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CONGRUENCE BETWEEN SUBJECT CHOICE AND CAREER/VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF ADOLESCENTS.

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Abstract

The study investigated congruence in subject choice and career/vocational aspirations of adolescents. The Adolescent Personal Data Inventory (APDI) administered to a total of 120 respondents in secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolis was used in investigating congruence in subject choice of Senior Secondary School Adolescents. Scoring and tabulation of data done at different levels relevant to Section E of the APDI using information from table of congruence depicted subject choices were relevant to career /vocational aspiration of adolescents for all careers investigated in the study, with the exception of architecture and physiotherapy. Adolescent respondents recorded 45.5% non- relevance of subject choice to vocational aspiration in Architecture, while they recorded a 53% non relevance of subject choice to vocational aspiration in Physiotherapy. In all, for six (6) of the careers investigated, participants subject choices rated 100% congruence to vocations of their aspiration.

Key Words: *Subject Choice, Career/Vocational Aspirations, Adolescents*

Introduction

This study expresses a need for human adults to understand the adolescents' make up (and so be able to prevent conflicts). Generally adult professionals who double as 'caregivers' and instructors to adolescents being trained and charged with the responsibility of manning adolescents are better able to forestall potential crises peculiar to the adolescent. This is because, basically they are better equipped with knowledge of the adolescents' make up, and so operate from the background of that knowledge when interacting with them. Adolescents' parents, guardians, families, instructors, as well as their peers influence adolescents' motives and perspectives of subject choice towards vocational aspiration. This is because in some way or the other, all these entities exert some sort of influence or pressure on the young person's mind as they face the ordeal of making up their minds on what career choice to make when they look to the future.

In addition to the influence of these entities, factors resident within the adolescents (intrinsic factors) as well as factors without the adolescents (extrinsic factors) equally exerts on the adolescents mindset on vocational aspiration. Chief among these factors however is the ability of the young person to successfully match appropriate subject(s) to vocation aspired. Making appropriate subject choice congruent to future vocational aspiration is important. Non congruent subject choice in career aspirations does not allow the adolescent to fulfill his desire of ending up in the vocation of his dreams. In essence he or she is compelled to the option of choosing alternative vocation based on the choice of subjects inappropriately made, relative to aspired vocation. Consequently, the adolescent may be lucky to get adjusted in an alternative vocation of the future or perhaps end up frustrated in the resulting alternative career choice.

This scenario played back, non congruent subject choice in adolescence, holds for many professionals today, ever present lingering memory of regret. They consider the fact that developing educationally along appropriate subjects choice at sometime in the past along the vocations of their dream, would otherwise have been preferred to subjects choices they had made accounting for professions they had eventually developed.

Added to conflicts adolescents' face trying to secure admission into institutions of higher learning, in aspiring to a career, is the necessity to investigate subject choices' congruence or incongruence to future career aspirations. That is what this paper's focus addresses. Added to this need is the easy proneness of adolescents to conflicts, so that there is increasing need to pay attention to the needs and aspiration of adolescents in a changing society and world. Though adolescents have adults as "neighbors" everywhere, their minds, their maturity, and their experience differ from those of adults. Little wonder why easy susceptibility to conflicts with respect to values, interests, expectation and social role subsists.

Conflict on any of these is capable of generating societal unrest capable of jeopardizing peace and stability. Adolescents constitute the majority of the population in most countries of the world. The focus of this study is one of the many concerns of the adolescents. It holds tremendous importance in throwing light on the need for congruence in subject choice and vocational/career aspiration.

A Background To The Make-Up of The Adolescent Accounting For Needs And Aspirations of The Adolescent.

The developmental period referred to as Adolescence falls between childhood and adulthood. It is defined by biological, social, and cultural variables.

Three domains interact in the adolescent as he/she advances toward adulthood namely, the cognitive domain, the biological domain, and the social domain. Firstly, the biological marker is characterized by accelerated deep biological processes initiated in the brain, specifically in the hypothalamus, which sends messages to the pituitary glands informing it 'Childhood is over'; at the same time, stimulating the adrenals, relevant endocrine glands and reproductive glands of the body for hormones production, such as androgen and estrogen – bringing on the onset of puberty. Puberty which externally manifests in deep biological processes results – breasts develop, so do the onset of menstruation, nocturnal emissions and growth of testes, scrotum and penis results in boys. So also is the emergence of secondary sexual characteristics – a deepened voice, facial and chest hair in boys and pubic hair in both sexes. Greatly altered also are skeletal [growth spurt] and muscular development, and circulatory and respiratory systems.

