

Assessing Career Maturity of Secondary School Students Using Developmental Theory Therapy

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Abstract

The study investigated the effects of guidance and counselling programmes on career maturity of junior and senior secondary schools students using the developmental theory. Two research questions were raised to guide the study, and one hypothesis was formulated. Quasi experimental of pre-test, post-test, two groups design was adopted for the study. Career Development Inventory of Kuti (1979) was adapted and used for data collection. The instrument is of three scales: planning orientation scale, use of resources for career exploration scale and information and decision making scale. The validation of the instrument was re-established with a coefficient of 0.65, 0.70 and 0.65 for each scale respectively. The experimental procedure was systematically carried out. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts and t-test to assess the career maturity of junior and senior secondary school students. The findings revealed that there were differences between the career maturity of students in junior and secondary school classes. It showed that students in senior classes were more matured than students in the junior classes on the issue of career maturity. The treatment also improved the career maturity and decision making skill of the participants. The study recommended that career guidance and counselling programmes should be made compulsory in secondary schools at both junior and senior classes.

Key Words: Career maturity, Developmental theory, Career guidance and counselling programme, Career decision making skills.

Introduction

The developmental theory has the assumption that vocational decision does not take place at a given point in time. Developmentalists are of the opinion that selection of occupations is made at a number of different points in one's life. They also believe that occupational decisions are a continuous process which starts in late childhood and ends in the early adulthood. Ginzberg (1951) and Super (1957), the major apostles of the developmental theory are of the opinion that there are critical and identifiable stages which an individual will pass through before finally achieving vocational or career maturity. The stages are **fantasy, tentative** and **realistic** stages.

Fantasy Stage (0-11 years): this stage of a child's occupational choice is characterised by lack of serious vocational thought, and the child feels he/she can do anything he/she fancies. Their approach to career decision making lack reality orientation, it is dominated by play orientation, children at this stage of vocational growth see and interpret work as almost the same way as they see and interpret their game or play.

Tentative Stage (12-17 years): as the child matured into this stage, which corresponds with an adolescent period, the individual considers work

first on the basis of interest, then value, ability, and capabilities in that order. How all these fit with job requirements and rewards of the job are combined in the decision making.

Realistic Stage (18-24 years): this period appears more flexible than the tentative stage partly because of variations in training requirements of different occupations. The individual at this stage investigates occupational opportunities for virtually the last time and options are sorted out. At this stage, choices are delimited, and the individual becomes more specific in career choice. Moreover, the individual takes action, for instance, Ogbodo (2002) found that age significantly differentiated the career preferences of her subjects in one of her studies. The students at the fantasy stage were more interested in medically related professions like medicine, nursing, pharmacy than those students who are at the realm of the realistic stage of life. Gesinde (1986) in one of his research works in Nigeria also discovered that students at the lower level of secondary school were more attracted by the glamour and prestige of some career than the students in the middle and upper classes. This buttress the point that, the higher the level of Education, the more realistic they become in career maturity and decision making.

The developmental theory has a number of implications for the work of school counsellors in using this to determine the tasks to be accomplished in each stage, also to specify the current job information to be provided. Individual abilities, needs, interest, and values should be explored and combined with environmental factors to help the individual to make a right career decision through self-knowledge and understanding of the world of work. Since career development is viewed as a lifelong process, the major concept of developmental theory suggests that individuals made a change during developmental stages and adapted to changing life roles. Students should project self into the work environment during the exploration stage and integrate a realistic self-understanding into the world of work. A system of developmental tasks over the lifespan provides key points for counselling interventions. The counsellor's role in the school is to evaluate the many unique developmental needs of each student when establishing counselling goals. Super's (1954) developmental theory perceives the individual as moving through a series of life stages each of which is characterized by different vocational developmental tasks which elicit varying vocational behaviour. This implies that the thoroughness with which the individual deals with these tasks were reflected in the career decisions to be made at the end of each stage. It is therefore noted in the theory that coping with the process leading to career maturity via successful handling of the developmental tasks associated with the vocational life stages will enhance the manifestation of appropriate career decision to be made.

