

## VOCATIONAL INTEREST AS A CORRELATE OF RE-ENTRY OF ADOLESCENTS INTO SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

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### ABSTRACT

*The study sought to find out the relationship between vocational interest and re-entry of adolescents into school. Three hundred and three (303) adolescents from three educational institutions in Delta State were use for the study. Two research hypotheses and one research question were raised to guide the study. Three research instruments were used; they are the vocational interest inventory (VII), the socio-economic status instrument (SESI) and the instrument on re-entry into school by adolescents (IRIS). Data were analyzed using regression analysis. The result showed that there was a significant relationship between vocational interest and re-entry of adolescents into school. It is recommended that vocational guidance and counselling services should be rendered to adolescents with a major objective of identifying and harnessing their potentialities. In addition, cognitive behavioural counselling like rational emotive therapy can be used in counselling adolescents who re-entred schools, with a view to changing their perception of their past. If this is done their self-esteem will be enhanced and their potentials optimally realized.*

### INTRODUCTION

The period of adolescence, which many psychologists have described as that in which emotional, psychological and physiological changes take place at a bewildering rate, coincides with the time when most adolescents are faced with the issue of vocational choice. When adolescents find themselves in a situation where they are faced with the issue of vocational choice, a number of factors come into play especially in influencing the decisions they make with regard to the available options. Such factors may be external, accidental, social, psychological or economic amongst others. Interest or choice is one of the three aspects of vocational development among aspiration and preference. Vocational interest refers to what an individual will readily want to do after considering his chances of actually entering into the occupation. It is important to note that an indication of interest in a vocation is regarded as one of the points in life at which a young person is called upon to state rather explicitly his concept of himself.

Super (1990) found that choosing a career is one of the most important decisions students have to take in determining their future lives. In doing this Salami (1991) observed that many Nigerian youths go into unsuitable careers due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of the prestige attached to certain jobs, without adequate career counselling and vocational guidance. Consequently most youths end up indicating their vocational interest in fields that are not suitable for them and in careers that do not give them fulfillment. Therefore, they find themselves unable to contribute meaningfully towards national development.

Acuram, Caluna, Cadeli and Alcisto (2007) in their study found that majority of the students were greatly influenced in their occupational choice by interest, aptitudes, family members, employment opportunities, and accessibility of schools offering the preferred courses. On the other hand, Borchet

(2002) found that when it comes to indication of interest in a vocation, every individual has a unique history that determines his/her perception of the world of work. This history, according to him is created in part by the child's environment, personality and opportunities.

Gottfredson (2005) found that by age 13 – 14 years adolescents have developed two cognitive competences about occupations; these areas of competence include: self concept and perceptions about occupations. A major aspect of the life-span theory of career development is the self-concept. In this regard, individuals must be able to understand their interests and skills as a key to satisfaction in a chosen vocation or career. This is because individuals seek career satisfaction through work roles in which they can express themselves and implement and develop their self-concepts. Interests are personal because two individuals may be interested in the same occupation for different reasons.

It is important for one to indicate an interest in a vocation, and at the same time be able to sustain the vocation. No wonder Alika (2010) opined that the sustainability of a career may depend to a large extent on the provision of the right vocational guidance and counselling to individuals, in line with the individuals' potentials and capabilities. However, the selection of a particular career is influenced by some factors among which are peer group influence, parental influence, socio-economic status, counselling vocational interest, self-concept among others (Alika and Egbochuku 2008, Alika and Osa-Edoh 2009).

Low socio-economic status could be a hindrance to school completion and school re-entry, because the individual may be forced to withdraw from school so as to generate money or income by way of hawking goods or working to support the family. Butler and Monk (1985) observed that poor and illiterate parents discourage their children from attending school so as to help them generate income by working. Alika and Egbochuku (2008) found that socio-economic status of parents significantly determines the re-entry of girls into school in Edo State, they observed that as the socio-economic status rises, the incidence of dropout of school is reduced and the chances of re-entry into school is enhanced. They also asserted that a girl's particular socio-economic inheritance may have a direct and important effect on her educational attainment.

