

Goal-Orientation as Determinant of Career Preference of in-School Adolescents in Imo State

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated goal-orientation as determinant of career preference of in-school adolescents in Imo State. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational survey research design. The sample comprised 902 respondents drawn from a population of 18,036 in-school adolescents in SS II (SS 2) in Imo State through multistage sampling technique for the study. Two research instruments were used in collecting data for the study namely: Students' Goal Orientation Questionnaire (SGOQ) and Students Career Preference Questionnaire (SCPQ). The instruments were validated by three experts. The stability indices of the instruments were 0.84 and 0.72 for SGOQ and SCPQ, respectively. Indices of internal consistency were established using Cronbach Alpha and reliability indices of 0.80 and 0.88 were obtained for SGOQ and SCPQ, respectively. Data obtained were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, Pearson r , R^2 to answer the research questions while linear regression and multiple regressions analysis were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that: Learning goal orientation determined 58.1% of career preference among in-school adolescents and learning goal orientation significantly determined career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State; there was no significant correlation between learning goal orientation and male and female in-school adolescents' career preference because learning goal orientation determined only 4.9% and 4.8% of male and female in-school adolescents' career preference respectively. It was recommended that in-school adolescents should be trained on the importance of goal-orientation in determining their career preference without gender discrimination.

Key: Goal-Orientation, Career Preference, In-School Adolescents

Introduction

Students tend to face complex and rapidly changing situations in our society today. It appears that regardless of great effort put forth by families, government agencies and non-governmental agencies, many young people encounter difficulties in the transition from the world of school to that of work. Investigating and understanding of the myriad factors that contribute to career preference is a topic of recurring interest in our schools today. This is because appropriate career preference would greatly contribute to economic and technological advancement of our country (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2022). Career is a lifelong process which can be defined as a pattern of work experiences comprising the entire life span of a person and which is generally seen with regards to a number of phrases or stages reflecting the transition from one stage of life to the next (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2022).

The term career was defined by Polos and Drobot (2020) as an individual's lifelong sequence of work as well as his educational and leisure experiences. Career may include job/work that is temporary, contingent, casual, contract, part-time, self-employed, external and freelance. Therefore, the term career may be defined as a sequence of interaction of individuals with society, education and organizations throughout their lifespan. Pratiwi, *et al.* (2019) indicated that preference is what individuals like or would like to do. So, it is the expression of what people like to do among the many aspirations they earlier had. Three conditions may be necessary for a choice to take place; which may include, choice supply, which refers to having two or more careers from which to choose; the incentive to make the choice, which indicates that the individual must be motivated to select and thirdly is the freedom to choose without being restricted (Pratiwi, *et al.* 2019).

All individuals tend to give serious thought to their abilities, interest and aptitude in vocational choices. Those who fail usually may find themselves engaged in career they have less preference for. In preferences therefore, it is no longer a matter of all jobs appealing, but a question of specific ones now appealing. Career preference is an important process which can affect every aspect of one's life including social, economic and health of an individual's life. Career preference is the selection or choosing of a career which an individual has the potentials of entering (Javed & Tariq, 2021).

However, a number of students take such decisions very easily without considering capabilities, wellbeing, talents and values for future life. Making a decision for a career is a very difficult process and a lot of attention is required to accomplish it (Javed & Tariq, 2021). Career preference may be referred as a stage at which a child becomes capable of preferring one career over others, as he/she is transforming to in-school adolescent. Theresa (2021) viewed career preference as a decisive period referred to as a tentative decision concerned with the various existing careers. In the same vein, Wanga (2021) defined the term career preferences as a more realistic option than aspiration and which is more associated with adolescents.

Efforts have been made to address the problem of inappropriate career preference by in-school adolescents. Sevinc and Gizir (2014) noted that school authorities seem to understand the diversity of their students and the peculiar problems that impede their career growth and advancement both academically and socially. Hence, they organize orientation training for new students, seminars, fostering strong collaboration among parents, respond to diversity and provide for the successful inclusion, encouraging students to get out of their comfort zone and rediscover themselves, reinforce performance by giving automatic employment to best graduating students and so on. Thus, any nation that refuses to engender adequate career preference among its students has failed and could stand the risk of decay because education plays a vital role in the overall technological and economic development of nations. Research evidences by Uzoka et al (2016); Ali (2021) tend to suggest that goal orientation has the potentials of determining career preference among students.

Many people find themselves in a wrong career, resulting in unhappy life because a happy life depends often on the choice of a suitable career. If people can fit into their right type of job it becomes possible they would work happily in full capacity. In line with this, Uzoka et al (2016) stated that individual success or failure in career preference has profound repercussions not only to the individual's life but also to the society which they serve. In view of the above, career preference tends to be a persistent problem for the students in the contemporary society. That is why it is not uncommon for students to get into careers that do not suit their abilities. What is usually obtained in the end is job dissatisfaction, disillusionment and depression, which invariably may result to

frustration, malfunction and inefficiency, all translating into National economic crisis irrespective of gender (Ali, 2021).

