

## **An Investigation into Vocational Preferences among Students in Technical Colleges in Ogun State, Nigeria**

Akintayo W. Lateef and Olunusi P. A.

Home Economics & Hotel Management Dept Home Econs & Hotel Mgt. Dept  
Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode Tai Solarin University of  
Education, Ijebu-Ode  
E-mail: [akintayo2002@gmail.com](mailto:akintayo2002@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the vocational preferences of students in Technical Colleges in Ogun State. The sample consisted of two hundred and eight-eight (288) male and one hundred and twelve (112) female students randomly selected from the two technical colleges at Ijebu-North and Ijebu-Ode Local government areas of Ogun State. Four research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated and tested. Data generated from a survey were analyzed using descriptive and inferential techniques such as frequency counts, percentage and t-test statistics respectively for data analysis. The study revealed among others that there is no significant difference between the attitude of male students and female students in the choice of a vocation in Technical Colleges; that students took to their various vocations as a result of the need for stable and secure future and that lack of adequate equipment, time for practical and dearth of qualified teachers were the problems students faced in their various vocations. The study concludes with a set of recommendations among others that Government should devise ways of dissuading students from choosing vocations out of a need of monetary reward for this will go a long way in jeopardizing the scientific and technological advancement of the country.*

**Key words:** Preference, Vocational Career choice, Technical College, Students

### **INTRODUCTION**

Technical colleges in Nigeria are geared towards producing craftsmen in various disciplines. Their existence, (Olaitan, 2006), is to stimulate technological and industrial development by developing and utilizing technologies for industrial and economic advancement. Technical colleges are an integral part of the total Nigerian educational system. They contribute towards the development of good citizenship by developing the physical, social, civic, cultural and economic competencies of the individual (Sanni, 2002). The goals of technical colleges, as stated by Federal Ministry of Education (2004) are, (i) “to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business, particularly at craft, advanced craft and technician levels; (ii) provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; and (iii) give training and impart the requisite skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically and in tune with latest technology”. In technical colleges, students are trained to acquire relevant knowledge and skills in different occupations for employment in the world of work (NBTE, 2000, Agbamelu, (2008).

According to Deighten (2007), the fact that Vocational and Technical Curriculum are derived from the needs of our time. They are organized to provide learning experiences for those who would prepare themselves for employment in a particular field of endeavor. Evans and Herv (2001), Hassan (2006) and Madu (2010) contended that no definition of vocational education is entirely satisfactory because the term is used to include only instruction designed to enable people to succeed in occupation requiring less than a baccalaureate degree.

In Nigeria, the general attitude towards vocational and technical education is poor. This is due to a number of factors. The environment in which the students live regards vocational and technical studies as a course meant exclusively for the under-privileged groups in our society. Consequently, many children tend to abhor taking to choice of this nature. There are other factors like interest, value, curriculum in the schools, lack of technical teachers, teachers influence, employment opportunities and occupational prestige. Nevertheless, it has been established that family background affects students' vocational preference. Harman (206) and Super (2011) in their theories came to the conclusion that parents influence their children not only by their attitudes but also through vocational, identification with their children.

Super (2011) observes that, the concept of "self" influences individual preference of occupation. This self-concept theory stresses that, a person must put into consideration the kind of person he is and the kind of occupation that would make him live the type of person he thinks he is. In the same vain, the prestige that the society attached to various occupations has influenced students towards technical and vocational preference of vocation. Technical vocations were not given high prestige among other vocations like medicine, engineering and law. Various studies conducted by Durojaiye (2008), Magsud (2009), Werner (2011) and Ijaduola (2016) confirmed this assertion.

However, the curriculum of the school to a large extent influences the vocational preference of students. The type of subject a student takes in the school will have influence on the type of vocation he or she chooses. The present curriculum has not been developed with clear cut objectives and contents; and the method of secondary education is not in tune with technical and vocational realities of the present age (Ijaduola, 2016). Chihena (2014) observes that, the existing secondary school system in Nigeria is too academic and of little relevance to the need of the society. There is a reflection that, the few technical and vocational courses availability has not been well integrated with the secondary phase of education. Okoke (2013) and Hassan (2016) examined at the question of opportunities that are available and their impact on preference of vocation. The position they took was that school shaped the future vocations of pupils and therefore asked for diversification of school curricular.

