Sex Discrimination on Career Choice of Boys And Girls in IMO State Secondary Schools

Authors

Dr. Tina Nweze
Dept. of Educational Foundations (Guidance & Counselling) Ebonyi State University, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of sex discrimination in the career choice of boys and girls, which was conducted in Imo State, Nigeria. The study tends to find out if boys and girls in Senior Secondary Schools choose careers based on their sex as it strongly supports eradication of sex discrimination in the career choice of boys and girls. The population of the study which was 110 comprised of senior secondary school students selected from 4 different government secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. Questionnaire was used for data collection, while interview was also used to tap information which was not included in the questionnaire. Data collected was analysed using mean and distribution table. The results among others revealed that boys and girls choose careers based on their sex rather than choice based on interest, aptitude and ability. The concluded by making recommendations.

Keywords: Sex Discrimination, Career, Career Choice, Interest, Aptitude, Ability

INTRODUCTION

In this era of rapid technological development, career choice is becoming more complex. New career areas are springing us especially in the era of information and communication technology. Examples include computer education, internet facilities and GSM communication system. Traditional agriculture is rapidly changing to a more complex and industrialised agriculture. New job areas are springing up rapidly. These maybe career choice more complex. Whether in Engineering, Environmental Studies, Social Sciences and Arts, boys and girls should be given equal opportunity. Most girls excel better than boys in most career choice regarded as male adequate. Success in any career is a function of one’s level of intelligence quotient whether boy or girl and not determined by sex.

In most parts of Imo State Nigeria, the cultural role expectation of men and women are still known to be clearly defined. Boys and girls undergo different socialising experiences and learn different sex roles. It has been observed that these different sex roles influence the boys and girls in career choice. Therefore boys tend to choose male adequate career. Some careers are known to be for the girls. The female adequate careers are known to be careers that are less tedious such as Engineering, Architecture, Environmental Studies, Medicine, Pharmacy etc. Hence, the values of women are influenced by what kind of occupation most Imo State women choose.
Also, the values of men are influenced by what kind of occupation most women choose. Most of the times, men who choose female adequate careers such as home economics, nursing etc are seen as not men enough; while females in male adequate careers are sometimes seen as unfit to perform, hence there is discrimination. This discrimination has reached an alarming state that something has to be done. Nwobi (1996) stated that vocational or career guidance are services regarded to a client to help him to have clear understanding of his attitudes, attainments, interest, disposition and circumstances in the light of vocational demand. Okorie and Ezeji (1988) reviewed the factors that influence the career choice of boys and girls. They noted that there is a significant relationship between sex role and career choice. They reported that while girls preferred career in engineering, medicine and agriculture. They concluded that boys and girls choose career based on sex role.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine sex discrimination in the career choice of boys and girls, which was conducted in Imo State, Nigeria. Therefore the objectives of the study are to:

Determine the career choices of Boys and Girls in Senior Secondary Schools

Determine the reasons for career choices

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

What are the career choices of Boys and Girls in Senior Secondary Schools?

What are reasons for their career choices?

Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study is important in understanding the reasons why many boys and girls in the secondary schools make certain career choices. Such an understanding is essential for all levels of school administration and for human resources management in their efforts to improve the quality education. Secondly, based on the results, efforts would be made by school administrators to educate the students on sex discrimination on career choices. It will give an insight into the level of perception and attitudes of parents towards particular aspects of job. It will help school counsellors and their allies in the profession on how to assist individual students on making career choices.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design and it was chosen because survey information has been accepted as a useful tool in educational research for describing existing information of programme practice. The population of the study consisted of 180 Senior Secondary School Students selected from 4 Government Senior Secondary Schools in Imo State. However, random sampling technique was used to select 110 respondents out of the 180 students that formed the study population. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire and the questionnaire was distributed to the research respondents through the help of the research assistants. Data was analyzed using distribution tables, percentages and mean.
The table 1 revealed that boys generally preferred careers as Medical Doctors, Civil Engineers, Surveyors, Electrical Engineers, Archaeologists, Pilots, Mechanical Engineers, Building Engineers, Computer Engineers/Scientists, while the girls preferred career that make them become Teachers, Medical Doctors, Computer Scientists, Journalists, Economists, Accounts, Administrators etc.

