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APPROPRIATE CAREER DECISION MAKING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A PANACEA TO HIGH DROPOUT AND INSECURITY AMONG STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study outlined appropriate career decision making among university students: a panacea to high dropout and insecurity among students. The study adopted a descriptive survey design to seek the opinion of respondents to achieve this purpose. The study covered two universities in Niger State, Nigeria; FUT Minna and IBBU Lapai. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was duly validated, and the reliability coefficients obtained was determined to be 0.86. Mean, and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z- test and One – way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), were used to analyzed the hypotheses at (P < .05) level of significance. Findings on factors that led to the course of study, among others, include; family influence, grades obtained, inadequate information, financial constraints, and secondary education teachers' influence. Recommended strategies among others are; Effective career education in secondary education, right parenting style, enhancing student's self-efficacy and teachers should ensure his or her subject is interesting.

Keywords: *Career, Decision Making and University students*

Introduction

Education is the process of teaching, training, and learning for the development of knowledge and skills to prepare individuals to live happily with themselves and others in the society where they live. Education can also be seen as a process whereby every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in its cultural setting and heritage to continuously foster the wellbeing of humankind and guarantee its survival against the unpredictable, at times hostile and destructive elements and forces of man and nature. However, the focus of education is to imbue the individuals with the knowledge abilities, skills, or behaviour to enable them to function in their immediate environment and the society at large. Education is a strategic vehicle for efforts to develop all the potential of the individual so that the ideals develop human can be achieved. Education itself is a significant tool for human security: it provides the opportunity for creativity, research and innovation, making it possible to improve the quality of life. Access to and completion of higher education is a key determinant in the accumulation of human capital, a pre-requisite for human rights and civil liberties, good health, clean environment, and personal safety (Dambazau, 2014). The learners must be helped in the choice of career if the aim and objectives of education are to be achieved.

A career is more than work or a workplace; it is a way of life; it is a lifelong process balancing different life roles with the objective and subjective dimensions of a career. A career is more than matching an individual's skills and competencies with the needs of an organization (Law, 2007). It is expressed as a consecutive and progressive achievement in a field of interest wherewith the individual's livelihood is intended. Career-related choices are among the most

important decisions people make during their lifetime (Ali, 2014). These choices have significant long-term implications for individuals' lifestyles, emotional welfare, economic and social status, as well as their sense of personal productivity and contribution to society.

The choice of an occupation is one of the most important decisions one makes in life. How suitable a career choice is determining the amount of satisfaction one will experience in the career and the opportunities he has for advancement (Salami & Salami, 2013). The concept of a career or choice of occupation begins right from the time children indulge in pretend play as a doctor, teacher, and other professionals they see around them. Often children find themselves answering questions as to what they want to become when they are older. Although this process starts early, actual planning and decision making start in adolescence, the period between 13 and 18 years. It is a developmental period characterized by several biological and psychological changes and requires the successful resolution of specific tasks like identity achievement. It is a stage where they struggle to find a balance between obedience and independence. Along with other skills, an adolescent need to develop adequate decision-making skills as several important decisions that will have an impact on their future will be taken in this period.

