

Templates That Determines the Choice of Course Selection in the University: A Case Study of University of Calabar

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Abstract

This presentation is an exposition on templates that disposes one especially an adolescent to make a career choice of study in Nigeria Universities. Specifically, issues considered includes; ignorance, peer groups influence, role models; as well as prestige attachment as responsible for career choice selection in Nigeria. Others factors periscoped as that which a student considers for a choice mentioned are situational factor, school attended, parental influence, gender and interest. Accordingly, lack of planning, inadequate career research and lack of skilled personnel was identified as problems that has stalled proper choice making academically in Nigeria. Undoubtedly when a wrong career choice is made, the person is face with dissatisfaction, unfulfilled aspirations, regrets and discomfort which will lead to poor and low productivity. Social learning theory served as a theoretical template to explain the phenomena of career choice. Significantly educational administrators, counsellors, curriculum experts and parents will find this work immensely beneficial as issues raised borders on what should be done to assist adolescent make proper choice in his or her career. And from the findings the following recommendations were made: teachers who serves as role models, religious leaders should make it a duty to conscientize students on the requirement and socio-economic benefit attached in career choice, nobody should impose a career choice on the students as career choosing should come out of interest and passion as to guarantee effectiveness and efficiency.

Keywords: career, choice, university, template, academic.

INTRODUCTION

Career choice for most people is a life long process that individuals uses for employment opportunities and to eke a living through work professionally. According to Caparara, et al (2001), each person undertaking the process of career choice is influenced by many factors, which includes; personal aptitudes, educational attainment of the parents and the context in which they live. In early days of human civilization there was no problem in making a choice of a career. For example, feudalism converted itself into family affairs therefore it was not a problem for a son of a carpenter or bricklayer to become one himself. But, industrialization and globalization with its consequences (positive and negative) shifted the paradigm and the need for course choices and selection for specific benefits hold sway in determining one's class state and role ascription/performance in the society (Ayuk, 2012).

It became possible to monopolized a field if one had skills and knowledge since the polity and economy is becoming more knowledge based (Zoldsoki, 1996). This according to Ayuk (2012), has added more pressure on adolescent to make choices in respect to

course of study which Erickson in Obidigbo (2004) asserts, marks a major turning point in the child's choice he or she makes in school, which he calls "a stage of identity and role confusion". This period defines the success or failure in ones life; because it is at this stage an adolescent discovers what his or her roles and skills are best suited Edward (2006), argued that proper selection leads to identifying and charting a noble course but failure leads to truancy, non-conforming attitudes, delinquency etc.

Generally, it has been observed that many children of early age choose what their career choices are, but at the later years their motives changes. Some of these students make these choices at tender ages, others while in school and the last group, after college. Buttressing this claim Hutchings (2009), maintained in his research that, secondary students in their choices of school subject and of possible career, shows that those who choose at ages 13 continue changing until they had made "A" level choices.

Oftentimes community and family views career choice as a start to workplace readiness, however, this plays a defining point in establishing adolescent

in career path that opens and close opportunities. Also young adults through interaction with the context of family, school and community learn and explore careers that ultimately lead to career choice. For instance, research carried out in rural Pennsylvania, shows that the role family, school and community plays can impact greatly on adolescent self – identity and the choices they make (Mingliang, 2006). Hence, every choice career-wise made is aimed at improving the individual’s resolve in the quest to contribute to societal enhancement and to better himself or herself while professionally finding comfort, motivations and happiness.

THE CONCERN AND PROBLEM

Many youths make wrong choices in respect to career all over the world and indeed Nigeria due to ignorance, peer pressure, role models as well as prestige attached to certain careers without adequate vocational guidance and career counselling (Salami, 1999). And when this happen they become irrelevant in their career, as such jobs for them unwittingly expresses de-satisfaction and their value needs unattained; consequently, unseriousness, truancy and frustration take – the - shine - of - them.

