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**Self-Expression Values and Sex Difference as Correlates of Career Choice Among  
Secondary School Students in Akpabuyo L.G.A Cross River State, Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study sought to assess self-expression values and sex difference as correlates of career choice among secondary school students in Akpabuyo L.G.A Cross River State, Nigeria. The design used in this study was a survey design. The study area was Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of 300 senior secondary school students (150 males and 150 females) randomly selected from five secondary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area. Stratified random sampling techniques was used for the study. The main instrument was a questionnaire titled "Self-Expression Values, Sex Difference and Career Choice Questionnaire" (SEVSDCCQ). The reliability coefficient was calculated using test-re-test technique. Reliability coefficient obtained was between the range of .86 to .94, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The research hypotheses were answered using one-way analysis of variance and independent t-test at .05 level of significance. The study concluded that Self-expression values of attitude, self-concept and aptitude have influence on career choice among senior secondary school students. Also that Sex differentiation significantly influences career choice among senior secondary school students. It was therefore recommended that State Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Secondary Education Board (SEB), as well as the Science and Technical Board should ensure that trained, professional guidance counselors are posted to secondary and technical schools. This will not only help in effective management of our state secondary schools, but will also ensure that guidance counselors will devote more time to effective career counseling strategies which would enable the students make realistic occupational preferences.*

**KEYWORDS: Self-Expression Values, Sex Difference and Career Choice**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The development of self and work roles is a process which began at home from childhood. Parents, siblings, and significant others who regularly enter the home, plays an important motivational role in determining the career choices of students. The socio-economic status of parents motivates children learning capacity and ability and probably their level of career choices. (Stacey 2000, Russel 1999 and Olayinka 2005). Children from high socio-economic families are fed properly; given good medical care, provided conducive reading environment, a well-equipped library, a play-ground and might be sent to special schools, thus promoting their studies and invariably their career choices. Children from low socio-economic parents could not have such motivational conditions and so very likely to perform poorly in their

studies. This performance might limit their opportunities regarding career choices because they could not score good grades to qualify them for highly prized careers. This is not to say that students of low socio-economic parent are not bright students but the level of their exposure seems to limit them and sometimes they are being faced with inferiority complex.

Career choices of students are not only influenced by motivational factors, such as physical, psychological, sociological and economic, but also by occupational information (Shertzer and Stone, 2002, Tyler, 1999, Udo, 2003). Occupational information is considered as accurate and usable information about jobs and occupations (Christensen 2002). This information includes; duties, requirements for entrance, conditions of work, rewards offered, advancement pattern, existing, predicted supply and demand for workers, and sources for further information (Gesinde, 1998).

Occupational information therefore performs informative, adjustive, motivational and distributive functions in influencing the career choices of youths (Hayes and Hopson, 2001). Before the introduction of guidance and counseling, there was nothing like occupational information. Most students found themselves in certain careers by accident (Shertzer and Stone 2002) or by some other dominant motivational factors (Osuji, 2003). For instance, many students select subjects without considering interest, ability and aptitude and without thinking of their future careers and the subjects that are pre-requisite to them. Some do not know that a credit in mathematics is required before they could be offered courses in the physical and Social Sciences. As a result, they become frustrated when they apply for admission into the universities and other higher institutions, and probably are rejected (Olayinka, 2002).

In the same vein, others think that credits in any five subjects in the school certificate or General Certificate in Education (GCE) examination could fetch them certificate. But after getting the five credits, those with wrong combinations soon discover that such certificate is worthless, to enter the University or any other higher institutions, hence their dream careers become difficult, if not possible to accomplish. These unfortunate candidates may end up entering any higher institution to read courses they neither liked nor proposed to read; simply because that is all they could afford with their certificates. This is the category of graduates who may end up with unemployment or no job satisfaction (Onanuga, 2000). Apart from selecting subjects and careers that are equally important (Hayes and Hopson, 2001). These according to Hayes and Hopson included personality traits for chosen careers, choices of universities, duration of courses, places of employment, allied careers and the importance of such careers to the manpower needs of the community, state and federal governments. A thorough knowledge of the above information has some motivational influence on the career choices of adolescents. Some motivational factors therefore influence the career choices of students, but the differences in the influence of these motivational factors have not been investigated. It was against the background that this study was intended to examine the influence of motivational factors, such as self-expression values and sex difference on career choice of senior secondary students in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Youths of today are in a fix to what career to choose. Many find themselves in jobs which they do not have any interest in. As a result, many have become disappointed and their performance

affects them in their places of employment. The cause of this could be traceable to the fact that many of our students do not have the freewill to choose their own careers depending on their abilities and interests. Hence youths are not motivated to take up certain career but jump into them either because of the financial reward to be derived or the prestigious nature of the job as society now ranks some jobs higher than others even when the youths may have high aspiration and decisions about careers but seems to be very difficult to make choice due to insufficient information. Thus, youths sometimes find their jobs dissatisfying, frustrating and disappointing just because they are not allowed to make their own choices neither are they properly guided and counseled, before choices are made that they could have a self-knowledge of themselves to enable intrinsic choice of career to be made.