The study of career decision making has its beginning with Parson's trait and factor approach given in 1909, after which many models have been proposed to explain the process of career decision making. Theories of career development in figure 1 revealed that career development could be grouped into three; Structural theories which focus on individual characteristics and occupational tasks, Developmental theories apply development theory to the career decision making the process and the learning theories. Atueyi and Isiaku (2011) career development can be seen as the hub of any meaningful development since man heeds to all activities on earth. It is important to note that when a youth is developed career-wise, he now has the ample opportunity, skill, and zeal to develop the nation. Career development enhances the satisfaction of needs, rapid technical development, business growth, community development, as well as national development (Ajufo, 2013).
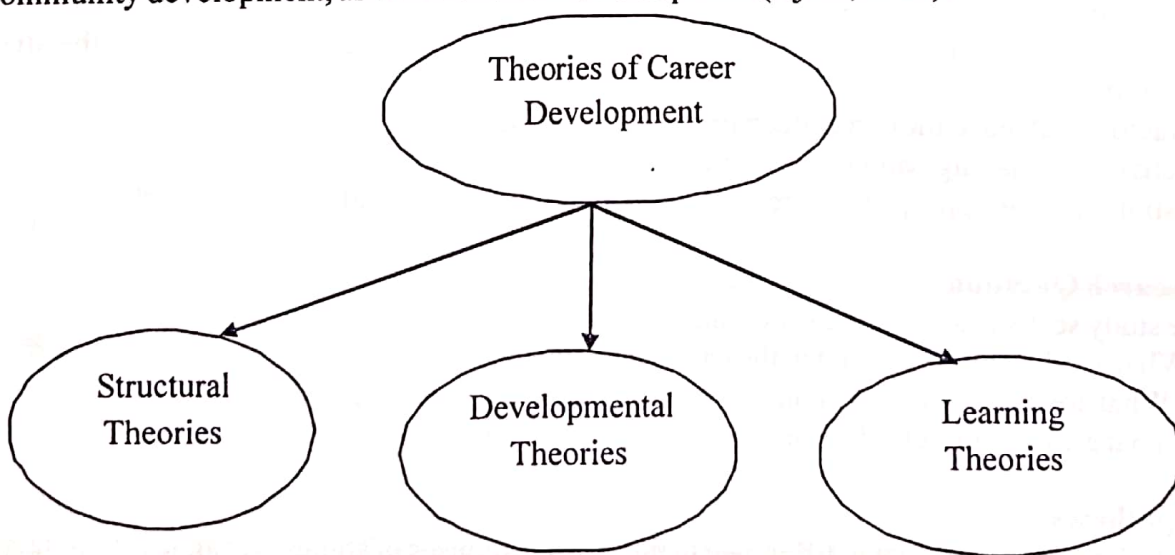

Figure 1. Theories of career development

Super opined that vocational development does not take place in one "snapshot" moment but involves a series of decision that occurs at the different development stage. Super (1969) suggested that career choice and development is essentially a process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept. Career decision making is a process that explains that a person makes when selecting a particular career. It is a complex phenomenon that has social, psychological, and philosophical aspects to it. It helps to identify individual differences and various factors involved in an individual's career decision making. It also provides an understanding of the way these factors have an impact on their career decisions and choices (Ghuangpeng, 2011). The consequences of making an inappropriate career decision may be significant, both financially that is one's investment in the training, psychologically; the difficulty of making a change in a vital aspect of one's life and the frustration deriving from an unsatisfying job and dropout when studying a particular course of choice. Hence, it is not surprising that career-decision-making can become a stressful process for many people, and is often associated with increased levels of anxiety.

Statement to the Problem

Career choice and planning has become necessary as globalization, and current career choices have created an unprecedented war for talent. Selection of the wrong career can affect achievement, contentment, and mental health of the individual for life. Therefore, career-related decisions are an essential milestone in a person's life. Failure by students to make the right choices may lead to unhappiness and disapproval by society. The choice of course of study in higher education which leads individuals to their respective professions, must not be toyed with if the people involved are to perform well and be productive in their career. It is sad to note that most people engaged in social vices are people that fell out as a result of wrong career choices they made while in school.

It is therefore, necessary to investigate appropriate career decision making among university students: a panacea to high dropout and insecurity among students.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to investigate appropriate career decision making among university students: a panacea to high dropout and insecurity among students. Specifically, the study determined the;
1. factors that led to the career decision making among students
2. challenges facing career decision making among students
3. strategies for appropriate career decision making among students

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions
1. What are the factors that led to the career decision making among students?
2. What are the challenges facing career decision making among students?
3. What are the strategies for career decision making among students?

Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of students at all levels on factors that led to the choice of course of study

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H_{o2}: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on factors that led to the choice of course of study.

