

Management of Environmental Factors Associated With Career Choice among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State

DR. UKALA, C. C

Department of Educational Management Faculty of Education University Of Port Harcourt

Abstract: *This study investigated the management of environmental factors that affect senior secondary III student career choice in Rivers state. Four research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 2,980 SS III students in five LGA of rivers state. The sample size for the study was 745 respondents which represents 25% of the entire population. The sample technique used was stratified random sampling technique. An instrument titled Management of Environmental Factors for Career Choice Scale (MEFCES) was used for data collection. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation. A reliability coefficient of 0.71 was derived which testified that the instrument was reliable. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and rand order statistics, while the z test statistics was used to analyze the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The finding revealed among others that peer group influence can be managed through identification of peer group with academic ambition which can eliminate school dropout, repetition, truancy. Effective social activities (quiz, debate and cultural activities) are indispensable. Documentation of achievers in different areas of specialization will enhance career choice; provision of the required facilities in all the career areas of specialization; constant practical works for exposition and entrepreneurship education and proper career orientation. It was therefore recommended among others that the laudable policies, goals and objectives as enshrined in the National Policy of Nigerian Education should be strictly adhered to by all tiers of government as well as all the stakeholders in education. Teachers and parents should collaborate to prepare students for career awareness at an entry age and discourage them from going for quick money which invariable creates a lot of problems in the society.*

Keywords: *Management, Environment, Environmental Factors, Career, Career Choice*

Date of Submission: 29-01-2020

Date of Acceptance: 14-02-2020

I. Introduction

An Industrialist places a great importance on the manipulation of the materials he uses for the production process. As the raw materials are very essential for the operation of the industry so is the child a very important factor in the educational system of a nation. Nigeria is not an exception though the manipulation of this educational materials may assume a moral complex dimension. It is an accepted concept that "The Child" in the context embraces all those within school age - that is from the ages of six to seventeen years. This paper is conceived with mainly children in the senior secondary schools (SSIII). It deals with those environmental factors that may affect their career choice.

Career plays a very significant role in the life of individuals. It determines the sound status, the pattern of life, the income, personality of the individual among others it is a profession, an occupation that is undertaken for a significant period of a person's life and with opportunities for progress and growth. It is conceived with employment. According to Uzochukwu (2013), career is the manifestation of decisions that directs one academically, socially and politically in order to develop into future vision. This is because any decision one makes affects one's life either positively or negatively. Moreso, career determines the type of life one's operational life style and values. As a result all stakeholders in education should play a vital role in helping students in their career choices as this will significantly influence their direction, personal satisfaction, life fulfillment as well as economic and natural development.

The Nigerian National Policy on education recognizes education as the bedrock of natural, industrial, agricultural and individual development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). This has made the federal republic of Nigeria over the years to invest into the big industry to ensure that the youths are formally educated. In addition, parents, charitable organizations and other philanthropists have in their own ways, supported in the education of the youths but it seems that most students in public senior secondary schools have their interest in acquiring education and choosing careers that needs paper qualifications which will earn them high status in the society they tend to the contrary and drop out of school or first attempt the senior secondary school certificate examination and opt for career that earns them quick money which most times stem up as the insecurity and

other vices we are experiencing the society today. Among which are kidnapping, high rate of armed robbery attacks, (Gbofire) crude oil business processing.

This paper takes a critical look at the students in urban areas of Rivers State. It is widely believed that no child comes to school blank. There are powers that motivate the child's behavior right from birth. Apart from instinctive behavior, the child is highly influenced by the surrounding that he finds himself. It is axiomatic that the child's growth, behavior and attitudes are highly affected by his immediate environment. This fact illustrates the diverse attitudes including the career choices. For instance a child born in an indolent environment is seen to have traces of laziness in his adult/industrial life while a child from a surrounding of craftsmen seems to have strong affinity for crafts.

A child's concept of life is highly influenced by his environment which comprises of the home, his surrounding and people he mixes with at the church, market, play circles, school and society. There is the saying "tell me who you go with and I will tell you who you are" what then is the case of environmental factors that affect the child's choice of career in Rivers state. A peer could mean anyone you look up to in terms of behaviour and influence mostly of the same age bracket. A peer depicts one with close relation and association. A peer is one that is in a group with similar purpose (Obi, 2016). It could be seen as someone you associate with in behaviour would be of almost equal to your age or ability (Adaba, 2017). Pressure implies forcing people to do something that they ordinarily would not want to do. According to Abuchi (2011), peer pressure refers to the undue influences that peers can have on each other.

