

THEORY OF CAREER CHOICE DEPENDENCE: A PRIME APPROACH



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Abstract

In the study of vocational and occupation guidance, researchers across board have found that numerous factors influence the choice of students in their career choice process. The notable ones among these influencers are parents and peers. Parents and peers are seen as major influencers because unlike social media and the environment, parents and peers have a way of putting extra pressure on students to succumb to their option or opinion on the course the child should take. Because of the overwhelming pressure that students most times face from parents and their peers, they have now become totally dependent on what they are told to do. This theory of career/vocational/occupational choice dependence draws from the strength that students are prone to waiting on their parents, peers or societal decision to take action. This theory is very invaluable to the understanding of students' career choice because nearly all researches are beamed on parental pressure. None is focused on students' overdependence of parents to take action in their career choice process. This paper therefore, is an introduction to a new perspective in the discus of career guidance which seeks to look at career guidance counselling from a student's dependent attitude approach.

March, 2018

Introduction

This theory of career choice dependence was developed in a typical Nigerian setting. In Nigeria, students who had concluded secondary schools are expected to take the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) which allows them to transit to the University. To do this, students/applicants are expected to look critically into the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) syllabus to determine their courses and course requirements which is in their area of strength and interest before choosing their paths. This is where the problem starts.

Within the Nigerian context, career **tutelage** among transiting students have been very poor. Many students only know about selection of course of study for the very first time when they are faced with the option to select their courses during JAMB registration. At this point, they are very timid and naive. Hence, they tend to ask anyone around for guidance. Now, they are highly dependent and will take almost any advice given to them. Not many students are able articulate what they will be later in life before JAMB present them with the question of course of study.

The career choice dependence does not end with peers. A larger part of the dependent syndrome lies at home. Students, especially those who rely on their parents for all economic and academic gains tend to wait on their parents to tell them what do. This is even more so in homes with educated parents. Studies by Gihuntla (2012), Berk (2007), Bezzina (2008), and National Center for Children in Poverty (2007) revealed that parents who are education or highly educated tend to have more leanings/involvements in their child's academic activities. This may have a great influence on the abilities of the child to reflect independently on his own to determine what best suits him.

Career choice dependence by students transiting to the Universities may be caused by parental over-dictation on the child's academic life. Most children may have been victims of parental dictation, hence, they tend to wait for their parents for every decision to avoid breach of interest or chaos. Most parents held the view that their kid will be irresponsible if certain decisions are left for them to handle, hence, in each and every opportunity, they cease it to be the all and all (Alpha and Omega) to the child. It is around this circumstance that the child becomes also dependent on the parent for vocational career guide.

Major Assumptions

This theory of career/vocational/occupational dependence hold that:

1. Children/students will wait for their parent/peers to choose a course of study.

March, 2018

2. That their vocational satisfaction – irrespective of their interest, aptitude or skills – will be filled to the extent it was chosen for them by their trustee.
3. That students with educated parents are more likely to be dependent on their parent for vocational/career tutelage.
4. That career selection under this setting may not be based on the interest, aptitude and skills of the bearer, but on what the trustee feel is good for the dependant.
5. That students may be misled as a result of wrong career path chosen for them which may not be at par with their capacity because the trustee may not be trained in the area of career selection.
6. That to solve students' career problems, they should own up, and choose their careers themselves or consult career experts to put them through.

Significance

This theory is very significant to the study and understanding of career counselling. Too many materials focused on parental influence. The blame is often placed on the parents without any literature referring to the fact that some students actually depends on their parents/peers for career decision because they believe that their parents/peer's decision is more informed than what they will ever choose. This is a very wrong thought. This theory therefore, serves as a paradigm shift for researchers engaged in this field of study to look into this direction.

This theory also implied that since students depend so largely on their parents, it is now time to improve the career selection skills of parents. This will aid parents to integrate their choice of course for their wards with the one the wards themselves can offer. This will go a long way in fulfilling the career dreams of the students.

Conclusion

Although this theory focuses on career dependence, it does not however, deny the fact that parents often pressure their wards to study courses they want instead of allowing the children to choose by themselves. Most parents are very strict and will not pay the child's academic expenses if the child does not study the course they want. It is therefore, necessary for parents to be made to understand that the success of their child's career largely depends on studying the course that the child likes. They must be made to understand the principle of career satisfaction, else, deemed to be inadequate and hazardous to choose careers for their children. This is so because it may stymie the future career prospects of the children.

March, 2018

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