H_{o3}: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna and Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida University (IBBU) Lapai students on factors that led to the choice of course of study.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The survey covered two Universities in Niger State, Nigeria, FUT Minna, and IBBU Lapai. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was designed to gather the data used to answer the research questions of the study, while an interview was conducted to support the questionnaire. The validated questionnaire was trial tested to establish the degree of internal consistency of the questionnaire. The data generated were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha to ascertain the internal of the instrument and the extent of homogeneity of the items. The reliability coefficients obtained for all the sections were as follow; cluster A, 0.87; Cluster B, 0.82; Cluster C, 0.92. The reliability coefficient for the entire 33 items questionnaire was determined to be 0.86. Mean, and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z- test and One – way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses to determine the significant difference at the 0.05 level of significance.

Decisions on the research questions were based on the resulting means score interpreted relative to the concept of real lower and upper limits of numbers, as shown in Table 1. The standard deviation was used to decide on the closeness or otherwise of the respondents to the mean in their responses. Any item with a standard deviation of less than 1.96 indicated that the respondents were not too far from the mean or one another in their responses and any item having standard deviation equal or above-stated value signified that respondents were too far from the mean. Decisions on the hypotheses were based on comparing the significant value with ($P=.05$) level of significance. Where the significance value is equal or greater than ($P >.05$) level of significance, the hypothesis is upheld, while less than ($P < .05$), it was considered rejected. Levene's test of homogeneity of variances is carried to test for similarity.

Table 1: Interpretation of Four Point Scale

S/N	Scale of Research Question	Point
1	Strongly Agreed	3.50 – 4.00
2	Agreed	2.50 – 3.49
3	Disagreed	1.50 – 2.49
4	Strongly Disagreed	0.50 – 1.49

Results

Research Question 1: What are the factors that led to the career decision

Table 2: University Students Opinion on Factors that Led to Course of Study and its Ranking

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remark	Ranking
1	My secondary education teachers' influence	3.52	0.08	SA	5th
2	Family influence	3.74	0.54	SA	1st
3	Peer influence	3.42	0.89	A	6th
4	My interest	3.36	0.32	A	7th
5	Financial constraints	3.57	0.07	SA	4th
6	Influence of social media	3.11	0.65	A	8th
7	I am limited to my course of choice by my grades	3.67	0.76	SA	2nd
8	Experience from the previous job	2.45	0.55	D	12th
9	I am limited to the course of choice due to catchment areas	2.09	0.89	D	14th
10	My low performance in the previous course of study	2.18	0.01	D	13th
11	Poor career information	3.61	0.03	SA	3rd
12	Competitiveness of choice course	2.96	0.43	A	9th
13	The prestige attached to the job by society	2.56	0.21	A	11th
14	Job prospect	2.76	0.30	A	10th

Table 2 revealed that the average mean of the respondents revealed that they strongly agreed with five items with mean points arranges from 3.52-3.74, they agreed with six items having means from 2.56 – 3.42 and Disagreed with three items having mean ranges from 2.09 – 2.45. In the ranking categories, the family influence was ranked 1st; item 7 ranked 2nd, item 11 ranked 3rd and so on. The standard deviation of 14 items ranges from 0.01 - 0.89 each of these values was less than 1.96, indicated that the respondents mean scores were not too far from each other and were close to one another in their responses. This adds value to the reliability of the mean.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges facing career decision making among students?

Table 3: University Students Opinion on the Challenges Facing Career Decision Making among University Students

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Unseriousness of secondary education teachers	3.46	0.09	A
2	Family influence	3.57	0.23	SA
3	Peer influence	3.60	0.06	SA
4	Unavailability of the course in State	2.36	0.28	D
5	Financial constraints	3.59	0.01	SA
6	Influence of social media	2.65	0.56	A
7	Low UTME scores	3.75	0.34	SA
8	Inadequate career information	3.82	0.26	SA
9	I am limited to the course of choice due to catchment areas	2.24	0.19	D
10	My low performance in the previous course of study	2.47	0.12	D
11	Difficulties in admission	3.60	0.54	SA
12	Competitive nature of the course.	3.01	0.67	A

Table 3 shows that University students strongly agreed with five items ranges from 3.57 – 3.82, Agreed with three items having mean points from 2.65- 3.46 and they Disagreed with items 4, 9 and 10 as challenges facing career decision making among University students. The

standard deviation of 12 items ranges from 0.01 - 0.67 each of these values was less than 1.96, indicated that the respondents mean scores were not too far from each other and were close to one another in their responses. This adds value to the reliability of the mean.

