



Influence of Self Efficacy on Career Choice of Secondary School Adolescent Students in Afijio Local Government of Oyo State

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Abstract

The issue of incorrect career choices among secondary school adolescents in Afijio Local Government Area and globally has reached a concerning level. It is concerning that it has risen to prominence in both academic and social discussions. This issue persists even after extensive studies on career selection. It is essential to examine the influence of self-efficacy on the career choices of secondary school adolescents in Afijio Local Government. This study evaluated the impact of self-efficacy on career choice among secondary school adolescents in the Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. The investigation utilised a descriptive survey research design. Two hundred participants were chosen from five secondary schools in the Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State, employing a stratified random sampling technique. The participants' ages varied from 11 to 19 years old. Three hypotheses were examined through linear regression at a 0.05 level of significance, indicating a significant relationship between self-efficacy and career choice ($r = .740^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, socio-economic class did not have a significant impact on the career choices of adolescents in Afijio Local Government Area [$t(200) = 1.69$; $p > .05$]. Additionally, individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds ($X = 64.19$; $SD = 9.78$) and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds ($X = 62.27$; $SD = 8.19$) exhibited comparable career choices. A notable correlation was observed between the educational status of parents and the career choices of adolescents in the Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State ($r = .612^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). In light of these findings, it is advised that school counsellors enhance their initiatives focused on training adolescents in assertiveness to mitigate incorrect career choices. Additionally, promoting positive self-efficacy training is essential to address the issue of misguided career paths.

Keywords: Adolescents, Career choice, Self-efficacy, Socio-economic class and Parental education.

1. Introduction

At a certain point in human development, the need for a career becomes so obvious that in-school adolescents cannot help but plan, explore, choose and seek ways to advance in a preserved career or to pursue other opportunities that their ways in order to live a life full of joy and satisfaction. A career encompasses a sequence of positions undertaken over an individual's lifetime, with some of these roles potentially overlapping. This pursuit demands a significant commitment of one's life and offers opportunities for growth (Eyo, 2021). A career encompasses the entirety of time and effort dedicated to engaging in work that contributes to a fulfilling life. This includes all time invested in planning, obtaining education and training necessary for a profession, the initial entry into the workforce, and the ongoing efforts to achieve advancement. This progression may involve further training, job changes, and continuous development throughout one's professional journey (Oluwatimilehin

& Owoyele, 2022). Nonetheless, as noted by Eyo (2021), selecting a career is a pivotal decision that individuals encounter at various stages of their lives; it is a choice that warrants thorough examination due to its potential influence on the life of a student in their formative years.

Choosing a career involves understanding the various long-term employment possibilities and possessing the necessary knowledge to strategise and follow a particular professional path (Amanda, Andre & Margaret, 2019). The process involves an individual's inherent images, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that lead them towards a specific vocation (Nourah, 2021). In the process of navigating their career choices, these in-school adolescents encounter challenges in aligning their career interests with their academic abilities during their secondary education. At this stage of secondary education, students are at risk of making unwise decisions if careful consideration is not applied. An unfavourable decision could diminish enjoyment in life as it may result in a disconnect in one's professional path. An unsuitable selection could indicate peril not just for adolescents in educational settings but for society as a whole (Obiunu & Ebunu, 2023).

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Career choice among in-school adolescents are an important part of their development because they build the groundwork for future career options and professional paths. Personal interests, cultural expectations, family influences and educational experiences could play a role in shaping these inclinations. Career choice is usually a challenging undertaking, especially when there are competing variables, but it is an important step towards a happy life. According to Robertson (2024), career choice is a significant issue in youth development as it can lead to both positive and negative psychological, physical and socioeconomic inequalities that can persist into adulthood. This obviously implies that care must be given when determining job selections; otherwise, an incorrect option would negatively affect the lives of the individual as well as the society.

