

DETERMINANTS OF SUBJECT AREA SELECTION AND THEIR IMPACT ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS

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INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that many of the students at various levels have been confronted with the issue of either subject or course choice. In many instances such choices are made from expressed interest verbally. In some schools, students are asked to write such choices and possibly to give reasons for their choices. After that such choices are not monitored to identify the performance despite the expressed interest by the students (Kolo, 2002). The influence of parents is one of the most persistent factors determining the child's interests in school. Not only do parents influence children attitudes towards school in general, but they have profound influence on their attitude towards the importance of education, towards studying, different school subject and towards his teachers and classmates.

The emphasis given to secondary education was perhaps because of its strategic position in any nation's educational system. Secondary education is seen as having both consumer and producer. Status with ability to determine not only the fate but also the pace of education at the primary and tertiary levels. The senior secondary school education (S.S.S) represents the third stage in the current educational system known as 9-3-4 which exposes the learner to as many disciplines as possible in the Junior Secondary School (J.S.S) and then allows them to make choices of subjects in the senior secondary school level (SSS). It is also stated that, the laudable aims and objectives of senior Secondary education as outlined in the National Policy on Education (2004:18) to prepare an individual for living within the society and for higher education coupled with the list of subjects in the curriculum to achieve such stated objective. Self-concept is the picture or image a person has of himself. It is the sum of what people believe to be true about them. Together with the importance they attach to those beliefs (Bala 2007). The student's personal attitudes towards education and learning have either positive or

negative impacts on subjects they offer. Interest is a gearing factor that pushes individuals to choose and aspire for certain subjects for the purpose of individual development. For instance, when pupils express lack of interest in a subject, it affects the way they react or listen to the teacher, thus influencing the academic achievement of the students. Socio economic status of parents are equally contributory factor that impacts on the learner's choice on subject area selection. Parents especially the educated ones are known to dictate which subjects their children take regardless of the student's interest or potentials. The job prospect of subject related profession is closely related to why parents influence some of their children's choices. This to a large extent may be due to ignorance about how wide and how far knowledge in subjects could facilitate academic performance on different fields and professions.

Uche (1995) observed that in any classroom, some students come from well to do homes where they are well-fed and their various needs met to a large extent, while other come from economically deprived homes where the basic need for food cannot be assured. According to him, some Parents may place great values on education and emphasize on the need for hard work on a regular basis and offer helping hand and instruction. Yet others are nonchalant about the students and what they do at school. When parents show an interest in the child's schooling and pride in his achievements, the child usually lives up to his capacities. When parents are indifferent, the child is likely to be indifferent also while most parents, even if their own education has been limited, feel that their children should have good education (Cobb, 1992).

Problem Statement

The aims and objectives of subject area selection is to give a room for every student the opportunity to work towards the attainment and realization of their future, in line with these therefore, there is the need for proper Guidance. The achievements of these lies in the hands of Professional Counsellors, who are to impart knowledge as well as Counselling the students. The knowledge imparted on students is expected to bring an impact in their subject area selections Considering the rate of the current secondary school students performance at senior classes and their performance at tertiary levels of learning now a days in Sokoto Metropolis, it is an indicator that our education system need some adjustments. It became necessary to verify, what are the factors responsible for such for senior secondary students' poor performance in

their present and future learning. The list of secondary school subjects given are carefully selected to meet the national broad goals of education. A combination of secondary school subjects must be the foundation for a particular occupation in later life. Left unguided it has been observed that students are faced with the problem of indecision when they come to choose a subject as a result of differences in opinion from various angles. This problem has plagued many Nigerian secondary school students for quite some time. It is such a problem that must be looked into, knowing fully that the place of secondary education cannot be over emphasized in the educational development of a Nation.

Objectives of the Study

The research work will be guided with the following objectives:

1. To find out the relationship between self concept and subject area selection among students of senior secondary schools, in Sokoto metropolis.
2. To verify the relationship between interest and subject area selection among students of senior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis
3. To assess the connection between socio-economic status of parents and subjects area selection of students in senior secondary schools, Sokoto Metropolis.

Research Questions

The study is therefore designed to answer the following research questions:-

1. What are the relative effects of independent variables (self concept, interest and socio-economic status) on dependent variable (subject area selection) among senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.

Research Hypotheses

1. H_{01} : There is significant relationship between self concept and students subject area selection among senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.
2. H_{02} : There is significant relationship between interest and students subject area selection among senior secondary schools students in Sokoto metropolis.

3. H₀₃: There is significant relationship between Socio economic status of parents and students subject area selections among senior secondary schools students in Sokoto metropolis.

