

SEX DIFFERENCES IN CAREER MATURITY OF NIGERIAN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

This study investigated sex differences in the career maturity of Nigerian adolescents. 651 Nigerians adolescents drawn from four Federal Government Colleges were administered the Career maturity Inventory Attitude Scale. The result of t-test indicated that Female Nigerian adolescents have a significant higher mean score than the Males. The implications of this finding were discussed in relation to career counselling of Nigerian adolescents

Introduction

Assessing career maturity and devising means to further its development have become increasingly important concerns of researchers, counsellors and programme designers (Miller, 1978). The concept of career maturity could be traced to the work of Carte (1940), who studied the development of interest, in adolescents. However, the first explicit definition of career maturity was offered by Super (1955) to mean the dimensions along which to measure the factors of orientation to vocational choice, crystallization of traits, information and planning, consistency and wisdom of Vocational preferences. In an attempt to further explain these factors, Super and Overstreet (1960) developed the Career Pattern study Model (CPS) to measure and indicate the indices or factors of career maturity. From this model, Super (1977) defined career maturity as the ability to cope with the career development tasks with which one is confronted.

Since the development of the Career Pattern Study Model (CPS), increasing attention has been given to the importance of how some psychological, social physiological and environmental factors influence the career behaviour and maturity of adolescents. This assertion falls in line with Karayini's (1981) observation that career maturity seems to be a reflection of general personality development and must be taken into consideration in effective vocational counselling more so that career matured individuals are more mature not only in

occupational attitudes, but also in personality characteristics. The basic assumption behind this observation assertion is that adolescence being the age of career exploration (approximately between the ages of 15 and 24) the matured individual is characterised by playfulness, awareness and the use of appropriate resources. Knowledge about participation in the world of work and ability to integrate and execute career decision (Super and Overstreet, 1960; Dilley, 1965.; Jordan and Heyde, 1979).

However, in the Nigerian society, most adolescents tend to demonstrate behaviour and attitudes analogous to Super and Over street's (1960) description of the vocationally immature (Ipaye, 1989). It is this anomaly that the National Policy on Education was aimed at correcting when it categorically stated that:

In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post primary institutions (NPE,1981, p.30).

Although career development theories give only cursory attention to differences in career development between males and, females, it is obvious that career maturity in both sexes would differ. This idea emerged from Crites' (1973) assertion that career maturity is a part of general development and adjustment, as such sex differences are likely to occur, moreso that advanced biological maturity of girl, is different from that of boys(Herr and Cramer, 1979).

However, few studies that have attempted to investigate sex differences in career behaviour in general and maturity in particular have yielded inconsistent findings. Hollander (1971) in his study attempted to test the hypotheses that at about the age of fifteen, girls tend to get set in career earlier than boys, even though they may enter a career pattern with less thought than boys because of the residual effects of stereo- typing of choices they are encouraged to pursue. The results further revealed that significantly more females than males report a definite vocational choice during this period. Hollander(1971) went further to confirm Hallighurst's (1965) earlier suggestion that counselling for girls should be

different from that of boys. In another study, Entwisle and Greenberger (1972) explored the effects of adolescents' 'sex, race, IQ, social class and residential locus on their attitudes toward women's work role. The findings showed a marked difference between boys and girls concerning the women's role, with boys consistently holding more conservative opinions. Farmer (1976), in her review of research literatures reported that achievement and career motivation in girls differ from that of boys as a result of several poorly defined factors. From different perspectives, the Studies of Onyejiaku (1985) and Kammer (1987) revealed that there are no sex differences in the career maturity of adolescents. For instance, Onyejiaku (1985) investigated intra-sex differences in the maturity of Nigerian adolescents and reported that there were similarities in the mean scores between boys and girls in each of the dimensions of career maturity measures.

Despite all these findings, a lot of areas as regards the career maturity of Nigerian adolescents are yet to be filled. For instance, none of these studies, i.e. Hollander (1971), Entwisle and Greenberger (1972), Farmer (1976), Onyejiaku (1985), And Kammer (1987) seems to have used Nigerian adolescents.

