

WORK ROLE SALIENCE, SELF ESTEEM AND PERCEIVED SELF-EFFICACY AS PREDICTORS OF CAREER MATURITY AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Background: This study is focused secondary school students because this stage of education is a critical period for the development of career maturity. Some studies have contended that career maturity is largely determined by gender and socioeconomic status, while not disputing this, this study is set out to examine the impact of work role salience, self-esteem, and self-efficacy on career maturity of students.

Methods: Two hundred and fifty seven (257) senior secondary school students with age ranging from 15 to 19 years (mean age = 17 years) were selected from four public and private Secondary Schools in metropolitan city through stratified and systematic sampling techniques. The study being a survey research, made use of a questionnaire consisting of three validated subscales.

Results: Multivariate and bivariate analysis were employed to analyse the data and the results indicate that work role salience, self-esteem, and self-efficacy jointly predicted ($F_{3, 256} = 26.315, p < 0.05$) career maturity of students. Multiple regression analysis shows that there was a significant contribution of work role salience ($\beta = .445; t = 8.496; p < 0.05$) and self-esteem, ($\beta = .197; t = 2.109; p < 0.05$) to the career maturity of students. However, self-efficacy ($\beta = .048; t = 0.859; p > 0.05$) did not contribute significantly in predicting the career maturity of students.

Conclusion: The findings of the study show the need for policy makers and educationists to further institutionalize counselling and guidance services in secondary schools. Students personnel support should therefore create awareness and organize seminars for the students on career issues as this may improve students' career self-efficacy.

Keywords: work role salience, self-esteem, self-efficacy, career maturity, students.

1 INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to define the concept of career maturity, it is important to ask what is meant by a career. In the literature various definitions are found: Schein (1977) was of the opinion that a career is a planned direction that an individual follows over time and space, which includes involvement in a specific role. Another, and probably the most cited definition of a career is that of Super (1977, p.295). He defined it as "the course of events which constitutes a life; the sequence of occupations and other life roles which combine to express one's commitment to work in his or her total pattern of self-development". From the different definitions, it is clear that a career spans a person's total lifespan; it represents a changing process rather than a static state, and calls for the person to become the active driving force responsible for constantly building constructive links between himself/herself and the working environment (Super, 1977).

In Nigeria, it is usually assumed that adolescents have sufficient knowledge and exposure to the world of work and are able to make a career choice by the end of secondary school education. Unfortunately however, this assumption especially by parents is not based on adequate knowledge. Additionally, enough time and effort have not been invested to confirm this assumption, considering that one of the most important decisions in an individual's life is his/her career choice. However, secondary school students are expected to choose a career to pursue at the university level after the completion of their secondary education. It is mandatory for every Nigerian secondary student who wishes to proceed to the University to apply for admission through the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and choose a course of study. This is followed by a competitive examination. Recently, applicants have been limited to choose only one University out of over 100 universities in Nigeria. This restriction has placed more demand on the need for career maturity among secondary students which is a

prerequisite to making good career choice. The appropriateness or otherwise of career counselling for secondary school students just at the time of completing their JAMB applications may also have adverse implications on their level of career maturity. They may not have had adequate self-knowledge, the courses available and the self-efficacy required for the tasks ahead may not have been developed. Self-efficacy is associated with Bandura's research. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy refers to the belief that an individual has of his capabilities. This led to the term career self-efficacy (Hackett & Betz, 1992), which refers to the confidence with which the individual will embark on activities that involve career behaviour.

In view of the demands of a career on an individual, Super (1957) maintained that, in order to make the right career choice, a person should display a certain level of career maturity. Johnson (2000) is of the opinion that a person's occupation has important consequences for the self and is the pivot on which his/her basic values and life goals rest. Career or vocational maturity was first used by Super (1957) when he proposed the career development theory. For over 30 years the term is a construct that has been investigated, measured, and debated. According to Super (1977, p.294), career maturity can be defined as "the way in which an individual successfully completes certain career development tasks that are required according to his current developmental phase". It is seen as the collection of behaviours necessary to identify, choose, plan and execute career goals. Betz, (1988) defined career maturity as the extent to which an individual has mastered the age appropriate vocational tasks relevant to his or her developmental stage. Hence, adolescents are considered to be career mature if they are able to make tentative career decisions and if they have gained knowledge about educational and occupational alternatives. According to Crites (1978), career maturity is essential in the choice of a career. A career immature person cannot make an optimal career decision. When a person has attained career maturity, he will display certain characteristics: the career mature person will gather information about the self in order to gain insight, obtain the necessary competencies in order to make an informed decision, integrate self-knowledge and knowledge of the world of work, and implement the above mentioned knowledge when planning a career (Crites, 1978; Super 1957).