### **Objective of the Study**

1. To examine the influence of self-expression values on occupational choices among secondary school students in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.
2. To determine the influence of sex difference on occupational choices among secondary school students in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. Is there any influence of self-expression values on occupational choices among secondary school students in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria?
2. Is there any influence of sex difference on the choice of career among secondary school students in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant influence of self-expression value and on career choice among secondary school students in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant influence of sex difference on the choice of career among secondary school students in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Self-Expression Values and Career Choice**

Self-expression values refer to interest, ability, aptitude, achievement, ambition and self-concept. According to Jiboku (1994), several factors motivate the career choices of youths. These include: his personality, his intellectual ability, entire complexity, aptitude, interest, sex, and his self-concept in one hand; security, prestige, money and power in the other hand. Silvey (2002), using Ugandan students who were asked to mention the two important aspects of a job they would consider when thinking about their first job, found out that interest in the job ability and personality as well as suitable pay and highly respected job were mentioned in that order. In a study of career choice by grammar school boys, Hill (2001) found out that hobbies and interest were important elements in occupational choice before the age of sixteen. The findings of this

study revealed that 33.33% of the samples choose a career which was related to a hobby and interest.

Katz and Allport (1998) also revealed that interest had significant influence on career choice of Syracuse students. 82% of the subjects reported “liking for particular work”, 45% mentioned “special abilities” while 30% selected eighteen other reasons. Koreman (1999) undertook a study to test the hypothesis that high self-esteem students are more likely to choose these occupations which they perceived to require their high abilities than low self-esteem persons. He used self-assurance scale and self-descriptive inventory to measure self-esteem and ability assessment. Questionnaires were employed to measure self-perceived abilities. His findings supported the hypothesis that individuals with high esteem sought vocations that were congruent with their self-perception. Ekong (2004) in his field study and levels of Engineering concluded that personality played a part in the engineering, but that special abilities and aptitudes influenced the level within a specified field.

Harvey (2005) revealed that individual attitudes, job and vocational preferences might probably explain part of the growing unemployment rate in the country. Calotte (1997) reporting on employment among school leavers in the Western State of Nigeria indicated that youths would not offer themselves for jobs in construction works or road building for status reasons. Writing on “formulating a guidance philosophy for Africa” Esen (2003) stated that in African society, the group rather the individual seemed to be reality. The Nation therefore feels that the needs of the individuals must be subordinated to the collective needs of the society of nation. If the individual’s choices cut across societal needs, there would definitely be some conflict. In support of Esen’s proposition, Denga (2006) observed that various governments in developing countries might be funding education in order to meet the projected manpower needs. He said that the counselor’s role in vocational counseling might be to conform to the demands of the government by influencing the students to fill crucial shortage fields in the labour market. The individuals’ interest and choices were therefore ignored. Nwagwu (2001), Olayinka (2005) and Davis (1999) also revealed that the relationship of career and job choices of students to the employment opportunities in the society neglected. Students probably have a wrong mental image of the employment opportunities and this might, have had significant impact on the job choices.

### **Sex Difference and Career Choice**

Another important motivating factor for occupational choice which is internal to the individual values system is the sex factor. Most of the studies tend to uphold the contention that women have somewhat different career patterns than men because of their traditional role and biological make-up. Frieze et al (2002) while commenting on the biology and sociology of sex observe that the average man was expected to be aggressive, active independent and forceful, while the average women were expected to be passive, dependent and soft spoken. Macoby and Jacklin (1999) earlier asserted that the child identifies with the same sex patters and learns the details of a sex role through imitations of the parents. Using a sampling of 285 university students, Davis (1999) sought to determine the relationship between career choices and sex role identities of his sample. Sex role identities were determined by Ben sex-role inventory (BSRI) while career choices were determined by career choices survey (CPS) adapted from Davis (1999). Analysis of his data indicated significant relationship between sex role identities and career choices. However, a high degree of androgyny was recorded.

