

Relationship between Occupational Self-Concept and Career Interest among Senior Secondary School Students in Suleja Educational Zone of Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research work investigates the relationship between occupational self-concept and career interest among senior secondary school students in Suleja educational zone of Niger State. The study mainly focused on two occupational environments which constitute the two components of this study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The sample size of this study comprises of 170 respondents; out of which 92 respondents were majored in outdoor occupational environment while 78 were majored in mechanical occupational environment. Modified Version of Occupational Self-Concept Scale and Vocational Interest Inventory were used for data collection. Two hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance. Results of the analysis revealed among other that significant negative relationship existed between mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest among senior secondary school students in Suleja educational zone of Niger State. Based on the findings the researchers recommended among other that guidance counsellors and teachers should help to improve students' mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest most especially those students majoring in mechanical occupational environment by helping them see how mechanical occupational self-concept is connected to mechanical career interest during counselling and teaching.

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Introduction

Self-concept is a popular psychological variable which captivates the mind of many researchers in the field of psychology. Self-concept is a characteristics feature that human beings recognized and expressed themselves with by using personalized terms like “I, me, my, myself” which signify the awareness of oneself as distinct from others. It is this awareness of one’s self or self-perception otherwise known as self-concept that makes each individual to react and respond to situations in distinct ways (Duane in Kagu and Mohammed, 2007). Individuals who are otherwise similar feel differently about themselves and this suggests that people behave in ways that are consonant with their self-concept. Mohammed (2008) sees the self as a composite of thoughts and feelings which constitute a person’s awareness of his individual existence. Bukoye (2010) defined self-concept as a combination of all thoughts and feelings that a person has about himself or how he pictures himself. Both the physical and psychological dimension of self makes up the self-concept. Sternberg (2005) considers self-concept to consist of three components namely: cognitive domain (person’s knowledge about his real self), effective domain (person’s feelings about himself and evaluation of his own behaviour or abilities) and behavioural domain (when a person behaves in ways he wants others to regard him). Occupational self-concept is an aspect of self-concept which refers to the way individuals view, perceive and rate themselves in relation to various occupational activities such as outdoor, mechanical, computational, scientific, persuasive, artistic, literary, musical, social service and clerical. Therefore, the way individual perceives and rates himself/herself occupationally may influence his/her career interest, for instance, if an individual viewed, perceived and rated himself/herself high in artistic occupational activities may influence positively in his/her interest towards artistic occupations and vice versa.

Career interests have been defined by many researchers such as Fortune (2011) who says the word ‘interest’ is a term used very often in our day to day life. It may appear to be a very simple term, but it is quite difficult to define and interpret. Interest is an orientation towards certain objects, activities and expressions. It is an expression of our likes and dislikes or attractions and aversions. Interest decides if we would be attentive to a particular stimulus or not. He further described that career or vocational interests reflect individuals’ choices in engaging in tasks and activities of their choices. Balogun (2006) described interests as attitudes that reflect stable personality traits.

Super as cited by Mohammed (2008) believed that career choice and development is essentially a process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept in the world of work. Super stressed that self-concept played significant role in students' career interest and choices. And by choosing a career according to him one is implementing his/her self-concept. Holland (2000) believed that persons obtain satisfaction in performing the particular kind of work activity that closely fits their personality. Holland postulates that individuals reveal much of their personalities through the choices of occupation they made. Holland's theory is based on the notion that an individual's personality characteristics and his/her occupational environment should correspond. Holland believes that there is a relationship between the personality type and suitable working environment. Otta and Williams (2012) stressed that, both self-concept and career interest are function of each other.

Egwuchukwu (2003), Peng (2007), Asika (2011) and Nasir and Lin (2013), discovered in their studies that significant relationship existed between artistic vocational self-concept and vocational choices among senior secondary school students; significant relationship existed between persuasive vocational self-concept and vocational choices among senior secondary school students; significant relationship existed between outdoor vocational self-concept and vocational choices among senior secondary school students; significant relationship existed between scientific vocational self-concept and vocational choices among senior secondary school students and significant relationship existed between computational vocational self-concept and vocational choices among senior secondary school students. Otta and Williams (2012) studied relationship between self-concept and vocational interest among senior secondary school students and found that significant relationship exists between students' self-concept and vocational interest. The results further revealed that those adolescent students with high self-concept and high vocational interest turned to direction of scientific, clerical, persuasive, social services, literary and computational vocational interest areas, whereas those students with low self-concept and low vocational interest turned to outdoor, mechanical, artistic and musical.