Secondly, cognitively, the adolescent is able to abstract and to formulate hypotheses. They can analyse issues, outline them, and outthink the adult. They carry the brain of the adult, so to say, in a body yet growing towards adulthood.

Thirdly, socially, the effect of psychological storms reputedly carried over from biological storms characteristic of the adolescent manifest themselves in interpersonal relationship with their peers and with adults. Insecurity about self in relation to friends, fierce and unhappy struggle for self identity and a distrust and dislike [or preference of peer- above- parent] of parent represent the turmoil theory of adolescent development which sees adolescent anguish as necessary, inevitable and means of separating themselves from parents to form own identities. Seen as truly overwhelming and possibly difficult for some, extreme turmoil in adolescence is however, for normal adolescents, an exception rather than the rule, much depending on their temperament, childhood experiences, coping skills and social life.

Adolescence ends with a social marker in much the same way it begun with a biological marker – puberty. Having felt that 'adult privileges' due him/her were not accorded him/her throughout adolescence stage, that denial ends when the full power of social status of the adult are accorded him at maturity – age 18 years; 21years.

Characteristics of Adolescent: Sixteen (16) years old and younger
Nevertheless, a look at the adolescents' spiral growth pattern by Gesell (1982) indicate the adolescent aged fifteen an sixteen are concluding High school, and are developmentally ready in terms of beginning to really consolidate aspiration for a 'tomorrow' as far as vocation of the future is concerned. It is at this stage that the adolescents' educational exposure of 5 or 6 years of

secondary school culminate into entry for subjects of choice in the final examinations – Ordinary Levels examinations.

Gesell, Ilg, and Ames (1982) Spiral growth patterns of adolescents describes the norms of adolescents behavior in chronological sequence summarizing a few of the characteristics of adolescents of the age bracket so described, that is, age sixteen and younger as found below:

THE SIXTEEN-YEAR OLD: Prototype of pre adult: self aware, more independent, self confident, more balanced and integrated personality, more self control, thought more oriented towards the future. Cheerful, friendly, outgoing, and well adjusted. Boy – girl companionship on a non romantic basis.

THE FIFTEEN-YEAR OLD: Large individual differences, difficult to describe. Rising spirit of interdependence, desire for freedom, increased tensions, and conflicts with parents and school personnel can lead to defiance, behavior problems, and delinquency. Some perfectionist tendencies, beginning of self control.

THE FOURTEEN-YEAR OLD: Introversion now replaced by extroversion, characterized by energy, exuberance, a degree of self-assurance, sociability, interest own and other personalities. Bases friendship on similar interests and personality traits. Frequent identification with heros.

THE THIRTEEN-YEAR OLD: Become introspective, reflective, sensitive to criticism, overly conscientious, more critical of parents. Body changes affect posture, motor coordination, voice, facial expressions. Mood fluctuates from despair to self acceptance. Fewer but closer friends.

THE TWELVE-YEAR OLD: Much of the turbulence of eleven-old has disappeared. Becomes more reasonable, tolerant, positive, companionable, sociable and enthusiastic. Trying to act grown up, be more independent of parents. Influenced by peers, aware of appearance, wants to wear what the crowd wears. Antagonism toward opposite sex is fading, plays kissing games at parties.

THE ELEVEN-YEAR OLD: Marks dawn of adolescence, beginning of biological changes that cause psychological changes: moodiness, impulsiveness, anger, enthusiasm, negativism, quarreling with siblings, rebellion against parents.

THE TEN-YEAR OLD: In a state of equilibrium and balance. Recognizes authority, accepts life as it comes, and is confident and obedient, fond of home and friends of the same sex. Joins groups and organization. Strong sense of fairness. Careless in appearance. Near end of childhood.

