

## THE STUDY OF PEER PRESSURE AND PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON THE CHOICE OF CAREER AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE

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### Abstract

*The study investigated parental influence and peer pressure on the choice of career among secondary school students in Sagamu Local government Area of Ogun State. Three research questions were raised and tested during the course of the study. 125 randomly selected participants from selected Junior Secondary Schools in Sagamu Local Government Area formed the sample size. The research instrument tagged "Scale of Parental and Peer Influence on Career Choice (SPPCC) was developed by the researcher to collect data from the participants. The data collected were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation for the research questions. The findings indicated that parents and peer exert influence on their wards' career choices, but parental influence predominates mostly. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that parents should be counseled and orientated about the advantages of allowing their wards choose the careers they have interest in.*

**Keywords:** *Peer Pressure; Career Choice; parental influence*

### Introduction

Education is universally recognized as the answer to socio-economic problems of the world. Nations and individuals look up to education to provide a cure for poverty, ignorance, drought, flood, mental deficiency, joblessness, bad governance among other things. Every nation of the world aspires toward quality of life and high social status. A lot of students in secondary schools believe that their future is a glorious adventure in which they are bound to succeed. Many of these students have the idea that they would be able to work in public or private establishments as soon as they complete secondary school education. Some have planned to become lawyers, engineers, medical doctors, accountants, and so on. The choice of career is therefore a delicate issue that requires caution and serious considerations.

The choice of career a young adult makes is considered to be a major turning point in his/her life. The decision made has a great potential of opening the door of success or closing the door of opportunity for the individual. It might look as if it is the individual's choice to choose of career he or she wants, but, it has been found out that there are several factors responsible for the choice of career an individual make. Borchet (200) observed that factors such as the students' immediate environment, opportunities available to the students and the student's personality affect the choice of career among students. Kniveton (2004) in his research on influences on which students based their choice of career found out that students report that parents have the greatest influence on which career they choose. Many adults underestimate their children's intuitive capabilities to choose a career for themselves (Jacobsen, 2009). Poulter (2006) also found out that children have a non-stop camera running in their mind, recording any and all behaviours, comments, and attitudes of their parents. They watch their parents beliefs and attitudes to work, their motivation to succeed. Most of this is unconsciously imbibed as children and adolescents which later affect their choice of career. In fact, children as young as five years old begin to identify with the occupation of their mother or father (Havighurst, Harley & Prior, 2004). According to Keller (2004), the most important parental influence to a student's choice of career include attitude and behaviour the parents reward of punish, approve or disapprove of, the expectation

parents have for their children's education and career, the examples they set for their children, the values they show to their family, friends and to the society, the opportunities they offered their children to learn and develop themselves, and the kind of parent-child relationship they develop.

The interaction between parents and their children often times form the basis of their career choice. Williams (2016) notes that if parent's job give them great satisfaction or provide a comfortable lifestyle, children see the perks early and may favour these careers over others. On the contrary, if parents complain about their job or struggle to support the family on the income their job provide, children are more likely to seek more fulfilling or higher paid jobs.

Peers are also seen as another strong factor that might influence students in their career choice. Salami (2006) pointed out that many Nigerian youths make wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, or as a result of reputation attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling. In school, the socialization process is overtaken by peers from the parents with the selection and adoption of lifestyle, appearance, social activities and academics (Sebald, 1992). Likewise, Han & Li (2009); Zimmerman (2003) found out that potential friends and peers are potential sources of positive relations towards education, job search and even joining a social or political organization. Also some friendship can lead to negative influence.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Unemployment rate in Nigeria has continued to be on the increase despite the abundant human and natural resources the country is endowed with. Each year, thousands of graduates are turned out of Nigerian higher institutions with no job available for them. The large number of youths who are unemployed is capable of undermining the democratic process as they might constitute a serious threat to the peace and security of the country if engaged by the political class for criminal activities. This unemployment issue could be traced to wrong choices of career. Many of them while in secondary schools made career choices due to influence of friends, demands of their parents and wrong counsels not minding their natural strengths and talents. In view of this, there is therefore the need to study the influence of parents and peer pressure on the choice of career among secondary school students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

- To find out the influence of parents on the career choice of selected junior secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State.
- To find out the influence of peer pressure on the career choice of selected junior secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relative effect of parent influence on the career choice of selected junior secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State?
2. What is the relative effect of peer influence on the career choice of selected junior secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State?
3. What are the joint effect of parental and peer influence on the career choice of selected junior secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State.