Statement of the Problems

Career is an important issue in the life of an individual as it influences one's general life. It determines both the economic and social status of the entire family. As such, there is the need for an individual student to have adequate knowledge of him/herself as well as current information on various occupation/careers before making a career choice. Unfortunately

today, due to lack or inadequate professional career guidance counsellors in our schools, students are ignorant about career choices; many Nigerian adolescents have unrealistic ideas about career to choose in life. This is because it is common to find students who are only good at Arts subjects but wanting to read Medicine or Engineering. It was also observed that through interaction, some senior secondary school students are found indicated their interest to take to career such as medicine, law, pharmacy, engineering, accountancy, psychology and so on without a single thought of the congruence between their career interest and occupational self-concept (Kagu and Mohammed, 2007). These are pointers to the fact that most secondary school students in Nigeria lack adequate information about their self-concept and the information in the world of work available (Mohammed, 2008).

Based on this, the study investigated the relationship between occupational self-concept and career interest among senior secondary school students in two occupational environments (outdoor and mechanical).

Objectives of the Study

The study set out to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between outdoor occupational self-concept and outdoor career interest among senior secondary school students;
2. To examine the relationship between mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest among senior secondary school students.

Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested.

1. There is no significant relationship between outdoor occupational self-concept and outdoor career interest among senior secondary school students.
2. There is no significant relationship between mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest among senior secondary school students.

Significance of the Study

It has been a common practice among parents/guardians, teachers and society in general to make occupational choice for students and this is hazardous to both students and even the society. In line with this, the researchers' hopes that the findings of this study will provide vital

information that will enable parents, guardians, teachers and others to realize the importance of occupational self-concept in relation to career interest/choice, and also see reasons why they should allow their children or students to choose careers that correlate with their occupational self-concept. This will in turn minimize or even eliminate the problems of dissatisfaction, unproductive and failure in imposed career.

Methodology

This study adopted Correlational design to examine relationship between occupational self-concept and career interest among senior secondary school students in Suleja educational zone of Niger state. The population of this study comprises of all public senior secondary schools students across Suleja educational zone of Niger state. According to the statistical data, about senior secondary school students, which was obtained from Niger State Ministry of Education, Minna (2016) there are eighteen thousand, eight hundred and ninety seven (18,897) students. The size of the sample selected for this study comprised a total of one hundred and seventy (170) respondents which were selected through multi-stage sampling technique. Out of this 170 respondents, 92 were majored in outdoor occupational environment while 78 respondents were majored in mechanical occupational environment. These two occupational environments (outdoor and mechanical) formed the two indices or components of this study. The researcher used multi-stage sampling techniques in order to obtain more accurate representation, and to address the different characteristics of the entire population. In this case, Suleja educational zone was divided into five according to the local government areas that constituted the zone (Gurara, Suleja, Tafa, Lapai and Munya respectively); and one public senior secondary school was randomly picked from each local government area to participate in the study. In each sample school, participants were selected randomly but proportionately, out of which a sample of the respondents for the study were obtained.

However, the two instruments used for this study were Modified Version of James Rounds Occupational Self-Concept Scale (MVJROSCS) by Rounds (2008) of which the reliability coefficient of the scale was: mechanical 0.76 and outdoor 0.82, and Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) by Bakare (1977) which was used for the collection of data about students' career interest and the reliability coefficient was: mechanical 0.84 and outdoor 0.71. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The hypotheses formulated in this study were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistics.

Hypothesis 1 There is no significant relationship between outdoor occupational self-concept and outdoor career interest among senior secondary school students in Suleja educational zone of Niger state.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis between Outdoor Occupational Self-concept and Outdoor Career Interest of Senior Secondary School Students

Variables	No	Mean	SD	r	df	P-Value
Outdoor occasional self-concept	78	79.310	12.699			
Outdoor career Interest	78	75.551	13.114	0.700**	760.00	

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 above revealed that correlation index r value is 0.700; degree of freedom 76 and P-value of 0.000. This result showed that correlation is significant, because P-value is lower than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between outdoor occupational self-concept and outdoor career interest among senior secondary school students in Suleja educational zone of Niger state is hereby rejected. This result indicated that significant positive relationship existed between outdoor occupational self-concept and outdoor career interest among senior secondary school students majoring in the outdoor occupational environment. This implies that the higher the outdoor occupational self-concept, the higher the outdoor career interest and vice versa.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest among senior secondary school students in Suleja educational zone of Niger state.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis between Mechanical Occupational Self-concept and Mechanical Career Interest of Senior Secondary School Students

Variables	No	Mean	SD	r	df	P-Value
Mechanical Occupational self-concept	92	86.262	14.714			
Mechanical Career Interest	92	41.786	13.114	-0.613**	90	0.000

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 above revealed that correlation index r value is -0.613, degree of freedom 90 and P-value is 0.000. This result showed that correlation is significant, because P-value was lower than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis two which states that there is no significant relationship between mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest among senior secondary school students in Suleja educational zone of Niger state is hereby rejected. This result showed that significant negative relationship existed between mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest among senior secondary school students majoring in mechanical occupational environments. This means that the higher the mechanical occupational self-concept, the lower the mechanical career interest of the senior secondary school students and vice versa.