Ayuk (2012) observed that, an individual who ultimately do not contribute meaningfully to the society is “some what” a product of wrong career choice and unearned investment to himself, his family and a liability to the nation. Equally, Palmer (2005) maintained that adolescent indeed, should be guided to make career choices but not coerce by parents or any inducing factor that the individual is indisposed.

When students make wrong choices without considering such requirements as self discipline, dedication and longer length of time, the result would be that, the student(s) finds it difficult to meet up with the demands of these professions which may lead to academic frauds, like cheating in the exams and impersonating in all academic endeavours. Out in the society, because of the expectation to perform in the labour market and their inability(ies) to meet such expectations – they will resort to being political thugs, arm robbers and perpetrators of social ills with the excuses that “there no are jobs”.

These concerns raised above has informed this presentation. Objectively this paper aims at, finding out those factors influencing the choice of a career course; ascertaining parents influence in their children choice, and make recommendations that possibly can serve as a template for students in making choices based on understanding about irrelevant influences.

GENERAL VIEW OF CHOICE MAKING

For every person in life his or her decisions are informed by choice either advertently or inadvertently (Ayuk, 2012). Therefore each individual making a choice career is influence by the following factors:

a) Situational Factors

Situations and circumstances to a large extent has been fundamental to career choice made by students. For instance, research made with fresh students of library archival and information studies in Nigeria Universities shows that many of them offered the course because, they were rejected by the department of their first choices owing to the fact that they scored low at the University matriculation examination (University entrance examination). It is also on record that the department of library and information studies, University of Ibadan had 29 candidates who choose the course originally in 2002/2003 academic session. Out of this only 19 candidates, who scored above cut – off marks were on the first admission list of 56 candidates. Impliedly therefore, other students who were admitted came from supplementary list consisting of students who perhaps could not meet up the University Matriculation Examination requirements for or of their preferred courses (Sax, 1994; Ferry, 2006).

Equally, Agumanu (1989), surveyed second, third and final year students of the Imo State University – Nigeria Library and information studies and found out, it was not their typical first choice, rather their initial choices was to study law. Unfortunately what they are presently studying was informed by their inability to meet law requirement. Situationally, library and information became the alternative.

b) School Attended

In all countries of the world, the philosophy of education is based among many other things, on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen fully integrated into the community (UNDP, 2005). Therefore, different nations have vigorously pursued and adopted proactive and innovative changes in their education sectors to satisfy their society’s needs, most especially the need to prepare individuals for the world of works, and to make them economically self – reliance.

Most often, adolescents finds it troubling to make career choice that will satisfy their personal economic and intellectual goals – either because they do not have the disposition to explore different career options and possibilities of such careers or they do not have knowledge of the prerequisite of such career. School type (private & public) tend to bridge this gap – that is, influences the decision students make about their future career (Salami, 2004).

Folayan (2003) opine that students are differentially prepared to explore career opportunities by the school they attend; that private schools provide more comprehensive services to their students than public schools. Hence, their students are provided with information and counselling on career choice. Undoubtedly, the type of school a child attends has facilitatory or inhibitory influence on the students' behaviour. In line with influence of school type attended in career choice, Obemila (1999) noted that, academic environment plays a vital role in student orientation as students who attend private schools are not only prepared for improved cognitive achievements, but that are oriented towards making informed decision about career.

c) Parental Influence

Families have undoubtedly great influences on a child's career selection in Nigeria. Through subtle and not so subtle behaviours or comments, career choices are encouraged or discouraged by parents (Eureka, 2009 in Ogbuezi, 2013).

Gurerra, et al (1999) agreed that both parents' education and income influences career aspirations. For instance, university career services of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill surveyed parents of incoming freshmen in order to ascertain about parents' beliefs regarding their wards' career choice and influence on those choices. The study revealed that families appear to play a dominant role in the child's career development (Guerra & Braung & Reker, 1999; Lankard, 1995; Mickelson and Valasco, 1998; Otto, 2000; Mau Hitchcock & Calvert, 1998).

Parents are influential figures with whom whether intentionally or unintentionally, children become aware of and get introduced to career opportunities. Trize (1991) identified parents' occupation and family size as that which determines a child's choice. A family which is large is always indisposed income-wise, to finance their wards on the preferred career choice.