This study's focus is on congruence in subject choice and adolescents' career/vocational aspirations. Most adolescents aged sixteen/ fifteen are expected to have finalized choice of subjects toward the Ordinary Level examinations, before the examination is due; This is apart from very concretely arriving at definite career aspiration, apart from experiencing traits of large, individual differences: a rising spirit of independence, a desire for freedom, some perfectionist tendencies, beginning of self control mixed with self awareness; It is at this time they experience a yearning for more independence, a self- confidence, a more balanced integrated personality, thoughts more oriented towards the future, cheerfulness, friendliness, outgoingness, a well-adjustedness, and a boy-girl companionship on a non romantic basis. However the set of characteristics found in the sixteen year olds relevant to the focus of this study are traits of large, individual differences: a rising spirit of independence, a desire for freedom, some perfectionist tendencies, beginning of self control mixed with self awareness; It is at this time they experience a yearning for more independence, a self- confidence, a more balanced integrated personality, thoughts more oriented towards the future, cheerfulness, friendliness, outgoingness, a well- adjustedness, and a boy-girl companionship on a non romantic basis. Adolescents of this age bracket are both internally and externally ready to face the developmental task of future career decision making being fully equipped with all the traits here enumerated. Varying, as a result of individual differences are individual adolescent personalities, varying also available careers to which they aspire. All in all, the adolescent, in order to arrive at the fulfilling career of the future must ensure congruence between subject choice and career for which he/she aspire.

Adolescent Vocational Aspiration

It is not the aim of this paper to look into the multi-faceted needs and aspirations of the adolescent in details at once in the cognitive, biological and social domains, but to narrow down on their aspiration in career-related areas in so far as the relevance of their choices of subjects agree or do not agree with careers/vocation they aspire to take up.

A healthy ego identity is an enabling ingredient in adolescents' ability to aspire to become. The desire and expectation to get ahead vocationally also depend upon self esteem. High self esteem adolescents also report that their parents accept, understand and like them. Those with low self esteem have parents who use psychological pressure techniques such as withdrawal of love, guilt or self-pity to control them Rice (1975). Females who have a chance to have both a career and a marriage tend to have higher self- esteem than those who have become homemakers. Boys who aspire to upward mobility also show a strong sense of self esteem, where as downwardly mobile boys often wish for changes in self that are extensive that they indicate self rejection. (Rice, 1975). Both those with low and high self esteem consider it important to get ahead, but

those with low esteem are less likely to expect to succeed. According to Rice, they are more likely to say "I will like to get ahead in life but I don't think I will ever get ahead as far as I like".

Watson, Quatman, and Edler (2002), in a research on Career Aspiration of Adolescent Girls found that girls at single-sexed schools had higher real career aspirations than did girls and boys at co educational schools. Results in that study show that high-achieving girls exceeded the aspiration of average achieving girls and boys, and were the same as those of high achieving boys. Gender and grade differences in ideal and real career choices over all achievement levels are also reported.

External Pressures on the Adolescent to Choose A Vocation.

Socio-economic Status: Socio-economic status influences the knowledge and understanding of the adolescent on different occupations. Socially disadvantaged adolescents who have seen less, heard less about and experienced less variety in their environment have fewer opportunities than do the socially privileged. Urban boys tend to have a higher aspiration level than do rural boys. Middle class parents are more able than working class parents to assist their adolescents to develop broad vocational interest and awareness of opportunities beyond the local community. (Bernard, 1971).

Prestige and Aspiration: Glamour and high prestige may be the reasons advanced by adolescents for aspiring into an occupation. Five commonly accepted assumptions about occupational values at least exists for instance in the American Congruence between subject choice and career/vocational aspirations of adolescents.

The various subject combinations that young people make a well as their achievements on those combinations as they grow are crucial issues of vocational development of the adolescent. If the consequent decision made on attributes of the adolescents' various personality dimensions such as his interest, abilities, aptitudes and self concepts, vocational development of the adolescents which tend to harmonize these varied personality dimensions of the young person, he or she would be actualized.

The vocational development of the adolescent may be ordered in a sort of progression from the very early manifestation of aspiration toward a vocation to the time of choice (Akinboye, 1977).

Crucial Determinants of Vocational Aspiration resident within the Adolescent
Determinants of vocational aspiration resident within the adolescent include intelligence, aptitudes and special abilities, and interests. Students, who show superior academic ability and performance, more often aspire to higher occupational choices than those with lesser ability. Special aptitudes and

abilities required in occupations range from strength to speed, good eye-hand coordination, good spatial visualization, artistic talents, talents of verbal skills. Others range from creativity to originality, autonomy, conformity, cooperation, and ability to take direction. Intelligence, ability, opportunities, and other factors must be related to interests for an adolescent to be able to take decision on a vocation to which he/she aspire, hence the individual is counselled to consider vocations in the fields of greatest interest.