The presence, magnitude and direction of gender discrepancy in interest and achievement in school has been a subject of intense debate among researchers. Studies on Gender and school achievement revealed that girls tend to make consistently better grades than boys, especially in primary schools. Girls often read better, spell better and are more proficient in the use of language. But at the higher levels of education, boys seem to do better (F.M.E. 1981) Adesoji and Babatunde (2008) found that gender has no influence on achievement in science. Studies have shown that females tend to rank higher than males in empathy, verbal skills, social skills and security seeking while males ranks higher in independence, dominance, and special skills (Keith, Reynolds, Patel, Ridley, 2007). Moreover, UNICEF (2004) report indicates that females are often kept at home to help the family because the social and economic value of educating females is not recognized in sub-Saharan Africa, hence female school attendance still lags severely behind that of boys.

Adolescents may have different reasons for re-entry into school. It may be as result of parental encouragement, fulfillment of the individual's self esteem and conducive environment amongst others. However, Christenson, Sinclair, Lehr, & Hurley (2002) have earlier identified the following factors as reasons for re-entry into school, based on a synthesis of information from a variety of studies.

- Supportive, nurturing family and home environment
- Interaction with and the involvement of committed, concerned educators and other adults.
- Development of perseverance, optimism and motivation to obtain a certificate.
- Positive, respectful relationship between staff and students.
- Satisfaction with the learning experience (e.g. social climate, instructional climate, school course offering, and school rules). Relevance of Curriculum.
- Fair discipline policies.

The importance of re-entry into school cannot be over-emphasized, since vocational aspiration and by implication education is the bedrock of the development of a nation. Education enhances individual skills in the arts, social sciences, technical education, science and humanities. Most of these skills are acquired in schools. Acquisition of the appropriate skill could be obtained through vocational guidance and counselling, which exposes the individual to his/her special interest, abilities and aptitudes (Izuchi, & Opara 2010).

## **THE PROBLEM**

The indication of interest in a vocation is a decision that should be carefully made because it affects the entire life of an individual; hence it is necessary that a study such as this should be carried out in order to determine the relationship between vocational interest and re-entry of adolescents into school. In view of the fact that studies have shown that the choice of a vocation is influenced by other factors other than vocational interest, for example Dick and Rallis (1991), found that parents and teachers were perceived to be highly influential in career choices of adolescents. The importance of deriving satisfaction in a chosen field based on the individual's personal or vocational interest is paramount if the nation is to derive optimal human resource development, to help in building the much desired capacity development in the nation, such that Nigeria will no longer be classified as one of the developing nations of the world, but rather a developed nation. Therefore, a study on the role of vocational interest in adolescents' re-entry into school is timely. The question then is: could it be said that vocational interest determines re-entry into school by adolescents in Delta State?

To guide this study, one research question was generated and two research hypotheses were formulated.

### **Research Question I**

To what extent does gender determine re-entry into school by adolescents?

### **Hypotheses**

1. Vocational interest does not significantly determine re-entry into school by adolescents in Delta State.
2. Socio-economic status does not significantly determine re-entry of adolescent into school in Delta State.