The treatments in this study were drawn from the developmental model. This model was guidance and counselling programmes to arrive at behaviour change of sampled subjects toward career maturity. The developmental model has been built from the premise that career development is a lifelong process and career counselling needs of the individual must be met at all these stages in life (Gelso and Fretz, 2001). The developmental model also stresses the necessity of discovering each student's uniqueness and developmental needs. The model was applied to students in open-ended group career discussion class with no "right" answers with the greater opportunity given to these students to

make decisions. Two approaches to career maturity have been found to be feasible to this research work the career guidance, this technique emphasises direct cognitive giving of information to clients. The approach here is structured and leader-centered. The important assumption behind the career guidance is that the individual who has been formally exposed to occupation information will make more appropriate career decision than individual not exposed. The second approach to career maturity is group career counselling — this method focuses on the orientations that are related to the expression of feeling and attitude in a group setting. The assumption of the technique is the active participation of the individuals in the clarification of feeling about a career decision. With this procedure, the facilitator merely helps in the expression of feeling, clarifies reactions and stimulates productive interaction among members, and this is referred to as client-centered.

The purpose of this study was to find out the effects of career guidance and career counselling programmes on career maturity of junior and senior secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

Two questions were raised to guide the study, and they are:

1. What is the career maturity status of Junior secondary school (JSS) and senior secondary school (SSS) students in Ekiti State, Nigeria before treatment?
2. Is there any difference in the career maturity of students in JSS and SSS classes?

Based on the research questions raised, one null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H: There is no significant difference in the career maturity of students in JSS and SSS classes.

Methodology

The study employed the use of quasi-experimental design of two experimental groups and one control group. The population for the study was all the Junior secondary school and all the senior secondary school students in Ekiti State as at the time of the study. The sample was selected through stratified random sampling.

Instrument

The instrument for data collection was an adapted version of the Career Development Inventory of Kuti (1979). The instrument consisted of three scales: planning orientations, use of resources for career exploration and information and decision making scale. The first two scales measure attitudinal components of individuals, while the third scale measures the cognitive components of career decision making skills.

Validation of the instrument

The face and content validity of the instrument has been done by Kuti (1979) who attested to the validity of the instrument when it was used on a group of class two secondary school students. He reported the validity coefficient of the scales as 0.75, 0.62 and 0.69 respectively. However, the instrument validity was re-established by the test-re-test method on a set of twenty-five students selected outside the subjects used for the study; the instrument was administered twice on the subjects within two weeks interval, the sub-scale co-efficient of 0.65, 0.70 and 0.65 respectively were obtained. This validity coefficient was adjudged high enough to determine the consistency of the instrument.

Treatment procedure

There were two sets of students, the first set was the junior secondary school students, specifically, JSS 2 students and the second set of the students was drawn from senior secondary school class 2, that is, SSS 2 students. The pre-test of career development inventory was administered on all the JSS 2 and SSS 3 students selected for the study in their different school locations. All the students that scored 81-323 were regarded as being career matured, but those students that scored below 80 marks were regarded as poor performance and had lower career maturity. The subjects that were regarded as immature in career decisions were selected for treatment in each of the classes using career guidance and counselling method. The two groups, that is, JSS 2 and SSS 2 group were attended to in their various schools and data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Question 1: What is the career maturity status of the junior secondary school (JSS) and senior

secondary school (SSS) students in Ekiti State before treatment?

Table 1: The frequency counts and percentages of JSS and SSS students' career maturity status before treatment.

Classes	Mature		Immature		Total
	N	%	N	%	
JSS	40	8.34%	200	41.66%	240
SSS	70	14.58%	170	35.42%	240
Total	210	22.92%	370	77.08%	480

Table 1 revealed that 40 students from JSS classes representing 8.34% of the sampled students demonstrated career maturity, while 200 students (41.66%) were immature in career decision making, 70 students from SSS classes representing 14.5% of the sampled students were matured in career decision making, while, 170 students (35.42) were regarded as immature in career making decision. This implies that only 110 students representing 22.92% of both JSS and SSS classes were regarded as matured in career decision making, while, 370 students representing 77.08 in both classes that constituted the majority of the students were immature in career decision making.

Histogram Illustrating JSS and SSS Students' Career Decision Making before Treatment.

