

**Influence of Environment and Gender on Career Choice among Secondary School Students in Kaura Local Government Area, Kaduna State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined the influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government of Kaduna State. A descriptive research design was used and 18 secondary schools were clustered into three chiefdoms to draw a sample of 6 secondary schools using purposive sampling technique. Also, a sample of 422 students from a population of 3558 students from the three Chiefdoms was drawn using cluster sampling technique. The study developed and used a questionnaire tagged 'Environment, Gender and Career Choice Questionnaire (EGCCQ)' with correlation coefficient of 0.78. The students' career choice was based on the adoption of Career Interest Survey (CIS) and Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) developed by Bakare (1977). Descriptive statistics of simple percentage was used for the research question generated, while inferential statistics of multiple regression analysis was employed to analyse the null hypotheses developed for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that students had preferences for career choice based on gender and environment. There was a significant composite influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government of Kaduna State, with the influence of environment being relatively than that of gender. It is therefore recommended among others that students should be well counselled in the choice of career process by professional counsellors and they should take into consideration the immediate environment of the students, their gender, interest, ability, skills and personality.*

*Keywords:* gender, environment, influence, career choice, secondary students

No matter the age or level of a student, the choice of a career becomes a paramount question to provide suitable solution to. Students become aware of

the career opportunities and career choices around them as they are exposed to friends and people around them such as parents' occupations, literature, role models, television programmes, school programmes, counselling, and community activities among others as they are overwhelmed by the avalanche of occupational opportunities available to them. More so, many of them are not certain of the expected requirements and skills required for their proposed career choice and some of them have faint idea whether they would either work in private or public organizations as soon as they complete their education. Salami and Salami (2013) submitted in their study that a lot of students in secondary education level believe that, their future is a glorious adventure in which they are bound to succeed.

Career refers to a job or series of jobs you do during your working life. It is the broad opportunities that exist for lifelong vocation. It is the totality of work one does in lifetime. Gettings (2012) and Dawn (2013) in their various studies viewed career as a lifelong undertaking in which an individual has interest, feels strongly about doing it from which person generates income. McKay (2019) expressed in his study that career is what a person does to earn a living. It ranges from those that require extensive education and training to others which need hardly any preparation, they include Engineering, Carpentry, Veterinary assistant, Cashier, Teaching and Hairstylist. According to Popoola (2014), career is viewed as a profession for which one experiences regulated training over a period of time in which one intends to follow the whole of one's life. Career choice is the ability to make selection among the available job(s) opportunities to guide people for future lifework. It determines the patterns of income one is exposed to as it affects the individual personality and concept in life. It is one of the many important choices students will make in determining future plans and what they have decided would impact them throughout their lives (Ohadoma, 2014).

Several factors have been adduced to influence students' career choice in secondary schools. Edward and Quinter (2011) in their study identified multiple factors including personality, interest, self-concepts, cultural, globalization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and finance. The role of family in career choice among students cannot be neglected. Hewitt (2010) submitted in his work that most people are influenced by the career that their parents favour, others follow the career that their educational choices have opened for them, while some choose to follow their passion regardless of how much or little it will make them, whereas others choose the career that gives them income. Similarly, Mtemeri (2017) noted that family has influence on students' career choice and mothers have major role to play in this. In a like manner, Marinas, Igrret, Marinas and Prioteasa (2016) confirmed in their study on the factors influencing choice of career that career choices are influenced by family by 60%. In like manner, McQuaid and Bond (2003) found that students' perception of being suitable for a particular job is influenced by ethnic background, years spent in schools, level of achievement,

choice of subject, attitude and differences in job character. This was substantiated by Okafor (2014) that choice of career among other things is determined by a combination of personal abilities, personality type and other factors.

The influence of gender on career choice cannot be overemphasized. Gender has been viewed from different perspectives. Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) defined gender as the fact of being male or female. In the same manner, gender is seen as the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in different families, communities and cultures. Jude and Edmund (2020) posited that gender has to do with a range of characteristics that pertains to being male or female. According to a study carried out by Durosaro and Adebanye (2012) on gender as a factor in career choice readiness among senior secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State, they revealed that male and female students differ greatly in career choice readiness.