A significant number of Nigerian adolescent students face challenges in identifying a vocation that aligns with their interests and skills. A career represents the culmination of an individual's professional endeavours. Nwoka, Otta, and Njoku. (2022) described career choice as the process of meticulously evaluating various career options prior to making a decision on which one to follow at a specific time. They argued that selecting a career is not merely a process of trial and error, but a deliberate decision made thoughtfully, akin to choosing a life partner due to its significant impact on one's overall happiness. Abdullahi and Atsua (2014) indicate that selecting a career is a challenging decision for students, as it determines the profession they aspire to follow in their lives. It was also asserted that adolescents often face challenges in linking their career choices made during secondary school to their aptitudes and academic performance in the relevant subjects.

The career choices of secondary school students can be seen as a process that guides them towards making informed decisions regarding their future professions. According to the study conducted by Nachmias and Walmsley (2021), it was observed that although most students had a clear idea of their intended career paths, they were deficient in the necessary skills to make informed and effective career choices. The decision regarding one's career is a multifaceted matter shaped by a combination of personal traits, available opportunities, and external environmental factors (Gavo, 2020). Gacohi, Sindabi, and Chepchieng (2021) highlight that the decision regarding which degree to pursue at university represents a significant career milestone for students. Certainly, these career inclinations reflect the student's readiness for the workforce and their awareness of upcoming job opportunities (Gacohi, Sindabi & Chepchieng, 2021).

Kerka (2020) indicates that various factors influence profession preference, including personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalisation, socialisation, role models, social support, and available resources like information and financial means. Kerka

(2020) indicates that each in-school adolescent involved in the process is shaped by numerous factors, such as their living environment, individual skills, social interactions, and educational attainment. Hewitt (2020) identifies that the factors influencing career choice can be categorised as internal, extrinsic, or a combination of both. Hewitt notes that many adolescents in secondary schools are influenced by the career preferences of their parents, while some opt for paths that align with their passions, irrespective of financial gain, and others select careers primarily for their lucrative potential. A range of factors has been identified that affect students' views on their appropriateness for particular careers. These include ethnic background, academic year, level of achievement, selection of science subjects, personal attitudes, and differences in job characteristics (McQuaid & Bond, 2019).

Students globally often encounter the significant challenge of deciding on their career paths. Individuals considering their educational journeys often face challenging choices regarding their careers, areas of focus, and academic courses, alongside the trajectories they wish to pursue in the future. Selecting the appropriate mix of subjects that aligns with the right career can frequently determine whether you enjoy or detest your job over time. Committing to impractical career trajectories often results in disappointment. Consequently, a significant number of Nigerians view employment primarily as a source of income or a means to achieve other goals, rather than as an intrinsic pursuit that offers its own fulfilment and satisfaction, along with a chance to showcase individual talents or creative abilities. An adverse outlook on work and the consequent issue of diminished productivity become widespread. The overall impact of this external situation is the destruction of the nation's economy (Issa & Nwalo, 2023).

Choosing a career requires significant creativity, exploration, decision-making, and sound judgement. A comprehensive grasp of a specific subject is crucial for fostering and sustaining enthusiasm in that profession. Activities that define oneself and are crucial for the spirit, emotions, and empowerment of a student in school are deeply connected to their passions. Professional success is most likely to be achieved when an adolescent's career path aligns with their skills, personality, background, and cognitive abilities. A significant number of students made choices influenced more by their individual preferences than by the demands of the labour market (Magdadaro, 2020). The selection of a career is a significant decision that adolescents in school will confront as they strategise for their future. This decision will significantly influence their lives in the long run. The core of a student's identity will be shaped by their aspirations regarding their professional endeavours.