Discussion of Findings

The study examines the relationship between occupational self-concept and career interest among senior secondary school students in Suleja educational zone of Niger state. The result from table 1 revealed that significant positive relationship exist between outdoor occupational self-concept and outdoor career interest among senior secondary school students majoring in outdoor occupational environment in Suleja educational zone of Niger state. Though, a great number of students who are majoring in outdoor occupational environment rated themselves high in both outdoor occupational activities and outdoor careers interest. A possible explanation for this finding could be that, most of these respondents are from semi urban and rural areas of which outdoor occupations such as farming, mining, marson etc. are common and practiced. This could be due to their observation and identification with adults that engaged in some of these outdoor careers which served as factors that influenced positively on the

responses of the respondents on outdoor occupational activities and outdoor career interest. Super as cited by Sharf (2006) asserted that vocational self-concept develop on the basis of children's observation and identifications with adults in work. He further explained that vocational self-concept requires a person to recognize himself/herself as an individual and to realize his/her similarities with others. Mohammed (2008) stressed that when an individual chooses a career or develops genuine interest for careers that confirmed with his/her self-image and ideal self, he/she is more likely to perform and function effectively in that career. He further explains that success in life is mostly associated with how successful one is in his/her career.

This finding however, agreed with findings of Nasir and Lin (2013) and Peng (2007), who examine the relationship between vocational self-concept and vocational choice of post-secondary school students and found that significant relationship exist between outdoor vocational self-concept and outdoor vocational choice of the students. These findings show the fact that self-concept played significant role in students' career interest and choice. And by choosing a career according to Super in Oluloye (2005) one is implementing his/her self-concept. Otta and Williams (2012) stressed that both self-concept and career interest or choices are function of each other. This finding disagreed with the finding of Oluloye (2005) who reported that negative relationship exists between outdoor occupational self-concept and career choice among students.

The results from table 2 revealed that significant negative relationship existed between mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest among senior secondary school students majoring in mechanical occupational environments. Oluwu (2005) asserted that Nigerian do not relate self-concept with vocation. And this might be due to partly, the traditional African set up and Nigerians like most Africans are more concerned with satisfying communal rather than self needs. He added that most Africans enter into career based on family or societal needs. When a person chooses a career or pushed into a career that conflicts with his/her occupational self-concept, problems are bound to occur. Sababa (2010) maintained that most parents are ignorance and illiterates who do not know much about vocational interest or career choice thereby pushed their children to choose career that suit their minds without considering their capabilities, self-concept and personality type. American Career Resource Network (2010) states that the counsellors and teachers should help to improve students' self-concept and vocational interest by helping them see how education is connected to vocation during counselling, teaching, workshop

or practical work at school. This findings however, confirmed the work of Egwuchukwu (2003), and Asika (2011) who investigated the relationship between vocational self-concept and vocational choice among students and found significant relationship existed between mechanical vocational self-concept and vocational choice.

The finding however, contradicted the study of Nasir and Lin (2013) who investigated relationship between vocational self-concept and vocational choice of students and found significant positive relationship existed between mechanical vocational self-concept and mechanical vocational choice. Also, studies carried out by Nworah (2000) and Peng (2007) revealed that significant positive relationship existed between mechanical vocational self-concept and vocational interest among the respondents.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that:

1. Outdoor occupational self-concept correlated positively with outdoor career interest, hence the result indicated significant positive relationship existed between outdoor occupational self-concept and outdoor career interest among senior secondary school students majored in the outdoor occupational environment.
2. Mechanical occupational self-concept correlated negatively with mechanical career interest, hence the result indicated significant negative existed between mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest among senior secondary school students majored in mechanical occupational environment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made

1. Guidance counsellors and teachers should help to motivate and encourage students most especially those that are on the right path of congruence between their occupational self-concept and career interest so that they will continue to maintain their right decision.
2. Guidance counsellors and teachers should help to improve students' mechanical occupational self-concept and mechanical career interest most especially those students majoring in mechanical occupational environment by helping them see how mechanical occupational self-concept is connected to mechanical career interest during counselling and teaching.

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