

Gender and Career Choice: Counselling Implications for Promoting Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development in the 21st Century

A.B. ADAMS, I.P. AJEWOLE
Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria.

L.O.GBORE
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba–Akoko, Nigeria

Abstract. This study examined the vocational interest among high and low academic achievers boys and girls in secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The instrument employed for the study was the vocational interest inventory (VII) after validation for the purpose of this study. Subjects used were 256 students selected through purposeful selection method, comprising of 128 low academic achievers and 128 high academic achievers of both sexes drawn from eight secondary schools located in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The data collected were subjected to t-test statistics for analyses. The generated hypotheses were tested at $P < 0.05$ level of significance. The results showed that: there is significant difference in the vocational interest of high academic achiever boys and high academic achiever girls, there is no significant difference in the vocational interest of low academic achiever boys and low academic achiever girls, there is significant difference in the vocational interest of boys and girls irrespective of academic achievement. Recommendations were made based on the findings of this study that; the school counsellors, parents and government should assist individual secondary school student in choosing career that is congruent to his/her interest and ability for job satisfaction and

fulfilled life. This will enhance a positive change necessary in vocational education for promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable development in 21st century.

Keywords: Gender, High Academic Achievers, Low Academic Achievers, Vocational/Career Interest.

1. Introduction

In the African traditional society, parents usually choose careers for their children. This perhaps was due to the simple mode of life of the day. Today, things are changing because of the world of scientific and technological knowledge and development.

Career choice is a very important process in one's life and in the life of a nation as a whole. We must decide what manner of person (man) we wish to be and what favourable callings in life we would follow. Choosing a lifelong career is a difficult thing in the world. It is a common phenomenon that people prefer certain jobs based on their interests and needs, to satisfy people who influence them such as parents, peer groups and the environment. Such career choice is sometimes based on the needs for self-

expression that will offer an individual the need to achieve self-actualization.

Owuamanam (1982) affirms that it is pertinent that serious consideration and attention is given to career choice of the Nigeria Secondary School adolescents so that they can appropriate career choice. Cook, Hepper and O'Brien (2002) states that individuals operate within a unique ecosystem and therefore their vocational interest is often influenced by factors operating in that society. Adams (1996) shows that some adolescents' career choices were influenced by their parents. Brown (2002) presented research findings supporting several propositions about the role of values in career choice, success and satisfaction. He showed that the people will prefer careers that the society will approve based on the societal values. According to Malini Nair (2010), a former Harvard head Larry Summers had once angered feminists across the globe by suggesting that women may not have innate ability to handle science and math. Malini stressed further that women made 37% of science Ph.D.'s with a depressingly large percentage of workforce dropouts due to prejudiced mindset, the burden of their family roles and gender biased administrations.

The choice of a career among the adolescents in Nigeria is a major concern of everybody in the country, the reason being that it affects the individual student, his family and the society at large. Probably, this was the reason why the Federal Government of Nigeria pointed out in the Third Nation Development Plan (1975) that Education is uncompleted if the beneficiary does not have the particular feeling of self-fulfilment which goes with the right choice of career. At this stage, adolescents exhibit identity crises due to some academic Also to have a po related problems in the vocational choice. Sommers (2008) showed that women earned more Ph.D.'s than men in the humanities, social sciences, education and life sciences. She made it clear that the figures were different in other areas. Women comprised just 19% of tenure-track professors in math, 11% in physics, 10% in computer science and 10% in electrical engineering. Also, according to Cohen (2011), the gender breakdown of the top 15 college majors in 1998-99 and 2008-09 reveals that the

most female-dominated majors- from English to the health professions-became more female dominated. Weisgram & Bigler (2006) affirmed the low percentage of women in scientific fields.

In a rapidly developing country such as Nigeria that is at the verge of changing from a traditional agricultural country to an industrial one, the choice of career is a complete task. Family occupations such as farming, weaving, carving, drumming, fishing and hunting are no longer accepted by the children to be followed as career choices. The drift from rural to urban setting has affected the pattern of occupations and career of youths. Likewise, the influence of science and technology in all sectors of the economy has complicate the number of careers that are available as well as the best means and ways of choosing the right occupation for the right person, Olayinka (1980). Uba and Olaniyi (1990) argued that there is significant difference in the vocational interest of females. Olasehinde (1976) submitted that sex plays an important role in determining the student's career choice. He stated further that children tend to learn different sex roles and that these roles and interests later become dominant factors in career choice.