As noted by Victor (2011), selecting a career involves reaching a compromise. In essence, selecting a

profession that aligns with personal interests and skills is crucial for reaching individual objectives. However, it is important to consider multiple factors that may either facilitate or hinder the attainment of optimal satisfaction in both life and work. The career choices of students are shaped by various factors, including their grades, ages, personal interests, and experiences. It is through their educational journeys that these students determine their aspirations for future careers (Edwards & Quinter, 2021). Career choices are frequently shaped by the surrounding environment and the level of support provided by parents, educators, and peers. When a career path resonates with an adolescent's strengths and interests, it can foster long-term satisfaction and success in their professional journey.

Nonetheless, when young individuals select career paths that do not correspond with their personal characteristics, they frequently encounter various challenges, both throughout their educational experiences and subsequently in their professional endeavours. In numerous educational frameworks, especially in developing nations, there exists an absence of organised career guidance. Educational institutions frequently fail to equip students with sufficient information or resources to investigate diverse career paths, resulting in young individuals making poorly informed choices regarding their futures. In Nigeria, the absence of career counselling has been recognised as a significant factor leading to poor career choices among students (Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014). Young individuals often possess a constrained awareness of their abilities, limitations, and interests, which can result in career decisions grounded in flawed self-evaluations. This may lead to individuals embarking on career paths that are either excessively demanding or insufficiently stimulating, resulting in discontent and subpar performance.

An immediate consequence of an incorrect career choice is subpar academic performance. Students who find themselves in courses that do not match their interests or abilities tend to show lower levels of engagement in their studies. This absence of motivation frequently results in unsatisfactory grades and a diminished passion for acquiring knowledge. Studies indicate that students lacking enthusiasm for their selected area of study often face academic challenges (Nwosu & Ugwuegbu, 2020). Young individuals compelled to pursue careers that do not align with their interests frequently encounter significant emotional turmoil. Adolescents in school might experience feelings of frustration, anxiety, or even depression stemming from the gap between their genuine interests and the career trajectory they are following. This emotional distress can result in diminished self-esteem and a pervasive sense of despair regarding future prospects. Research has shown that dissatisfaction with career choices in adolescents may result in elevated anxiety and stress levels (Bakar, Mohamed & Zakaria, 2012).

Even if young individuals succeed in finishing their education despite making an incorrect career choice, they are likely to encounter low levels of career satisfaction in adulthood. A professional path that fails to resonate with an individual's interests or passions may result in enduring discontent, potentially presenting as job-related stress, burnout, and a tendency for frequent job transitions. Singh and Singh (2016) indicate that individuals who fail to engage in careers that resonate with their interests frequently experience diminished job satisfaction and increased occupational stress. A notable issue associated with poor career selection is the heightened probability of making an unsuitable career choice. Students in their teenage years who experience a lack of connection between their chosen career paths and their academic activities are at a higher risk of becoming disengaged from their educational experience. This frequently results in suboptimal or incorrect career selection rates, particularly in developing nations where educational resources are already scarce. Young individuals who select inappropriate career paths may encounter situations where their professional growth is severely restricted. Lacking passion or motivation for their work can lead to insufficient effort in advancing their careers. This may result in limited professional development and a standstill in their selected areas of expertise.

This study examined the impact of self-efficacy on the career choices of adolescents currently enrolled in school. Self-efficacy refers to the conviction individuals hold regarding their ability to perform, organise, and execute the necessary actions to achieve specific performance outcomes (Wilson, 2018). This can also be characterised as the assessment of an individual's ability to accomplish tasks and achieve objectives (Ormrod, 2016). This influences all aspects of human existence, shaping the beliefs an adolescent student has about their ability to impact situations. Consequently, it significantly affects both the actual power a person possesses to tackle challenges effectively and the decisions a student is inclined to make. The impact of these effects is especially evident and persuasive when considering behaviours that influence health (Liuszczynska & Schwarzer, 2015). Adolescent students will only find motivation to act or persist through challenges when they believe that their actions can lead to the outcomes they seek. The behaviour of in-school adolescents can frequently be more accurately anticipated by the beliefs they possess regarding their abilities rather than by their actual potential for achievement. Beliefs in one's own capabilities play a crucial role in shaping the expected results when undertaking a task, with those who possess confidence tending to foresee successful outcomes in their endeavours (Pajares, 2017).