Significance of the study

If completed, findings of the study are expected to provide meaningful data which can be of benefit to educators, educational planners, teachers, counselors and other stakeholders. Such information could help in identifying some of the factors contributing to the educational attachment of students. It will help in identifying some of the barriers to learning In order to enhance quality in Educational delivery and student's performance. It is also assumed that the findings of the study would help in developing realistic parents' perception of their children's worth in relation to their potentials and participate in helping their children to attain their academic goals. Teachers will benefit greatly from the findings of this study as it will provide them with the necessary information on the relationship of self concept, interest, socio-economic status of parents and subject area selection of their students. This knowledge will enable them assist their students in order to have perfect choices. The study is also expected to provide assistance to the school counsellors on the various guidance services that can be used in the process of counselling students.

Scope and Limitations of the study

The study is concerned with only senior secondary school students (SS1) in Sokoto metropolis. The study will be delimited to public schools within Sokoto metropolis. Specifically the study will cover all the senior secondary schools within Sokoto metropolis. The age range of the respondents is between 15-18 years which consist of male and female students. The reason for chosen SSI students is because they have just chosen their subjects. Three variables are the concern of the study, which are: self concept, socio-economic status of parents, interest as the independent variables and subject area selection as the dependent variable.

Related Literature Review

The history of Nigerian educational system and programmes evidence show that certain schools are specifically meant to train people for peculiar type of subject combination. For instant, we have teachers colleges, commercial colleges, science technologies, universities and polytechnics. Each was designed to train people who would eventually

occupy different kinds of work and positions. Child (1981) explained that the level of education and success of school are widely used by employers as measure of potential competence in jobs. Similarly, the amount, quality of schooling, progress through school and certification are mostly used as criteria for suitability and placement into industry, occupation and education.

Okeke (1973) conducted research to find out if school subject actually shape the future career choice of learners. He found that over 90% of the sampled students indicated in clear and unequivocal manner that what they learnt in school conditional their choice of area of specialization, their pursuance of higher education and choice of career. While Denga undertook his survey to find out whether the type of school had any effect on career choice of students, the result revealed that students in vocational school such as technical, commercial and teachers college have chosen careers related to their training through there are some who deviated and indicated their desire to engage in occupations other than the ones they were trained for.

Making choices from an array of alternatives is an integral part of life. At various stages of life, individuals have to make some important decisions. Some of such decisions tend to have everlasting impacts on the individual. One of such delicate and life implicating decisions is the choice of school subjects at the senior secondary school level. It is one decision that tends to determine students' future educational and career progress. Some researchers have tried to identify a considerable number of factors influencing subjects' selection by students in secondary schools. Some literature reviewed identified many factors that are likely to influence students' subject selection including school policy, parental-will (Davis-Kean, 2005), peer influence (Addy and Biddulgh, 2001; Owoyele, 2007), academic ability, intelligence, age, sex, ignorance and accidental choice (Cooley and Comber, 2003). The contribution of each of these factors is still obscure and studies on the most likely positive determinant of school subject selection in terms of predicting students' success in future educational and career endeavors are still inconclusive.

Most parents are in the habit of determining virtually all academic decisions for their children. They choose the school to attend, the books to read and even the subjects to study in school (Owoyele, 1999). Parental education and social economic status seems to have an impact on

students' academic performance and subject selection (Davis-Kean, 2005). Many researchers have noted that the educational level of parents could be a predictor of the kind of subjects students will choose at senior class level based on experience and what they want their children to become in the later life (Kirk, 2000). It was observed that parents that are well-read and professional in different field could be better equipped to help children with the understanding of concepts behind each course or field a child is interested on than those with less-experience and qualifications.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This is a correlational study, which is a type of descriptive research that is concerned with determining or measuring the degree of relationship between two or more variables for the purpose of making predictions about relationships. A correlational study can be used to know if a relationship exists between variables but does not indicate causation (Salawu, 1994). The justification for adopting the correlational design for this study therefore is that, it permits one to measure a great number of variables and their inter-relationships simultaneously.

Population of the Study

The population of this study is made up of SSI students in senior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis. There are 28 senior secondary schools in the metropolis, the total population of SSI students in the metropolis is 24,356 (Research and statistics units Ministry of Education Sokoto, 2022)

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The research sample consists of SS 1 students from six purposively selected secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis. These schools comprise of boys only, Girls only and mix schools. Simple random sampling method was employed to select students from the targeted schools. Using Kreycie and Morgan (1970) table of determining sample size, 351 students were selected for the purpose of this research. The schools were selected using purposive sampling technique because all the schools are within Sokoto metropolis. The purposive selections of schools are found to be better through direct selection (Obasi, 1988).