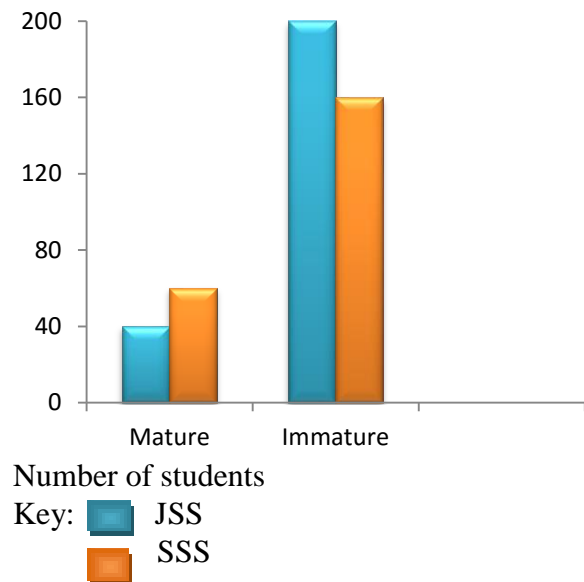


Fig 1 career maturity status

Fig 1 illustrates the JSS and SSS students' career decision making based on their maturity in choosing

a career on the basis of the level of education they have attained. The histogram clearly shows the difference between students from junior and senior secondary schools as regards their consciousness and planning toward career choice. It shows that students from SSS were more conscious and had better planning toward their future career than the students in JSS classes. This revelation clearly revealed that those students in lower classes are at the stage in which there is no serious planning for career decision, but the few students in the senior secondary school that demonstrated having a mature tendency toward career decision making are those that operate at the tentative stage as described in the developmental theory of career choice.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the career maturity of students in JSS and SSS classes.

The hypothesis was set to find out if the classes of students would have any significant difference in career maturity of students. After treatment has taken place in each of the groups using guidance and counselling method. These set of students were post-tested in their various schools. To test the only hypothesis formulated, however, the post test mean scores were subjected to t-test analysis as presented below.

Table 2: t-test comparison of career maturity of JSS and SSS students after treatment.

Class	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tb
JSS	137	94.55	24.36	267	2.19	1.96
SSS	132	102.29	32.95		6	6

P < 0.05 (significant)

The results in table 2 reveal that the t-test calculated value (2.196) is greater than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in career maturity of students in JSS and SSS classes.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed a general low career maturity among the students in both Junior and Senior secondary schools in Ekiti State. This implies that the majority of secondary school students in Ekiti State of Nigeria lack career

decision making skills. These findings were in line with Okon (2001) that the majority of secondary school graduates left school without the knowledge of what is awaiting theirs in the world of work. Probe through the only hypothesis formulated to find the interaction effect of classes on career maturity of students in both Junior and senior secondary school revealed that there is a significant difference in the career maturity of students in JSS and SSS classes. The results are in support of the finding of Ogbodo (2002) that found age difference in the career preference. The students at JSS classes were regarded as the students operating at fantasy stage where students at this level of education were more interested in all prestigious careers. Gesinde (1976) in one of his studies also discovered that students at the lower level of secondary school were more attracted by glamour and prestige of some career than the students in the middle and upper classes. The finding of Gensinde (1986) supports the outcome of this study. The finding of this study also established the fact that using career guidance and counselling programme would be of benefit to students to foster career maturity and decision making skills. The study also emphasises the role of school counsellors in evaluating the many unique developmental theory perceives***** individual as they are moving through a series of life stages each of which is characterized by different vocational developmental tasks which elicit vocational behaviour of individuals. This was also in line with (Gelso and Fretg, 2001) who opined that the developmental model had been built from the premise that career development is a life-long process and career counselling needs of the individual must be met at all the stages in life.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Generally, there are low career maturity and career decision making skills among the secondary school students, both at Junior and senior secondary school in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The results also revealed that there is a significance difference in career maturity and decision making skills of JSS and SSS students. On the basis of the findings, it is recommended that career guidance and counselling programmes should be made compulsory at all levels of education, that is, the school should place emphasis on group guidance and counselling at both Junior and Senior secondary school levels.

This programme will prepare students for subject combinations that will determine their future career. The study also suggests the need to incorporate career education into the secondary school programmes and curriculum in Nigeria.

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