



What factors affect students' career orientation? The case of some Departments of the University of Buea.

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Abstract

When students enroll in school, it is often than not in order to acquire knowledge that will allow them to occupy certain roles in society. Understanding what affects their pathways as they progress through school, is important in providing the impetus required to sustain their dreams. The objective of this study was to identify factors that affect student's career orientation in Buea municipality. By understanding those factors, the counselor has the advantage to explore avenues that can channel students into roles that will enable them socioeconomically emerge into society when they graduate.

The study employed a simple survey design, to collect data from students of various Departments in the University of Buea (UB). A simple questionnaire was employed, alongside the Motivation for Occupational Preference Scale (MOPS), to collect data from 100 respondents. The selection of respondents was simple random selection of undergraduate students enrolled in various departments of UB. The percentage scale was used to describe the data collected in frequencies. The findings of the study were then discussed with respect to the objectives and a few recommendations were made.

Key words: career orientation.

Background to the study

The word career refers to one's profession or progress through life. It refers to something that one works with permanently through life. Someone could become a teacher, lawyer, accountant, pilot, surgeon, stage director, poet, editor, cook, tailor, priest, and carpenter for example. One is not usually born as any of these (Lent, Robert W.; Brown, Steven D.; Larkin, Kevin C (2007). It is in life that one would have to decide on which path to follow. The choice is usually made in early years of life (Nsamenang, 2005). Although some career choices can be made later on in life. Whatever one decides to become in life, there is usually some preparation that has to be done prior to assuming such an occupation (Holland, 1985; 1997).

People spend some time learning a trade or learning skills required for a particular profession (Holland, 1959). Some careers require lengthy preparation and learning or training. Others require less preparation (Lent, 2007; 2002). Many require many years of formal education. Some careers do not require any serious formal education, but will need that someone learns just a basic skill (ILO, 2010). If one decides to become a medical doctor, then that person has to do a good number of years in a medical school. If you decide to become a professor, you must spend many years in a university, studying. However, if you decide to become a hotel attendant, you could succeed in such a career by learning on the job site (Piaget, 1962). To become a pilot or an astronaut, for instance, you would have to go to school and you must be financially viable and later on receive certification.

Some people decide very early in life, what they want to become, and work very hard to achieve their dreams (Feller, 2003). Others do not make serious choices about careers. You cannot get up anytime in your life and decide to join some careers (Ford, 2008; Lent, 2002). You would not decide at age 50 that you want to join the military or priesthood for instance. Again, it is hard to find a taxi driver who is a female in Cameroon. Some careers are dominated by a single sex. Other careers have strict age regulations (Dawis, 2002).

Some people usually have to make a decision on what they want to become in the early years of life, generally, as students, in their early school years especially in countries with compulsory formal education. Even in communities without formal education, a child would have to learn a trade (Tchombe, 2011; 2019; UNESCO, 2004, 2005, 2014; Pestalozzi, 2006). What makes a student to decide to join a particular career?

Statement of the problem

In spite of the lengthy preparation that people go through to join some careers, some eventually leave such careers to pursue different ones (UNESCO, 2004; 2005). Students who study in the same classroom usually have different careers interests from each other even if they study under the same conditions (Wirsiy, 2022). Furthermore, students in the same classroom, even with similar career interests, would not necessarily attain their career dreams. Largely, this would affect their self-esteem, given that occupation is part of the major factors that affect how we feel about ourselves (Maslow, 1973). Because occupation is very important factor in our lives, it was important to verify factors that affect students' future

occupations, so that both teachers and students can take advantage of this knowledge to make relevant decisions when their careers are still at the elastic stage (Vernon, 1969). If educational stakeholders understand these factors, more so in time, they can take advantage of them to harness the resources needed to make students become what they want to become. By so doing, it will reduce knowledge wastage, a situation in which students spend years in school to study subjects they are less likely to apply in their lives, to make their environments more comfortable.

The main objective of the research was:

To find out the factors affecting students career orientation in Buea Municipality

The specific objectives of the research were:

1. To find out how gender affects students career orientation
2. To find out how academic competence affects students' career orientation
3. To find out the extent to which; external influence, extrinsic rewards, self expression and people oriented values affect students' career orientation

The main Research question was:

What factors affect students' career orientation?

The specific research questions were:

1. How does gender affects students' career orientation?
2. How does academic competence affect students' career orientation?
3. To what extent do; external influence, extrinsic rewards, self expression and people oriented values affect students' career orientation?

Significance of study

The researcher chose this topic due to its pertinence in the 2035 agenda. Cameroon has as its long term plan to emerge by 2035 to middle income-hood. There have been projections about labor requirements and discourses about various occupational requirements. However, there would be an imbalance, if students migrate to different occupations continuously. This happens if the students have previously studied or enrolled in programs that were not of their best interest. Therefore, such a situation (over skewed occupational mobility) can be prevented by placing a system in place that enables students to enroll in fields in which they would likely excel and therefore have a lesser tendency to deviate. This produces a more stable labor force and thus economy.

