25

Data in table 3 showed that all the items attracted positive responses from the respondents with mean ratings above 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.24 indicated that the respondents agreed to a great extent that prestigious job syndrome influence career choice of secondary school students.

### Summary of Major Findings

From the analysis of the data collected in the study, the major findings include:

1. Parental values influence career choice of the secondary school students to a great extent.
2. Family background influences career choice of students in secondary school to a great extent.
3. Prestigious job syndrome influences secondary school students' career choice to a great extent.

### Discussion

The findings of the study were discussed under the following sub headings:

1. Extent to which parental values influence career choice of secondary school students.

2. Extent to which family background influences career choice of students in secondary schools.
  3. Extent to which prestigious job syndrome influences the secondary school students' career choice.
  4. Ways in which the problem of career choice of secondary school students could be solved.
- **Extent to which Parental Values Influence Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Onitsha north local government area of Anambra state:** Results of the study showed that parental values influence secondary school students' choice of career to a great extent. The finding was in support of Obi (2011) that many parents are unable to realize their life aspiration so they attempt to realize it through their children. Some parents want their children to become lawyers or doctors because Mr. B's children are already in medicine not because the children are interested or have the aptitude for medicine. In addition Mopson and Hayed cited in Uba (2013) stated that parents and family play a vital role in occupational choice of youth and since the child has grown up among these people, he is likely to imbibe some of their values and ideas which will be reflected on his choice of career. There are lots of causes and effect, issues in life and in the field of vocational choices, these can be observed in the various factors like external factors and values like parents, teacher, peer group that affect the choice of individual's vocation. Several external factors like parents, teacher, friend, radio, television and books surround the adolescents in his day-to-day activities and they very much influence his way of life. Parental or family set-standard may greatly affect the occupational choice of the adolescents and so motivate them to be achievement oriented. Thus, families where some particular careers are of great priority, tend to orient its children towards achieving that goal. In some families, it is very important that every child does law as a career no matter his preferentially chosen career inclination. The children from this type of family then work hard to obtain this career. According to Edoh and Alutu 2011, some families would want to have a lawyer, doctor, pharmacist, accountants and so on. The motivational force is as high that the children tend to yield willingly, work very hard and fall into these chosen careers.
  - **Extent to which Family Background Influences Career Choice of Students in Secondary Schools:** The study discovered that family background influences choice of students in secondary schools to a great extent. This is line with the opinion of Christen (2016) that with respect to culture, it would appear that nations within the African Continent, parts in Euro America culture have varied and diversified culture that could be said to lack homogeneity even among individuals within ethnic groups. This gives rise to sub cultures that are usually associated with groups as found in the four major ethnic groups: Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa and Efiks in Nigeria. Such sub cultures nearly always exert their influence on those who belong to it at some extent. In the findings, it was discovered that young people tend to do what family is known for and wants to succeed in it. Culture has an enormous influence on career selection. All forms of media, language, cultural myths, family preferences, peer pressures and fads cause certain careers to get labeled cool and others not. Ethnic, racial and gender stereotypes whose origins can be in local, regional or national culture all exert influence over career selection. We inherit beliefs, goal values, behaviours, attitudes and dreams from our families. This inheritance can greatly affect individual career choice: through subtle and not so subtle behaviours or comments, careers options are encouraged or discouraged. Certain career choices may be presented as part of a child's duty to family, their genes or part of their destiny.

In addition to experiencing a national culture, individuals may belong to other groups or sub-cultures to which they or their families have strong ties. Regional, local, religious, ethnic, racial or historical affiliations may exert even stronger influence on a teen or young adult, as these are institutions or group with which youth have frequent and personal contact. Each organization to which a young adult has strong ties has probably passed along value judgments with regard to what's a cool job and what's not.

**Extent to which Prestigious Job Syndrome Influences Career Choice of Secondary School Students:** The results of the study also showed that prestigious job syndrome influences secondary school students' career choice to a great extent. This is in line with the views of Omofere (2010) that young people go for prestigious job because of its status in the society even though some are not intelligent enough to match that prestigious career. The parents will generally not accept it if their child chooses a non prestigious career such as mason, unskilled labour or clerical job.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results obtained from this study, it was concluded that, parental values and family background influence students' career choice to a great extent while prestigious job syndrome was found to influence students' career choice to a very great extent.

In addition, it is concluded that the solutions to the problems of career choice of secondary school students include that, parents should not influence their children's choice of career, vocational counselor should guide students properly on choice of career, the government should employ more vocational counselor in secondary schools to adequately advise students on career choice and government should also employ competent counselors who would help improve students' choice of career.

### **Implications of the Study**

The consequence of these factors that influence career choice has a lot of negative effects. Students pursue career choice that does not suit their aptitude and which they don't have interest for. The influence on choice of career brings long lasting frustration and regret for the student, the future of the society is at stake when its young ones are not properly counseled with appropriate career that suit their ability. A lot of vices such as armed robbery, prostitution and cultism are caused by these factors that influence career choice of students. All these vices abound because the concerned authorities such as parents, government and schools have failed woefully to do their work very well.