Olamide and Olawaiye (2013) investigated career choice among schools in Ogun State. The researchers randomly selected a sample of 100 students from five secondary schools which consisted of 37 males and 67 females using convenient sampling technique. The study revealed that 52% of male and 46% of female agreed that opportunity did affect career choice, while 42% disagreed for both male and female; 51% of the male and 50% agreed that personality did affect career choice while, 42% and 45% of male and female disagreed. Similarly, Simon, Ibitoye, Mabel and Zacheaus (2020) in their study on students' perception and choice of nursing profession as a career in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria revealed a positive perception of the nursing profession engendered with its attractions and desirability as a career among students. The researchers concluded that young people should be recruited into the profession and this should be done through advocacy, career counselling and positive imaging through the mass media. A similar study carried out in Zimbabwe by Mapfumo, Chireshe and Munhuweyi (2002) on career perceptions and vision of boys and girls in secondary schools confirmed a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.95$  between boys' and girls' perceptions of masculine and feminine. While Evans (2006) submitted in his study that females valued jobs attributes related to interpersonal relationship and helping others than males who valued jobs attributes related to leadership, power and higher income than females.

A study carried out to investigate the perception of students regarding the roles of teachers and parents on career choice found that parents and teachers perceived that students were prepared very well for career choice (Baraka & Rehema, 2019). A study was also carried out to assess the determinants of students' career choice in Western Uganda and findings revealed that 11% of the male students attributed their career choice to teachers influence (Peace, 2017). Freeman, Lenz and Reardon (2017) in their study on the impact of career choice on students' career decision revealed that a career course is positively influenced by students' ability to navigate the career decision-making process. A study was conducted on the impact of gender on

academic performance of one hundred and sixty students on Art-related subjects in Nasarawa state in Nigeria. The finding revealed that female students performed significantly better than male students in those subjects (Madu, 2011). Mattoo (2014) indicated in his study that girls have higher inclination towards fine Arts, crafts, households and sports activities while technical and outdoor interest were found to be higher in boys. Jude and Edmund (2020) examined the influence of gender, location and parental factors on career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo states in Nigeria. The finding revealed a significant relationship among gender, location and parental factors on the career choice of senior secondary school students. The researchers concluded that the percentage contributions of school location (environment) and gender were 7% and 9% to career choice. Another reason for the gender distinctions in career choice relates to career-related self-efficacy perceptions, or beliefs in one's ability to be successful in a wide range of career pursuits. Science intensity especially Mathematics was seen as one of the most significant dimensions of gender differences in educational choices in many developing nations and girls are less likely to perform better than boys in Mathematics and Science related courses in secondary education (Buser, Niederle, & Oosterbeek, 2014). Zagi, Ayu and Daniel (2018) conducted a study on the correlates of career choice among senior secondary schools in Tarka Local government in Benue State. The finding revealed no significant difference between male and female students on career choice.

Environment also influences the choice of career at all levels of education. Many studies have been conducted on the school environment but none has delved into the influence of immediate environment of the student or location on their career choice. Environment is a concept that has diverse meanings. The connotations range from the physical, cultural, economic and social environments. Olatunji (2003) in Adegboyega (2017) explained three types of environment which are: natural environment, biological environment and social environment. The study argued that natural environment consists of natural phenomenon in man's surroundings that exerts some influence on man's mode of living and source of income. The researcher explained that social environment is made up of all patterns of social relationship and groupings as well as the educational, recreational, religion, technological, cultural and economic opportunities created by man in the environment for the use of the mankind.

Environment is where students grow up from childhood to adulthood to receive informal, non-formal and formal education. Encyclopaedia Britannica (2002) defined environment as the complex physical factors that make up our surroundings and in turn act upon us. It is the sum total of conditions available in which an organization has to maintain its life processes and this influences the growth and development of the living organism. Students in their environment will be exposed to various groups and belief and these students are indirectly the products of the environment. Any environment that is

predominantly dominated by professional career persons would definitely have influence on the choice of career of students in such environment. Deci and Ryan (1995; 2008) noted that people may be motivated due to the social environment with which they interact. Onoyase and Onoyase (2009) examined the effects of environmental factors such as family background, school environment, religious institution, and peer group on students' choice of career. The finding revealed that a combination of these factors determines the choice of career of students.