Gender is a factor that is believed to have the potential of influencing goal orientation on career preference of in-school students. However, arguments on the relationship between gender and each of these variables have been inconclusive (Musa, 2016). Gender is a concept used to distinguish between masculine and feminine role expectations. Every culture has gender-based expectations. In most cultures it is assumed that males and females are supposed to act differently; learn some things differently and achieve differently (Gage, *et al.* 2014). Some cultures expect that males or females cannot engage in certain career at a certain stage because of their gender. Gage and Berliner in Dibianco, *et al.* (2014) were of the view that gender schema develops in pupils and influences their zeal; what they believe, how they do, learn, remember and achieve success in life. One wonders if the types of expectations parents have for their children based on gender could influence their career preferences in Imo State.

Statement of the Problem

Choosing a career is often considered a major turning point in a young person's life. The decision to choose a career has the potential to open the door for success or close the door of opportunity. While career preference is often perceived to be an individual thing, research suggests that a variety of influences are likely to manipulate one's ultimate career decision and choice such as goal orientation.

It is therefore important to explore the issues regarding adolescent career preference and the role goal orientation plays in this decision. This is an important topic because parents may not realize the major impact their norms, values and gender roles have on career preference, and yet the impact of goal orientation on students' career selection may present opportunities or obstacles for students during the career exploration process. It is upon this basis that this study aimed to explore the extent to which goal orientation determines career preference among in-school students in Imo State. Therefore, the problem of this study put in a question form is: To what extent does goal orientation serve as determinant of career preference of in-school adolescents in Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which goal orientation could serve as determinant of career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the extent learning goal orientation determines career preference among in-school adolescents.
2. examine the extent learning goal orientation of male and female in-school adolescents determine their career preference.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does learning goal orientation determine career preference among in-school adolescents?
2. To what extent does learning goal orientation of male and female in-school adolescents' determine career preference?

Methodology

The study adopted correlational survey research design. The sample comprised 902 (433 male and 469 female) respondents drawn from a population of 18,036 (8,664 male and 9,372 female) in-school adolescents in SS II (SS 2) in Imo State through multistage sampling technique for the study. The sample consisted of five percent of the population. Two research instruments were used in collecting data for the study namely: Students' Goal Orientation Questionnaire (SGOQ) and Students Career Preference Questionnaire (SCPQ). The instruments were validated by three experts, one from Guidance and Counselling; one from Educational Psychology and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all from College of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The stability indices of the instruments were 0.84 and 0.72 for SGOQ and SCPQ respectively. Indices of internal consistency were established using Cronbach Alpha and reliability indices of 0.80 and 0.88 were obtained for SGOQ and SCPQ respectively. Data obtained were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, Pearson r , R^2 (coefficient of determination) to answer the research questions while linear regression and multiple regressions analysis were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does learning goal orientation determine career preference among in-school adolescents?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Learning Goal Orientation and Career Preference among In-School Adolescents

Source		LGO	CP
LGO	Pearson Correlation	1	.762*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	879	879
CP	Pearson Correlation	.762*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	879	879
	R ²	.581	

LGO = Learning Goal Orientation. CP = Career Preference. *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 1 indicate a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.762 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of $\pm 0.61-0.80$. This indicated that learning goal orientation to a high and positive extent correlates with career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State. The coefficient of determination (R^2) 0.581 indicated that 58.1% of the variance observed in career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State was accounted for by learning goal orientation. Consequently, learning goal orientation determined 58.1% of career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State.

Hypothesis One: Learning goal orientation does not significantly determine career preference among in-school adolescents.

Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis of the Correlation between Learning Goal Orientation and Career Preference among In-School Adolescents

Variables	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-cal	Sig.	Dec.
LGO and CP	Regression	1121.543	1	1121.543	869.413	.000 ^a	S
	Residual	1132.552	878	1.290			
	Total	2254.095	879				

Df= degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The data in the Table 2 showed that there was significant correlation between learning goal orientation and career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State. This is shown by the F- value of 869.413 in respect of the relationship between learning goal orientation and career preference among in-school adolescents which has a probability value of .000 and therefore significant at 0.05 levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated that learning goal orientation does not significantly determine career preference among in-school adolescents was rejected. Consequently, learning goal orientation significantly determined career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State.

Research Question 2

To what extent does learning goal orientation of male and female in-school adolescents determine their career preference?