Ovundah(2010) defined peer pressure as the ability of people from the same social rank or age to influence another of same age bracket. Many of the likely activities of the peers can be having a negative influence on one another. Some of these consequences and influences may be to practice truancy, examination malpractice, fighting, prostitution, use of drugs or alcohol, smoking and cultism. Peer pressure in the school system may adversely affect students' academic record. Peer pressure may be linked to career choice. Ade (2015) reported that peer pressure affects students' career decision in secondary schools in Ekiti State. Similarly, Owuka (2016) found that majority of the students end up making career decision based on the type of group they were previously a member. The peer group activities are mostly noticeable in the school environment.

School environment is a formal setting where academic activities take place. School environment is characterized with the provision and availability of equipment's, facilities, policies and regulations. Proper management of school environment can encourage collaboration and synergy among students and teachers. A good school environment can promote learning which can expose students to areas of academic weakness and strength (Abubaka, 2017). It was revealed that family background, peer group pressure, societal valued jobs and the school environment directly influence students' choice of career (Omotere, 2010). Exposition to the areas of strength and weakness will enhance students' choice of career according to their areas of strength. School environment that accommodates socialization may encourage learning. According to Simeon (2018) school environment is required for imitation and modeling of desired character and career. Similarly, Whiteman (2016) submitted that the easiest means of career identification and decision is through socialization. This goes on to emphasize that social environment creation can enhance career choice and development. Interestingly, Raveanther (2017) reported that environment factors do not have huge importance to choose their career decisions because the findings reveal that environment had weak relationship with career choice. The management of environmental factors are most of the time difficult to achieve. Study by Joshi, Pandt and Kuma (2005) showed that 89% of government schools and 45% of private schools have poor environmental conditions. Joshi, Pandt and Kuma further stated that 69% of government school pupils are suffering from health problems directly related to environmental conditions at school, while only 22% of private school pupils show symptoms of similar health problems. It was also revealed that most of the government schools don't have standard classrooms, good sports facilities, portable drinking water, and pure light and ventilation in place, when compared to private schools which may affect their career choice and development (Joshi, Pandt & Kuma, 2005).

Rivers State is a commercial hub that produces the highest quantity of crude oil that runs the economy of the country. It is the center of industrial life of Nigeria. It houses most oil companies in their flashing cars plying the highways doing their business and most times polluting the environment rendering the fishermen and farmers with no value of their means of livelihood. Moreover, people who hardly passed their school certificate examination or even had a good grade as university graduate who had the opportunity of going into politics enjoy the same affluence while people who had better career seems to be suffering as civil servant and professionals in their various field. It is against the background that the researcher set off to investigate the environmental factors that affect senior secondary schools students' career choice in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study was aimed at investigating management of environmental factors associated with career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the ways peer group pressure can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. Determine ways school environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. Ascertain ways social environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
4. Investigate the challenges in managing environmental factors associated with career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study.

1. What are the ways peer group pressure can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State?
2. In what ways school environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State?
3. What are the ways social environments can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State?
4. What are the ways challenges of environmental factors associated with career choice can be managed among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways peer group pressure can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways school environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways social environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
4. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the challenges in managing environmental factors associated with career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

II. Methodology

The population of the study consisted of 2,980 (1332 females and 1648 males) SS III students in five LGA of Rivers State. The sample size for the study was 745 (333 females and 412 males) respondents which represents 25% of the entire population. The sample technique used was stratified random sampling technique. An instrument titled Management of Environmental Factors for Career Choice Scale (MEFCES) was developed and used by the researcher for data collection. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation. A reliability coefficient of 0.71 was derived which testified that the instrument was reliable. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and rand order statistics, while the z test statistics was used to analyze the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

III. Results

Research Questions 1: What are the ways peer group pressure can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores on ways peer group pressure can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State