In a study conducted by Anuja (2017) on career choice and environment, opportunity and personality on 180 Bachelor of Arts degree students of Eastern university, Sri Lanka found a significant weak relationship between environment and career choice with correlation efficient ( $r = 0.442$ ). Similarly, Adegboyega (2017) carried out a study on the environmental influence on career choice of undergraduates at university of Ilorin using Analysis of Variance and t-test to test the hypotheses formulated. The study revealed that environmental factors have influence on their career choice. The study further found no significant difference in the influence of environmental factors on the career choice of undergraduate at university of Ilorin based on gender.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Career choice is not an easy task. Students make choices of career as they progress on the educational ladder. It is a decision that involves a lot of mental activities as these choices are made. It is during this process that students determine what become of them in life and any mistake made during this period may mar their life ambitions. Several factors could be responsible for students' choices, such as family occupation, closeness to their mother, prospects of the job, peer group influence, professionals, counsellors, teachers, and environment. This study therefore examined the influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study empirically established the influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria so as to make recommendations for the improvement of career choice among secondary school students. Specifically, this study investigates the career choice of secondary school students with regards to their environment and gender. Specifically, this study:

1. Investigated the preferences by gender of career choices among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government Area, Kaduna State.
2. Investigated the composite influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government Area, Kaduna State.

3. Examined the relative influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government Area, Kaduna State.

### **Research Question**

What are the preferences by gender of career choices among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government area, Kaduna State, Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant composite influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government area, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relative influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government area, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The study clustered 18 secondary schools into three chiefdoms: Kagoro, Moro'a and Atakar. At the second stage, two secondary schools were selected from each of the three chiefdoms, which were: Government secondary schools Manchok, Government junior secondary schools, Manchok, Government secondary schools Fadan Atakar, Government junior secondary schools Fadan Atakar, Government secondary schools Mallagum and Government College, Kagoro to draw a sample of 6 secondary schools using purposive sampling technique. Also, a sample of 422 students from a population of 3558 students was drawn using cluster sampling technique from these chiefdoms. The researchers developed a questionnaire tagged Environment, Gender and Career Choice Questionnaire (EGCCQ) with correlation coefficient of 0.78. The questionnaire had two sections; the first section elicited information on the respondents' demographic data while the second section elicited responses from students on career choice based on the adaptation of Career Interest Survey (CIS) and Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) developed by Bakare (1977). Descriptive statistics of simple percentage was used for the research question generated, while inferential statistics of multiple regression analysis was employed to analyse the null hypotheses developed for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Results and Discussion**

**Research Question:** What are the preferences by gender of career choices among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government area, Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Table 1

*Preferences by Gender of Career Choice among Secondary School Students in Kaura Local Government Area, Kaduna State, Nigeria*

Professions	% of Males	% of Females
Teaching	31.0	69.0
Law	53.6	46.4
Medicals: Doctor, Nurse & Pharmacist	37.0	63.7
Business: Marketing, Accounting & Banking	48.0	49.4
Army: Police, Navy & Pilot	84.0	14.9
Pastor: Reverend, Sister & Pastor	71.4	28.6
Sports	71.4	24.6
Politics	50.0	50.0
Newscasting	0.0	100
Farming	73.7	24.3
Hair dressing	9.1	90.5
Catering	0.0	100.0
Mechanics	50.0	50.0
Acting	50.0	50.0
Driving	50.0	0.0