**Methodology**

Research Design: The study adopted the descriptive research design.

Population of the Study: The population comprised all the students in the junior secondary schools in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State. There are 20 junior secondary schools in Sagamu Local Government Area.

Sampling and Sampling Technique: The simple random sampling technique was used to select five schools from the 20 junior secondary schools while multistage sampling method was used to select 25 students from each school. The total number of students that formed the sample size was therefore 125.

Research Instrument: The instrument used for the study is a self-developed research instrument named: Scale of Parents’ and Peer Influence on Career Choice (SPPICC). SPPICC has two sections: Section A contained the biodata of participants such as age, sex and class while the section B was structured using Likert four point rating scale.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument: The face and content validity of the instrument was carried out by experts in the field of counseling. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test-retest method at an interval of two weeks. The reliability coefficient of the instruments is 0.75 which is relatively high.

**Results**

Research Question1: What is the relative effect of parental influence on the career choice of selected junior secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State?

**Table 1**

	ISSUE RAISED	RESPONSES			
		SA	A	D	SD
1	My parent’s occupation greatly influences my choice of career	60(60.0%)	15(15.0%)	7(7.0%)	18(18.0%)
2	It is important that I continue my family’s business	55(55.0%)	12(12.0%)	23(23.0%)	10(10.0%)
3	my parents have nothing to do with my choice of career	13(13.0%)	7(7.0%)	36(36.0%)	44(44.0%)
4	my parents have a say in my choice of career	35(35.0%)	30(30.0%)	20(20.0%)	15(15.0%)
5	I do not want to have anything to do with my parents’ line of work	12(12.0%)	28(28.0%)	35(35.0%)	25(25.0%)
6	I want to continue my parents’ legacy by continue their career	35(35.0%)	30(30.0%)	20(20.0%)	15(15.0%)
7	I want to choose a career that will impress my parents	28(28.0%)	35(35.0%)	18(18.0%)	19(19.0%)

Table 1 shows that 75.0% of the respondents agreed that their parents’ occupation greatly influences their choice of career, 25.0% of the respondents disagreed to this. This infer that parental occupation influences their choice of career.

The study showed that 67.0% of the respondents were of the perception that it is important they continue their family business, while the remaining 33.0% of the respondent were of a different perception. Hence, a conclusion could be made that most of the students want to continue their family business.

It was discovered from the study that 20.0% of the respondents agreed that their parents have no say in their choice of career, while 80.0% of the respondents disagreed to this. This infers that parents contribute to the career choice of the students.

The study showed that 65.0% of the respondents were of the perception that their parents have a say in their choice of career, while the remaining 35.0% of the respondents were of a different perception. Hence a conclusion could be made that their parents have a say in their choice of career.

It was discovered from the study that 40.0% of the respondents agreed that they do not want to have anything to do with their parents' line of work, while 60% of the respondents disagreed. This infers still that the respondents want to do with their parents' line of work.

The study showed that 65.0% of the respondents were of the perception that they want to continue their parent's legacy by continue their career, while the remaining 35% of the respondents were of a different perception. Hence, a conclusion could be made that they want to continue their parent's legacy by continue their career.

It was discovered from the study that 63.0% of the respondent agreed that they want to choose a career that will impress their parents, while 37.0% of the respondents disagreed to this. This infers that the respondents want to choose a career that will impress their parents.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relative effect of peer influence on the career choice of selected junior secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State?