### Table 2: Reasons for Career Choices

Total number of respondents = 110

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Reasons for Career Choices</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Career is prestigious</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>81.81%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Career has high income</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 revealed that boys and girls choose careers mostly for the following reasons:
The career is prestigious
Career has high employment opportunity.
Ability and Aptitude to succeed in a career.
The career can take one to overseas
Career has high income after graduation
Personal Interest in a particular career

career choice based on sex role ranked very low with 27.3 %, parental influence ranked 18.2%. this means that boys and girls no longer choose career based on sex role as it were in the time past and parental choices for their children. This is gradually loosing strong holds. Education can thus be a significant tool to decrease sex discrimination in choosing careers. With increase in the level of education, it is normal that individuals would become aware of their rights and thus complaint against biased practices of the society.

Maranzu (1983) revealed in her study that there are fewer women than men in some occupational areas; she concluded that men and women choose career based on their sex role. In occupational distribution of men and women, it was observed that the highest population of women were engaged in clerical services and private house hold occupation while the lowest population of women were found in craft, non-farm labour technical, managerial and administrative occupation. Therefore, Maranzu concluded that men and women choose career based on their sex roles. Okpala (1977) noted that there was segregation and discrimination in the so-called men’s job and women job. In the study Okpala inferred that women’s choice of career is based on sex role. He acknowledged that the sex of a secretary does not really matter and that it was illegal to discriminate but however affirmed that there may be valued reason why a man or a woman may be preferred foe a certain job.

Olayinka (1973) examined the extent to which a person’s sex influenced his job preference and the extent to which youth performed well in Mathematics and English language. The study showed that girls opted for career in teaching, nursing, home management and journalism. Olayinka observed that their choice of career was based on sex role. The
boys’ choice careers are in Engineering, Medicine, Air pilot, Architecture, Banking and Military. When comparing how well they performed in Examination, Olayinka observed that boys perform better in Mathematics than in English language while the girls performed better in English language than in Mathematics. The study revealed that the career chosen by the boys were different from the ones chosen by the girls.

Williams (2001) in his study titled women participation in technology education programme: implication for secondary school introductory technology in Anambra State revealed that there is sex stereotyping in career choice causing low rate of women participation in technology education. Williams noted that there is low female enrolment into core technical courses of Colleges of Education Technical. Also, in a study conducted by Wokocha (2001) on Gender and achievement in science and technology education revealed that there was significant difference between the gender of learners and their performances in achievement test in science and technology education. Nwana (1988) in his study of gender and science achievement reported that in the past and to a large extent in the present, it was assumed that if science was to be done, it should be done by boys while girls are to be in liberal arts and humanities. He noted that the vast majority of the earlier girls’ schools in Nigeria did not offer science and technology courses except hygiene and home management or domestic science while boys offered a wide range of science and technical courses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The career an individual pursues is dependent to a great degree on the choice of flow of education at the secondary school level. If a student takes up subjects that leads to arts in the university, he/she would not be able to switch to science based courses later on in his/her career or vice versa. Again, it is generally perceived that pursuing studies in arts for instance, leads to lower paid jobs while pursuing studies in science or engineering leads to higher paid jobs. Also, getting into a science or engineering courses either requires high grades or high course fees. Unless one takes up a high opportunity course in terms of earning potential, the possibility of a high-earning career is bleak. Now, those courses that lead to higher paid jobs such as Engineering, Architecture, Surveying, are those which the societies ascribed to boys. The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study that:

The ministries of education should establish a public campaign unit to educate parents and students on the dangers of sex discrimination or suggestion in career choice.

The female students should be encouraged to take up careers in technical and vocational courses by award of scholarships.

The state and federal ministries of education should organize effective guidance and counselling services in all secondary schools.

REFERENCES

