Environmental Factors As a Predictor of Students Career Choices in NDOP Central Sub-Division, North West Region of Cameroon

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Abstract:- This study was carried out on environmental Factors as a predictor of students Career Choices in Ndop Central Sub-Division, North West Region of Cameroon. Indicators of Environmental Factors were peer groups, school environment and religious groups that were used to test the relationships between environmental factors and students Career Choices. Descriptive survey design was used with the sample of 140 students randomly selected from three secondary schools (Government Bilingual High School Ndop, St. Mary Catholic Secondary School Ndop and Comprehensive High school Ndop) in Ndop Central Sub Division. The instrument used for data collection in this study was the questionnaire. Data analysis was done by means of frequency counts, percentages and Pearson test to establish the link between environmental factors and career choices of student. Findings showed a positive relationship between peer groups and secondary school student's career choices. Findings equally affirmed there was a substantial and affirming affiliation between school environment and secondary school students' career choices. Similarly, findings equally disclosed that there exists a substantial and positive relationship between religious groups and career choices of secondary school students. Based on the findings, it was recorded that school Counselors should guide students so that they can choose careers based on their personality trait and interest. This will help students to gain career satisfaction.

Keywords:- Environment Factors, Career Choice, Peer Group, School Environment and Religious Institutions.

I. INTRODUCTION

A choice of student career is a multifaceted decision since it determines the kind of profession that they intend to pursue in future. As students work toward making these choices, they face problems in matching their career choices with their abilities and school performance (Kochung and Migunde, 2011). Environmental factors are some of the problems faced by students on career choices. However, environmental factors like any other factors have an effect on the student's career choices. These environmental factors can have some impacts on career choices of secondary school students, thereby affecting them in future if not properly taken care of. Talking about the environment, we have the social, natural and the biological environment and there are factors among this three that influence student career choices. Olatunji (2003) argues that we have three types of environments that include: Natural, Biological and Social environment. He holds on the point that, the natural environment is that man's surroundings which is the product of natural process that consist of natural phenomenon such as air, water, land as well as climate and its elements. The natural environment has some influences on man as according to Brown (2002), he opined that matching temperament to well-suited environments would lead to job happiness and fulfillment. To him work related to individual personality leads to success and satisfaction. Looking at a compatible work environment by Holland and Gottfredson (1976), they argued that majority of people are in reality, Realistic-Investigative, or Artistic-Social. This means that, people will undoubtedly want to consider occupations in many category, individuals will be happy and satisfied working if they choose to do something that matches their personality trait.

Krumboltz (1976), came up with the social learning theory of career decision making that people develop happiness based on countless number of their learning experiences. Individual's observation in the environment will help to form their experiences and personal beliefs. He opined that their abilities and emotions from there either can reinforce or influences their activities positively or negatively. As a result, individuals will certainly put interest where they feel passionately by their parents and where found themselves (Krumboltz, 1993).

The consequences from experiences and observations generate an internal acceptance (whether realistic or not) that individuals then use as their pattern for making future career decisions. Fouad and Byars-Winston (2005) maintain that, when individual alterations such as interest or decision-making are exclusive, other factors that could affect a person's career decision may be cut off. To them, factors outside these individuals should also be taken into account.

Betz (1989) opined that outside influences such as religion could make people to chase career objectives. Therefore, both the internal systems and systems (factors) can affect individual career. Still in line, the objectivist theory recognized a systematic and logical relationship between a persons' character and his or her demands in a work setting (Chen, 2003). The objectivists theory holds that work-related matches can be measured and forecast (mainly through scientific assessments) and will rationally predict the type of career choice that best fits an individual.

This type of rational was leading in the early 20th century. Frank Parsons, the founder of career guidance movement (Baker, 2009 & Parsons, 1909), unlocked the doors to the practice of matching one's self to one's job qualities, which has continued to this day (Niles, 2001).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

➢ *Peer Group Influences and Students' Career Choices*

Wentzel (1991) argued that peer groups interaction has a role to play on student career plans for the future. Zellman and Quigley (1999) argued that friends shared the same educational and career orientation characterized by high educational standards that can affect student career plans for the future. Moreover, Rowe, Woulbroun and Gulley (1994) argued that the consistency of behavior among students who belong to the same or similar peer group cannot be credited or attributed entirely to peers group influences.

Peer group are important factors that influence student career choices through socialization and behavioral modification. Peer group influences may be influenced by numerous factors such as advice, situation, accident, or association. Sebald (1992) view that, the career development of an individual is always a product of the family that makes them to adopt a lifestyle. Similarly, peers are pivotal and influential in individuals' perceptions, attitudes and ideas to understand the outside world and future lives. (Baron, Kerr and Miller, 1992).