S/N	Ways peer group pressure can be managed for career choice	Mean	Std	Decision	Mean	Std	Decision
1	Identification of peer group with right ambition can enhance my career choice	3.03	.66	Agree	3.12	.50	Agree
2	Resistance of undue pressure from the group against my career choice	3.31	.78	Agree	3.12	.47	Agree
3	Dissociation with peer group of no academic purpose	3.14	.92	Agree	3.27	.49	Agree
4	Undue pressure from the group can lead to drop out from school	3.34	.78	Agree	3.15	.48	Agree
5	Avoiding groups that influence one negatively will avert class repetition	3.44	.88	Agree	3.14	.39	Agree
6	Peer group influence can lead to truancy which may affect career choice	2.64	.48	Agree	3.16	.48	Agree

Grand mean and standard deviation	3.15	0.75		3.16	0.47	
--	-------------	-------------	--	-------------	-------------	--

Table 1 revealed that items with serial numbers 1 to 6 have their various mean values above the criterion mean value of 2.50 and were agreed by the respondents as ways peer group pressure can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The ways peer group influence can be managed are by identification of peer group with right ambition which can eliminate school dropout, repetition, truancy, there should be resistance to undue influence from the group and dissociation from peer group with no academic purpose.

Research Questions 2: In what ways school environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores on ways school environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State

S/N	Ways of managing school environment for career choice	Mean	Std	Decision	Mean	Std	Decision
7	Documenting achievers in different areas of specialization will enhance career choice	2.77	.76	Agree	3.17	.63	Agree
8	Provision of the required facilities in all the career areas of specialization	3.14	.85	Agree	3.18	.69	Agree
9	Constant practical works for exposition can enhance career choice	2.83	.73	Agree	3.34	.55	Agree
10	Entrepreneurship education can lead to career choice	3.44	.72	Agree	3.14	.531	Agree
11	Proper orientation in the school on career can enhance career choice	2.54	.92	Agree	2.57	.68	Agree
	Grand mean and standard deviation	2.94	0.79		3.08	0.62	

Table 2 showed that items with serial numbers 7 to 11 have their various mean values above the criterion mean value of 2.50 and were agreed by the respondents as the ways school environment can be managed for students' career choice in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The various ways school environment can be managed for students' career choice are through: documentation of achievers in different areas of specialization will enhance career choice; provision of the required facilities in all the career areas of specialization; constant practical works for exposition and entrepreneurship education and proper career orientation.

Research Questions 3: What are the ways social environments can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation scores on ways social environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State

S/N	Ways social environment can be managed for career choice	Mean	Std	Decision	Mean	Std	Decision
12	Exposition of students to field trips	3.24	.72	Agree	2.58	.69	Agree
13	encouragement of synergy through teamwork	2.67	.91	Agree	2.57	.84	Agree
14	Effective social activities (quiz, debate and cultural activities) can influence my career choice	3.04	.88	Agree	2.98	.33	Agree
15	Modeling of astute can enhance my career choice	3.11	.75	Agree	3.26	.53	Agree
16	Imitation of seasoned celebrities can influence my career choice	2.63	.79	Agree	2.97	.49	Agree
	Grand mean and standard deviation	2.94	0.81		2.87	0.58	

Table 3 showed that items with serial numbers 12 to 13 have their various mean values above the criterion mean value of 2.50 and were agreed by the respondents as the ways social environment can be managed for senior secondary school students' career choice in Rivers State. The various ways social environment can be managed are through: exposition of students to field trip; encouragement of synergy through teamwork; effective social activities (quiz, debate and cultural activities) can influence my career choice; modeling of astute, and imitation of seasoned celebrities.

Research Questions 4: What are the ways challenges of environmental factors associated with career choice can be managed among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation scores on the challenges in managing career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State

S/N	Challenges in managing career choice	Mean	Std	Decision	Mean	Std	Decision
17	Indecision among students on their dream career	2.67	.65	Agree	3.08	.49	Agree
18	Insufficient counseling centers in the secondary schools	2.64	1.02	Agree	3.06	.42	Agree
19	Lack of seriousness on the part of the counselors	2.73	.73	Agree	3.16	.62	Agree
20	Poor attitude of the school towards counseling	3.14	.92	Agree	3.14	.35	Agree
21	Inadequate counselors to match the number of counselees	3.44	.88	Agree	2.96	.49	Agree
22	Poor orientation on the importance of making the right career choice	2.64	.48	Agree	2.86	.65	Agree
23	Parental influence hinders the management of students' career	2.77	.77	Agree	3.10	.65	Agree
	Grand mean and standard deviation	2.86	0.78		3.05	0.52	

Table 4 showed that items with serial numbers 17 to 23 have their various mean values above the criterion mean value of 2.50 and were agreed by the respondents as the challenges in the management of environmental factors for senior secondary school students' choice of career in Rivers State. The various challenges in the management of environmental factors for career choice are: indecision among students on their dream career; insufficient counseling centers in the secondary schools; lack of seriousness on the part of the counselors; poor attitude of the school towards counseling; inadequate counselors to match the number of counselees; poor orientation on the importance of making the right career choice, and undue parental influence.