Scope and delimitation of study

The researcher was interested in factors that affect the career orientation of students. At primary and secondary school level, pupils and students respectively have relatively little knowledge about various careers. More so, they still have a lot of time to decide on their career pathways.

This is not the case with post-secondary students, whom at about 21, are expected to become independent and to begin to be productive members of their societies. It was therefore important to identify the forces on the career trajectories of these students, and how they can be maneuvered to produce optimized career pathways. This group of students falls in undergraduate school in Cameroon. This would eventually comprise the focus of the study.

Definition of key terms

Career: referring to permanent engagements by students which would eventually define their occupations.

Orientation: students' predisposition towards particular fields or occupations.

RELATED LITERATURE

Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities in Work Environment

Holland (1990) postulated that vocational interest is an expression of one's personality, and that vocational interests could be conceptualized into six typologies, which are Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C). If a person's degree of resemblance to the six vocational personality and interest types could be assessed, then it is possible to generate a three-letter code (e.g., SIA, RIA) to denote and summarize one's career interest. The first letter of the code is a person's primary interest type, which would likely play a major role in career choice and satisfaction.

The second and third letters are secondary interest themes, and they would likely play a lesser but still significant role in the career choice process. Furthermore, Holland (1985, 1997) postulated that vocational environments could be arranged into similar typologies. In the career choice and development process, people search for environments that would allow them to exercise their skills and abilities, and to express their attitudes and values. In any given vocational environment, there is a tendency to shape its composition so that its characteristics are like the dominant persons in there, and those who are dissimilar to the dominant types are likely to feel unfulfilled and dissatisfied.

The concept of "congruence" is used by Holland to denote the status of Person-environment interaction. A high degree of match between a person's personality and interest types and the dominant work environmental types (that is, high degree of congruence) is likely to result in vocational satisfaction and stability, and a low degree of match (that is, low congruence) is likely to result in vocational dissatisfaction and instability.

Self-concept Theory of Career Development

Super (1990) suggested that career choice and development is essentially a process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept. According to Super (1990), self-concept is a product of complex interactions among a number of factors, including physical and mental growth, personal experiences, and environmental characteristics and stimulation. Super's theory has called for a stronger emphasis on the effects of social context and the reciprocal influence between the person and the environment. Building on Super's notion that self-concept theory was essentially a personal construct theory, Savickas (2002) took a constructivist perspective and postulated that "the process of career construction is essentially that of developing and implementing vocational self-concepts in work roles" (Savickas, 2002 p. 155).

A relatively stable self-concept should emerge in late adolescence to serve as a guide to career choice and adjustment. However, self-concept is not a static entity and it would continue to evolve as the person encounters new experience and progresses through the developmental stages. Life and work satisfaction is a continual process of implementing the evolving self-concept through work and other life roles. Super (1990) proposed a life stage developmental framework with the following stages: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance (or management), and disengagement.

In each stage one has to successfully manage the vocational developmental tasks that are socially expected of persons in the given chronological age range. For example, in the stage of exploration (ages around 15 to 24), an adolescent has to cope with the vocational developmental tasks of crystallization (a cognitive process involving an understanding of one's interests, skills, and values, and to pursue career goals consistent with that understanding), specification (making tentative and specific career choices), and implementation (taking steps to actualize career choices through engaging in training and job positions). Accordingly, the concept of "career maturity" was used to denote the degree that a person was able to fulfill the vocational developmental tasks required in each developmental stage.

Empirical framework

Age and career orientation

According to the AJOL, not many undergraduate university students in Nigeria apply to study librarianship, unless as a last resort. A study (Kin, 2008) investigated the influence of age, gender, subject background and predisposing factors on the admission choice of undergraduates in Nigerian library schools. This was to allow for a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding the admission choice of this set of undergraduates in Nigerian universities. The study adopted a survey research design. In all, 1,228 students from eight, proportionally stratified Nigerian university library schools selected by proportionate sampling were surveyed; based on the population of students per library school and for every class involved in the study. Secondary data were obtained from the students' admission records. The questionnaire was validated through expert advice and pre-test. Students from

the Federal University of Technology, Minna Library School were involved in the pre-test. Chi-square statistics were used to test the study. The study concluded that the choice of library and information science as a course of study was influenced more by the identified admission predisposing factors, like age, than other factors.

Furthermore, a comparison of 121 mature-age and 270 normal-age entrants who graduated from the University of Queensland Medical School between 1999 and 2009 showed that mature-age entrants were some 7 years older, were more likely to come from public (state) schools and less likely to have parents in professional/ technical occupations. Mature-age entrants experienced greater stress throughout the medical course, especially with regard to financial difficulties, loneliness/isolation from the students and family problems (a greater proportion were married with children). While whole-course grades were similar in both groups, normal-age entrants tended to win more undergraduate honors/prizes and postgraduate diplomas/degrees, including specialist qualifications (Harth, 2009).