In connection with the above position, Green (2007) noted that about ninety percent (90%) of a group of pupils surveyed wanted education beyond secondary school level despite the fact that only a few would get it. However, Foster (2005) and Ijaduola (2016) expressed doubts that school exercises a decisive influence upon vocational preference of students. Lewis (2011) carried this argument further that a change in school curriculum is an important but not a decisive answer, as children's

expectation is derived not so much from school leavers in the days when number of school leaver was much smaller. In recent times, employment and unemployment is said to have affected students' influence towards technical and vocational choices. In support to this statement Hoppock (2006) states that the choice of occupation may determine whether one will be employed or unemployed, whether one will enjoy or detest one's work or whether he will fail or succeed.

Olaitan (1995) observes that vocational education has not been fully recognized in our society over the years and in effect, it has been difficult to have adequate number of qualified teachers, in the few vocational schools and Colleges of Education in the country. Apart from teaching them vocational works, the students may be standard in certain trades or subjects. It is the duty of the teachers to encourage and advise the students so that they may not turn out to be "programme drop outs". Consequently, the teachers are also needed for guidance and counseling services.

Durojaiye (2008) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between perceived occupational prestige and the type of education a secondary school pupil received. The aim of the study was to distinguish differences from occupational attractiveness and occupational preference and even occupational aspiration. His findings portrayed that a simple count shows that professional jobs such as those of Doctors, Lawyers, Dentists, Engineers, and Accountants in that order were mentioned by most children as having the highest occupational prestige from the point of view of their friends, their relations and themselves. Skilled and semi-skilled jobs like artisans or technical works and various craftsmanship were mentioned by few students.

Hicks (2009) carried out a study on the relationship existing between sex and occupation in Zambia. He used one hundred and ten (110) students both male and female. Of the thirty-two (32) selected occupations, he discovered that male ranked scientist first, engineers second, cabinet minister third and lawyer occupied the fourth position while girls ranked these occupations in this order: Medical Doctors, Cabinet Minister, Scientists, Lawyer and lastly Engineers. Okonkwo (1989) in his study of some determinants of vocational preference among secondary school students found that age significantly differentiated the career preferences of his subjects. He found that thirteen to fifteen years old were interested in medicine than sixteen and seventeen and above eighteen. Conclusively, Agbamelu (1980) found that there was environmental influence on the vocational choice of students. He discovered that students from urban school location significantly possessed self-expressed values and experienced little external influence on their choice of career than students from rural schools.

### **Statement of Problem**

The reality of the contemporary time shows that not all school pupils can end up becoming medical doctors, lawyers and engineers no matter how greatly they fantasized, but there are equally high profile and lucrative professions which offer great hopes of fulfilling careers to the young ones when they make career choice in the area of technical and vocational education. However, the extents to which school pupils are aware of these careers and make vocational and technical as choice of preference may determine their ability to explore such opportunities.

Hence this study investigates vocational preference among students in technical colleges in Ogun State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the percentage of male and female students that take one vocation or the other?
2. Why do such students take to such vocation?
3. What factors influence students' vocational Preferences?
4. What are the problems students faced in their various vocations?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference between the attitude of male students and female students' choice of vocation in Technical Colleges.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of the public and the students to technical education

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study made use of the descriptive research design involving a survey of students' Vocational career preferences in technical colleges. None of the variables studied was manipulated to cause a change in the other. Instead, an objective description of the existing phenomenon as it using questionnaires as the research instrument was conducted. Students currently attending schools in public Technical Colleges in Ogun state, Nigeria constituted the target population. A sample of four hundred (400) students drawn from two technical colleges: Government Technical College, Ijebu-Igbo and Government Technical College, Ijebu-Ode. The two technical colleges made up about 16.67% of the total population out of twelve technical colleges in Ogun State. The subject consisted of students offering various vocations.

