

DETERMINANTS OF CAREER MATURITY AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Interaction with penultimate year students and some final year high school students show a mixed message or attitude concerning a future career choice. Most are confused and uncertain about what they want to study after completing high school. This attitude motivated the design of this study. The aim of this study is the investigation of the factors that could possibly predict career maturity of high school students in Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The sample consisted of 703 senior high school students selected from six schools. The Career Maturity Questionnaire comprising of five (5) research trajectories viz Self Efficacy scale, Self-Esteem scale, Parental Social Economic Scale, Academic Need Achievement Scale and the Career Maturity Scale was employed for data collection. All the sub-scales in The Career Maturity Questionnaire were validated. Data is currently being analysed. The results will be discussed, conclusions shall be drawn and recommendations on factors that will improve students' career maturity highlighted. The identification of these factors will assist schools and vocational counsellors' to offer early career counselling and to create appropriate interventions.

Keywords: Career maturity, subject choice, self-efficacy, self-esteem, students.

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most important decisions adolescents will ever face is choosing what career to pursue and this has significant consequences on their identity, values and aspirations (Coertse and Schepers, 2004). Career choice is the most important event in an individual's life. Person's success and consequently, satisfaction and happiness depend on how accurately he chooses his Career. The first explicit definition of career maturity was offered by Super (1955) to mean the dimensions along which to measure the factors of orientation to vocational choice, crystallization of traits, information and planning, consistency and wisdom of vocational preferences. Gribbons and Lohnes (1968) after a careful study of the work carried out in the Career Pattern Study defined career maturity as the "readiness for vocational planning". Career maturity is not only the selection of an occupation, but it refers to all attitudes towards decision making, understanding of job requirements, planning activity and development of vocational capabilities (Marr, 1969). Crites (1961) noted that in adolescence, the expectation is that an individual's vocational preferences are more specific, agree better with reality and reflect greater independence from the influence of others at the end of high school than at the beginning.

This study is therefore structured to investigate how career decision self-efficacy, self-esteem, parental socio-economic status and academic need achievement scale influences career maturity of high school students. One variable implicated in adolescence career maturity is parental socio-economic status. The focal point of Anne Roe's theory of career development is the relative role which the parents play in the career choice of an individual. According to Roe (1957), parents influence the career choice of their children through the type of emotional climate that is available in the home such as emotional concentration on the child, avoidance of the child and the acceptance of the child. Parental socio-economic status is germane to career maturity of adolescence. This is more so as parents are the first and foremost influence in the lives of children. Bogie (1976) working with high school students concluded that socio-economic status was a strong predictor of the discrepancy between an individual's career aspirations and career selection.

Another important variable is academic need achievement. Achievement motivation is the degree of competitiveness for excellence. As reported by Mohone (1960), subjects who are low in fear of failure tend to be more unrealistic in their vocational choice than subjects who are high in achievement

motivation and low in fear of failure. The level of achievement motivation in a particular person at a particular time is generally conceived of as a function of two major factors. The first is the situation which examines whether the person is under related condition, aroused condition, neutral condition and secondly is the complexity of the task set before the person; the enduring strength of the motive to achieve in the individual personality or the innate ability to persist in achieving a goal. Academic achievement is significantly related to self-esteem (Tremblay, Inman & Willms, 2000).

Perceived self-efficacy makes a difference in how people feel, think, and act (Bandura 1997). Career decision-making self-efficacy is an individual's expectations regarding her or his ability to perform the specific tasks and behaviors that are important to effective career decision making (Taylor & Betz, 1983). Hackett and Betz (1981) were the first to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and career-related behaviours. Identifying and describing immature and mature career behaviour is made easier through a clear understanding of career maturity (Themba, Oosthuizen, R. M., & Coetzee, 2012). Career-mature people tend to have more career information, are more likely to have been self-employed in part-time jobs, appear to be more realistic in their career aspirations, and behave in a manner that is more in keeping with their abilities and socio-economic circumstances (Themba et al., 2012). Moreover, career-mature individuals are generally better adjusted to their careers, whereas mal-adjusted individuals' career choices are generally not consistent with their field of interest or their abilities (Crites 1971, cited in Themba et al., 2012).