Hypothesis 1: there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways peer group pressure can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test on the difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways peer pressure can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students

Categories	N	mean	Std	df	z-cal	p-val.	Alpha level	Decision
Male students	333	18.89	3.63	743	.318	0.06	0.05	Hypothesis is accepted
Female students	412	18.96	1.84					

Table 5 revealed that male students have mean and standard deviation scores of 18.89 and 3.63 while female students have mean and standard deviation scores of 18.96 and 1.84 respectively. The z-test value is 0.318 with degree of freedom of 743. The study showed that the probability value of 0.06 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. By implication, there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways peer group pressure can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways school environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 6: z-test on the difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways school environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students

Categories	N	mean	Std	df	z-cal	p-val.	Alpha level	Decision
Male students	333	14.72	2.69	743	3.87	0.00	0.05	Hypothesis is rejected
Female students	412	15.39	1.99					

Table 6 revealed that male students have mean and standard deviation scores of 14.72 and 2.69 while female students have mean and standard deviation scores of 15.39 and 1.99 respectively. The z-test value is 3.87 with degree of freedom of 743. The study showed that the probability value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. By implication, there is a significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways school environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways social environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 7: z-test on the difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways social environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students

Categories	N	mean	Std	df	z-cal	p-val.	Alpha level	Decision
Male students	333	14.69	3.35	743	1.72	.09	0.05	Hypothesis is accepted
Female students	412	14.37	1.69					

Table 7 revealed that male students have mean and standard deviation scores of 14.69 and 3.35 while female students have mean and standard deviation scores of 14.37 and 1.69 respectively. The z-test value is 1.72 with degree of freedom of 743. The study showed that the probability value of 0.09 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. By implication, there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways social environment can be managed for career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 4: there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the challenges in managing environmental factors associated with career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 8: z-test on the difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the challenges in managing environmental factors associated with career choice among senior secondary school students

Categories	N	mean	std	Df	z-cal	p-val.	Alpha level	Decision
Male students	333	20.02	3.46	743	6.68	.00	0.05	Hypothesis is rejected
Female students	412	21.36	1.92					

Table 8 revealed that male students have mean and standard deviation scores of 20.02 and 3.46 while female students have mean and standard deviation scores of 21.36 and 1.92 respectively. The z-test value is 6.68 with degree of freedom of 743. The study showed that the probability value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. By implication, there is a significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the challenges in managing environmental factors associated with career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

IV. Discussion of Findings

Peer Influence and Career Choice

The ways peer group influence can be managed are by identification of peer group with right ambition which can eliminate school dropout, repetition, truancy, there should be resistance to undue influence from the group and dissociation from peer group with no academic purpose. This finding is in tandem with Adaba (2017) who found that proper management of peer pressure will eradicate truancy, examination malpractice, fighting, prostitution, use of drugs or alcohol, smoking and cultism which will bring about good academic record and positive career choice. Similarly, Obi (2016) submitted that peer pressure in the school system may adversely affect students' academic record leading to school dropout. Consequently, Ade (2015) reported that peer pressure affects students' career decision in secondary schools in Ekiti State. Similarly, Owuka (2016) found that majority of the students end up making career decision based on the type of group they were previously a member. The peer group activities are mostly noticeable in the school environment. When there is repetition and dropout from the school, the students may not achieve the professional academic career choice in life. Proper management of peer pressure by a way of avoidance of undue pressure and coercion will lead to effective career choice among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

School Environment and Career Choice

The various ways school environment can be managed for students' career choice are through: documentation of achievers in different areas of specialization will enhance career choice; provision of the required facilities in all the career areas of specialization; constant practical works for exposition and entrepreneurship education and proper career orientation. The study has established proper management of school environment is very sacrosanct in the achievement of career choice. A good school environment can promote learning which can expose students to areas academic weakness and strength (Abubaka, 2017). In the same line of thought, it was revealed that family background and the school environment directly influence students' choice of career (Omotere, 2010).

