

SELF CONCEPT AND VOCATIONAL INTEREST AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (ADOLESCENTS)

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Self Concept and Vocational Interest among secondary school students in Ohafia Education zone of Abia State. Through purposive random sampling technique, a total of seven hundred and ninety nine (799) SS II students participated in the study. Instruments used in the study were Adolescent Personal Data Inventory (APDI) Akinboye (1985) and Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) Bakare (1977). Regression Analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Z-test statistics and Pearson Product Moment were used as statistical tools for data analysis. Moreso, frequency counts, percentages and rank were also used to analyze data. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between self concept and vocational interest. Those adolescents with high vocational interest turned towards scientific, literary, persuasive, computational and social services interest areas; whereas low vocational interest turned towards outdoor activities, mechanical, musical and artistic areas of interest. There was no significant difference between the male in their vocational interest. Implications of these findings were stressed. It was recommended among others that well-packaged seminars and workshops be organized regularly, including the school-based management committee in various schools to intimate parents, teachers and counsellors on self concept, interest and needs of the adolescents. Limitations of the study were highlighted and summary and conclusion drawn.

Keywords: Vocational Interest, self concept, adolescents, management committee

INTRODUCTION

Forcing students to read courses by parents, friends and some higher institutions has placed many of them jumping from one course to another. Many of the Nigerian students have neither the understanding of themselves nor the diversity of vocations of interest that are available as well as the necessary prerequisites for jobs. A number of the students manifest lack of interest in the vocation and ability to cope with the courses they are studying.

Hassan (2008) reported that many Nigeria Secondary Schools have incongruent patterns between the aspiration or no vocational interest and subject combinations for the school certificate examination. This is a pointer to the fact that most Nigerian adolescents lack adequate information about their self concept and the information on the world of work available and also manifest lack of interest (Arowolo, 2010). Furthermore, the growing need for vocational guidance in schools is based on the assumption that 'nobody can choose what he or she is not interested in or know nothing about'.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The system of education in Nigeria has failed abysmally to launch the nation to technologically advancement as envisioned by the Education policy makers. Many Nigeria students leaving secondary schools have neither the awareness of the diversity of occupation available nor the one to develop interest in. In most of these schools, there are insufficient counsellors to assist the students make

appropriate vocational decisions based on their interest and self concept. This is because self concept has been proved to affect occupational maturity (Natalie, 2006), occupational aspiration (Hassan, 2008) and motivation (Meyer, 1995). When learners lack interest, they may not cope with the courses they wish to read (Ahamadu Afu, 2010). This study therefore focuses on self concept in relation to vocational interest. (Direction of interest and on gender).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the level of self concept and vocational interest among secondary school adolescents.

Specifically, the study investigated:

- i. the level of self concept among secondary school students in Ohafia Education Zone of Abia State.
- ii. relationship between the level of self concept and vocational interest of these students.
- iii. Male and female self concept and vocational interest.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To guide the study, the following research questions were thrown:

- i. What is the level of self concept and vocational interest among secondary school students?
- ii. What direction are those with high self concept and high vocational interest over those with low self concept and low vocational interest?
- iii. What is the relationship of gender based on self concept and vocational interest?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested with 0.05 level of significance.

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between self concept and vocational interest among secondary school students.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference between those with high self concept and their vocational interest and those with low self concept and their vocational interest.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant difference between male and female self concept and their vocational interest.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Self is the combination of physical and psychological attributes that is unique to each individual (Shaffer, 2005). According to Shaffer, the self and social development are intertwined. The self develop through interactions and acquire information among people around the self to form the social self. This self require social cognition which Shaffer described as the thinking that people display about the thoughts, feelings, motives and behaviours of themselves and others. Shaffer agreed that this will lead the self to self-recognition. He added that the ability to recognize oneself coupled with the conscious awareness that "I" represents my own is self-recognition. The self recognition will help the adolescent to develop physical self concept, psychological self concept and academic self concept, and this in one way or the other, influence the vocational interest of the adolescent and promote the adolescent's self esteem.

To Hattie (2003) self esteem is the evaluation of one's self worth. Self concept, according to Rogers (1963), is the perception of one's self. It develops out of the organism's interaction within the environment. To Rogers, self concept develops as one's inherited potentials meet with the experience of everyday life. It may change as a result of maturation and learning.