One central theme in Super's developmental theory is that of the self-concept. Super et al. (1957) as cited by Mubiana (2010) believed that the self-concept was a result of physical and mental development. The idea of the self-concept emanates from observations of work and how growth develops in working adults, general environment, and general experiences. Super's theory consists of 14 propositions which suggest that people differ in terms of abilities and personalities, needs, values, interests, traits and self-concepts. As a result of this people are qualified by virtue of these characteristics for a number of occupations. Individuals' preference towards a specific career path is influenced by external social impacts and their cultural surroundings (Ackerman and Botha, 1997). Significant factors in determining the chosen career strategies are the social and economic conditions of the family which according to Isaacson (1985) is mainly associated with the male's career status. Every person has a unique pattern of interests, temperaments and other personality traits, which is seen as individual differences (Shertzer, 1981). Rousseau and Venter (2009) add that individual variables are associated with interests, talents and personality; whereas work related interests specifically refer to what an individual would like to do as a career. Thus, interests are vital, as individuals who select careers compatible with their interests are commonly more content in their jobs (Rousseau & Venter, 2009).

1.1 Objectives

This study was structured to examine how factors such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, academic need achievement and parental socio-economic status determines student's career maturity.

1.2 Research Question

Will there be a significant correlation among all the variables of interest.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

There will be a significant combined and relative contribution of the predictors on the criterion variable.

1.4 Ethical considerations

According to Cohen and Swerdlk (2010), ethics pertain to a body of principles of right, proper or good conduct. They asserted that a respondent that is involved in a research study has the right: to give informed consent; to be informed of the results; the right to privacy and confidentiality; and not to be labelled in a stigmatizing manner. Ethical clearance for the study was obtained via the principal of the selected secondary schools who coordinated with parents and guardians. Consent letters were signed by parents and returned to the researcher through the principal to give consent for their wards to participate in the present study. Assent letters were also signed by learners and returned to the researcher whereby they agreed to voluntarily participate in the study.

2 METHODS

Seven hundred and three secondary school students (mean age = 17.8, SD = 1.2) were randomly selected in six schools. The six schools were further divided into three public and private schools each. The three schools for the two categories comprised of a school in the city, semi-urban area and rural areas. The descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. A research question and one research hypothesis were raised and tested. A questionnaire tagged the Career Maturity Questionnaire (CMQ) and consisting of five (5) research trajectories viz Self Efficacy scale (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996), Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), Parental Social Economic Scale (Adegoke, 1987), Academic Need Achievement Scale (Bakare, 1976) and the Career Maturity Scale (Savickas, 1984) was used for data collection. Based on the students' population, systematic and simple random sampling was performed to make the sample representative.

2.1 Measures

2.1.1 Self-Efficacy Scale

The researcher chose the CDMSE-SF (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996) to measure career decision self-efficacy expectation related to career decision tasks. This provided the overall assessment of students' career decision self-efficacy in relation to their self-appraisal knowledge of occupational information, goal selection, future plans, and problem solving. The 25-item short form was developed by eliminating 5 of the 10 items from each of the five CDMSE scales. Participants are asked to rate how confident they are that they could complete the given tasks on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (no confidence at all that I could) to 5 (complete confidence that I could). Scale scores are computed by summing the responses to each scale's items, and the total score is the sum of the five-scale score. Higher scores indicate higher levels of career decision self-efficacy. The CDMSE was adapted for this study.

2.1.2 Self-Esteem Scale

A 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

2.1.3 Parental Social Economic Scale (PSES)

The PSES was designed to measure the socio-economic status of the parents using the criterion of occupation and income, type and place of residence, level of education and properties. No single variable among the listed ones can conveniently be an objective measure of socio-economic status, hence, the aggregation of all. The initial instrument by Adegoke (1987) was adapted and scaled to be appropriate for this study. The reliability was confirmed by a test-retest method (three week interval) which yielded a coefficient of 0.73.

2.1.4 Academic Need Achievement Scale

Academic Needs Achievement Scale (ANAS) is an adopted standardized psychological instrument developed by Bakare (1977) and to determine the validity of the instrument, the author carried out a thorough construct validity of the instrument. In order to determine its reliability, ANAS was administered by Bakare to a group of 45 students and the coefficient obtained was 0.80. According to Bakare (1977) the reliability is high enough to establish its reliability. This researcher totally shared his view, thus the holistic adoption of the instrument for this study. There are five different responses to each of the items on the scale. It requires the respondents to tick any one that is applied to him. Any positive response received high score ranging from 5-1- while any negative answered attracted low score ranging from - for 1-5. Example for a positive response the scores ranges from very true of you 5, mostly true of you 4 partly true of you 3, mostly untrue of you 2 and very untrue of you 1. All the score on each of the item were added together to get the total scores on the scale for each respondents. The highest score obtained is 180