Table 1 shows preferences by gender of career choices among secondary school students In Kaura Local Government, Kaduna State. From the result, males showed high preference for Law (53.6%), Army such as Soldier, Airforce and Navy (84.0%), Pastoral work (71.4%), Farming (75.7%) and slightly high preference for Mechanics (50%), Driving (50%) and Politics (50%) while females had high preference for Teaching (69.0%), Catering (100%), Medicals such as Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing (68.7%), Hair-dressing (90.5%) and slightly high preference for Business such as Marketing, Accounting and Banking (49%). The above indicated that students have preference for different careers based on their gender.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant composite influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government area, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Table 2

*Model Summary of Composite Influence of Environment and Gender on Career Choice among Secondary School Students in Kaura Local Government Area*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.625	.432	.418	5.329

Table 2 shows the result of the influence of environmental and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government area, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The result shows a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .625 and multiple regression squared (R<sup>2</sup>) adjusted of .418. It

means that about 43.2% of the variance in predicting career choice was due to the linear combination of environment and gender.

Table 3  
*Analysis of Variance*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	296.145	5	45.536	16.437	.000*
Residual	571.444	417	3.013		
Total	887.598	422			

\*Significant ( $p < 0.05$ )

Table 3 shows that the observed F-ratio is statistically significant at ( $p(F=16.347) = 0.000$ ) Due to this result, the null hypothesis, which states that, there is no significant composite influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government, Kaduna is rejected.

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** There is no significant relative influence of gender and environment on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government area, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Table 4  
*Parameter Estimate of the Influence of Environment and Gender on Career Choice among Secondary School Students in Kaura Local Government Area*

Model	B	Std Error	$\beta$	t-value	Sig	P
Environment	0.368	0.247	0.345	3.256	0.000	< .05
Gender	0.357	0.254	0.256	4.453	0.001	< .05

Table 4 above shows the relative influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government, Kaduna state. The relative contributions of each of the variables revealed that environment made the highest contribution to career choice ( $\beta = 0.345$ ;  $p < .05$ ) while gender contributed ( $\beta = 0.256$ ;  $p < .05$ ) to career choice. Although, the contributions were relatively low. Therefore, the study revealed a relatively high significant influence of environment on career choice among secondary schools in Kaura Local Government in Kaduna state.

### Discussion of Findings

Basing on the research question raised and the verified hypotheses formulated, the finding revealed that secondary school students in Kaura Local Government, Kaduna state had various preferences for career choices based on gender. Majority of the male respondents indicated career preference for Pilot, Army and Law while female respondents had preference for career choice in Teaching, Nursing, Catering and Hairdressing. This finding is in line with that of Mattoo (2014) who found boys to be more inclined toward outdoor interest than girls. The present study is also in agreement with Madu (2011), who



confirmed that female students performed significantly better than males in Art-related subjects.

There was also a significant composite influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government, Kaduna state. This finding is in consonance with that of Jude and Edmund (2020) who found a significant relationship among gender, location and parental factors on the career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo states in Nigeria. The percentage contributions of environment and gender were 7% and 9% which made a total of 16% to career choice. This implies that there were other factors that could have influenced career choice apart from environment and gender.

There was a relatively higher influence of environment on career choice than gender among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government. This finding is in consonance with Adegboyega (2017) who found that the influence of environmental factor on career choice of undergraduate at university of Ilorin was average. In the current study, the percentage contributions of environment and gender to career choice were 35% and 26% respectively. This finding is at variance with that of Jude and Edmund (2020) who revealed that the percentage contributions of environment and gender to career choice were 7% and 9% respectively.

### **Conclusion**

The study was conducted on the influence of environment and gender on career choice among secondary school students in Kaura Local Government, Kaduna State and findings revealed that the students had preference for career choice based on their gender. It is evident that there is significant composite influence of gender and environment on career choice. It is apparent from the study that the environment of the learners has higher influence on the career choice of secondary school students in Kaura Local Government, Kaduna state compared to their gender. The implication of this is that students are influenced by environment and gender which help to partly explain why people go for different occupations.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the finding of this study, the following suggestions were made:

- Professional counsellors should be employed in schools to guide the students in the process of career choice and should take into consideration interest, ability, skills and personality of students.
- Workshops and seminars should be organized for parents and guardians to enable them appropriately advise their wards or children when making decisions on career choice that would affect their life.

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