Research Question 3: What are the recommended strategies for appropriate career decision making among University students?

Table 4: University Students Opinion on the recommended strategies for appropriate career decision making among University Students

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Effective career education in secondary education	3.66	0.45	SA
2	Good parenting style	3.56	0.29	SA
3	Adequate career information	3.87	0.03	SA
4	Flexibility in placing students in the course to study	3.45	0.01	A
5	Enhancing student's self-efficacy	3.86	0.01	SA
6	Teachers should ensure his or her subject is interesting	3.76	0.07	SA
7	Parents should not force wards for the course to study	3.51	0.62	SA

Table 4 revealed that respondents strongly agreed with six items ranges from $3.51 - 3.87$, Agreed with an item having mean points from 3.45. The standard deviation of 7 items ranges from 0.01 - 0.62 each of these values was less than 1.96, indicated that the respondents mean scores were not too far from each other and were close to one another in their responses. This adds value to the reliability of the mean.

Hypothesis 1

H_{o1}: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of students at all levels on factors that led to the choice of the course of study.

The result of the one – way ANOVA of the difference in the mean scores of the respondents on factors that led to the course of study is presented in Table 5. Levene's test of homogeneity of variances for the data was 0.09. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was met. Since the value is greater than the significant level of $(P>0.05)$, therefore, ANOVA can be used for analysis.

Table 5: One-way ANOVA of Mean scores of Respondents on Factors that Led to the Course of Study

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Group	130.65	4	32.66	1.33	0.75
Within Group	29301.44	1191	24.60		
Total	29432.09	1195			

Table 5 reveals that there was no significant difference $(P> 0.05)$ in the mean responses of the respondents. This implies that the students at all levels did not differ in their mean responses on factors that led to the course of study.

Hypothesis 2

H_{o2}: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students at on factors that led to the choice of the course of study.

Table 6: Z-test of Difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Students on Factors that Led to Course of Study

Student	Mean	S.D	N	df	Z	Sig (2 tailed)
Male	3.23	0.17	724	1193	-1.42	0.09
Female	3.11	0.09	471			

The result of the analysis presented in Table 9 indicated that there is no significant difference between the means of male and female respondents on factors that led to the choice of the course of study.

Hypothesis 3

H_{o3}: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of FUT Minna students and IBBU Lapai students on factors that led to the choice of the course of study.
The result of the test of significance in the mean responses of respondents on factors that led to the choice of the course of study is presented in Table 10.

Table 7: Z-test of Difference between the Mean Scores of FUT Minna Students and IBBU Lapai Students on Factors that Led to the Course of Study

Student	Mean	S.D	N	Df	Z	Sig (2 tailed)
FUT Minna Students	2.93	0.07	724	1193	-1.62	0.11
IBBU Lapai Students	3.05	0.03	471			

The result of the analysis presented in Table 10 indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of FUT Minna Students and IBBU Lapai Students on factors that led to the choice of the course of study.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of research question 1 revealed the family influences the choice of course of study, which later led to his or her career. The first contact of a child with people takes place within its home and among members of its family who include parents, siblings, and relatives. A child is affected by a number of family-related factors such as the marital relationship of the parents, the socio-economic status of the family, the atmosphere of the home (whether parents are warm or hostile), the environmental condition, occupational status of the parents and the number of siblings in the family (Bollu-steve & Sanni, 2013). Bollu-steve and Sanni (2013) averred that the family plays a vital role in the career readiness of the students. They conducted a study on the influence of family background on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria. It was found that supportive parents are essential for their children's career decision making and the success of their careers (Ehigbor & Akinlosotu 2016). Bollu-steve and Sanni (2013) opined that Nigerian parents influenced students' performance and eventual career choices. Family influences on career choices, the ranking of family influence as 1st is not coming as a surprise as the previous study revealed that, the ratios where parents were quite influential to their children's career choices.