The various subject combinations that young people make a well as their achievements on those combinations as they grow are crucial issues of vocational development of the adolescent. If the consequent decision made on attributes of the adolescents' various personality dimensions such as his interest, abilities, aptitudes and self concepts, vocational development of the adolescents which tend to harmonize these varied personality dimensions of the young person, he or she would be actualized.

The vocational development of the adolescent may be ordered in a sort of progression from the very early manifestation of aspiration toward a vocation to the time of choice. Akinboye, 1977. Very early aspirations may be determined by a number of factors such as adolescent's personal preference, subject combination, school achievement, teacher or parent stimulation, peer influence, job opportunity, status accorded profession and so on.

Methodology

In order to ascertain the congruence between subject choice and adolescents' vocational aspiration, the researcher administered copies of the Adolescent Personal Data Inventory (APDI) to young people in Oyo State schools. Only section E of the APDI only is relevant to the study.

Ten copies of Section E of the APDI were administered to SS3 students who were randomly selected among others, in each of twelve schools in Ibadan metropolis. A total of 120 inventories were therefore used in carrying out the study.

Summary of Study

Population Sample of adolescents to which APDI was administered:
120

No of candidates who marked [tick] on 5

professions to which they aspire: 140

No of candidates who marked [tick] on only 4 professions to which they aspire:
4

Variable, "State of Origin" was used to depict congruence between subject combination and professional aspiration. (104 respondents indicated "state of origin").

No of respondents who marked [tick] on only 3 professions to which they
aspire: 1

No of respondents who marked [tick] on only 1 profession to which they aspire:
2

No of respondents who did not mark [tick] on any profession to which they
aspire: 9

States of Origin of Respondents: Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Ekiti, Delta, Akwa Ibom,
Abia, Kwara, Lagos, and Kogi.

Respondent's subject combination were examined to determine relevance or
non relevance to each of the five various professions which each respondent
have chosen (ref. scoring manual instructions on APDI). Table named Format
A show scoring; Table named Format B also show scoring.

Format A

Candidate	Age	Sex	Religion	State	Town	Professional Aspiration	Subject Choice
1	17	F	C	Osun	Ila Orangun	20	English, Mathematics, Government, Commerce, Agriculture, Economics, Geography' Biology, Yoruba.
2	16	F	C	Oyo	Agbegbani a	8,17,21,23,24	Mathematics, English, Biology, Agriculture, Economics, Geography, Yoruba, Accounting, Book keeping
3	22	F	C	Delta	Ibusa	8, 9, 11,21	English, Government, Agriculture, Literature In English, Biology, Commerce, Mathematics, Economics, Geography.

For each respondent in the entire population sample (120) information teased out from Section E of APDI
was (recorded) scored as exemplified in Table format A and format B.

Finally, Table 1 (Table of Congruence Between Subject Choice And Professional Aspiration) summarizes
all computations from all available information on format B.

TABLE 1. CONGRUENCE BETWEEN SUBJECTS CHOICES AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS.

Professional Aspiration of Adolescents	Relevant (R) Choice of subjects of Adolescents											Non-Relevant (N) choice subjects of Adolescents											Relevant Aspirants (R)	Non-Relevant Aspirant (N)	Aspirants Total (T)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
5 Stenography	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	8
6 Physiotherapist	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	7	13
7 Medical Laboratory Tech	5	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	8	19
8 Medicine	10	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	8	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	14	35
9 Business	25	15	4	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	1	51
10 Teaching	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
11 Psychology	4	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	10
12 Law	13	9	2	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	8	28
13 Police	8	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	12
14 Navy	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
15 Engineering	12	8	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	12	8	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	24	23	47
16 Accounting	18	16	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	0	39
17 Lecturing	2	8	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	14
18 Professor	11	11	4	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	30
19 Director	19	12	3	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	41	1	42
20 Bank Manager	20	14	3	6	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	36	3	39
21 Geology	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	7
22 Engine Designing	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	4	9
23 Petroleum Engineering	9	5	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	5	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	19	12	31
24 Agricultural Engineering	6	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	10
25 Architecture	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	11
26 Any Profession	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Total																							382	94	476