2.1.5 The Career Maturity Scale

For the purposes of this study, only the Attitude Scale was used. The Attitude Scale of the CMI-R is the most widely used measure of career maturity (Savickas, 1984). The Attitude Scale of the CMI-R

consists of 25 diverse statements with an overall score from 1 to 25 for career maturity attitude. Scoring is conducted by transferring individual responses to each item on the scale to the CMI-R answer sheet. The scoring key with the correct answers shown on the top and bottom of its window is then placed on the answer sheet so that the completed answers are displayed in the window. The answers that match the letters shown on the key are then totaled. This procedure is performed for the CMI-R Attitude Scale, and the total numbers for the scores are summed. This number represents the individual's career maturity attitude score. Having a higher score would be an indication of more highly developed attitudes toward career decisions.

2.1.6 Validity and Reliability of the instrument

A pilot study was performed which involved 65 students in two schools. The reliability of the CMQ was established using a test-retest reliability method with a three week interval. Cronbach alpha value for all the scales ranged from .79 to .91. The Cronbach Alpha was used to estimate the reliability coefficient of the CMQ which stood 0.86. The research trajectory was therefore considered adequate for testing purposes.

2.1.7 Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation and t-test of independent samples. Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the contributions of self-efficacy scale, self-esteem scale, parental socio-economic scale and the academic need achievement scale to student's career maturity. Multiple regression tests were carried out after some prerequisites such as sample size, test outliers, multicollinearity and singularity among others had been satisfied.

3 RESULTS

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Variables of Participants (n = 703)

Variables	Frequency/ Percentage
Gender	
Male	381 (54.2)
Female	322 (45.8)
Age Range	
13-15	337 (47.9)
16-19	366 (52.1)
Types of School	
Public (City)	140 (19.9)
Public (Semi Urban)	144 (20.5)
Public (Rural)	117 (16.6)
Private (City)	141 (20.1)
Private (Semi Urban)	101 (14.4)
Private (Rural)	60 (8.5)

In Table 1, it was revealed that 703 students were involved in the study. More than half of the participants were males accounting for 54.2%. Majority of the students (366) are between the ages of 16 and 19 years (52.1%). There were more students from public schools (401 (57%)) as against private schools (302 (43%)).

Research Question 1: Will there be a significant correlation among all the variables of interest.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations and Pearson Product-Moment correlations for dependent and independent variables. N = 703

Variable	Mean	SD	ANAS	PSES	SEffc	SE	CMS
ANAS	22.3101	4.263	1.000				
PSES	21.6458	3.273	.058	1.000			
Self-Efficacy	24.3172	4.753	-.090*	-.016	1.000		
Self-Esteem	21.7937	2.867	-.011	.015	.246**	1.000	
CMS	37.2888	1.718	.093*	.157**	-.010	-.001	1.000

Note. ANAS = Academic needs achievement scale; PSES = Parental socioeconomic status; SEffc = Self-Efficacy; SE = Self-Esteem; CMS = Career Maturity Scale.

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

This research question sought to determine the relationships among career maturity, career decision self-efficacy, self-esteem, academic needs achievement and parental socio-economic status? It was proposed that students who had high career decision self-efficacy would also demonstrate high career maturity scores. In addition, student with high self-esteem scores would also demonstrate high career maturity scores. To test this, correlations were computed among (a) Career Maturity Scale (b) the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (c) the Self-Esteem Scale (d) Parental socioeconomic Scale and (e) Academic Needs Achievement Scale. For the entire population sample, the overall mean and standard deviations for each variable is as follows; career maturity (Mean = 37.29, SD = 1.72), career decision self-efficacy (Mean = 24.32, SD = 4.75), self-esteem scale (Mean = 21.79, SD = 2.87), parental socio-economic scale (Mean = 21.65, SD = 3.27) and the academic needs achievement scale (Mean = 22.31, SD = 4.26). Correlations among the various assessment measures demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between career maturity and academic needs achievement ($r = .093$; $n = 703$; $p = <.001$) and significant but weak correlation with parental socioeconomic scale ($r = 0.157$; $n = 703$; $p = <.001$). There was a significant relationship between academic needs achievement scale and self-efficacy ($r = -.09$; $n = 703$; $p = <.001$). Finally, there was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem scale ($r = 0.246$; $n = 703$; $p = <.001$) for all the student participants (see Table 2). All the significant relationships were at the .01 alpha level. The researcher found a significant relationship between career maturity, academic needs achievement scale and parental socio-economic scale.