Research Instruments

The research instrument was adopted from Akinboye (1985), Boyi (2011), Abubakar (2010) and Kolo (2002) and titled; Students Subject Area Selection and its Impact on Their Academic Achievement Assessment Questionnaire (SSASITAAAQ).

Validity of the Instrument

In order to validate this sub-scale Akinboye (1985), reported that test scores from the 30 items that survived an initial screening of the original 120 items was subjected to an internal consistency analysis. The co-efficient alpha was 0.75. He called this as an index of items homogeneity. A factor analytics procedure was then use to establish the construct of self - concept of the isolated factors in other words, to determine the validity of this sub-scale. The instrument was equality subjected to different research experts from Sokoto State University, Shehu Shagari College of Education and Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. Their corrections and inputs also made the instrument valid enough to measure what is was made to measure.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of this sub-scale was measured by the internal consistency method. According to Akinboye (1985), this was indicated by a fairly high co-efficient alpha of 0.874. Thus the current researcher adopted the validation and adopted the instrumentation for this study.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered by the researchers with the assistance of some teachers in the schools, using face to face direct delivery techniques in administration and collection of the questionnaires, so as to ensure significant return rate of completed questionnaires.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson product moment correlation co-efficiently 'r' statistics was used to analyze the data collected. The justification for using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient for the hypotheses was because these hypotheses are trying to look at relationship between two variables.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

H_{01} : There is significant relationship between self concept and students subject area selection among senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.

Table 1: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Reliability Index of the Relationship between Self Concept and Subject Area Selection of Students in Senior Secondary school in Sokoto Metropolis.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	r-Cal	ρ Value	Remarks
Self-Concept	351	102.50	18.521				
Subject Area Selection	351	3.11	1.241	349	.229	.000	S

From table 4.1 above it can be seen that the relationship between self-concept and subject area selection results in a higher calculated r – value of .226 against the ρ – value .000 at 349 degrees of freedom. Thus, the hypothesis is not accepted. This indicates that self-concept has relationship with the subject area selection of senior school students in Sokoto metropolis.

H_{02} : There is significant relationship between interest and students subject area selection among senior secondary schools students in Sokoto metropolis.

Table 2: Mean Score, Standard deviation and reliability index of the relationship between interest and subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	r-Cal	ρ -Value	Remarks
Interest	351	67.82	10.624				
Subject Area Selection	351	3.11	1.241	349	.208	.000	S

From table 4.5 above it can be seen that the relationship between interest and subject area selection results in a higher calculated r-value of .208 against the ρ -value of .000 at 349 degrees of freedom. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that interest has relationship with the subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.

H_{03} : There is significant relationship between Socio economic status of parents and students subject area selections among senior secondary schools students in Sokoto metropolis.

Table 3: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and reliability index of the relationship between Socio-Economic Status and Subject Area Selection of Students in Senior Secondary School Students in Sokoto Metropolis.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	r-Cal	p-Value	Remarks
Self-Concept	351	81.14	16.087				
Subject Area Selection	351	3.11	1.241	349	.003	.958	NS

From table 3 above it can be seen that the relationship between socio-economic status and subject area selection results in a lower calculated r-value of .003 against the p-value of .958 at 349 degrees of freedom. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that socio-economic status has no relationship with the subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The study investigated the relationship between self-concept, interest, socio-economic status and subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis. The following are the summary of major findings based on the three (3) hypotheses tested.

1. There is a significant relationship between self-concept and subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.
2. There is significant relationship between interest and subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.
3. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis one found a significant relationship between self-concept and subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto State metropolis. This is in agreement with the findings of Yakasai, (2000) who reports a significant relationship between students' academic self-concept and academic advancement, which according to him is consistent with other studies. He maintains that students with high academic self-concept mostly go for sciences and art courses rather than technical courses. It also agrees with the study of Franken (1994), in enhancing self-concept

retrieved that "It is the self-concept that gives rise to possible selves which in returns creates motivation for behaviour.

Furthermore, Gage and Berlimer (1992), in enhancing self-concept retrieved December (2000) stated that "level of school success, particularly over many years predict level of one's own ability". Since a strong and positive relationship exists between self-concept and subject area selection of secondary school students, it becomes necessary for parents and teachers to put in their best in supporting and encouraging the students to develop positive self-concept of themselves. This is because according to Tambuwal, (2000) self as being made up of perceptions, memories, value, attitude, interest, experience self-esteem, ideas, goals and ambition of a particular individual. He further stated that self is flexible not rigid so it can change as it assimilates experience and ideas. Muhammad (2007), also stated that an individual's performance is a function of his perception of the self. If an individual has a positive self-concept, he will motivated by the desire to desire to achieve since motivation is said to account for the differences in school performance beyond those resulting from cognitive factors. In contrast however Abubakar (2011) found out that there is no significant relationship between self-concept and subject area selection. Also, Abida (2010) found out that there is no significant relationship between self-concept and subject area selection.