**Table 2**

	ISSUE RAISED	RESPONSES			
		SA	A	D	SD
1	I will like to take up a career based on the career choice of my friends	60(60.0%)	15(15.0%)	7(7.0%)	18(18.0%)
2	My friends have no direct say on what I choose as a career	13(13.0%)	7(7.0%)	36(36.0%)	44(44.0%)
3	My socialization with friends determines my choice of career	55(55.0%)	12(12.0%)	23(23.0%)	10(44.0%)

From table 2 above, 75.0% of the respondents agree that they will like to take up a career based on the career choice of their friends, 25.0% of the respondents disagreed to this. This infers that they will like to take up a career based on the career choice of their friends.

It was discovered from the study that 20.0% of the respondents agreed that their friends have no direct say on their career choice, while 80% of the respondents disagreed to this. This infers still that friends have a direct say on their career choice.

The study showed that 67.0% of the respondents were of the perception that socialization with friends determines their choice of career, while the remaining 33.0% of the respondents were of a different perception. Hence, a conclusion could be made that their socialization with friends determines their choice of career.

**Research Question 3:** What are the joint effects of parental and peer influence on the career choice of selected junior secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State?

**Table 3**

	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSES			
		SA	A	D	SD
1	My parents and friends has an influence on my career	60(60.0%)	15(15.0%)	7(7.0%)	18(18.0%)
2	If my parents are not interested in a career choice, my friends may prompt me to pick that career	13(13.0%)	7(7.0%)	36(36.0%)	44(44.0%)
3	If my friends are not interested in a career choice, my parents may prompt me to choose the career	55(55.0%)	12(12.0%)	23(23.0%)	10(10.0%)

The study showed that 75.0% of the respondents were of the perception that both their friends and parents have an influence on their career choice, while the remaining 25.0% of the respondents were of different perception. Hence, a conclusion could be made that parents and peers have an influence on the choice of career. It was discovered from the study that 20.0% of the respondents agreed that if their parents are not interested in a career choice, their friends may prompt them to pick that career, while 15% of the respondents disagreed to this. This infers that if their parents are not interested in a career choice, their friends may not be able to prompt them to pick that career.

The study also showed that 67.0% of the respondents were of the perception that if their friends are not interested in a particular career choice, their parents may prompt them to choose that particular career, while the remaining 20.0% of the respondents were of different perception. Hence, a conclusion could be made that parental influence on career choice is far stronger than peer influence on career choice.

### Discussion of Findings

From the result, it was discovered that the career of some of the parents influence the choice of career of some of the students. They tend to follow their parents' career pathway. This finding corroborates William (2016) research work. He found out that if the parent's jobs give them great satisfaction or provide comfortable lifestyle, children see the perks early and may favour these careers over others.

In fact, parents tend to create the strongest impression on their adolescent's vocational choice more than any other group including counselors, teachers, friends, or even people working in the identified occupation of desire (Bardick, Bernes, Magnusson & Witko, 2004). The findings also show that socialization with friends affects the choice of career of secondary school students. Hans & Li (2009) also reiterate this in their work. They found out that potential friends and peers are potential sources of positive relations towards education, job search and even joining social or political organization. The joint effect of parental and peer influence on career choice of secondary school students show that parents influence has more influence on their career choice than peer influence. This probably could be because socialization starts from the home environment and a basic bond would have been formed at home between the parents and their children before going to school to form another bond with friends. The basic bond tends to be stronger most times which make them see their parents as role model worthy of emulation.

### Conclusion

The choice of career for a student is one of the most important decisions such a child would make, although, this decision is always affected by many factors around such child. These factors range from the child's interest, ability academically, the environment such child grew in, peer influence and parental influence. Parents have a way of influencing their child's career choice consciously or unconsciously, therefore, it is important for parents to create an environment at home where the child can explore and utilize his/her abilities thereby getting to know his/her area of interest in terms of career instead of just towing the line of the parents blindly.

### **Recommendations:**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Parents should provide an enabling environment for exploration at home to help the child discover himself or herself
- Parents should allow their children make their own career decision and encourage them.
- Guidance counselors should be involved in guiding students to choose rightly their future careers. The counselors should be allowed to counsel both parents and students on the advantage of choosing rightly by the students.
- All secondary school should have school counselors to help the students in making the right career choices.

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