## **METHOD**

The survey method was adopted for the study. The population comprises all adolescents in senior secondary school who dropped out of school and re-entered school, in Aniocha South, Oshimili South and Ika South Local Government Areas of Delta State. These Local Government areas have the institutes of continuing education, National Teachers Institutes and some skill acquisition centres. The simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample size of 303 respondents from these institutes, representing 101 adolescents from each institute and centre. This was done by assigning numbers to all the students, later only subjects with even numbers were selected for the study. The average age of respondents were (mean = 20 years and a standard deviation of SD. 4.71). The instruments used for the study were the students occupational clusters preference scale (OCPS), and the instrument on re-entry into school by adolescents, which was designed by the researcher. The occupational clusters preference scale was used to measure the different occupational cluster. The occupational clusters preference scale was designed by Obiunu (2003) and it was used in the selection of the occupational clusters. These instruments were however, modified by the researcher, to suit the purpose of the study. The socio-economic status instrument was based on classification of students, using parental occupation, level of education, residence and home conveniences. In addition, parents were asked to indicate their monthly income, information given by parents was later incorporated into a categorized salary structure designed for the study. The questionnaire required the respondents to indicate their gender by filling the appropriate box, and indicate whether or not they were motivated to go back to school as a result of their gender. 51 males and 50 females were randomly selected from each institute.

## **VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT**

To determine the validity of the instrument, experts in the area of study, modified it by removing certain items that were not necessary, thereby certifying the instrument valid.

## **RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT**

To determine the reliability of the instrument it was administered to two groups of Senior Secondary school students, which were not part of the study sample. A two week re-test reliability method was carried out on the sample. The two weeks interval was to ensure that the respondents do not remember

exactly their previous responses and that the traits being measured were relatively stable among respondents in order to show consistency in scores in both tests. The scores obtained were correlated and the reliability co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained, for the vocational interest inventory (VII), 0.74 for the instrument on re-entry into school (IRIS), thus indicating that the instruments were adequate for the study.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Percentages and regression analysis were used in analyzing the data. The alpha of 0.05 level of significance was used as a standard for accepting or rejecting the hypotheses.

## RESULTS

### Research question I

To what extent does gender determine re-entry into school by adolescents?

**Table I:** The Role of gender on re-entry into school

Variable	Respondents	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Were you motivated to re-enter school as a result of your gender?	Male	89	58.2	64	41.8	153
	Female	85	56.7	65	43.3	150

Table I indicates that 89 males representing 58.2% indicated that they went back to school as a result of their gender while 64 males representing 41.8% indicated that gender has nothing to do with their re-entry into school. On the other hand, 85 females representing 56.7% indicated that they went back to school as a result of the awareness that they are females while 65 indicated No representing 43.3%.

### Hypothesis I

Vocational interest does not significantly determine re-entry into school by adolescents in Delta State.

**Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis of Vocational Interest and Re-Entry of Adolescents into School**

Analysis of Variance						
	df	SS	MS	F	Sig	
Regression	1	8352.726	8352.726	75.140	.000	
Residual	302	32758.323	111.079			
Total	303	42223.054				
Parameter Estimate						
Variable	B	SE	r	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> (adj)	
Constant	7.773	3.621				.031
Vocational Interest	.267	.029	.446	.198	.196	.000

Regressions are significant at  $P > 0.05$

All regressions are based on  $N = 303$

B = Beta Regression coefficient

SE = Standard error of b.

The result in the table above shows that the regression coefficient found for vocational interest and re-entry of adolescents was .267, significant at  $P < 0.05$  and a coefficient of determination  $R^2$ . 198 and an (Adjusted)  $R^2$  value of .196 were obtained. This value indicated that vocational interest accounted for 19% of the total variance in re-entry of adolescents into school in Delta State. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for regression data produced an F – value of at  $P < 0.05$ . The result also yielded an r of .446. The hypothesis which states that vocational interest does not significantly determine re-entry of adolescents into school is therefore rejected. It is concluded that vocational interest plays a significant role in determining re-entry of adolescents into school in Delta State.

**Hypothesis 2:** Socio-economic status does not significantly determine re-entry of adolescents into school in Delta State.

