

Parental Influence on Vocational Education and Career Choice: Implication for Industrial Development

By

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Abstract

The study was designed to evaluate parental influence on career choice for their children. The study was carried out in Yenagoa LGA, Bayelsa State. It adopted a survey design. The sample was two hundred (200) which was obtained through random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using percentages and chi-square. The study revealed that; small but influential families/parents do not want vocational education as a career for their children, the level of the parents' education also influenced children's choice of career significantly, and wealthy parents also do not want their children to choose vocational education as a career. It thus recommends that public awareness about the profession and programme be embarked on by government to correct the misconception people have about vocational education and finally, provide enough funds in the budget to boost vocational education programmes.

Keywords: Parental influence, vocational education, career choice, industrial development.

Introduction

The development of any nation is largely determined by the quality and quantum of available skilled human resources (Ochu 2008), that would offer job-related knowledge and skills in the industry. Industrial development is equally a yard-stick for the measurement of advancement of a nation. The supply of skilled personnel for various job-related tasks in the industry is laden on a functional vocational and technical education system. Vocational education offers systematic learning experiences, which are designed for individuals to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that would enable them fit for gainful employment in recognized occupations as semi-skilled, or skilled workers, (Mohammed, 2010; Ugboala, 2016). Okoye (2013) also posits that vocational technical education is a multi-faced multi-dimensional and pragmatic field of study that is geared towards equipping individuals with

necessary skills, which enhances their participation and relevance in the world of work. Vocational education is essentially designed to give individuals the skills to learn and become productive citizens and for advancement in workplace as it provides learning which supports achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry-defined works. The inability to meet the demands of technical manpower to feed the multinational oil companies and other industries operating in our locality is one of the reasons for this study. Governments at various levels have established institutions of learning such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and craft centres for the development of the much-needed manpower in the industries. In spite of government's actions and encouragement, the industrial sector still suffers inadequate manpower to do industry-related jobs. One most probable reason for this is parental decision on career choices of their children due to the value system of the society. The society misconstrued vocational education as a type of education meant for the handicapped, people of very low intelligence, dropouts, delinquent and indigent ones. Kanu (2004), also expressed the opinion of the society, which states; once you attract vocational education programme you are already less intelligent. This is a misconception because the society has not been able to distinguish between vocational and technical education and vocational training. Vocational and technical education deals with the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes required for success in any useful occupation, while vocational training values "pick up" method of learning on the job with or without help from a journeyman.

Anyaduba (1986) confirmed that most of the parents and youths are uniformed and sometimes misinformed or misled about vocational education. Furthermore, Iroegbu (2005) also stated that the attitude of students towards education can be traced to the parent's attitude towards it. Salami (1999) confirmed that many youths go into unsuitable careers due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, and advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of the prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling. The assertion of various authors and the value placed on vocational education may have led to the formation of negative attitudes about vocational and technical education despite the fact that Government have initiated programmes aimed at sensitization of parents and the society in general on the importance of vocational technical education as a career. The choice of vocational and technical education as career seems to persist as the number of students that enroll in vocational and technical education courses are still far lower than those in other career options. In this study, four factors are considered as responsible for children choice of career.

They are parental desire, parental education background, family size and parental wealth. Parental desire influences children's choice of career in that majority of the parents had negative feelings about Vocational Technical Education. This is in agreement with Mau and Bikkos (2000), Wilson and Wilson, (1992) who opined that parents have an important influence on the children's choice of career. In the same vein, Salami (1999) also claimed that children go into unsuitable careers due to ignorance or advice from parents because of certain prestige attached to some jobs.

In addition, it is the feeling that that parental educational background also influences the children's choice of career. In this regard, Ojoko (1989) reported that highly educated and well-placed parents in the society encouraged their children to go for professions like Law, Medicine, Nursing, Engineering, Accountancy, Pharmacy, which the society places very high premium instead of allowing their children to choose their desired career. Okeke (2000) also holds a similar view that the socio-economic class to which parents belong affects their desire towards career choice of their children.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to examine parents influence on vocational education and career choice. The specific objectives of the study are to find out:

- The influence of parental desire on children's choice of career in Bayelsa State;
- The influence of parental educational achievement on children's choice of career in Bayelsa State;
- The influence of family size on children's choice of career in Bayelsa State;
- The influence of parental wealth on children's choice of career in Bayelsa State;

Research Questions

- Does parental desire influence children's choice of career in Bayelsa State
- Does parental educational achievement influence children's choice of career in Bayelsa State?
- Does family size influence children's choice of career in Bayelsa State?
- Does wealth of the parents' influence children's choice of career in Bayelsa State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study:

- There is no significant influence of parental desire on the choice of their children towards vocational technical education;
- There is no significant influence of educated parents on the choice of career of their children towards vocational technical education;
- There is no significant influence of family size on the choice of career of their children towards vocational technical education; and
- There is no significant influence of level of wealth of the parents on the choice of career of their children towards vocational technical education.

Methodology

Research Design: The research adopts descriptive survey design. The rationale for this that, it aims at obtaining undiluted information from the respondents.

Population: The target population for the study is all parents in the eight linguistic extractions of Ijaw ethnic nationality that make up Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample of Two Hundred (200) parents was used for the study. Random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of twenty-five parents from each of the eight clans in the study area to serve as respondents.

Instrumentation: A questionnaire on parental influence on career choice was developed to elicit information on the following areas: parental desire, parental educational background, family size and parental level of wealth.

Validity: The questionnaire was given to experts in measurement and evaluation unit of Department of Educational foundations of Niger Delta University to assess for content and construct validity.

Method of Administration

The questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the researcher and two of his assistants, which were retrieved later for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and chi-square.

Research Question 1: Does Parental Desire Influence Children's choice of career in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Influence of parents' desire toward vocational technical education career and other professions

S/NO	Item	Respondents	Yes	No
1	Does your desire as a parent influence the choice of career for your children?	200	144	56

In table 1, 144 respondents representing 72% expressed that their desire influenced the choice of career against the study of vocational technical education, while 56 parents representing 28% expressed that their desire influenced their children to choose a career in vocational technical education.

Research Question 2. Does parental educational background influence children's choice of career in Bayelsa State?

Table 2: Influence of Parental Educational Background on Career Choice for their Children

S/NO	Item	Respondents	Yes	No
1	Does your educational background influence the choice of career for your children?	200	144	56

In table 2, 144 parents representing 72% accepted that their educational background influences their children's choice of career while 56 representing 28% says that their educational background does not influence their children's choice of career in vocational technical education.

Research Question 3: Does Family Size influence children's choice of career in Bayelsa State?

Table 3: The influence of family size in the choice of vocational technical education as a career

S/NO	Item	Respondent	Yes	No
1	Does your family size influence the choice of career for your children?	200	104	96

The result in table 3, revealed that 104 parents of small families representing 52% agree that they influenced their children's career choice towards vocational technical education, while 96 representing 48% says they do not influence their children's career choice towards vocational technical education.

Research Question 4: Does parents' wealth level influence the choice of career for your children in Bayelsa State?

Table 4: Influence of Parents' Wealth Level in the Choice of Vocational Education As a Career

S/NO	Item	Respondent	Yes	No
1	Does your wealth level influence the choice of career for your children? children's choice of career	200	120	80

The result in table 4, revealed that 120 parents representing 60% says their status in the society influenced the choice of career for their children toward technical education, while 80 parents representing 40% says their wealthlevel did not influence the choice of their children towards vocational technical education.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between parents that wish their children to go for vocational technical education and those against.

Table 1: Influence of Parents' Desire Toward Vocational Technical Education Career and Other Professions

Variable	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	$(O-E/.5)$	$(O-E/.5)^2$	
To Study Vocational education	56	100	43.5	1892.25	18.92
Other profession	144	100	43.5	1892.25	18.92

df = 2 - 1, $P < 0.05$ Table value 3.84

From the results in table 1, the calculated chi-square value of 37.84 was greater than the critical table value of 3.84. This result therefore indicates that there was significant relationship between those parents who desire their children to go for vocationalcourses and those who do not want. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted. That is parental desire influenced their children choice of career in vocational technical education.

Hypothesis2: There is no significant relationship between highly educated parents and less educated parents toward vocational technical educational as a career for their children.

Table 2: Influence of Educational Background on Career Choice of Children.