### **Research Instrument**

The main instrument for this study was a questionnaire divided into three sections. Section 'A' dealt with demographic data of the respondents such as name of school, age, class, sex etc. Section B comprised some questions on vocational preferences while section C comprised of the reasons for vocational preferences. The questionnaire was of Likert type which contained items on a scales ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree.

### **Validation and Reliability of the Instrument**

The questionnaire was first subjected to face and content validity tests by allowing for its assessment by three colleagues who suggested inclusion or deletion of certain items as the case may be. The reliability coefficient of the resultant instrument was thereafter determined through test-retest procedure using Kudden-Richardson KR 2 formula. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained.

### Administration of Instrument

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher. They were distributed and collected back immediately having been completed by respondents. Efforts were made to ensure no collaboration by respondents.

### Data Analysis

In analyzing the data collected, simple percentage and T-test were used. After scoring the questionnaire, the number of students responding to each item connected with information required was collated.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** Percentage of Male and Female Students that take one vocation or the other

**Table 1: Percentage of responses of male and female students on the choice of one vocation or the other**

| Vocations          | Male | %    | Female | %    |
|--------------------|------|------|--------|------|
| Electronics        | 66   | 23.9 | 25     | 22.3 |
| Computer Education | 49   | 17   | 20     | 17.8 |
| Mechanics          | 51   | 17.3 | 24     | 21.4 |
| Arts and Crafts    | 70   | 24.3 | 20     | 17.8 |
| Catering           | 53   | 18.6 | 23     | 20.5 |
| Total              | 288  | 100  | 112    | 100  |

Table 1 contains the data of the respondent students in terms of their gender on their choice of one vocation or the other. The study reveals that for each vocational choice the majority was male except in Catering. It could therefore be concluded that there were more male than female students in the five areas of vocations and the students took vocations in Arts and Crafts than other.

**Research Question 2:** Why do the students select their vocations?

**Table 2: Percentage of responses of male and female students on the reasons for choosing a vocation**

| Reasons for choosing vocations | Response | Male | %    | Female | %    |
|--------------------------------|----------|------|------|--------|------|
| Monetary reward                | Agreed   | 59   | 20.5 | 23     | 20.5 |
|                                | Disagree | 31   | 10.7 | 14     | 12.5 |
| Stable and secure future       | Agreed   | 73   | 25.3 | 28     | 25.0 |
|                                | Disagree | 31   | 10.7 | 11     | 9.8  |
| Interest                       | Agreed   | 53   | 18.4 | 25     | 22.4 |
|                                | Disagree | 41   | 14.4 | 11     | 9.8  |
| TOTAL                          |          | 288  | 100  | 112    | 100  |

To establish on the reasons for choosing a particular vocations, cross-tabulation was carried out as shown in Table 2. For monetary reward, there were 127 students out of which 82 (41%) agreed that monetary reward they intends to gain at the end of their vocation was responsible for their choice, while 45 (23.2%) of the respondents disagreed. The situation with stable and secure future is that 101 (50.3%) agreed while 42 (20.5%) disagreed. The large number of students who had

their choices out of their interest for the vocation was 78(40.8%) while 52 (24.2%) of the respondents disagreed on this factor.

### **Research Questions 3: What factors influence students' vocational preferences?**

Table 3: Percentage of responses of male and female students on the factors influencing students' vocational preference

| Factors influencing students' vocational preferences? | Male | Female | Total | %    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------|--------|-------|------|
| Parents                                               | 107  | 51     | 158   | 39.5 |
| Teachers                                              | 81   | 28     | 109   | 27.2 |
| Personal choice                                       | 100  | 33     | 133   | 33.3 |
| Total                                                 | 288  | 112    | 400   |      |

Table 3 establishes the result of the study on the factors behind the choice of students' vocational preferences. Parents of the students played out with 39.5% responsible for their choice of Vocational preference; 33.3% were influenced by teachers', while only 27.2% were personal' choice. Choosing vocational programmes for the students, by the parents, may not be unconnected with the fact that the students were still unable to suspect what the future world of work could be like except their parents.