Research and scholarships on the issue of friends and peer influence suggest that peer and friends look beyond the confines of home to explore and find avenues that make their direction and self-expression more evident (Adler and Adler, 1998). Similarly, Peers groups help individual in selecting and scrutinizing feelings, opinions and thoughts in an acceptable way (Corsaro, 1992). Besides, at the level of decision making and career selection among youth today are influence by their teacher counseling (Palos, and Drobot, 2010).

Further, informational provided by friends or peers have a positively link with career choices and their behaviors. (Bellemare, Lepage and Shearer, 2010). Summarizing the contents, peer group play a significant role selecting in choosing students careers since they influence individuals either positively or negatively.

➢ *School Environment and Students' Career Choices*

Johnson (2004) say school environment influences student's career choices based on their frequent interactions with such students. He opined that such influences are common due to closer rapport with teachers than other students. Dick and Rallis (1991) say teachers are influential on girls' choices of career in schools as they tell students careers that could suit them better and not what the student want.

Research carried out in other countries with different cultures shows a different relationship among variables selected for is study. With respect to school environment, students' curiosity in a subject is an aspect that impact their career choices (Fatima et al., 2015). As such, an individual attitude towards a particular subject contributes in his or her career selection decision. Interest shown by students in some subjects will typically lead to academic performance and a possible choice of profession in the subject path. Alexander et al (2011) holds that, students love toward a subject has paramount implication when selecting a career part in life. Edward and Quinter (2012) revealed that person's inclination towards a specific field or subject is an important factor contributing to his or her career path.

In addition, students some time see themselves in a role in which personality is a determining factor that influences their chosen careers. Some careers mandate that you have the disposition to match the qualities of the occupation. For example, sales people have to be out-going.

Opportunity is an influential factor that can shape career choices for students. Opportunities explored by students in any school environment will have effects on the student career. According to Alutu (2001) career choice should be introduced in school at different levels of the academic ladder so as to prepare students with appropriate Career decision skills that will make them becomes highly imperative in schools.

➢ *Religious Institutions and Students' Career Choice*

Gostein (2003) opined a direct relation between religion and career choice. That is religious institutions assert on the choice of schools and even the areas that student concentrate on. Religious institutions to an extent are setting a predetermined career for students in their institutions. At times, this occurs irrespective of the child's capacity, interests and desires for it. Where the youth have no strong objection to the choice being made for them, they get predestined to a life career which does not suit them. One of the motives of religious institutions action is to get the children to take up the career, that the religious institutions are attractive to the institution. (Gostein, 2000). Thus, religious institutions live viciously through children.

Kinnaman, (2015) submitted that schools and career decision making signify an important prospect for faith leaders to impact students. At times, many persons do not understand how the Christian faith and the gospel ought to enlighten their career ambitions. Religious institutions and faith leaders are not as purposeful as they should be with when it comes to the issues of teaching and coaching students in the domain of career decisions. Understanding how young people hope to spend their professional lives can help faith groups and organizations better support students make clear career decisions as they discern God's calling in their lives.

According to Bassey*et al*., (2012) and Sigalow*et al*., (2012) religious institutions have a significant impact on the career selection of students, as religious leaders advice student to choose careers that don't interfere with religious programmers and the church expects children to choose a career relating to the activities they promote. Religious institutions have significant influence on the career choices of people (Bassey*et al*., 2012; Sigalow*et al*., 2012).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study was a descriptive survey and was made up of 140 participants who were secondary schools' students purposively and randomly selected from (Government Bilingual High School Ndop, St. Mary Catholic Secondary School Ndop and Comprehensive High school Ndop) Ndop Central Sub Division. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to include participants who demonstrated a range of characteristics of different series; meanwhile random sampling was used to select a number that was demographically representative and also sizable enough for the study. Questionnaire was the instrument used which was designed and self-constructed.

Conceptual Components/variables	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Variance	Number of valid cases	Number of valid items
Peer Group	0.612	0.049	15	10
School Environment	0.568	0.062	15	10
Religious Institutions	0.517	0.040	14	10
Career Choice	0.492	0.057	15	10
Integrated value mapping	**0.723**	**0.066**	**15**	**50**

Table 1:- Reliability Analysis

The overall reliability analysis of the instrument (IVM) was 0.712. Generally, when the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient value is above 0.5 especially in a context where the test items to some extent are directly related to one another, as it was the case in the context of this study, the instrument is considered valid and reliable for analysis.