Besides, non-sensitization of the youth by the government agencies and homes concerning beneficial career choice had misled the youth to regard thuggery, touting and other anti-social vices. On the other hand, lack of guidance counselors in secondary schools help to defect the issue of career choice. All in all, unwanted career choice is bedeviled by the above implications therefore; drastic measures should be taken to solve these problems.

### **Recommendations**

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

1. Government should organize seminars or workshops for secondary school students to create awareness in them on proper way of making a good choice of career by inviting professionals on different careers to talk to the students.
2. Guidance Counselors should try to adequately educate the students on choice of career.
3. Government should employ more guidance counselors to secondary schools to guide students effectively.
4. Schools should allocate time for guidance counselors for them to talk to the students and also make effective use of time and then their skill acquired to guide the students.
5. Adequate information about career should be given to the students.
6. The schools should also organize seminars for the parents so that they will be adequately informed on career choice. This will help to reduce their influence on the issue of career choice of their children.

## **REFERENCES**

- Akuzuilo, E.O & Agu, N. (2003). Research & statistics in education & social methods & applications. Awka: NuelCenti Publishers & Academic Press Ltd.
- Anagbogu, M.A. (2002). Career choice and gender stereotyping, implication for vocational counselors in Nigeria. John Best Press.
- Borchet, M. (2002). Career choice factors of high school students. Graduate College University of Wisconsin-Stout. Menomonie WI 54751.
- Chibueze, C.D. (2011). Factors that influence students' choice of teaching as a career in Onitsha South Local Government Area of Anambra State. An unpublished B.sc (Ed) Project, Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
- Chima, I.M. (2005). "Level of counseling as impediment to university admission, implication for girl child education". Department of education vol. 1 No. 3, December, International Journal of FAWEN, Faculty of Education, Imo State University, Owerri, Imo State.
- Christen, C. (2010). How culture and family affects career choice. Available at <http://www.definitions.net/definition/careerchoice>.
- Denga, D.I. (1983). Guidance & counseling for 6-3-3-4 system of education. Jos: Savan Press Limited.
- Denga, D.I. (1986). Guidance & counseling in schools and non-school setting. Calabar: Gentor Press Limited.
- Euvrard, D. (1996). Career needs for the Eastern Cape pupils in South Africa. British Journal of Guidance and Counseling, 6, 22-31.
- Gysbers, N.C. Heppner, M.J. & Johnston, J.A. (1998). Career counseling, process, issues and techniques. London: Ally and Bacon.
- Helen, S. & Miles (2006). Career counseling & development in a global economy. New York: Lahaska press Houghton Mifflin company.
- Ipaye, (2003). Education & work: Career planning & decision making. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press.
- Makura, A.H., Skead, M. & Nhundu, K. (2011). Academic development practices at fort Hare University: An Epitome of University Access. Research in Higher Education Journal, 14, 4-

15.  
Meety Career Education Task Force (1998). Retrieved on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2012. At [www.mceety.org](http://www.mceety.org)
- Obi, C. (2001). Factors that influence career choice of secondary school students in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State. An unpublished PGDE project, department of educational foundations, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State.
- Okoye, T.C & Nwosu, B.O. (2009). Vocational choices among secondary school students: issues strategies in Nigeria. *Journal of Business Management*, 11, 3-14.
- Omofere, K.J. (2010). Factors that influence career choice of secondary school students in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State. An unpublished PGDE project, department of educational foundations, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State.
- OsaEdoh, G.I. & Alutu, A.N.G. (2011). Parents socio-economic status & its effects in students' educational values and vocation. *European journal of education studies* 3 (1), 2011 ISSN 1946-6331: Ozean publication.
- Pines, M.A & Yanal, O.F. (2001). "Unconscious determination of career choice 7 burnout counseling theoretical model & strategy". *Journal of Employment Counselor*, Vol. 38.4 170 (5) 2001: American Counseling Association.
- Strong, E.K. (2000). *Manual for vocational interest blank for man*. California: Stand for University Press.
- Super, D.E. (1993). *The psychology of career*. New York: Haper and Brothers Publisher.
- Super, D.E. (1957). *A theory of vocational development*. American Psychologist. New Jersey.
- Uba, I.M. (2008). Factors affecting career choice of secondary school students in Orlu West Local Government Area of Imo State. An unpublished under graduate project, department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.
- Unachukwu, G. & Igborgbor, G. (1991). *Guidance & counseling: a realistic approach*. Awka. Anambra International University Press.
- Van Schalkwyk S.C. (2007). *Crossing discourse boundaries. Students diverse realities when negotiating entry into knowledge communities*.  
[www.careerkeyhollandtheory.com](http://www.careerkeyhollandtheory.com). Retrieved on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2012.