Different views about what the root of career development is have given rise to a number of theories about the concept. There are several different viewpoints regarding career development. While researchers like Holland (1973; 1985) focused on personality by attempting to illustrate the interrelationship of personality, behaviour and careers, other researchers, like Roe (1956) used human genetics and early childhood experience as the basis for their theories of career development. Super (1957; 1962) made a profound contribution to career development by his introduction of the concept of career maturity. The career development theory of Super (1957, 1990), and its underpinning construct of career maturity provides a viable base for understanding the transition from school to work. Crites (1981) supported this theory, with his development of the first measuring tool for career maturity.

Super (1980) viewed career maturity as a normative term that refers to the extent to which an individual's observed and expected career behaviour is congruent. Super and Thompson (1979 as cited in Abernathy, 2000) identified six factors in vocational maturity namely: awareness to plan ahead, decision-making skills, knowledge and use of information resources, general career information, general world of work information, and detailed information about preferred occupation. Typically, the nature of one's career pattern is determined by the individual's parental socio-economic level, mental ability, education, skills, personality, career maturity and opportunities available. Super is of the opinion that the dimensions of career maturity could be achieved if the individual successfully carry out activities which he labelled as developmental tasks (Super 1957, 1980).

Most secondary school leavers in Nigeria are between the ages of 15-24 which has been considered the best years for individuals to explore their environment for a wide variety of vocations. It is also the time to test their personal "capabilities, skills and special endowments that would serve them in the world of works", as well as acquire the "awareness of places where their capabilities could best be developed for self enhancement and societal emancipation" (Adegoroye, Babatunde, Ibimuluyi, and Ajagbe, 2011, p. 1). Research has clearly and consistently identified career maturity as an important variable in career development. Career maturity refers to the readiness of an individual to make a career choice. It is expected that a student that is matured career-wise should be able to successfully cope with vocational tasks corresponding to his chronological age. The importance of career maturity for secondary school students, in particular, is highlighted by the number of relationships between career maturity and various constructs associated with effective career development. Significant, positive relationships have been found between career maturity and academic achievement (Healy 1994), self-esteem (Khan and Alvi, 1983), career self-efficacy (Wagner, 1998) and a variety of other

factors influencing career development. The complex interaction of these and other factors affects the individual's readiness to succeed in mastering the tasks appropriate to several stages of career development. Naidoo et al. (1998) indicated in a sample of African-American university students that age, gender, socioeconomic status, education, racial/ethnic differences, locus of control, and work salience accounted for only nine percent of the variance in career maturity, with work salience having the most influential effect. They concluded, "Other latent and observable factors that lie outside the domain of the current model must be included to provide a more comprehensive conceptualization" (p. 24).

The concept of role or identity salience has been proposed to explain the behaviours associated to social roles (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). According to Super (1990) role salience refers to the importance individuals ascribe to the various roles they play in different aspects of life. Role salience also known as role centrality (Martire, Stephens & Townsend, 2000), role commitment (Brown, Bifulco & Harris, 1987) and personal involvement (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992) provide individuals with meaning, self-worth and purpose (Noor, 2004). Role salience is also used to understand how people structure their life roles as it has been shown to crucially affect the career plans of adolescents and young adults (Niles & Goodnough, 1996). Work role salience among secondary school students therefore implies the extent to which their commitment in the workplace is associated with career maturity. In this study it is proposed that work role salience will significantly predict career maturity among secondary school students.

The research review indicates that there are several factors influencing career maturity, and when moving towards comprehensive career guidance, these factors should be taken into consideration. Knowledge of the different factors affecting career maturity can assist counsellors in identifying certain areas of concern in order to help an individual acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to make realistic career decisions. It is thus proposed in this study that work role salience, self-efficacy and self-esteem constitute important factors in determining the career maturity of secondary school students in Nigeria.

1.1 Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There will be a positive and significant relationship between career maturity, work role salience, career decision self-efficacy, and self-esteem among secondary school students.