IV. FINDINGS

	Test statistics	Peer Group Influence	Student Career Choices
Pearson test	R-value	1.000	.234**
	P-value	.	.007
	N	140	140
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 2:- Peer Group Influence and Student Career Choices

Statistically, finding showed that there was a very significant positive relationship between peer group and students career choices (P =0.007, far less than 0.05). The positive sign of the correlation value (R = 0.234**) implied that most of the students choose their careers based on what their peers are doing or want them to do. Therefore, the null hypothesis that state peer group has no significant influence on students' career choice was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that state peer group has a significant influence on student career choice was accepted.

	Test statistics	Environment	Career Choices
Pearson test	R-value	1.000	.278**
	P-value	.	.001
	N	140	140
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 3:- Relationship between School Environment and Career Choices of Students

Statistically, findings showed that there was a very significant positive relationship between school environment and career choices of students (P= 0.001, far less than 0.05). The positive sign of the correlation value (R = 0.278**) implied that students choose their careers based on the pressure from the school environment. Therefore, the null hypothesis that school environment has no significant influence on students choice of their careers was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states that school environment has a significant influence on career choices of students was accepted.

	Test statistics	Religious Groups	Career Choices of Students
Pearson test	R-value	1.000	.259**
	P-value	.	.002
	N	140	140
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 4:- Relationship between Religious Groups and Career Choices of Students

Statistically, finding showed that there was a very significant and positive relationship between religious groups and career choices/decision of secondary school students (P= 0.002, far less than 0.05). The constructive sign of the correlation value (R = 0.259**) inferred that students select their career choices grounded on their religious beliefs. Therefore, the null hypothesis that state religious groups has no significant effect on career choices of students in secondary school was rejected and the alternative hypothesis which states that religious groups has a significant effect on secondary school students' career choices was acknowledged.

V. DISCUSSION

➢ *Peer Groups and Students' Career Choice*
Findings showed a positive link between peer groups and the career choices of students. The study was confirmed by Osa-Edoh and Alutu (2011) who argued that, occupational and the career concerns of students are powerfully influenced by the socio-economic inheritance of students, which may from time to tome have a direct and superior effect upon the occupations open to them; or which they may find striking. Omrod, (2004) stated that students' careers choices are inclined or influenced by families, parents and peer groups as their friends advise them to go for careers that have high pay.

Wentzel, (1991) experimented that having friends who serve as academic and social resources can have a direct effect on s students' academic achievement outcomes and career plans for the future. In line, Zellman and Quigley (1999) presented that many students within a peer groups shared the same academic and career orientation categorized by high academic standards and career strategies for the future. As wanting to have the same career ambition like the others friends in the group. In divergence, Oyebode (1980) and Alika and Osa Edo (2009) state that regardless of parental and peer group influences, children choose jobs or careers that are highly regarded in the society. Furthermore, Rowe, Woulbroun and Gulley (1994) testified that the homogeneity of behavior and attitudes seen among students who belong to the same peer group cannot be credited entirely to peers' influences but on other factures like family income, gender, inadequate information about a partial career, poor orientation and parental stereotypes.

➢ *School Environment and Students' Career Choices*
Findings exposed that there was a significant and positive relationship between school environment and the career choices of students. The results obtained from the students showed that school environment greatly influence their career choices as they said. Students want to be like some of their teachers and school environment causes them to like what they want to become. Their teachers tell them about careers that could suit them better and not what they want and school counselors have been the supreme influence on students' career choices.

Dick and Rallis, (1991) supported the above facts by saying that, teachers do have an effect on students' choices of career in secondary schools. Teachers advice students on careers that could suit the student better and not what the students want. This is also, in line with their grades as a determines to their career choice, Arudo (2008) originate that students believe that their credentials can greatly impact the type of career they find themselves in and the environment does not provide facilities that promote interested career choices. Lavallee (2008) come in to clarify that external influences such as social support from peers helps to shape students' career choice.

➢ *Religious Institutions and Student Career Choices*
Findings exposed that there was a significant and positive relationship between religious groups and career choices of students. Gostein (2003) who says religious institutions influences student career choices, since some careers are considered as sin, based on different religious beliefs, supports this finding. This makes student to focus or choose careers that are acceptable by such religions. Motives of religious institutions action are to get the children to take up the career, that the religious institutions are always interested in (Gostein, 2000). Thus, religious institutions has an impact on children.

Also, Bassey*et al.*, (2012) and Sigalow*et al.*, (2012) says religious institutions influences the career choices of students. As religious leader advice student to choose careers that don't interfere with religious programmers and the church expects children to choose a career relating to the activities they promote.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Career choices of students in Ndop Central Sub-Division are being influence by peer, school environment and religious institutions. Therefore, the school counselors are encouraged to equally guide and counsel students so that they can choose careers that matches their personality so that the will be efficiency and job satisfaction.

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