Hypothesis two found a significant relationship between interest and subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis. This is in agreement with the work of Sosanya (1980), he concluded that there is a significant relationship between interest and subject area selection of students. The result indicated that interest, proved itself to be favourable associated with academic performance. It also agreed with findings of Adedeji (2007), and Ajiboye (2006), they all concluded that there is a significant relationship between interest and subject area selection because according to Ablard (1997), success or failure of students depends on their intelligence as a great determinant of their choice/selection of subject area. hence the academically gifted mostly goes for science related subjects, simply because they have a high level of intelligence that will enable them cope with high computational demand of the science related subjects. Also, those that are less gifted normally choose less demanding subjects like Arts, etc. Since a strong and positive relationship exist between interest and subject area selection

teachers should make effort towards giving students aptitude test on computational, verbal, abstract reasoning, special aptitude test so as to predict their level of interest in their studies and to help them where necessary. Contrary to this view Anwana (1977) concluded an investigation on interest and subject area selection of secondary school students and concluded that there is no significant relationship between interest and subject area selection.

Hypothesis three found no significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis. The results is supportive or earlier studies by Denga, (1975) and Ibrahim (2010) Denga conducted his study in Zaria while Ibrahim conducted his study in Kano State of Nigeria and their findings revealed no significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and subject Area selection. This implies that teachers need to make an effort to help students to understand the school curricula and extra curricula experiences, in other to help the students to develop an insight into their abilities and weaknesses; they should be able to develop ideas about who they are and what they would like to be. In contrast however, Mkpa (1986) opined that the position of the parent in one society sometimes influence students whereas some illiterate parents do not consider any subject were important than the other and the student from such parents could not be influenced to choose any particular subject of the study. Teachers should realize that the way an individual sees himself would go a long way to affect his choice of subject area. Barnes (1978) and Campbell (1965) for instance, concluded that individual's achievements are function of their perception of the self and that any individual is motivated by a need to achieve at a level which is consistent with his current self-perception.

According to Francisco (2000) self-concept influence how a person feels, how he or she thinks, learns value himself or himself, relates to others and ultimately, how he or she behaves. Self -concept includes both descriptive and evaluation aspects of an individual. While Omoluabi in Olowu (1990) defined self-concept to be characteristics inherent in the personality of every individual. Dreger (1998) in Kamba (2009) noticed that when self-concept is positive, children develop such traits as self-confidence, self-esteem and that ability to see themselves realistically. On the other hand, when the self-concept is negative, children develop feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. They are uncertain and lack self-

confidence. This leads to poor personality as well as socio adjustment. Teachers need to encourage and support students to develop and improve their children develop feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. They are uncertain and lack self-confidence. This leads to poor personality as well as social adjustment. Teachers need to encourage and support student to develop and improve their self-concept.

CONCLUSION

The study having examined the relationship among self-concept, interest, socio-economic status of parents and subject area selection of senior secondary school students. The study concluded that, senior secondary school students does not have any consideration for their self concept while self while selecting their subject areas. Senior secondary school students used to select their subject areas base on their personal interests without any consideration. This leads to the conclusion that teachers and other stakeholders in education should device means of assisting each student to understand their potentials, qualities deficiencies and capacities so as to make appropriate decisions for themselves. There is no connection or link between parent socio-economic status and students subject area selection at secondary school. This entails that teachers should consider learners perception of themselves in planning and development of their selection of subject areas in different stages.

Therefore, this study concluded that since significant positive relationship exist between the variables and that socio-economic status has no or little correlation with subject area selection of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis, therefore, all stakeholders should put in their best to enhance positive self-concept of student. Teachers should realize that a high level possession of self-concept by students will not only lead to perfect selection of subjects but will also build qualities, values and relationships on individuals and to enable them to be descriptive of themselves as they perceives data concerning their identity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers should put in their best to enhance continuous positive self-concept to students.
2. Teachers and counselors should mount fresh programmes that will assist students at senior secondary level to understand themselves better so as to make judicious use of their potentials when making their choice of subject area.

3. Parents should endeavor and strive to meet their children's educational needs such as books, toys, pocket money and other requirements for education, because all students need such support and encouragement to be able to perform well.
4. Since self-concept is found to be a better predictor of subject area selection individual students right from primary, secondary up to tertiary institutions should be encouraged to understand the self-concept of themselves. Also, educational and vocational guidance should be incorporated in the curriculum of senior secondary schools where students are precisely guided on subject combination and the prospects of such subject combination for realistic choices.

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