In another study, Ekong et al (2004) investigated whether differences exist in various motivations for occupational choices using a sample of 500 students. The instrument used for data collection was Bakare's (2003) "motivation for occupational choices scale" (MOPS). Ten schools in Calabar Municipality participated in the study. The analysis of the data was done using t-test, sample percentages and relative ranking as the statistical methods. The researcher found significant that an influence of sex difference on occupational choices of students existed. Burraugh's (1981) investigated the relationship of sex type on occupational choice and expectations of college women in America. The researcher found that the distributions of occupational choices and occupational expectations – traditional, moderate and innovation – were similar to those of other groups of young women and reflected the percentage of women actually working on sex-type occupations. He concluded that sex has no significant influence on occupational choices.

Umoh (2007) studied the various motivational factors for occupational choices of adolescents in Cross River State, using a randomly selected sample of 850 students. The data was collected through the administration of a self-developed student vocation inventory (SUI) on the subjects used for the study. Analysis of the data was done with the use of the independent t-test statistical method. The result showed that no significant sex influence on various motivational factors existed. Black (2000) studied sex differences in interest measurement. The sample consisted of 2396 high school students (613 boys and 783 girls) between 9 to 12 age grades. Data was collected from the sample through the administration of Word Association Test (WAT) vocational inventory, which he had added advantage of discriminating against occupation stereotype bias. The subjects (sample) were drawn from 18 different curricular areas representing all the socio-economic classes. The data analysis was done, using a one-way analysis of variance does not exist in the vocational interest of subjects. Nwadingwe (2001) investigated super's self-concept and vocational choices theory among University of Calabar students drawn from medical, nursing, law and education curricular groups. Data was collected through the administration of self-constructed questionnaire which elicited response on influence of affective characteristics, sex stereotype, self-esteem and self-concept on occupational choices existed. The researcher concluded that sex factor has ceased to be a significant motivator in vocational selections.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

The research Design used in this study was the survey design.

### **Research Area**

The research area was Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Population**

The subjects of this study consisted of 300 Senior Secondary School students (150 males and 150 females) randomly selected from five secondary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area.

### Sampling Techniques\Procedure

Five secondary schools selected for the study in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State were stratified on the basis of types (Urban Schools and Rural Schools) and also co-educational Schools.

### Instrumentation

The Main Instrument used in this study was questionnaire titled “Self-Expression Values, Sex Difference and Career Choice Questionnaire (SEVSDCCQ).”

### Validation of the Instrument

The face validation of the instrument was carried out to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, completeness and the language of the study under consideration.

### Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability coefficient was calculated using test-re-test technique. Reliability coefficient obtained was between the range of .86 to .94, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument.

### Method of Data Analysis

Research hypotheses were answered using one-way analysis of variance and independent t-test at .05 level of significance.

### Results

#### Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of self-expression values (such as attitude, self-concept and aptitude) on career choice among secondary school students. The dependent variable in this hypothesis was career choice among secondary school students, while the independent variable was self-expression values (of aptitude, self-concept and aptitude to their schooling). To test this hypothesis, summarized data were subjected to statistical analysis, using one-way analysis of variance procedures. The results of the analysis are presented in table 1

**TABLE 1: One-way analysis of variance of influence of self-expression values on career choice among secondary school students**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$
Aptitude (Low mean)	92	14.49	7.62	1333	19314
Self-concept (Average mean)	129	18.85	4.55	2432	45849.80
Attitude (High mean)	89	25.67	6.32	2285	58665.45
Total\average	300	19.69	5.17	6050	123829.26

Sources of variation	SS	df	MS	F-value	sign
Between groups:	1820.93	2	910.46	18.42*	.000
Within groups:	14729.67	297	49.43		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>16550.60</b>	<b>299</b>			

\*Significant at  $P < .05$ ;  $df = 2$  and  $297$ ;  $N = 300$ ;  $Crit - F = 3.004$

From table 1, the calculated F – value (18.42) was found to be greater than the critical F – value of 3.004 needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 2 and 297 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant influence of self-expression values (such as attitudes self-concept, and aptitude) on career choice among secondary school students. From the table it could be observed that the respondents mean scores on aptitude were higher ( $\bar{X}_1 = 25.67$ ) than those of self-concept ( $\bar{X}_2 = 18.85$ ) and aptitude (14.49). This variation indicates that the respondents perceive their aptitude for certain careers to be far higher than their self-concept and attitudes towards other careers.