**Table 3:** Summary of Regression analysis of socio-economic status and re-entry into school by adolescents.

Analysis of Variance						
	df	SS	MS	F	Sig	
Regression	1	6478.341	6478.341	54.689	.000	
Residual	302	32577.715	115.352			
Total	303	41215.047				
Parameter Estimate						
Variable	B	SE	r	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> (adj)	
Constant	41.016	1.680				.000
Vocational Interest	8.239	1.201	.362	.153	.150	.000

Regressions are significant at  $p < 0.05$ . All regressions are based on  $N = 303$

B = Beta Regression coefficient

SE = Standard error of b

Results in table 3 shows that the regression coefficient found for socio-economic status and re-entry of adolescents into school was 8.238 significant at  $p < 0.05$  and  $R^2$  (adj) of .150 was obtained. The value indicated that socio-economic status accounted for 15% of the total variance in re-entry into school by adolescents. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for regression data produced an F-value of 54.689 which was found to be significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Thus the hypothesis is rejected. The findings indicate that there was a significant relationship between socio-economic status and re-entry into school by adolescents in Delta State. It is concluded that socio-economic status significantly determines re-entry of adolescents into school.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The result showed that both males and females indicated that their gender was a determining factor in their resolve to go back to school. This could be as a result of the believe that Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society, where the male child is accorded great respect and responsibility. The finding is in agreement with that of Keith et al (2007) who found that males ranked higher than females in independence and dominance, hence the resolve to go back to school was more among the males. On the other hand, the females could have been motivated to re-enter school as a result of the clarion call globally on the importance of educating the girl child. Probably more parents are now aware of the importance of the girl child education.

The data analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between vocational interest and re-entry of adolescents into school in Delta State. This finding could be as a result of the vital role that interest in a vocation plays in motivating adolescents to go back to school. An indication of interest in a particular vocation could motivate an individual, to strive hard in overcoming all obstacles on his/her way to attaining his/her life ambition or goal, which in this case may be interest in a particular vocation. This finding is in line with the findings of Acuram, Caluna, Cadeli and Alcisto (2007) who found that majority of the students were greatly influenced in their occupational choice by interest and aptitudes amongst other factors. Moreover, the fact that there was an urge to go back to school would have been as a result of their initial link to education and a desire to complete and accomplish what they initially started which is the completion of their education. This also is in agreement with the finding of Gottfredson (1996) who found that someone's level of educational achievement may be linked to one's vocational interest. Supporting the view above Anthanasou (2001) asserted that personal preferences that are expressed as vocational interests also exert a strong directional force on the direction and extent of educational attainment and that given the pattern of interests and educational potential of a person, it is possible to outline educational and vocational options, in order to maximize the individuals success and satisfaction.

Result also showed that socio-economic status significantly determines re-entry of adolescents into school. This finding is in agreement with that of Alike and Egbochuku (2008) who found that socio-economic status imposes considerable constraints upon continuing stay in school and re-entry into school by girls, they asserted that a girl's particular socio-economic inheritance may have a direct effect on educational attainment.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that gender is a determinant of re-entry into school by adolescents in Delta State, and that vocational interest and socio-economic status significantly determines re-entry of adolescents into school. It is recommended that vocational guidance and counselling services should be rendered to adolescents with a major objective of identifying and harnessing their potentialities. In addition, in order to ensure the attainment of optimal vocational interest by adolescents, counsellors should try to have cordial relationship with the adolescents. The provision of vocational counselling services to adolescents will help them to acquire appropriate skills which will sustain their livelihoods. Government and non-governmental agencies should create more programmes that are aimed at eradicating poverty from our society, this could be done by providing more income generating programmes. This no doubt may serve as a boost towards enhancing the socio-economic status of the less privileged ones in the society.

## IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

Vocational counsellors should enlighten students on the importance of the various vocation and the entry requirements. This should be in line with the individual's abilities and interests.

The provision of adequate vocational guidance services will help in the total development of the individual. According to Kemjika and Nwakwo (2000) one of the essential aspects of human development is vocational development.

Cognitive behavioural counselling like rational emotive therapy can be used in counselling adolescents who re-entered school, with a view to changing their perception of their past. If this is done, their self-esteem shall be enhanced and their potentials optimally realized.

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