Finding of research question 2 revealed the need to enhancing student's self-efficacy, because that will help the students develop interest, capabilities on the career. The outcome agreed with study carryout by Gushue (2006), which suggested that there was a relationship between self-efficacy and the ability to generate possible jobs. The study found that students' perceived that self-efficacy influenced their career abilities, interests, goals, and confidence to look for their desired career Finding revealed the influence of peers in career decision making. This agreed with the study that, career education which comes from peers and friends was influential in students' choices of careers (Ghuangpeng, 2011). Aguado, Laguadorm, and Deligero (2015) said the students interact with peers and friends; they share important information on career choices Student participants in this study revealed that peer advice on career guidance was helpful in their choices of careers. Students are more likely to accept

career advice from peers they trust than any other sources. Peer advice may clarify certain issues regarding careers. The study also revealed that friends give comprehensive and proper advice regarding careers in common language to perpetuate career information. Senior students at schools may share their experiences on career information that they received from their predecessors. They serve as confidants to their members. In most cases, they belong to the same social clubs where they share the same values and ideals. While, many educators considered peer groups to be an effective and powerful instructional strategy that can be used to develop academic as well as social skills in a peer group (Bankole & Ogunsakin, 2015).

The finding of research question 3 revealed that teachers' influence plays a vital role in students' career decision making, and teachers should ensure his or her subject is fascinating. The study agreed with Mtemeri (2017) which said teachers should exhibit knowledge of the subject area to the satisfaction of the students because they play a key role in future career of their students and in the absence of such knowledge, students are not inspired by such teachers. A teacher is a central point of learning in a classroom situation; this is because he decides how the classroom setting looks, they must work hard to make their lesson fascinating (Saba, Bukar, Raymond & Tsado, 2011). They further said that a student might like a particular subject very well, but because of the poor teaching method adopted by the teacher; such a student may lose interest in the subject. Secondary school educators often have a large influence on students' vocational choices.

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of students at all levels, genders and across all institutions on factors that led to the choice of course of study. The findings revealed that students in higher institutions faced similar challenges, when it has to do with career decision making. The findings also agreed with the study conducted by Ali (2014), that many students graduated from secondary education and entered into higher institutions needs appropriate guidance and counselling to into enable them fit into appropriate career that matched they ability because many were influenced into their course of study thereafter end up as dropout. The findings are in harmony with the study conducted Mtemeri, (2017) agreed that majority of the students were agreeable that the kind of information they received from peers, influenced them to choose the careers they wish to pursue and that peer influence was powerful in their choice of careers. The researcher further said that students also agreed that friends gave them comprehensive advice.

Conclusion
The main issues considered in this study revealed that the choice of course of study highly depended on family influence, closely followed by grade obtained in the examinations, poor career information, financial constraints, and secondary education teachers' influence. The study exposed the challenges students face in career decision making to include: family influence, low grade, inadequate career information, and difficulties in getting admission, among others. This led students to enter into the course of study, which they have no interest and ability to pursue. Consequently, since the interest and ability are not on the course of study, it may further lead to dropout and the implications of dropout may lead to social vices such as arm robbery, kidnapping, and others. But the good news is that when the recommendations are implemented, it may lead to appropriate career decision making among students and after that reduce the cases of students dropping out from the course of studies and invariably reduce social vices in Nigeria.

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Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and its implications, to reduce the rate of dropout among students and National security, the following recommendations are made;

1. Parents should be educated on career guidance skills to enable them to guide their wards properly career choice. The training of parents may increase their children's knowledge about different careers and appropriate career decision making. This training can be organized during the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meeting.

2. The students should be well educated on career, and career decision making through public enlighten campaigns in social media, excursions/industrial visit, career days. Career information can be given to students during orientation talks, linking the subjects they are offering to the job they aspire to take to later in life; this will help them make meaningful plans.

3. Subject teachers should ensure that their subject of teaching is made interesting to students. This will arouse their interest in the subject and have a good grade which will qualify them for admission. It will also help them make a career in the course or subjects combination

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