Variable	Observed(O)	Expected(E)	O - E /5	(O - E/.5) ²	
High education	64	100	35.5	1260.25	12.6
Low education	136	100	35.5	126.25	12.6
					25.2

df=2-1 P<0.05 Table value 3.84

25.2

from the result in table 2, the calculated chi-square value of 25.2 was greater than the table value of 3.84. This result therefore indicated that there was significant relationship between highly educated parents and less educated towards their desire for vocational technical education. Hence the Null hypothesis was accepted. That is parental educational background influenced their children choice of career in vocational technical education.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between large and small families towards vocational technical education as a career for their children.

Table 3: Influence of Family Size And Vocational Technical Career

Variable	Observed O	Expected E	O-E/.5	(O - EA 5) ²	
Small Family size	104	100	3.5	12.25	0.1225
Large family size	96	100	3.5	12.25	0.1225

df = 2 -1 P< 0.05 Table value 3.84

0.2450

From the result in table 3, the calculated chi-square value of 0.2450 is lower than the critical table of 3.84. This result therefore indicated that there was significant relationship between parents having large families and those having small families. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted. That is family size influenced their children choice of career in vocational technical education.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between the poor families towards vocational education as career.

Table 4: Influence of Parents Living Status on Vocational Education As a Career

Variable	Observed O	Expected(E)	O - E/.5	(O - E/.5) ²	
Poor Family	80	100	19.5	380.25	3.80
Wealthy Family	120	100	19.5	380.25	3.80

df=2-1 P<0.05 Table value 3.84

7.60

From the result in table 4, the calculated chi-square value of 7.60 was greater critical table value of 3.84. This result indicates that there is significant difference in the influence of career choice between the poor families and wealthy families towards vocational technical education. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that wealthy parents influenced the choices of their children in the choice of course of study.

Discussion

The result of this study supports the findings of Hairston (2000) who discovered that parents are the most influential determinants of career choice of their children. This is also in agreement with Mau and Bikko (2000) and Wilson and Wilson. (1992) in their work cited parents as an important influence on their children choice of career. They exert that influence because society place premium or higher value on some career options over others, have higher wages which can easily pull them out of poverty or help to maintain family value and status in society, secure job in public or private organisations, with ease, have some aura of importance among ones contemporaries.

The study reveals that parental background influences the children choice of career. This finding is consistent with Ojoko (1988) who reported that highly educated and placed parents in the society do not want their children to go for vocational courses rather encouraged them to go for other professions like Law, Medicine, Accountancy, Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy. This is because society place higher premium and regard for these professions more than others.

The result reveals that large family size influences career choice of their children it was seen that most siblings in such families normally go for courses with short duration. This is in line with Myres (1997) that observed that 'the general types of families' background in which the student lives exercise greater influence on such students' choice of career in life. In similar vein, Norbert, Adejumo and Achebe (2000) opined that males from small families attain higher and earn more occupationally than males from larger families.

The result shows that the wealthy families do not want their children to choose vocational education as a career. This confirms Asuka (1997) who opined that with their positions in the society, high school classes have been observed to ensure that their children attend the elite schools all over the world. Utebo (1979) also agrees that parents from high socio-economic backgrounds preferred courses like Medicine, Law, Pharmacy, Accountancy, etc., for their children.

Summary of Findings

- Majority of the respondents did not want their children to go for vocational courses
- The parents of small families do not want vocational education as a career for their children
- The highly educated parents do not want their children to study vocational courses, instead encouraged them to go for Medicine, Pharmacy, Law, Engineering, Nursing, etc. because of the prestige attached to some jobs.
- The rich parents also do not want vocational education as a career for their children. It was also seen that, both parents' education and income influences career aspiration of secondary school students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The parental attitude, parental educational background, family size and economic status have been confirmed to play cardinal role in the career choice of their children. This can be seen from the various discussions stated above.

For vocational technical education to be taken seriously as a career, the following recommendations are made;

- Enlightenment/Seminar/Workshop on vocational and technical should be organized in order to create awareness on the benefits of vocational education to the society
- Adequate and sustained publicity be embarked on by the government to correct the misconception people have on vocational education that it is meant for never-do-wells, or for less privileged
- Government should increase funding of Vocational technical Education to make it a more attractive career.

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