**Research Question 4:** What were the problems students faced in their various vocations?

**Table 4: Percentage of responses of male and female students on the problems faced by students in their various vocations**

| Problems students faced in their various vocations | Response | Male | %    | Female | %    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------|------|------|--------|------|
| Lack of Equipment                                  | Agreed   | 52   | 18.1 | 23     | 20.5 |
|                                                    | Disagree | 39   | 13.5 | 7      | 6.3  |
| Lack of adequate time                              | Agreed   | 71   | 24.7 | 36     | 32.1 |
|                                                    | Disagree | 30   | 10.4 | 5      | 4.5  |
| Unqualified teachers                               | Agreed   | 67   | 23.2 | 35     | 31.2 |
|                                                    | Disagree | 29   | 10.1 | 6      | 5.4  |
| TOTAL                                              |          | 288  | 100  | 112    | 100  |

Table 4 show the result of the study on the problems students faces in their various vocations. The summary in table 4 suggests that lack of equipment, lack of adequate time for practical session and unqualified teachers were the problems faced by students in their choosing vocations.

**Table 5: t- test analysis of difference between attitude of male and female students to the choice of vocation in technical colleges.**

| Attitude | N   | X   | -X    | SD     | t-observed | t-critical |
|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------|------------|------------|
| Male     | 288 | 978 | 14.39 | 113.78 | 0.47       | 1.66       |
| Female   | 112 | 496 | 13.94 | 92.63  |            |            |
| Total    | 400 |     |       |        |            |            |

From the table above, it is noted that t-observed (0.47) is less than t- critical (1.66). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted which means that there was no significant difference between the attitude of male students and female students to the choice of vocation in technical colleges.

**Table 2: t-test analysis of difference in the attitude of the public and the students to technical education**

| Attitude | N   | X    | -X    | SD    | t-observed | t-critical |
|----------|-----|------|-------|-------|------------|------------|
| Public   | 288 | 426  | 5.23  | 31.77 | 6.07       | 1.64       |
| Students | 112 | 1498 | 16.41 | 92.04 |            |            |
| Total    | 400 |      |       |       |            |            |

From the table, t-observed (6.07) is greater than t-critical (1.64). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, which implies that there is a significant difference in the attitude of the public and the students to technical education.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the study, the following facts were deduced

1. That there is no significant difference between the attitude of male students and female students to the choice of vocation in technical colleges.
2. That there is a significant difference in the attitude of the public and the students to technical education
3. That students take vocations in Arts and Crafts than other areas
4. That students chose vocations as a result of the need for stable and secure future.
5. That it was mostly the parents and the students themselves that influence the choice of vocation.
6. That lack of adequate equipment, time for practical and dearth of qualified teachers were the problems students faced in their various vocations.
7. That public attitude to technical education was favourable.

### DISCUSSIONS

The findings of Hicks (2009), which established varying degrees of male and female choice of vocation, went contrary to the findings of the present study. Further, the prestige that society attaches to various occupations exerts a tremendous influence on student plan for technical and vocational career. Consequently, studies conducted by Durojaiye (2008), Masquel (2009), and Warner (2011) corroborated the present study. It was also found that students were influenced by monetary reward, a stable and secure future and interest though at varying degrees. This however was quite at variance with the concept of “self” as