Discussion

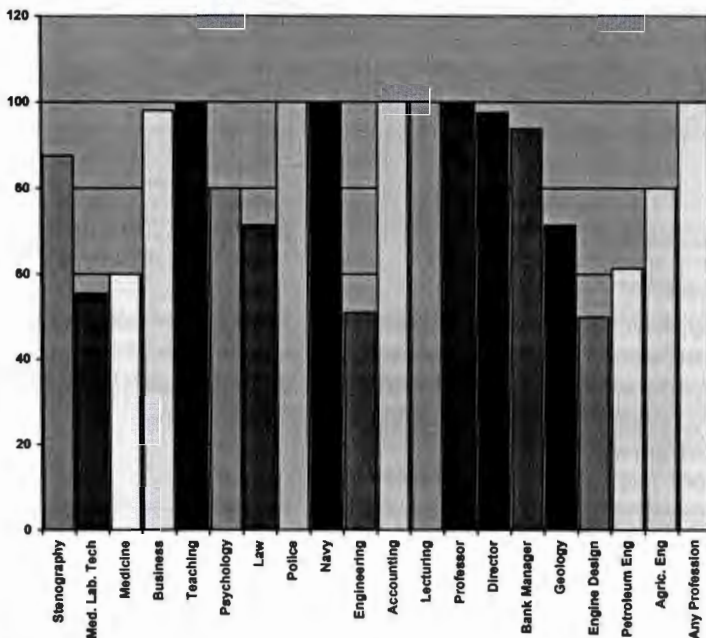
Based on this study, a close look at the table on congruence between subjects choice and career aspiration show that generally subject choices which participants have made are relevant to careers to which they aspire.[See Table 1] This is especially noticeable in the following careers:

- 5. Stenography, 87.5% relevance
- 7. Medical Laboratory Technology, 55.5% relevance
- 8. Medicine, 60% relevance
- 9. Business, 98% relevance
- 10. Teaching, 100% relevance
- 11. Psychology, 80% relevance
- 12. Law, 71.4% relevance
- 13. Police, 100% relevance
- 14. Navy, 100% relevance
- 15. Engineering, 51% relevance
- 16. Accounting, 100% relevance
- 17. Lecturing, 100% relevance
- 18 Professor, 100% relevance
- 19. Director, 97.6% relevance
- 20. Bank Manager, 93.8% relevance
- 21. Geology, 71.4% relevance
- 22. Engine Design, 50% relevance
- 23. Petroleum Engineering, 61.3% relevance
- 24. Agricultural Engineering, 80% relevance
- 26. Any Profession, 100% relevance.

Only two (2) careers are missing from the list above. These two are not listed with the rest. They are: 6. Physiotherapy, 53% non relevance, and 25. Architecture, 45.5% non relevance

Both careers in question owe their non relevance of subject combinations to their non relevance being just slightly higher than their relevance to subject combinations. For a quick view, an entire pictorial representation of the data on congruent subject combinations to career aspiration can be understood from the Bar Chart below.

CONGRUENCE BETWEEN SUBJECT CHOICE AND CAREER



Note:

100% congruent scores were obtained in the following career/career related areas: 'Professor', Lecturing', 'Accounting', 'Navy', 'Police, Teaching and 'Any Profession'

FORMAT B

Respondent	5 Professional Areas				
	A	B	C	D	E
	7R	8R	16R	23R	24R
1	5R	8N	9R	12R	16R
2	6N	8N	9R	19R	20R
3	7N	8N	10R	11R	19R
4	9R	16R	18R	19R	20R
5	9R	16R	17R	18R	20R
6	11R	12R	14R	17R	20R
7	e. t. c	e. t. c	e. t. c	e. t. c	e. t. c
e. t. c					

Note R = Relevance, N= Non Relevance. Figures e. g. 7, 8,9,16 e. t. c = Careers on APDI.

Implication of the Study

From this findings, the researcher that subjects which adolescents combine to form eligible access into desired professions they require are generally congruent to vocational aspiration of participants in this study. This may have resulted from the good which guidance and counseling services have been rendering since inception its inception, on adolescents in Oyo State schools.

Suggestions For Further Work and Study

The researcher would like to suggest that studies of this type should continue from time to time as they stand for evaluation and they would:

- (a). Help alleviate the sufferings of the young people as they are easily prone to internal conflict and external ones in adolescence.
- (b) Findings from such studies would help in planning adolescents' future as well as help for policy making in matters pertaining to their vocations and welfare.
- (c) Findings from similar studies and/or other studies relevant to adolescents' career/ vocational/ professional leanings would assist in monitoring the progress of work and relevance of guidance/ counseling services in the school system to date whenever such takes effect.

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