Meyer (1995) described self concept as how a person view himself (self image) and how one will like others to view him (described self). To Kelly (2004), self concept is the awareness of one's attributes, judgements, and values in relation to one's behaviour, abilities and capabilities. This will help the adolescent to feel capable, likeable, adaptable and strong.

Self concept is influenced by environment and significant others. The environment may influence adolescents negatively or positively. When the environments of the home, school and society is conducive for the adolescents, they develop high, positive and healthy self concept (Okereke, 2006). In the home, it will attract self worth, self confidence and self esteem. Good communication, worthwhile experiences, will make adolescents look at adults as role models. To Okereke, lack of all these, coupled with poverty, alcoholism, marital problems, size of the family would affect the adolescent's self concept negatively.

In the school, good teacher/students relationship, availability of guidance counsellors, organized career talk, seminar, workshop, and accurate vocational information, would vocational interest (Balogun, 2006). But where they are lacking, Melgosa (2002) says, will cause the adolescent to be in total darkness. Denga (1998) posited that development of a healthy environment will promote good self concept of the adolescent at school. Hassan (2008) believes that self concept stability depends on the perceptual aspect which is organized by the cognitive processes.

The Super theory of self concept stated that an individual strives to implement the self concept by choosing a vocation of interest. By expression of their interest, character, feelings and needs are seen on that expected vocation. Conversely, Zakaria, (2005) investigated the self concept as motivation for vocational interest. Result indicated no significant differences in the opinion of students on motivation for self concept and vocational interest. arising from the finding was that students education has to be enriched and nourished for them to make realistic vocational interest.

Melgosa (2002) in the study of self concept and vocational choice, observed that proper vocational education will equip students to better vocational choice. Abam (1998) found in his study that there was also relationship of students' self esteem and their career desire. Balogun (2006) believes that accurate vocational information, seminar, career talk and workshop will promote high vocational interest. according to Denga (1998), vocational interests of the adolescents at school rest on teachers and counsellors.

Societal influence also plays social role on the adolescents' self concept and vocational interest. Nigerian society today are interested in the monetary gains people get, whether they get it in the right or wrong way (Ahmade, 2010). Many of the political opportunists are without good vocational knowledge, but rather are godfathers, contractors, whose brothers are in government and have made money without much effort. The society have high regard for such people and they help to influence the adolescents' vocational interest.

Vocational interest is related to the likeness one has for a particular job or vocation.

The interest need to be assessed, including the subject of interest, vocation of interest, work of interest and value of interest (Ekennia, 2011). According to Ekennia, no individual can perform any job well without any element of interest. Super (1957) in Nwamuo (2001) categorized interest into four levels thus:

- **Expressed Interest:** verbal stated preference.
- **Manifest Interests:** shown in deeds, or actions that can be objectively noted, but the interpretations is subjective.
- **Inventoried Interest:** use of questionnaire to elicit information on likes and dislikes vocation.
- **Tested Interest:** use of test results of acquired knowledge in certain areas in school work to know the peculiarities of the subjects.

According to Ukoha (2011), many factors have been blamed for the lack of interest in vocation. Parents today are preoccupied in money making; they have allowed the time they are supposed to be with adolescents to teach value and norms of the society to be spent on watching films and internet programmes. They have allowed their brains to be filled with chunks, leaving other important things of life. Ukoha asserts that environment plays about 50 percent role in influencing what an adolescent learns or becomes.

According to Shavelson and Stanton, one way to promote a healthy self concept is to give positive reinforcement on the things adolescents have done well will help them to recognize their own competence. But where the work by parents who are role models are delegated to house helps who are often children themselves, who imitates who? In the assessment of self concept, it is either normal, high or low. A normal self concept according to Huitt (2004) is an integrated person, creative and have self confidence, is stable and less anxious. Low self concept by Ugwuegbulam & Njoku (1998) feels rejected, feels shy, demoralized, timid and being hostile. The high self concept feels acceptable, self-worth, good looking, has desirable behaviour, handle social situations, respects and feel respected (Odoemelam, 1995). Omaka (2003) maintain that such behaviours like pride, arrogance and snobbery at times may be manifested by them. Udeanyi (2003) in a study of self concept in academic performance observed that females have high positive self concept and seem to have confidence and they see themselves as achievers, while males also have positive self concept similar to females' own.