Ho2: There will be a combined and relative contribution of knowledge and attitude on barriers to childhood immunization.

1.2 Ethical considerations

According to Cohen and Swerdik (2010), ethics pertain to a body of principles of right, proper or good conduct. They asserted that a respondent that is involved in a research study has the right: to give informed consent; to be informed of the results; the right to privacy and confidentiality; and not to be labelled in a stigmatizing manner. Ethical clearance for the study was obtained via the principal of the selected secondary schools who coordinated with parents and guardians. Consent letters were signed by parents and returned to the researcher through the principal to give consent for their wards to participate in the present study. Assent letters were also signed by learners and returned to the researcher whereby they agreed to voluntarily participate in the study.

2 METHODS

Two hundred and fifty seven (257) senior secondary school students with age ranging from 15 to 19 years (mean age = 17 years) were selected from four public and private Secondary Schools in metropolitan city through stratified and systematic sampling techniques. The study being a survey research, made use of a questionnaire consisting of three validated subscales. The senior students were chosen because they are expected to have acquired necessary academic training and through experience and exposure to vocational counselling as is currently rendered in Nigerian schools, to be able to engage in career decision making.

2.1 Measures

2.1.1 Work Role Salience

Work role salience was measured using the work role salience scale (WRSS) which was factor analyzed into three subscales by Greenhaus (1973). It consists of 26 items. Greenhaus and Sklarew (1981) used it as a unidimensional scale. The three subscales include the relative importance of work and careers with seven (7) items, planning and thinking about career (8 items) and general attitude to work with nine (9) items. The WRSS has adequate reliability as a unidimensional measure and support for the construct validity was reported by Watson and Stead (1990). For use among students, Stead & Watson (1992) reported a coefficient alpha of .98 among South African students while Salami (2000) reported a coefficient of .85 among Nigerian students. For this study, the WRSS returned a test re-test coefficient alpha of .91 after a three week interval.

2.1.2 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem was measured using the globally acclaimed 10-item Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem scale. The 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly. The self-esteem score for each participant was obtained by summing the score for each item with the negatively worded items reverse scored. Higher scores represent higher degree of self-esteem. For the convergent validity, The Rosenberg scale correlates significantly with the Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967). For this study, the Rosenberg scale returned a test re-test coefficient alpha of .86 after a three week interval.

2.1.3 Self-Efficacy

The twenty-five (25) item Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form (CDSE-SF) (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996) was employed to measure self-efficacy. The scale is made up of five subscales which measure self-appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, planning, and problem solving. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale measuring the level of confidence participants felt about these different aspects of their career such as 1 = No Confidence At All to 5 = Much Complete Confidence. However, the reliability and validity of the 5-level response continuum was found to be as good as the 10 level response type (Betz, Hammond, & Multon, 2005). As further reported by Betz et al., (2005), the five subscales for the short form of the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale using a 5-level response continuum had coefficient alphas ranging from .78 to .87 and .93 to .95 for the total score. For this study, the CDSE-SF returned a test re-test coefficient alpha of .89 after a three week interval.

2.1.4 Career Maturity

Career Maturity was measured with the aid of the Attitude Scale of the Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) by Crites and Savictas (as cited by Zunker, 1997). It is made up of 50 items. It measures some attitudinal clusters such as involvement in decision making, preference for career choice factors and conception of the choice process. The internal consistency obtained with KR formular 20 as reported by Crites and Savickas (1996) gave reliabilities that ranged between 0.65 and 0.84. The reliability of the CMI for this study using the test re-test method yielded a coefficient alpha of .82 after a three week interval.

3 RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients of Predictor and Criterion Variables

	Variables (N = 257)	1	2	3	4
1	CMI	1.00			
2	WRS	.467**	1.00		
3	SelfEsteem	.133*	.005	1.00	
4	Selfefficacy	.082	.010	.243*	1.00
	Mean	30.81	39.81	21.86	24.39
	S.D.	4.67	4.90	2.83	4.71

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Responses to the four scales were analysed using multiple regression analysis. Results in Table 1 revealed the means, standard deviations and inter-correlations amongst career maturity inventory, work role salience, self-esteem and self-efficacy of the participants. Some of the correlations were significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels. From the table, there was a positive and significant correlations between career maturity and work role salience ($r = .467, p < .000$) and self-esteem ($r = .133, p < .05$). There was no significant correlation between career maturity and self-efficacy of the participants ($r = .082, p > .05$). However, there was a positive and significant correlation between self-esteem and self-efficacy ($r = .243, p < .05$).