### Hypothesis Two

There is no significant influence of sex differentiation on the choice of career among secondary school students. The dependent variable in this hypothesis is choice of career\occupations, while the independent, variable is sex difference. To test this hypothesis, data for the independent variable was extracted from the data bank and summarized into means ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviations (SD) and according to the category of sex of students. The summarized data was then subjected to statistical analysis, using the independent t-test analytical procedure and the result presented in table 2

**TABLE 2: Independent t-test analysis of influence of sex difference in the choice of career among secondary school students**

Variable (sex difference)	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	sign
Female	150	12.71	3.21			
				298	6.897*	.00
Male	150	14.95	2.23			
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>13.83</b>	<b>2.72</b>			

\*Significant at  $P < .05$ ;  $df = 298$ ;  $N = 300$ ;  $crit - t = 1.968$

From table 2, the calculated t-value (6.897) was found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.968 needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level, with 298 degrees of freedom with this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant influence of sex differentiation in the choice of career among secondary school students. From the mean scores, of male are higher with lower standard deviations than those of the female respondents, this is indicative of the higher aspirations among male than their female counterparts in respect to career choice.

### Discussion of Findings

### **Self-Expression Values and Career Choice**

The results of analysis of hypothesis one of this study have revealed that a significant influence of self-expression values on career choice exists among secondary school students. Here, the respondent aptitude for certain careers was found to be greater than their self-concept and attitudes towards such careers. These findings are supported by Hasan (2000). Johansson (2002) and Jiboku (1994) who in their separate studies of the motivational influence of self-expression values on the careers choices of Nigerian students, found a general response pattern with respect to certain professions/occupations. For instance, Johansson (2002) and Hasan (2000) found that a profession such as farming was known to have negative self-concept and low achievement motivation, with some traces of anxiety, on the other hand the “group” for professionally motivated occupations such as medicine, law and accountancy, etc. were identified/associated with high positive self-concept, high achievement motivation and with some amount of extraversion. Furthermore, Johansson (2002) found that the ranking of occupations follows a dimension of interpersonal contact with introverted groups represented by farmers, driver, clerks, etc. while on the extroverted end; it was occupied by occupations such as Lawyers, Chambers of commerce of executive medical doctors, engineers, etc.

### **Sex Difference and Career Choice**

Analysis of hypothesis two of this study reveals the facts that a significant difference exists in sex differentiation influence on career choice among secondary school students, the male exhibiting more\higher sensitive to career choice with respect to the career choice than their female counterparts. These relations are in support of Ekong (2004) who found that one major reason why male perform mostly better in science, mathematics and technically-oriented subjects in school, is the differential role functioning\orientation of boys and girls in homes. That, while the boys are oriented towards strenuous, leadership and administrative roles, the girls on the other hand are oriented towards beautification of the caring for the offspring, catering and other allied feminine services that require less stresses. Therefore, with such orientation, females begin early in life to select professions that have to do with little expenditure of energy, such as secretarial administration, hotel and catering management, arts, nursing, etc. The findings also agree with the findings of Turner (2000) which revealed that women have somewhat different career choice pattern than men because of their differential orientations of roles of life, as well as their biological make-up. Those women ambitions were complex than men; with high relationship between career choices, in relation to their nature and type\kind of life spouse. Little/low relationships exist between material ambitions and education\occupational choices among women-folk, but very highly with the men folk.

### **Conclusion**

- 1) Self-expression values of attitude, self-concept and aptitude have influence on career choice among senior secondary school students. Therefore, with more effective career/occupational teachings in secondary school, students would be able to widen their occupational preferences for brighter future.
- 2) Sex differentiation significantly influences career choice among senior secondary school students. The male group being more significantly affected due to the differential roles played by male and females in real life situations. While men are oriented towards

strenuous and more leadership behavior, the females are oriented more towards domestic, aesthetic roles in the home, etc.

### **Recommendations**

1. The State Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Secondary Education Board (SEB), as well as the Science and Technical Board should ensure that at least trained, professional guidance counselors are posted to secondary and technical schools. This will not only help in effective management of our state secondary schools, but will also ensure that guidance counselors will devote more time to effective career counseling strategies which would enable the students make realistic occupational preferences.
2. The Nigerian education curriculum should be modified and reviewed to incorporate systematic career counseling programmes for the nation's children in their primary and secondary schools. Such curricula should be flexible enough to take the interest of the female-folk into consideration with the advancement in technology, by carrying both male and females along the path of career preferences.

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