Siann and Callaghan (2001) and Ozbilgin and Woodwork (2003) asserted that female students are underrepresented in science, engineering and technical education and that career choice is subject to social constraints in Britain and Turkey. Abiola (1983) pointed out that in the years back, 1% of the engineering students registered were women in areas like meteorological engineering, but in marine engineering, there was no woman at all. Adeyemi (1992) affirmed that boys must consider the types of occupation that are congruent with their abilities as their abilities and skills determine their career interest. Olive (1973) in her study of sex differences in adolescent vocational preference argued that females who are low/ high achievers clustered around such professions like social work, teaching, secretariat work and such other careers that require less educational training and responsibilities. Cooper (2015) stressed that "A potential business is like a lock. It will become

successful only with exactly matching key. I tried a number of businesses that did not match my key. When I finally located the right business (lock) for the grooved teeth of my key, I became a successful entrepreneur". To avoid unsuccessful entrepreneurship, one must engage in right career choice. Therefore, the need to understand the career interest of both high and low academic achiever boys and girls becomes imperative.

2. Statement of the problem

Nowadays, most secondary school students just choose career based on information from the peer group, on parental influence, prestige, social value, and lucrativity of such careers without considering their personal interest and ability for such jobs. Quite often they end up in failure and unfulfilled life. Success in any vocation may be difficult without one being interested in the job. Each career has its own hazards and prospects with unique skills. The students (both high and low academic achievers) must be well informed about the choice of vocation based on interest and ability in order to avoid waste of human and material resources.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of gender and career choice/counselling implication for promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

3. Research questions

To guide this study, the following questions were raised:

- Is there any difference in the vocational interest of high academic achiever boys and high academic achiever girls?
- Is there any difference in the vocational interest of low academic achiever boys and low academic achiever girls?
- Is there any difference in the vocational interest of boys and girls irrespective of academic achievement?

4. Research hypotheses

Based on the questions raised above, the following hypotheses were generated for verification:

- There is no significant difference in the vocational interest of high academic achiever boys and high academic achiever girls.
- There is no significant difference in the vocational interest of low academic achiever boys and low academic achiever girls.
- There is no significant difference in the vocational interest of boys and girls irrespective of academic achievement.

5. Methodology

Descriptive survey was employed in carrying out this study. The population of the study consisted of all Senior Secondary School Class One (SSS 1) students in secondary schools in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo state. Eight schools were randomly selected for the study, they were gathered in a classroom for easy administration, supervision and collection of data. A total of 256 students were purposively selected based on their academic performance (low and high academic achievers) to take part in the study. Thirty two (32) students made of 16 boys and 16 girls were selected from each school. The vocational interest inventory developed by Bakare (1997) for Nigeria secondary schools was adopted after validation by the researcher to gather scores on subjects' vocational interest. The instrument was administered personally on the respondents and completed copies of the inventory were collected by hand immediately after they were filled through simple random sampling technique and stratified sampling technique respectively. A pilot study using twenty senior secondary school class one students was carried out with interest inventory (VII) developed by Bakare (1997). The scores from the respondents were subjected to correlation using Crombach Alpha Method to determine homogeneity of the items. A coefficient of 0.82 was obtained, which was in line with the recommendation of Akinboye (2001) on the homogeneity of the items. This shows the construct validity of the

instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established through test retest techniques by administering the instrument twice at the interval of two weeks on the twenty subjects who were non participants in this study. The value of scores were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation and 0.80 was obtained. These values affirm the instrument's validity and reliability, hence, justifying its use for this study.

The VII is an instrument invented by Christopher M Bakare, PhD of University of Ibadan. It was designed to help an individual indicate the type of vocation he or she is interested in and would doing. It consists of 100 items, 10 for each of the 10 interest area namely mechanical, scientific, outdoor, artistic, persuasive, literacy, musical, social services, computational and clerical. The individual VII tends to tell his interest profile. The reliability of VII has been established for Nigerian subjects Bakare (1977). The reliability figure for one group of students range from 0.57 for the artistic to 0.92 for the scientific interest areas, for another group of students, the reliability co efficient falls between 0.63 for persuasive and 0.91 for literacy interest areas. In this study, the VII question options were numbered five to one,

thus like very much (5 points), Like (4 points), Indifferent (3 points), Dislike (2 points), Dislike very much (1 point). Entrepreneurship is like a key, the grooved teeth of the key are a person's specific characteristics and skills.

Different areas of vocational interest were identified by Bakare VII (1977) to enable the students find vocational interests which are congruent to their potentials, either boy or girl with low or high academic achievements. That is, the exact matching key referred to by Cooper (2015). Therefore, the right choice of vocational interest is bedrock for promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

6. Data analysis

Data collected from the study were analyzed using inferential statistics. Specifically, the hypotheses were analyzed using t-test statistic and tested at $P < 0.05$ level of significance.