Students with strong social skills tend to anticipate high grades in their exams and believe that the quality of their work will yield personal and professional advantages. In contrast, those who lack confidence

often experience the opposite outcome. People who question their social abilities frequently anticipate rejection or mockery prior to forming social connections. Individuals who doubt their academic abilities often anticipate receiving low grades before they start an exam or register for a course (Parares & Schunk, 2015). One approach to assist an aggressive student in enhancing self-efficacy beliefs is to support improvements in their physical and emotional well-being. Each student possesses the potential to transform their own thoughts and emotions, improve their beliefs in self-efficacy, which can subsequently affect their psychological well-being (Oladeji, 2017). When adolescents exhibit aggressive behaviour, it often leads to a negative emotional state that can adversely affect their overall well-being and developmental progress. It is essential for students to be introduced to the fundamentals of self-efficacy procedures to foster positive motivation and ensure they are well-adjusted within the school environment. Meier, McCarthy, and Schmeck (2017), as referenced by Jennifer (2019), suggested that there is a connection between self-efficacy and career choice. For example, possessing a strong belief in one's ability to perform a specific action may lead an individual to frequently engage in that behaviour, ultimately resulting in the formation of a habit. A lack of confidence in one's abilities regarding a specific action can lead to a negative career choice score and result in engaging in undesirable behaviours.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The issue of career selection among adolescents in secondary schools has sparked numerous enquiries and discussions among academics. The issue at hand is a nuanced matter that requires careful consideration. Secondary school students lack a defined approach for making career choices that enables them to explore all available options, hindering their ability to develop a well-informed strategy when selecting a vocation. The selection of careers by adolescents in Nigeria presents a critical concern, shaped by various elements including self-concept and self-efficacy. Adolescents in educational settings encounter difficulties in making well-informed career decisions, frequently stemming from insufficient guidance and societal pressures. Gender stereotypes further complicate these choices, as traditional roles influence the types of careers considered appropriate for males and females. For instance, societal expectations may encourage boys to pursue careers in engineering or technology, while girls are steered towards careers in education or healthcare. This skewed perception limits the potential for adolescents to explore diverse career paths based on personal interests and aptitudes.

Self-efficacy, or how individuals perceive their abilities, shapes career interests as well. Adolescents with a positive self-efficacy are more likely to explore and pursue challenging career paths, while those with a negative self-efficacy may limit their choices due to fear of failure or perceived inadequacies. This is

further influenced by motivation, which drives the desire to succeed in a chosen career. Adolescents with high motivation are more likely to invest effort in career exploration and development, while low motivation may result in passive career choices.

A significant gap exists in career choice, especially in rural or under-resourced schools, where students lack access to career counselling or accurate labour market information. This leaves many adolescents with limited knowledge about career opportunities and the requirements for different professions, leading to poorly informed decisions. Addressing these factors is crucial to fostering a more balanced and fulfilling career choice process among in-school adolescents in Nigeria. This study therefore, investigated the effect of self-efficacy on career choice of secondary school adolescent students in Afijio Local Government of Oyo state, Nigeria.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to assess the effect of self-efficacy on career choice of secondary school adolescent students in Afijio Local Government of Oyo state, Nigeria. Specifically the objectives of the study were to:

- I. Establish if the self-efficacy have any significant influence on adolescent students' career choice in Afijio Local Government of Oyo state, Nigeria;
- II. Examine if the children from higher socio-economic class differ from those from the lower socio-economic class in the rate of career choice among secondary school adolescents in Afijio Local Government of Oyo state;
- III. Eind if the educational status of parents affect the rate of career choice among secondary school adolescents in Afijio Local Government of Oyo state

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were posed for the study:

- i. Does self-efficacy have any significant influence on adolescents' career choice in Afijio Local Government of Oyo state, Nigeria?
- ii. Do children from higher socio-economic class differ from those from the lower class in the rate of career choice among secondary school adolescents in Afijio Local Government of Oyo state, Nigeria?
- iii. Does educational status of parents affects the rate of career choice among secondary school adolescents in Afijio Local Government of Oyo state, Nigeria?