Mothers are influential on their female wards' aspirations and occupation are often similar to their mothers' chosen profession. Parents' support and encouragement are factors that have been found to influence vocational outcome. Attitude and behaviour of children through interactions such as conversations and through their reactions (verbal or non verbal) replay what their parents do. In the same trajectory, Folayan (2003) in his study on 318 students of University of Ibadan observed that, there are five home factors influencing adolescent career choice, viz; family type, father's highest educational qualification, mother's educational qualification, father's occupation, and mother's occupation. But agreed that in Nigeria among all these, fathers'

educational qualification ranked first and followed by mother's occupation.

d) Gender

Sax (1994) examines students' initial interest in career vis-à-vis factors that influence careers choice and how these factors differ between male and female. The study revealed that men who abandon career aspirations were driven by financial concern whereas women who decided not to pursue scientific careers were concerned with social good of their choice.

Women avoid male dominated occupations and that this lack of confidence which is hinged on lack of encouragement and role model (Bertz & Hackett, 1981). Furthermore, he asserts that females had lower self-esteem than males for male dominated occupations, while males have low self-esteem for traditionally female occupation.

Gender barriers had been witnessed over a long period of time in the traditional Africa and indeed the Nigeria society. Gender in Nigeria is still dominant in the choice of career between professions and disciplines like medicine, law, engineering and mathematics which appears to be exclusive preserve for males while nursing, theatre art, mass communication and language studies oscillates to the females' preserve (Ayuk, 2012).

e) Prestige Attachment

Most adolescents find it difficult to make career decisions that will satisfy their personal, economic and intellectual goals. Often times, they base their choices on extraneous influences i.e status, monetary rewards and prestige attached to those professions (Zoldoske, 1996).

Some adolescents decide to study medicine, law and engineering because of the recognition, prestige and value the society accords it. Before now, in Nigeria, if you studied courses outside those mentioned above, is considered your not intelligent and little or no recognition is accorded societally (Ayuk, 2012).

f) Passion and Interest

Most students make career choices because of altruistic feelings. The passion, interest and panache according to Ayuk (2012), becomes the "sign post" of career choices. Without interest and passion in any endeavour, the commitment for success will always be a travesty and a charade. For example, research made on factors influencing career choice and level of professional satisfaction on speech language pathology, revealed two factors to be highly influential in choosing a career and includes; a desire to help others and interest in the profession and passion was the factor most agreed upon as being influential in choosing a career (Lart 2002).

PROBLEMS OF CAREER CHOICE

The following can be said to be the problems affecting the career choice of adolescents.

i) Lack Of Planning

Unplanned decision by students in their course of studies may lead to frustration. Because, as the case with Nigeria students, majority applied for course of study without the requisite preparation as it concerns passion, aptitude and love. (Myers 1998, Ayuk 2012).

ii) Inadequate Career Research

Because of paucity in career research many students have made serious mistakes in career choices. And often, after many years disappointment sets in – because of socio-economic demands and the satisfaction thereto, that accrues is not realized.

iii) Job Dissatisfaction

What lead generally to anger, frustration and dissatisfaction in jobs, vocation and trade is wrong choice we make (Ayuk, 2012). Most youths make career choice due to ignorance, peer pressure and in - experience (Salami, 1999). Hence, such undertakings distorts the child's aspiration in respect to finding themselves unsuited for such careers as these jobs do not satisfy their value needs.

iv) Lack Of Skilled Personnel

A continuing decline of admissions into certain careers may lead to a shortage of manpower in those fields and role models to be looked upon and emulate. This can adversely affect the smooth functioning of the society (Palmer, 2005).

Consequences of Choosing a Wrong Career

Choices and decisions remains cardinal in one's life success and failure. When a person makes a wrong choice, the consequences are dire. Some of the consequences associated with wrong choices and decisions in careers includes, lack of job fulfillment, confusion, discomfort, regret that can cause other psychological problems (Edward 2006; Ayuk 2012).