Testing of hypothesis

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the vocational interest of high academic achiever boys and high academic achiever girls.

Table 1: t-test of difference between vocational interest of high academic achiever boys and high academic achiever girls.

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	t - cal	t - critical
Vocational interest of high academic achiever boys	128	352.13	5.31	254	4.406	1.96
Vocational interest of high academic achiever girls	128	343.24	4.89			

$P < 0.05$, Result: Significant.

From Table 1 above, it was revealed that the mean for the vocational interest of high academic achiever boys was 352.13 while the standard deviation was 5.31. Also the mean score for high academic achiever girls was 343.24 while the standard deviation was 4.89. The t-cal value was 4.406 and the t-critical value was 1.96. Since the t-cal value is greater than the t-critical value, therefore, the hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the vocational interest of high academic achiever boys and high academic achiever girls is rejected.

Table 2: t-test of difference between vocational interest of low academic achiever boys and low academic achiever girls.

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	t - cal	t - critical
Vocational interest of low academic achiever boys	128	323.08	4.71	254	1.514	1.96
Vocational interest of low academic achiever girls	128	342.84	5.66			

$P < 0.05$ Result: Not Significant

From the Table 2 above, it is revealed that the mean vocational interest score of low achiever boys 323.08 while the standard deviation was 4.71. The mean score for low achiever girls was 342.84 with standard deviation 5.66. The t-test calculated value was 1.514. At degree of freedom 254 with 0.05 significant level, the t-critical value was 1.96. The t-test calculated was lesser than the t-critical. This means that there was no significant difference in the vocational interest of male and female low academic achievers. Therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 3: t-test of difference between vocational interest of high academic achievers and low academic achievers irrespective of gender.

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	t – cal	t – critical
Vocational interest of boys	128	337.61	5.01	254	8.44	1.96
Vocational interest of girls	128	343.04	5.28			

P<0.05 Result: Significant.

From the Table 3 above, it is revealed that the mean vocational interest score of boys was 337.61 while the standard deviation was 5.01. The mean score for girls was 343.04 with standard deviation 5.28. The t-test calculated value was 8.44. At degree of freedom 254 with 0.05 significant level, the t-critical value was 1.96. The t-test calculated was greater than the t-critical. This means that there is significant difference in the vocational interest of boys and girls. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

7. Discussion

The finding of this study showed that:

Significant difference exists in the vocational interest of high academic achiever boys and high academic achiever girls. The researcher has found out that masculinity and the societal belief plays important roles in career choice because some careers are perceived by the society for men in which women cannot perform well. This result supported the findings of Uba and Olaniyi (1990) that there is significant difference in the vocational interest of males and females. Also, this finding agreed with Olasehinde (1976) who found that sex played important roles in determining the career interests of subjects used in his study. The author explained that the different sex roles learnt by subjects later become dominant factors in career choice.

According to Malini Nair (2010), a former Harvard head Larry Summers had once angered feminists across the globe by suggesting that women may not have innate ability to handle science and math. Malini stressed further that

women made 37% of science Ph.D.'s with a depressingly large percentage of workforce dropouts due to prejudiced mindset, the burden of their family roles and gender biased administrations.

Abiola (1983) pointed out that in the year back, 1% of the engineers registered were women in areas like Meteorological Engineering, while there were no females in Marine Engineering. In the society, according to him, women are scared away from some professions. Skin and Callaghan (2001) and Ozbilgin and Woodwork (2003), asserted that female students were underrepresented in science, engineering and technical education and that career choice is subject to social constraints.

Significant difference does not exist in the vocational interest of low academic achiever boys and low academic achiever girls. The result may be due to their abilities and potentials as low achievers. This result also confirmed the findings of Olasehinde (1976) and Adeyemi (1992) that individual personalities (interest, attitude, capability, aptitude) plays a significant part in the vocation that he/she is likely to be admitted to and the work he/she is able to perform. Both of them tend toward the same career because birds of a feather flock together.

Significant difference exists in the vocational interest of boys and girls irrespective of academic achievement. The result may be due to the mind-set of the females preferring some careers and thinking that some careers are majorly meant for males. This agrees with Sommers (2008) who showed that women earned more Ph.D.'s than men in the humanities,

social sciences, education and life sciences. She made it clear that the figures were different in other areas. Women comprised just 19% of tenure-track professors in math, 11% in physics, 10% in computer science and 10% in electrical engineering. Also, according to Philip Cohen (2011), the gender breakdown of the top 15 college majors in 1998-99 and 2008-09 reveals that the most female-dominated majors- from English to the health professions-became more female dominated.