Even the study of Onyejiaku (1985) that attempted to do so used adolescents from only Bendel, Cross River, Imo, Anambra, Rivers and Oyo States, which are not fully representative of the entire Country. In a study of this nature, the researcher should be able to draw his/her samples from a wide spectrum of Nigerians to warrant a generalization. In this way, the results obtained would be valid and useful in understanding career development and allows for greater accuracy in career counselling and further the understanding of ways in which complex factors in career development are related. It is the identified gaps, inherent in the previous studies cited above, that the present study intends to fill.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to investigate further whether male and female Nigerian adolescents would score differently on the Career Maturity Inventory Attitude Scale measures. In addressing this issue, the

following question was posed: Do. Male and female students differ in their Career maturity Attitude?

Method

Sample: The sample consisted of 651 Nigerian adolescents (281 boys and 370 girls) selected from four Federal Government Colleges. The analysis of these samples by states indicated that it was only the Federal Capital territory, Abuja that was not represented. This thus implies that the sample is a true reflection of the Nigerian adolescents, as all the 21 states were covered.

Procedure: Students were administered the Career Maturity Inventory Attitude Scale - CMI-AS (Crites, 1978). This inventory was constructed by. Crites (1978), based on his development theory. It was *formerly* called Vocational Development Inventory. The name was changed in order *to* indicate that the Career maturity Inventory measured career behaviours which mature over time and not vocational, educational or occupational status variables. The attitude scale of Career Maturity Inventory is a measure of career maturity as defined by five attitudinal clusters among which were: Involvement in the decision making, preference *for* career choice *factors* and conception of the choice process. According to Crites (1978), the attitude scale is meant to:

Elicit the feelings, the subjective reactions, the dispositions that the individual has toward making a career choice and entering the world of work(p.3) .

The scale consists of 50 statements taken from adolescents who came *for* vocational counselling. In Nigeria, researchers like Achebe (1982), Carew (1985), Onyejiaku (1985) and Onivehu (1990) have used various versions of this scale. *On* the validity and reliability of this scale, Onivehu (1990) reported that the internal consistency obtained with the Kuder-Richardson formula 20 ranged from .65 to .84 with an average of .75, while the construct validity was established by correlating the construct of career maturity with the variables of intelligence, previous working experience, special aptitudes, personality traits and composites of other variables.,

Data Analysis: The t-test statistic was used to find the significant mean difference between male and female scores on the Career Maturity Inventory Attitude Scale.

Results

Mean scores, standard errors and t-test statistics were used to analyse the data obtained for this Study. As shown in Table 1, males have N = 281, X = 30.4 and SD = 4.9. For females, N = 370, X = 31.5, and SD = 4.4. This implies that the two sexes are not significantly similar in their career maturity. The higher maturity scores of the females (mean = 31.5) indicates that they are more matured in their career development attitudes than the males.

Table 1

Means, Standard deviation and t-test for Sex Differences in Career Maturity Scores.

<u>Sex</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>SDS</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>Male</u>	<u>281</u>	<u>30.406</u>	<u>4.860</u>	.290	649	3.05	.002	P<.05
<u>Female</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>31.522</u>	<u>4.447</u>					

Discussion and Implication for Counsellors

With regards to sex differences in career maturity, this study has revealed that Sex differences exist between male and female Nigerian adolescents in their career maturity. This leads girls to, score higher than boys, on the career maturity scale. This finding tallies also with those of Hollander (1971) that by the age of fifteen years, girls are more ready for a

career than boys, even though *they* may enter a career pattern with less thought than boys because of the residual effects of stereotyping of choice *they* are encouraged to pursue. In a similar manner, the advanced biological maturity of girls that is *different* from boys (Herr& Cramer, 1979) *seems to* be applicable to their career readiness and development also.

Implication for Counselling: In this study, it has been established that female Nigerian adolescents show superiority over their male counterparts in the area of career maturity attitude. Because of these *differences*, it is important to design career counselling programmes for boys that *will* be different from girls' Specifically, the result of this study have the following implications for school counsellors and educational planners as they generate career development programmes:

1. If counsellors consider career choice as a developmental *process* and hope to *maximise career* maturity, they need to design specific activities to increase students' level of career maturity, moreso that many of them are apparently ignorant of the world of work (see NPE, 1981, p. 43).
2. Counsellors should form counselling discussion groups to encourage discussion between students of varying *abilities* and levels of readiness.
3. Counsellors should be sensitive to sex differences as the they design their career-related programmes for their clients.

In conclusion the results of this *study* have indicated that sex differences are significant when considering career developing in general and maturity in particular. Hence, if counsellors are to be *committed* to promoting the aims and objectives of the

6-3-3-4 system of education, the career development of the student ,especially at the secondary school level, should be their concern.

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