Wrong career choice can be perceived as a "curse". The victim have to force him or herself to carry any task assign to him, always wishing for holidays, avoiding work and possibly retirement (Squeaky, 2006). The effects of being in a wrong career can be unsavouring and unsettling with no delight in what you do; life becomes stressful. Ostensibly the standard of work by the person automatically drops and the persons reputation becomes questionable. While Barry (2008), noted that, people who pursue careers that they are interested in and excited about tend to gain happiness and satisfaction but being stuck in the wrong job can make people unhappy, irritated and timely miserable.

A Teacher's Role in Career Guidance

A teacher's role in assisting student make right and desirable career choice cannot be underestimated. Beside imparting knowledge, the teacher among other things perform the following roles;

- i) As a coordinator: this involves the teacher bringing all the components that characterize a child academic pursuit in organized manner so as take or make an informed career choice for the child. Equally significant, the coordinator (teacher) must understand the child's emotions, health, social and interactional needs, for when this is done – appropriate career choice can be made with the aid of a teacher.
- ii) As a researcher: a teacher's role is to research to exhume facts that are relevant and needful in assisting the student in making his or her choice. If a teacher is not proactive in terms of research, he or she would be indisposed to ideas and to direct in respect to career choice directives of the students.
- iii) As a motivational and public speaker: The teacher must motivationally encourage students to make career choice(s) that are reflective of the current reality as it concerns job satisfaction and needed value.
- iv) As a negotiator and mediator: The teacher operating in these capacities must strive to harmonize conflicting and disturbing minds of the students in issues relating to making career choice. In event that the child is face with the dilemma of choice – it behoves on the teacher to intervene, bargain, reconcile and find a compromise that synchronizes the students' intentions, value and plans that offers achievable dreams.
- v) As a facilitator and initiator: a leading role which requires skills and experience. He or she must be sensitive to the academic plight of the students and called attention to the problem regarding a child's career. This help the child retrack paraventure he or she was or is at the verge of making a wrong career choice.

Related Theory (Social Learning Theory)

Definitionally a theory is a set of interrelated constructs, definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables with purpose of explaining and predicting events (Kerlinger, 1977).

Social learning theory is therefore considered apt to explain the phenomena of templates that determine career choice of student in the University.

Social learning theory posits that personality is a product of continuous interaction between personal and environmental variables which the environmental conditions shape the behaviour through learning while a person's behaviour in turn shapes the environment. the implication according to social learning theory is that, student's make or choose their career based on their interaction with their teachers, parents and role models.

The experiences acquired by direct reinforcement or through observational learning or evaluation of one's own performance further gives impetus for one to make a choice after such a performance. Therefore a child who is brought up in a family that orients itself to the study of medicine may likely study to become a medical doctor. This theory represents career choice as a behaviour through interactions which is appreciated in terms of gratification that is positive and emulated.

CONCLUSION

Career choice as espouse in this presentation is indispensable to every individual irrespective of the trade or profession. For job satisfaction, for socio-economic enhancement the need to make a choice is the deciding factor to realize one objective or not. The fact that most nations, indeed Nigeria, has produce below capacity given its abundant resources and ten of thousands of graduates churn out yearly in our universities and without commensurate productivity; and the large armies of these unemployed graduates attest to one fact: i.e wrong career choice.

The need for career choice in the university is all encompassing. The teacher should go further than imparting and broadening the minds of students. Counselling should equally form part of a teacher's role - parents as a matter of fact, should be involve in the quest of a child's career choice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this paper recommends as follows:

- i) Teachers role models, parents and religious leaders should make it a duty to conscientize students on the requirement and socio-economic benefits attached in career choice they make.
- ii) Periodically seminars, symposia and fora should be organize to adequately address issues related to career choice – this is to help students make right choices.
- iii) No child should be compelled to study a course which he or she originally had no intention rather given the leverage to make his/her choice with the help of those concern
- iv) A committee should be set up by Ministry of Education and Nigeria University Commission to, from time to time, visit universities and secondary schools to amplify the resolve for proper career choice for the student.

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