Ukoha (2011) believes that forcing adolescents into courses and vocations they are not gifted for is not the best, but to find out what the adolescent is gifted for and encourage him or her. Mohammed (2004) found in his study that there is no significant relationship between students' self concept and parents' occupation. Adenubi (2008) found in his study that self concept is reflected in the way an individual sees himself. Adenubi maintained that the self concept and vocational interest of adolescents depend on how he or she perceive the experiences rather than the parent's type of occupation. With the knowledge of all these that affect self concept and all that are affected by self concept, one wonders the direction of effect on level of self concept and sex.

METHODS

The study was carried out in Ohafia Education Zone of Abia State of Nigeria. The population of the study comprises all the Senior Secondary School II (SS II) in Ohafia Education Zone of Abia State. The sample size of the study was ten (10) secondary schools selected from the region with seven and ninety nine (799) SS II students.

The choice of schools is by purposive sampling because a school that has its representatives of both sexes of the secondary school students were needed. The instruments used in the study were Self Concept Inventory (APDI) by Akinboye (1995). Section A – Adolescent Data Inventory with 30 likert scale questionnaires and Vocational Interest Inventory by Bakare (1987) with Sections A to J with ten (10) interest areas and 100 likert scale questionnaires.

These instruments were adopted. The reliability of the instruments were determined by test-retest method. For the validity, the content and construct validity were determined using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to correlate the ten interest areas.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher personally administered the instrument and also used research assistants. Regression Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Z-Test Statistic, Pearson Product Moment were used. Also Frequency Counts, Percentage and Rank were used to analyze the data collected.

Research Question I:

What is the level of self concept vocational interest among secondary school students in Ohafia Zone?

Table 1. Regression summary table showing the level of Self Concept and Vocational Interest

$$Y = 36.0 + 0.302x$$

Predictor	Coef	E.E Coef	T	P
Constant	35.987	1.679	21.44	0.000
x	0.301630	0.02624	11.49	0.000
S =	8.36885		R-Sq = 14.2% R-Sq (adj) = 14.1%	

Coef = Total average of students vocational interest y

$$= 35.987 = 36.0y$$

Coef. = Total average students self concept x

$$= 0.302x$$

T-calculated = 11.49

R-Sq = 14.2%

R Sq (adjusted) = 14.1%

S. Standard Error of Estimation = 8.36885.

The results in the table 1 above indicate that there is significant relationship between self concept and vocational interest. The total average of vocational interest $y = 36.0 + 0.302x$ which is the total average of the self concept. The self concept also accounted for a total of 14.2% of (r^2) on the vocational interest of the students.

The relationship of self concept on the vocational interest has t-calculated to be 11.49 while t-tabulated was 1.96 at the significance of 0.05.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 states:

What direction are those with high self concept and high vocational interest over those with low self concept and low vocational interest.?

From table 2, it can be seen that students have greater interest for scientific, clerical, persuasive, social, literary and computational, whereas students have least interest in outdoor, mechanical, artistic and musical vocational interest areas.

Table 2. Showing those with high self concept and high vocational Interest and those with low self concept and low vocational Interest

Vocational Interest	Frequency	Percentages	Rank
Outdoor	69	8.3855	8 th
Mechanical	66	8.2603	9 th
Computational	80	10.0125	5 th
Scientific	98	12.2653	1 st
Persuasive	92	11.5144	3 rd
Artistic	68	8.5106	7 th
Literary	78	9.7622	6 th
Musical	65	8.1352	10 th
Social Services	90	11.2641	4 th
Clerical	94	11.7647	2 nd
Total	799	100	

Research Question 3

What is the relationship of gender based on self concept and vocational interest?

Table 3. Statistical descriptive Z-test analysis of male and female students' self concept and vocational interest

Statistics	Male	Female	Z _{cal}	Level of sign.	Z _{tab}
Sample (N)	429	370	1.42	0.05	1.96
Mean	55.401	54.486			
Standard					
Deviation (SD)	8.665	9.424			

The result in table 3 above shows a total sample size of 799 with male respondents being 429 and their mean was 55.401 and the female was 370 with mean score to be 54.486. The standard deviation for male was 8.665 while the female was 9.424 . The Z-calculated was 1.42 and Z-tabulated was 1.96 showing no differences between the two.