Table 2a: Relative Contributions of the Predictors on the Criterion Variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	18.593	3.027		6.142	.000
WRS	.445	.052	.446	8.496	.000
Self Esteem	-.197	.093	-.119	-2.109	.036
Self Efficacy	-.048	.056	-.049	-.859	.391

a. Dependent Variable: Career Maturity

Table 2b: Contribution of the Predictor Variables on the Criterion Variable and Model Summary of Multiple Regressions

R = .49 R ² = .24 Adj R = .23 Error = 4.11					
Model	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1330.465	443.488	3		
Residual	4263.808	16.853	253	26.315	.000
Total	5594.272		256		

a. Dependent Variable: Career Maturity

b. Predictors: (Constant), SelfEfficacy, WRS, selfesteem

The multiple regression analysis shows that work role salience ($\beta = .445; t = 8.496; p < 0.05$) and self-esteem, ($\beta = .197; t = 2.109; p < 0.05$) were significant predictors of the career maturity of students. However, self-efficacy ($\beta = .048; t = 0.859; p > 0.05$) did not contribute significantly in predicting the career maturity of students. The model summary as presented in Table 2a and 2b reveals that when the three predictor variables were entered into the regression model at once, there was a significant combined contribution of work role salience, self-esteem, and self-efficacy in the prediction of career

maturity of students ($R = 0.49$, $r^2 = 0.24$; $F_{3, 256} = 26.315$, $p < 0.05$). In this study, 24% of the variations in career maturity of students appear to be accounted for by the predictor variables.

4 DISCUSSION

Based on the results of this study, there is a positive relationship between career maturity, work role salience and self-esteem, but there was no significant relationship between career maturity and self-efficacy. As the scores in career maturity increased, so did the scores in work role salience and self-esteem. Additionally, this study's results showed that career maturity and work role salience were the most correlated ($r = .467$), career maturity and self-esteem were the second most correlated (.133). Based on the results of this research, it appears that as the students' attitude toward the career readiness process increased, so did their worth in career decisions improve. Many researchers noted that students need a high level of career maturity and career decision self-efficacy to be successful in college, but the result in this study show that the relationship between the two variables are not significantly related. Luzzo (1993b as cited by Walker, 2010) was the first to examine the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and career decision-making attitude and skills, and he found a strong correlation between the two, which is not supported in this study.

The study showed a joint contribution of the predictor variables on career maturity of students but on the relative contribution of each of the predictor variables, the result showed that work role salience made significant and the highest contribution followed by self-esteem. Self-efficacy proved not to be a significant contributor to career maturity of students. The finding on work role salience supports previous results (Salami, 2000; Super & Nevill, 1984). They all reported that work role salience was a significant determinant of career maturity. This result could be because senior secondary students especially those in the final year or penultimate year place a high premium on their future career path after education. The students involved in this study might be described as being vocationally mature.

The findings on self-esteem and career maturity also corroborates those of Royalty, Sedlacek & Johnson (1984); Super (1995) and Egbochukwu (1998). For example, Royalty, Sedlacek & Johnson (1984) found that self-esteem and career maturity increased from freshmen to senior women for career-oriented women, and the positive correlation between career maturity and self-esteem is consistent with Super's proposition that individuals high in self-esteem can make more realistic career decisions. However, this result contradicts the findings of Salami (1999) and Naidoo, Bowman & Gerstein (1998). They reported there was no significant contribution of self-esteem to the career maturity of their participants.

4.1 Conclusion

Due to more enlightenment and efforts of career counsellors, coupled with changes in the economic environment, many students are becoming much more conscious of career related issues. This has proved to be instrumental in changing perceptions about the world of work and attitudes towards career planning and choice. With the outcome of this study, researchers are encouraged to implement programmes that will assist in the enhancement of career maturity and career decision-making self-efficacy among students who are about to transit to higher levels of study. This study has initiated research into the relationship between career maturity, work role salience, self-esteem and career decision self-efficacy among secondary school students in Nigeria. Extant literature supports the importance of career maturity, work role salience, career decision self-efficacy, and self-esteem as individual constructs, but the literature review provided no studies that attempted to merge the three variables. Further investigation is recommended on the relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity.

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