Table 3. Relative Contribution of the Predictors on the Criterion Variable and Model Summary of Multiple Regressions

R = .203a R² = .041 Adjusted R² = .033 Err = 1.68967					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	33.827	.958		35.314	.000
Type of Schools	-.065	.040	-.060	-1.606	.109
ANAS	.033	.015	.082	2.183	.029
PSES	.076	.020	.145	3.897	.000
Self-Efficacy	.001	.014	.002	.046	.963
Self-Esteem	-.003	.023	-.005	-.118	.906
Age	.084	.039	.081	2.160	.031

a. Dependent Variable: CMS

Table 4. Contribution of the Predictors on the Criterion Variable

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	85.276	6	14.213	4.978	.000b
Residual	1987.106	696	2.855		
Total	2072.381	702			

a. Dependent Variable: CMS

b. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Self-Efficacy, Type of Schools, PSES, ANAS, Self-Esteem

In testing hypothesis 1, regression analysis was carried out on type of schools, ANAS, PSES, Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem as predictor variables and career maturity as the criterion variable. Table 3 reveals that ANAS ($\beta = 0.033$; $t = 2.183$; $p < 0.05$), PSES ($\beta = 0.076$; $t = 3.897$; $p < 0.05$) and Age ($\beta = 0.084$; $t = 2.160$; $p < 0.05$) were significant predictors of career maturity. However, types of school ($\beta = 0.065$; $t = 1.606$; $p > 0.05$), self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.001$; $t = 0.046$; $p > 0.05$) and self-esteem ($\beta = -0.003$; $t = 0.118$; $p > 0.05$) were not significant contributors to students career maturity.

The hypothesis which states that there will be a significant combined and relative contribution of self-esteem, self-efficacy, parental socio-economic status and academic needs achievement to the prediction career maturity of high school students was accepted for parental socio-economic status and academic need achievement but rejected for self-efficacy and self-esteem. As indicated in the model summary (Table 3 & 4), when all the predictor variables were entered into the regression model at once, there was a significant combined contribution of all the variables ($r = 0.203$, $r^2 = 0.041$; $F_{(6, 696)} = 4.978$; $p > 0.005$). In this study, 4.1% of the variation in students' career maturity appears to be accounted for by the combination of self-esteem, self-efficacy, parental socio-economic status and academic need achievement.

4 DISCUSSION

In this study, it was concluded that parental socio-economic status is a significant determinant of student's career maturity. Glaze (1980) using high school students confirmed that of all the variables investigated in relation to career choice and future orientation, socio-economic status ranked higher than other variables. According to Rojewski and Yang (1997) socioeconomic status was the most significant indicator of how occupational aspirations are chosen while McCandles, Lueptow and McClendon (1989) found that traditional gender/stereotypes were more common in high income families' occupational choice. Both of these indicate that there is a relationship between socioeconomic status and career choice/vocational aspiration.

In a study by Jamabo (2014), 40% of the participants responded that low socioeconomic status of parents does not affect the vocational aspiration of adolescents while 35% responded that high socioeconomic status of parents does affect the vocational aspiration of adolescents. Jamabo concluded that parents with high socioeconomic background tend to affect/influence the vocational aspirations of their children more than those with low socioeconomic background. O'Brien & Fasinger (1993) also reported that socioeconomic level is often cited as a potentially confounding variable in studies on adolescents' career choice and commitment.

Another finding revealed that there was a significant contribution of academic need achievement to the prediction of career maturity. As noted by Oluwatimilehin (2011), need achievement motivation is a hypothetical construct designed to explain inter – individual and intra – individual differences in the orientation, intensity and consistency of achievement behaviour. This finding could be interpreted to mean that the desire to achieve does have a significant effect on the career maturational attitudes of the participants. In contrast to this finding, the study by Onivehu (1990) reported that academic need achievement had the lowest correlation with career maturity; academic need achievement was not a significant predictor of career maturity. The results generally support the proposition that career maturity is associated with a wide range of variables, and that a different combination of variables are associated with Career Development Attitude and Career Development Knowledge.

5 CONCLUSION

Career counselling and career guidance centres on planning and making decisions regarding careers and education (Herr et al., 2004). Career maturity measures can be used to assess students'

readiness to make various educational decisions; there is the need therefore school administrators, counsellors and parents to be aware of all these measures and their resultant effect on career maturity. This will enable them identify students whose general level of career maturity is low that they may not be able to make certain educational and or vocational decisions.

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