The first Null Hypothesis States

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between self concept and vocational interest of adolescent secondary school students in the zone.

Using the table 1 of the Regression summary showing the relationship, the total variance accounted for the self concept was 14.2%. The t-calculated was 1.96 at significance level of 0.05, therefore Ho is rejected.

The Null hypothesis 2 States

There is no significant difference between those with high self concept and their vocational interest and those with low self concept and their vocational interest.

Data were subjected to Z-test statistical analysis on difference of two means of high self concept and the vocational interest and of low self concept and their vocational interest.

Table 4. Z-test analysis on difference of two means

Self Concept	No. of students (N)	Average (x)	Std Deviations	Z-cal	Level of Sign	Z-tab	Remark
High	532 (n ₁)	57.311 (x ₁)	7.886 (S ₁)				Reject Ho
Low	267 (n ₂)	50.389 (x ₂)	7.378 (S ₂)	10.313	0.05	1.96	There is significant difference

The result displayed in table 4.5 above shows that there is difference between the mean of the High self concept and the mean score of the Low self concept. As shown, in the Z-test analysis, the z-calculated is

10.313 while Z-tabulated at 0.05 level of significance is 1.96. This is showing that the Null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Self concept and vocational interest showed relationship.

1. There is a relationship between self concept and vocational interest
2. Those with high self concept and high vocational interest turned to a direction of scientific, clerical, persuasive, social services, literary and computational vocational interest areas, whereas those with low self concept and low vocational interest turned to outdoor, mechanical, artistic and musical.
3. Gender showed no difference in their self concept and vocational interest.

DISCUSSION

The study investigated self concept and vocational interest among secondary school students in Ohafia Education zone of Abia State of Nigeria. The discussion is presented in subheadings according to the summary of findings.

Self Concept and Adolescent Vocational Interest

It was found after the research question 1 with simple regression statistical analysis and analysis of variance, (ANOVA) that self concept contributed 14.2 percent to the vocational interest of adolescents in their choice of vocation. Super (1957) in Nwamuo (2001) categorized the level the interest will go in self concept for it to manifest into the implementation levels. According to Nwamuo, there will be stage the self will verbalize it, i.e. express level where verbal statements of hope are made. This will be followed by the stage of manifestation in action. The action is seen in the direction of academic performance and achievement to the stage of tested interest. Often, it has been inventoried through inventory stage. To Super, the adolescent now, is a master of the vocation of his interest area and will wish to implement his area of interest in the world of work.

Nwamuo (2001 and Agbe (2007) respectively added that healthy and conducive environment at home in school promote self concept and vocational interest. such environment create room for good self image and self confidence, congruency and positive self concept and vocational interest; whereas where they are lacking, according to Kagu & Mohammed (2007) and Agbe (2007) respectively, adolescents will suffer maltreatment, abuses, lack of confidence, aggressiveness and such reflections have been caused by unhealthy environment at home and school.

Denga (2007) and Sababa (2010) were of the opinion that school environment influences self concept and vocational interest. to them, improved school library, better and equipped laboratories and counsellors who may assist the adolescents to increase the awareness to answer the basic questions of life of whom they are, why they are there, where they go from there. The counsellor will give them the adequate information on the available world of works. Sababa (2010) maintained that most parents are illiterates who do not know anything about vocational interest or the vocations available. These create problems to most adolescents. This must have informed American Network (2010) to state that the counsellors and teachers should help to improve adolescents' self concept and vocational interest by helping them see how education is connected to vocation during counseling, teaching , workshop or practical work at school.

Level of Direction between Student Self Concept and Vocational Interest

Using table 2 of the interest areas, the analysis of frequency counts, ranks and percentages of students' performances were shown. Students with high self concept and vocational interest turned towards scientific, clerical persuasive, social service, literary and computational, vocational interest areas. The finding is in agreement with Arowolo (2010) who discussed in his studies that society has a general inclination to select group of vocations which are more prestigious than others.