8. Implications for Counselling

This study is an eye opener to all the stakeholders involving in the career choice of the students. The government, parents and the school counsellors will be able to guide and pave way for correct or right choice of career among students.

This study will also guide the student in choosing careers that are congruent to their abilities and interests.

9. Conclusion

From this study, significant difference exist in the career choice of high academic achiever girls and boys while there is no difference in the career choice of low academic achiever boys and girls. Therefore, students are to be guided in choosing the right career that is congruent to their potentials for them to have career satisfaction and fulfilled life.

10. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

- School counsellors are to guide students in choosing the correct careers that are congruent with their ability and interest.
- Counsellors should encourage secondary school girls not to be scared away from vocations deemed to be for males in the society.
- Parents are to be enlightened and encouraged not to force careers on their children.

- Students should seek for counselling on their career choices rather than copying their peer groups or choosing prestigious careers.
- Government should provide schools with competent guidance counsellor as well with their appropriate testing instrument.
- Seminar opportunities should be made available from time to time to the school counselors.

References

- Abiola, M.K.O. (1983). Women in Men's World. *Sunday Concord*: July 3rd 1983, Page 2.
- Adams, A.B. (1996). *Parental Influence on Career Choice of Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Akure South Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria*, Unpublished B.Ed. Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Adeyemi, A.M (1992). Vocational Choice among Secondary School Level Worker in Akure Local Government Area of Ondo State. *Journal of Education and Leadership*, vol.16(8):141-153 .
- Bakare, C.G.H. (1977). *Vocational Interest Inventory*. Psychological Research Production. University Press, Ibadan.
- Brown, D. (2002). "The Role of Work and Cultural Values in Occupational Choice, Satisfaction, and Success: A Theoretical Statement". *Journal of Counselling & Development* 80, No. 1, 48-56.
- Cohen, P.N. (2011). *Gender Integration's Lost Decade*. Family Inequality Blogspot: <http://familyinequalities.wordpress.com/2011/10/24/gender-integrations-lost-decade/>
- Cook, E.P., Heppner, H.J., and O'Brien, K.M. (2002). "Career Development of Women of Colour and White Women: Assumptions, Conceptualization, and Interventions from an Ecological Perspective". *Career Development Quarterly* 50, No. 4, 291-305.
- Cooper, R. (2015). *Entrepreneurial Development: Alternative Pathway for Youth Unemployment*, A Keynote

- Address Presented at the 1st International Conference on Promoting Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Sustainable Development in the 21st Century held at Akungba, Nigeria from 27th-30th July, 2015.
- Durojaiye, M.O.A. (1970). School Education and Occupation Choice: Social Psychological Research in a Nigeria International School. *West African Journal of Education*. 14 (1). Nair, M. (2010). Gender Bias Keeps Women Away from Science. *Daily News and Analysis (DNA)*, New Delhi, India: Friday, January 29 2010.
- Olasehinde, O. (1976). *Significant Differences in the Preferred Learning Strategies of the Students either on the Basis of Sex or Type of Programme*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ilorin and Educational Provisions in Lagos. *West African Journal of Education*, 17(3): 41-49.
- Olive, H. (1973). Sex Differences in Adolescents' Vocational Preferences. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 21(3): 199-201
- Owuamanam, D.O. (1982). Occupational Prestige and Occupational Aspirations of Nigerian Adolescent Students. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 5(5): 157-164.
- Ozbilgin, M. and Woodwork, D. (2003). *Banking and Gender: Sex Equality in Banking in Britain and Turkey*. London: Palgrave- IB Tauris Publishers.
- Siann G. and Callaghan, M. (2001). "Choices and Barriers: Factors Influencing Women's Choice of Higher Education in Science, Engineering and Technology". *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 25(1): 85-95.
- Sommers, C.H. (2008). Why Can't a Woman Be More Like a Man? *The American*: The Online Magazine of the American Enterprise Institute:
<http://www.american.com/archive/2008/march-april-Magazine-content/why-can2019t-a-woman-be-more-like-a-man>.
- Uba, A. and Olaniyi, G.B. (1990). Relative Effects of Gender and Family Type on the Vocational Preferences of Adolescents in Oyo State. *Nigeria Journal of Counselling and Development*, 5:95-10
- Weisgram, E. S. and Bigler, R. S. (2006) Girls and science careers: The role of altruistic values and attitude about science tasks. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 27, 326-340