Social Environment and Career Choice

The various ways social environment can be managed are through: exposition of students to field trip; encouragement of synergy through teamwork; effective social activities (quiz, debate and cultural activities) can influence my career choice; modeling of astute, and imitation of seasoned celebrities. In the same line of thought, it was revealed that family background societal valued jobs and the school environment directly influence students' choice of career (Omotere, 2010). Based on the importance of social environment to career choice, Simeon (2018) reported that social school environment is required for imitation and modeling of desired character and career. Similarly, Whiteman (2016) submitted that the easiest means of career identification and decision is through socialization. This goes on to emphasize that social environment creation can enhance career choice and development.

Challenges in the Management of Environmental Factors

The various challenges in the management of environmental factors for career choice are: indecision among students on their dream career; insufficient counseling centers in the secondary schools; lack of seriousness on the part of the counselors; poor attitude of the school towards counseling; inadequate counselors to match the number of counselees; poor orientation on making the right career choice, and undue parental influence. The issue of environmental management has posed a lot challenge as identified above. A study by Joshi, Pandt and Kuma (2005) revealed that 89% of government schools and 45% of private schools have poor environmental conditions. This goes on to suggest that the problem of career choice as affluenced by the environmental conditions is more in the public schools. Joshi, Pandt and Kuma further revealed that most of the government schools don't have standard classrooms, good sports facilities, portable drinking water, and pure light and ventilation in place, when compared to private schools which may affect their career choice and development (Joshi, Pandt&Kuma, 2005). These shortcomings in the management of environmental factors seriously affect career choice among students.

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that proper management of environmental factors in the areas of peer influence, social and school environment can enhance senior secondary school students' choice of career in Rivers State.

VI. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. The school administrators, government and Parent Teachers Association should provide instructional facilities, physical resources and other resources for proper implementation of vocational and apprenticeship opportunities at the basic level.
2. It was therefore recommended among others that the laudable policies, goals and objectives as enshrined in the National Policy of Nigerian Education should be strictly adhered to by all tiers of government as well as all the stakeholders in education.
3. Teachers and parents should collaborate to prepare students for career awareness at an entry age and discourage them from going for quick money which invariably creates a lot of problems in the society.

References

- [1]. Abubaka, Y.D. (2017). School location and school environment as correlates of career choice. *Journal of Special Education*, 1(1), 15-21.
- [2]. Abuchi, W.I. (2011). School related issues and students' academic commitment. *Journal of Educational Career*, 2(1), 15-22.
- [3]. Adaba, S.O. (2017). Peer group influence and students school dropout in Cross Rivers State. *Journal of Special Education*, 1(1), 34-41.
- [4]. Ade, S.E. (2015). Peer group orientation and association: A critical preview. *Journal of Sociology*, 1(1), 50-69.
- [5]. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). National Policy on Education. Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Abuja.
- [6]. Obi, C.J. (2016). Peer group pressure and academic performance in secondary schools in Imo State. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 1(1), 12-22.
- [7]. Omotere, T. (2010). The influence of environmental factors on choice of career among secondary school students' in Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6e4f/c68ffda00b25f1091ed0650688e4c891e9b8.pdf>
- [8]. Ovundah, O.C. (2010). Peer group dynamics and affiliation among students. A Ph.D Seminar of the Ignatius Ajuru University, Rivers State.
- [9]. Owuka, M.E. (2016). Early group association and students school adjustment in secondary schools in Enugu State. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 1(1), 23-30.
- [10]. Raveanther, A. (2017). Relationship between career choice, environment, opportunity and personality data. *International Journal of Scientific and Engineering Research*, 8(3), 63-67.
- [11]. Simeon, J.P. (2018). Environmental factors, educational level of parents and students emotional management. Unpublished Ph.D Project of Ignatius Ajuru University, Rivers State.

- [12]. Whiteman, A.D. (2016). School environment and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Lagos, Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 1(1), 31-39.

DR. UKALA, C. C. "Management of Environmental Factors Associated With Career Choice among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 10(1), 2020, pp. 47-54.