Again, result displayed in table 4 of the differences between the mean score of high self concept and high vocational interest and low self concept and low vocational interest, the z-calculated showed 10.313 while the z-tabulated at 0.05 level of significant showed 1.96 showing that there was great differences. This generally showed that students show interest where they assume they will earn more money. Most of the adolescents' interest on such vocations like business, politics, law and medicine are viewed in line with Arowolo (2010). He asserted that in the present Nigeria, the adolescents would be influenced by the present politician who earn more money than any other profession in the labour market. Such political opportunists who earn more money have made the adolescents have high hope on such vocations.

Students prefer professions that have high monetary reward. According to Adenubi (2007) and Ahmed (2010), students have regard on highly monetary rewarding vocations. As a result, most of the "emergent contractors" whose fathers and godfathers are in political positions with the type of money they earn, lure those adolescents away from the academic and vocational interest.

Those with low self concept turned towards interest areas like artistic, musical, outdoor activities and mechanical interest areas. This situation could be as a result of what Idaron (2002) called "accidental factor"; a situation where university graduates will become taxi drivers and motor cyclists because there is no job. It could be as a result of this and also create low self concept. Some school leavers may form music gangsters to see that life is moving. Others, Idaron said, may become political touts and bodyguards.

Many parents and guardians, when they see the level of monetary reward from such politicians would insist that their adolescent students read or enter into such courses without minding their self concept and vocational interest areas. Many, after study drop and leave the course and jump into what will give

them job satisfaction. Others would engage in vocations, not based on rational choice, but on the basis of wind of fate (Orhungu, 2007).

Male and Female Self Concept and Vocational Interest

Findings from research question 3 and hypothesis 3 on table 3 revealed that there was no differences in self concept and vocational interest of male and female genders. Ukoha (2011) defined gender as cultural functions attached to biological sex. Sex refers to physical aspects of being male or female, but psychologists use it to refer to the entire set of differences commonly attributed to male and female which may be partly or wholly socially determined (Ukoha, 2011).

There are no differences in the genders came from the fact that both sexes came from God (Ukoha, 2011). Furthermore, this is as a result of emancipation of women, many of whom have changed their attitude and accepted domestic roles and at the same seek salaries employment outside their homes (Aluta, 2000) and Hassan (2008).

Arowolo (2010) observed that some women from the present political dispensation seek to be elected into political positions. They have advocated 35% of their involvement in political arena. They preferred positions that have high monetary rewards and gains. That is why many are senators, legislators, ministers and governors. Many females today express interest on male dominated vocations. They are found in athletics, footballing, aviation, piloting, engineering, military and paramilitary professions.

Arowolo (2010) and Uwa (1999) studies show significant differences compared to the time their researches were conducted. Many technological and scientific changes have taken place. Whether males or females, if the adolescents are given a conducive environment to operate, they will develop positive and healthy self concept and pursue good vocations in life.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

- i. Since it was discovered that the school and home influence the self concept and vocational interest of the students when both create conducive environment to help the adolescents develop positive and high self concept, they will develop high vocational interest.
- ii. Since information is of importance for adolescent growth and awareness of self concept and available areas of vocation of interest adequate information, parents, teachers and counsellors will help the adolescents make proper vocational choice.
- iii. Since it was also discovered that gender showed no difference in their self and vocational interest, it implies that gender inequality in vocational aspiration will soon be an issue of the past, and that the building up of self concept of both males and females will help this generation.
- iv. Result showed that those with high self concept had high vocational interest and turned towards prestigious vocations, while those low self concept settled for outdoor, mechanical, artistic and musical vocations. This indicates that some Nigerians still feel that some vocations are for low achievers or those with low aspirations. No wonder the neglect of many vocations by the youths whose parents will want to enter for vocations of repute.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- i. That a well-packaged seminar and workshop be organized regularly, for parents, teachers, counsellors and adolescent on adolescent interest, needs, new technologies and current researches and findings. This will create opportunities for exchange of ideas about them..
- ii. Government should intensify efforts to send Guidance Counsellors to secondary schools and primary schools to provide vocational, educational and social services to the children, adolescents and parents.
- iii. Government should help schools implement what the policy makers have mapped out for guidance counsellors and adolescents. For example, in February, 2011, the National Council on Education (NCE) decided that counselling be allotted at least a period in the school timetable to enable the counsellors meet the vocational, educational, social and parental problems of the adolescents as leaders of tomorrow.

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