propounded by Super (2011) who perceived the choice of any occupation as a way of life. This finding is not also in tune with the contentions of Roe (2005) Hoppock (2006) and Herman (2006) who regarded vocational behavior as a developmental process where a person makes vocational decision that are congruent with his or her personal orientation. However, the present study portrayed that parents and the students themselves influence ultimately the choice of a vocation. This finding supports Super (2011) that an individual's career choices were determined by parents' socio-economic level, hence children from low economic backgrounds constituted the majority in the technical colleges.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that students choose vocations as a result of the need for stable and secure future. As a result of the relevance and prospects of the skills acquired in their choice of Vocational career, the present study hammers on the need for adequate and well qualified vocational and technical teachers as Olaitan (1995) had earlier done. It is generally believed that acquisition of the requisite skills is a means of increasing the productive power of a nation. Hence, the Nigeria society should recognize the fact that every citizen should be encourage to choose a that would equipped him/her to contribute effectively to the welfare of the country. The importance of vocational education as a springboard for skill acquisition cannot be over-emphasizes. Through vocational and technical colleges tremendous successes have been achieved in the areas of invention and improvements of variety of goods and services, which increase the quality of life.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Government should devise ways of dissuading students from choosing vocations out of a need of monetary reward for this will go a long way in jeopardizing the scientific and technological advancement of Nigeria.
2. Parents are enjoined to allow and encourage their wards to embark on any vocation of their choice.
3. More vocational and technical teachers should be recruited. They should be motivated and aspire to better qualifications, both professionally and academically e.g. through in service courses.
4. The public negative attitude should be corrected.
5. Intensive career guidance and counseling should be embarked upon by qualified personnel towards sensitising people on the importance of vocational and technical education.

## **REFERENCES**

- Agbamelu, R.A. (2008): Adjustment and Growth: The Challenges of Life. New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winton.
- Chihena, C.F. (2014): Vocational Development Theory. Washington American Personnel and Guidance Association.
- Deighton, L.M. (2007): Children Learning: An introduction to Educational Psychology. London: University of London Press.
- Durojaiye, M. (2008): School Education and Occupational Choice in Nigeria. West African Journal of Education, Vol. 7, No. 4.



- Evans, U.C. and Herr, B.K. (2001): Toward an Occupational Choice. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 2.
- Federal Ministry of Education.(2004). National Policy on Education. Lagos: NERDC
- Foster, R.R. (2005): *Learning Theory*. New York: Holt Rinehard and Winston.
- Green, C.N. (2007): *Occupational Choice Versus General Theory*. New York: Columbia University
- Hassan, T. ( 2016): “ A system approach towards operationalizing Guidance Counseling in Nigerian Secondary schools Paper presented at the Guidance and Counseling Conference, University of Ife, Ile - Ife
- Herman, J.L. (2006): “Sex Difference in Adolescent vocation Preference” *Vocational Guidance Quarterly* 21.
- Hicks, M.N. (2009): *Vocational Guidance in the New millenium*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Hopproch, R (2006): *Occupational Information*. New York: McGraw – Hill Book.
- Ijaduola, K.O. (2016) “Curriculum Development in Vocational and Technical Education” Paper presented at the 12<sup>nd</sup> National Conference, School of Voted, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta.
- Lewis, J.B. (2011): *The Role of the School in Vocational Development*. London: Heinemann Educational Book.
- Madu, A. (2010): “Towards Rapid Technology Transition in Nigeria” *Nigeria Journal for Technical Education* Vol.1 No 1.
- Maqsud, S. (2009): A study of Education and Occupational Interest of Secondary School Learners in Kano. *Nigerian Educational Forum*. 4(1).
- National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). (2000). National technical certificate and Advanced National Technical Certificate curriculum and module specifications for radio and TV works. Kaduna: Author
- Olaitan, S.O. (1996). *Vocational and technical education: Issues and Analysis*. Onitsha: Noble graphic press.
- Okeke, A.N. (2013): “The Impact of School subjects on the choice of career. *Journal of Education Foundation*. V.1.
- Okonkwo, J. (1989): “Aims of Remedial Education” *Teacher’s College Record*.
- Olaitan, S. (1995): *Vocational Teacher Education in Nigeria: The State of Art, Curriculum Organization of Nigeria Monograph Series No.1*.
- Roe, A. (2005): *The Psychology of Careers*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Sanni ,J. (2002). An appraisal of problems encountered in teaching and learning of mathematics in secondary schools. *ABACUS: Journal of the Mathematical Association of Nigeria*, 27 (1), 30-34.