

The relative influences of peers and parents on the choices of careers by Nigerian adolescents: a case study of Plateau State, Nigeria.

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Abstract:

The controversial issue of which socialising model parents or peers exert greater influence on the adolescents' choice of careers has remained unresolved. Some problems which teenagers, and even adults, encounter in choosing unrealistic careers such as the inability to cope with courses in their chosen fields and ultimate lack of satisfaction in the world of work has persisted. This study investigated the relative influences of peers and parents on Nigerian adolescents' career choices. Students Background Information Questionnaire (S.B.I.Q.) and Parent-Peer Orientation Questionnaire (P.P.O.Q.) were administered to 600 adolescents.

Four hypotheses were proposed and tested. One of the hypotheses confirmed that there was no significant difference between male and female adolescents in their orientation toward their peers in choice of careers. Another indicated that there was no difference between urban and rural adolescents in their orientation towards their peers in choice of careers. The remaining two hypotheses were rejected. These are the ones that speculated that adolescents are significantly more peer-oriented than parent-oriented in their choice of careers and that there is no significant difference between urban and rural adolescents in their parental orientation in career choices. Though more parent-oriented than peer-oriented, 3.51 and 2.77 mean scores respectively, only 0.08% of the adolescents investigated indicated willingness to pursue their parents' occupations. The study strongly recommends that career services be introduced in Plateau State Post-Primary institutions. Schools should be staffed with teachers who are exposed to adolescent psychology as opposed to the present situation where most of the teachers in that state - Indians, Pakistanis, Philipinos, Ghanians and Nigerians - lack this orientation. Since parents exert overwhelming influence on their adolescents' career choices, it is also recommended that school authorities should endeavour to use the avenues provided by the parents-teachers association meetings to educate parents on the existence of individual differences in talents and capabilities, thus increasing the probability that parents would become more realistic and tolerant about their wards career choices.

Keywords: Career/ parent/ peer/ socialising/ satisfaction/ orientation/ parents' occupations/ living standard

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