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of the Gender Difference in the Correlation between Learning Goal Orientation of Male and Female In-School Adolescents' Career Preference

Source	Male	Female	CP
Male	Pearson Correlation	1	.221
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.184*
	N	878	878
	R ²	.049	
Female	Pearson Correlation	1	.218
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.183*
	N	878	878
	R ²	.048	

Data in Table 3 indicated a correlation coefficient (r) of .221 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of $\pm 0.21-0.40$. This indicates that the male in-school adolescents' career preference based on learning goal orientation was to a low extent. The coefficient of determination (R²) .049 indicates that only 4.9% of the variance observed in in-school adolescents' career preference was accounted for by learning goal orientation. Therefore, learning goal orientation determined only 4.9 percent of the male in in-school adolescents'

career preference. Table 4.10 also indicated a correlation coefficient (r) of .218 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of $\pm 0.21-0.40$. This indicates that the female in in-school adolescents' career preference based on learning goal orientation was to a low extent. The coefficient of determination (R^2) .048 indicates that only 4.8 percent of the variance observed in in in-school adolescents' career preference was accounted for by learning goal orientation. Therefore, learning goal orientation predicted only 4.8 percent of the female in in-school adolescents' career preference. Therefore, learning goal orientation determined only 4.9% and 4.8% of the male and female in-school adolescents' career preference respectively.

Hypothesis Two: Learning goal orientation of male and female in-school adolescents' does not significantly determine career preference.

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis of Gender Difference in the Correlation between Learning Goal Orientation of Male and Female In-School Adolescents' Career Preference

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.325	1	.325	0.338	.183
Residual	844.733	878	0.962		
Total	845.058	879			

Df= degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The data in the Table 4 above showed that there was no significant correlation between learning goal orientation and the male and female in-school adolescents' career preference. This is shown by the F- value of 0.338 in respect of the gender difference in the correlation between learning goal orientation and the male and female in-school adolescents' career preference which has a probability value of 0.183 and therefore not significant at 0.05 levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant correlation between learning goal orientation and the male and female in-school adolescents' career preference was retained. Consequently, there is no significant correlation between learning goal orientation and the male and female in-school adolescents' career preference.

Summary of Major Finding

1. Learning goal orientation determined 58.1% of career preference among in-school adolescents and learning goal orientation significantly determined career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State.
2. There was no significant correlation between learning goal orientation and male and female in-school adolescents' career preference as learning goal orientation determined only 4.9% and 4.8% of male and female in-school adolescents' career preference respectively.

Discussion of the Findings

The study revealed that learning goal orientation determined 58.1% of career preference among in-school adolescents and learning goal orientation significantly determined career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of the earlier studies by Owuh (2018) and Espinosa *et al.* (2017). The study by Owuh (2018) investigated the relationship between learning goal orientation and school adjustment in Government secondary schools in Anambra State. The result revealed that there was a significant relationship between learning goal orientation of students in relationship with their peers, attitude to classwork and school activities. The study by Espinosa *et al.* (2017) investigated learning goal orientation and academic achievement in Chemistry. The study found significant relationship between learning goal orientation and academic achievement in Chemistry. It could be argued that the in-school adolescents who approached secondary schools as an opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge possessed a learning orientation while students who approached secondary schools with the goal to exclusively obtain high grades possessed a grade orientation. Goal orientation is based on contemporary goal-as-motives where it is posited that —all actions are given meaning, direction and purpose by the goals that individuals seek out, and that the quality and intensity of behaviour could change as these goals change.

The study further indicated that there was no significant correlation between learning goal orientation and male and female in-school adolescents' career preference as learning goal orientation determined only 4.9% and 4.8% of male and female in-school adolescents' career preference respectively. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of the study by Momanyi, et al. (2020) which investigated gender differences in self-efficacy and career

preference among Form 2 secondary school students in Lugari District of Kenya. The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference between male and female in self-efficacy in career preference. The findings of the study are in disagreement with the findings of the study by Boyd (2017) which was an examination of goal orientation between genders – an exploratory study" in Georgia Southern University. Results revealed significantly higher goal orientation in females than males in career preference. The fact that in the present study, there was no significant correlation between learning goal orientation and male and female in-school adolescents' career preference as learning goal orientation determined only 4.9% and 4.8% of male and female in-school adolescents' career preference respectively suggests that in-school adolescents' career preference could be established using learning goal orientation without gender discrimination.

Conclusions

The study examined the extent goal-orientation serves as a determinant of career preference of in-school adolescents. The result showed that learning goal orientation determined 58.1% of career preference among in-school adolescents and learning goal orientation significantly determined career preference among in-school adolescents in Imo State. There was no significant correlation between learning goal orientation and male and female in-school adolescents' career preference as learning goal orientation determined only 4.9% and 4.8% of male and female in-school adolescents' career preference respectively. Therefore, goal-orientation should be given serious consideration in determining the career preference of in-school adolescents without gender discrimination. Consequently, those gender stereotypes that discriminate against particular gender in career choices and career preferences should be checked

Recommendations

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

1. Possession of learning goal orientation by in-school adolescents is important in order to promote or facilitate students' career preference and choices.
2. Guidance counsellors/psychologists should be trained on the possession of goal-orientation especially the learning goal orientation in order to promote or enhance counselling practices especially in the secondary schools.

3. The career preference and choices among students can be promoted by the Guidance Counsellors independent of students' gender.
4. The instruments used in this study can be adopted or adapted to assess the level of goal-orientation possessed by the counsellors as well as career preference of the students.

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