2. Methods

This investigation utilised a descriptive survey research

design of the ex-post facto variety to fulfil the objectives of the study. The focus of this study was on secondary school students enrolled in SSS1, SSS2, and SSS3 within the Afijio Local Government area of Oyo State. The study involved a sample size of 200 senior secondary school adolescents, who were selected from five schools located in the Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. The stratified random sampling technique was utilised. The study utilised the Career Choice and Self-efficacy Scale, which consists of standardised instruments divided into two sections: Section A includes bio-data that gathers demographic information including age, gender, class, parental marital status, as well as parents' educational qualifications and occupations. The subsequent section features a career choice scale and a self-efficacy scale.

2.1 Career Choice Scale

The Career Choice Scale (CCS) is a psychological instrument intended to assess an individual's preferences and attitudes for diverse career trajectories and workplace settings. Michael Driver created the career choice measure in 1980. It has 15 items with a 4-point Likert scale for answers (e.g., Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree). The author indicated an internal dependability coefficient (alphas) between .77 and .89. In this investigation, the researcher found split-half reliabilities of .75 and .88, respectively, along with a psychometric characteristic of .93.

2.2 Self-Efficacy Scale

The self-efficacy scale was created by Rowbotham and Schmitz in 2013. The scale was designed to assess an individual's perceptions regarding their abilities to meet expected performance levels and attain specific goals or milestones. The scale consists of ten items utilising a Likert response format, which spans from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD). The scale was modified for the purposes of the study. The instrument demonstrated an internal consistency of 0.84. The scale underwent revalidation, achieving an internal consistency of .89.

A letter of introduction was obtained from the Department of Educational Psychology at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. This letter was then distributed to five selected schools within the Afijio Local Government area of Oyo State to facilitate data collection.

The individual sought permission from the principal of each school for the successful administration of the instruments. The analysis of the study's data employed inferential statistics. Data analysis was conducted using linear regression at a significance level of 0.05.

3. Results

Hypothesis 1: Does self-efficacy have any significant influence on career choice among secondary school adolescent students' in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo state

Result from Table 1 shows that there was significant relationship between self-efficacy and career choice ($r = .740^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that self-efficacy had significant influence on the career choice of senior secondary school adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: Do children from higher socio-economic class differ from those from the lower class in the rate of career choice of secondary school adolescent students in Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo state

Table 2 elucidates the distinctions in career choices among adolescent students in Afijio Local Government, categorised by socio-economic class, specifically contrasting those from higher and lower socio-economic backgrounds. The findings indicate that socio-economic class did not exert a significant impact on the career choices of adolescent students in Afijio Local Government [$t(200) = 1.69$; $p > .05$]. Moreover, individuals from both higher socio-economic class ($X = 64.19$; $SD = 9.78$) and lower socio-economic class ($X = 62.27$; $SD = 8.19$) exhibited comparable patterns in their career choices.

Hypothesis 3: Does educational status of parents affects the career choice of adolescent students in Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo state

The data presented in the table indicates a noteworthy correlation between the educational status of parents and the career choices made by individuals ($r = .612^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that the educational background of parents significantly influences the career decisions of students in the Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State.

4. Discussion of findings

The first hypothesis posits that self-efficacy exerts a significant influence on the career choices of adolescents in the Afijio Local Government area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings indicated that self-efficacy exerted a considerable influence on the career choices of senior secondary school adolescents. This assertion corroborates the findings of Obiunu and Ebunu (2023), who demonstrated that self-efficacy, serves as a significant predictor of career choice among college students, employing multiple regression analyses. Consequently, it is logical to assert that self-efficacy, as assessed through an individual's perception of risk, would serve as a predictor of career selection. A notable study carried out by Ajibola, Emeghe, Oluwunmi, and Oni (2021) meticulously investigates the connections between self-efficacy and career choice. The findings of these researchers indicate a notable correlation between self-efficacy and considerations surrounding career selection. The second hypothesis indicated that there is a distinction in career choices between adolescents in secondary schools from higher socio-economic backgrounds and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds in the Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. The study

Table 1: The summary table showing significant influence between self-efficacy and students' career choice

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Df	R	P	Remark
Career choice	43.1443	7.11099	200	198	.740**	.05	Sig.
Self-efficacy	34.1214	7.09966					

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 2: Linear regression Independent Samples showing the difference between higher socio-economic class and lower socio-economic class on career choice of students

Variable	Students	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P
Career Choice	Higher socio-economic class	177	64.19	9.78	1.69	198	> .05
	Lower socio-economic class	105	62.27	8.19			

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 3: The summary table showing significant relationship between educational status of parents and career choice of students

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Df	R	P	Remark
Career choice	43.1443	7.11099	200	198	.612**	.05	Sig.
Parent Educational Status	37.1086	7.32514					

Source: Field Study, 2024

indicated that there exists no distinction in career choices among secondary school adolescents in Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State, regardless of their socio-economic class, whether higher or lower. This observation aligns with the conclusions drawn by Getange and Sagwe (2023), who articulated that the connection between socio-economic status and children's career choices is grounded in particular beliefs and behaviours. Mberia and Midigo (2021) posited that socio-economic status significantly influences the career choices made by students. The analysis of students' socio-economic status indicates that those from the middle class exhibit superior performance in career choice compared to their counterparts from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Degol, Wang, Zhang, and Allerton (2018) posited that the socio-economic status significantly influences students' career choices.

The third hypothesis posits that the educational background of parents influences the career choices of adolescents in the Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. The study indicated that the educational background of parents significantly influenced the career choices of adolescents in the Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. This assertion aligns with the findings of Gacohi, Sindabi, and Chepchieng (2021), who demonstrated that parental educational status significantly influences career choice. Olsson and Martiny (2018) discovered that the educational status of parents significantly impacts career choices, leading peers to become distracted and lose focus in pursuit of their true aspirations. Lyon, Elliott, Ware, Juhasz, and Brown (2021) discovered that the

educational status of parents significantly influenced career choices, surpassing the impact observed among peers with parents possessing lower educational attainment, even when accounting for other critical variables associated with parental education. However, not all research has indicated that peers from families with elevated educational backgrounds are associated with more advanced career choices. Brandes, Herzhoff, Smack, and Tackett (2019) demonstrate that children encounter more significant challenges in career selection as a result of their parents' lower educational attainment in comparison to their peers.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study offers valuable insights into the relationship between self-efficacy and career choice among secondary school adolescents in the Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. It was also disclosed that self-efficacy exerted a considerable influence on the career choices of senior secondary school students; however, no discernible difference was observed between the higher and lower socio-economic classes regarding the career choices of adolescent students in the Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. The educational background of parents significantly influenced the career decisions of students in the Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. This discovery underscores the significance of acknowledging and addressing students' self-efficacy, as well as the educational and socio-economic backgrounds of their parents. By doing so, a connection can be fostered between students and parental involvement, which may influence positive decision-making regarding career choices.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, it is recommended that:

1. It is imperative that career guidance be systematically organised by counsellors and mandated in educational institutions to aid adolescents in making informed decisions regarding their professional paths.
2. Parents ought to engage in diligent oversight of their children while fostering an environment of transparency, robust communication, attentive involvement, and both emotional and material support, all of which can empower students to assert themselves in their career decisions.
3. The government ought to regulate media activities via a board of censors to scrutinise all programs broadcasted. All programs centred on career selection ought to be meticulously regulated and scrutinised.

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