Evidently, age plays an important role in the career orientation of students. Programs that require more years, like medicine and aeronautic engineering, tend to have younger entrants than older entrants. On the other hand, older entrants (especially those from low SES), would most probably prefer one and two year professional certificate programs.

Occupational orientation caused by academic competence

Bandura's 1986 general social cognitive theory emphasizes the means by which individuals exercise personal agency in the career development process, as well as extra-personal factors that enhance or constrain agency (Nabavi, 2012). In particular, his theory focuses on self-efficacy, expected outcome, and goal mechanisms and how they may interrelate with other person (for example, gender), contextual (support system), and experiential/learning factors.

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) emphasizes cognitive-person variables that enable people to influence their own career development, as well as extra-person (e.g., contextual) variables that enhance or constrain personal agency, for example, textbooks for students.

Textbooks have been said to contribute to career orientation of students. According to research perspective, 20% of illustration pictures in 1st grade textbooks were girls. 6% of these are adult women. Eventually, in 2nd grade the illustration of adult women felt to 1% in science textbooks. This may be overlooked, but the impression usually driven home is that women have no role in scientific knowledge, that all scientists are male. Girls are classified in mathematics text books as domestic or emotional (William, 2010).

Although our knowledge of women in science is very incomplete-because of the burdens they have had in gaining recognition for their work-at a minimum the science books could mention, Marie Curie and Marie Leaky. Instead sciences give children the impression that no woman has or can play a role in building our scientific knowledge. The scientific world is presented as a masculine domain: all scientists are male, only men do scientific work.

Reasons for Occupational Preference

The MOPS classified reasons for occupational preference into four main categories:

A, (External influence) Direct or indirect influence of parents, teachers, friends, TV, Radio and books. Provision of good salary, attractive working conditions, stable and secure future, improved social status and prestige

B (Extrinsic-reward oriented values) Fondness for school subjects which bear upon profession, permit to use special aptitude, permit to use special creativity, permit use of things

C (Self-expression values) Chance to exercise leadership, opportunity to work with people, opportunity to serve, permit to serve less fortunate people

D (People oriented values) Chance to exercise leadership, opportunity to work with people, opportunity to serve, permit to serve less fortunate people.

Research design

The study employed a qualitative survey research design. The study was descriptive and investigated factors that affect career orientation or choice of students, in Buea Municipality. The survey was chosen due to its cost effective nature, allowing the researcher to gather information within a short period.

Sample

DEPARTMENT	AGRIC	COM/ENG	LIN/LIT/EN	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	TOT
MOPS	20	16	08	16	24	12	04	100
QUESTIONAIR	27	14	06	19	00	05	29	100
TOTAL	47	30	14	35	24	17	33	200

AGRI (AGRICULTURE), COM/ENG (COMPUTER ENGINEERING), LIN/LIT/EN (LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE AND ENGLISH), BNF (BANKING AND FINANCE), CHM (CHEMISTRY), EPY (EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)

Sampling

The University of Buea is a state university located in the South West Region of Cameroon. It was selected because students in this university represent the typical university student in Buea Municipality. It was thought that students from private universities may have represented skewed populations. The students attending private university were most likely to come from higher income brackets and not likely to represent the ordinary university student in Buea municipality. The selection of respondents was random. Students who were located in the classroom block (representing students from various departments represented in the sample above) were used as the sample.

Research instrument

The Motivation for Occupational Preference Scale (MOPS) was the main research instrument used to collect data for the study. It is a research instrument produced at the psychological laboratory of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, by Christopher G. M. Bakare. The questionnaire was an effective data collection tool; it allowed a large volume of information to be collected within a short period of time from different respondents simultaneously. A research questionnaire accompanied the MOPS, to provide more insight and to contextualize the MOPS. These questionnaires were written in simple language, made as clear as possible, while avoiding ambiguous words. They were validated using the Coefficient of Validity index method using four panelists. The MOPS was a standardized instrument and did not necessitate such procedure.

Method of data analysis

The data were analyzed using percentages and means (Amin, 2004). The intention of the analysis was not to provide quantitative dimensions, rather, it enabled a qualitative demonstration on how the variables; age, gender, academic competence and socioeconomic status could potentially affect students' career orientation.

Ethical considerations

The data were collected from undergraduate students in the South West Region of Cameroon. They were opted into the exercise, while clearly indicating to them that the exercise was voluntary, and that therefore they could opt out even in the middle of the data collection exercise. The researcher pleaded with them to spare some of their time to fill in the questionnaires, without coercive verbal or non-verbal communication. No promises were made to the respondents in whatever form. Furthermore, no identity specific information was collected nor intended to be revealed in other to prevent any detrimental implications due to participation in the research process. Finally, the data was analyzed without zooming or manipulation, while referencing the works consulted to avoid plagiarism.

Presentation of findings

Research question one: How does gender affects students' career orientation?

Question on whether some jobs are more appropriate for one sex

DEPT	AGRIC	COM	LING	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	Total	Total %
YES M	12	7	2	4		2	5	32	62

F	7	2	3	9			9	30	
NO M	3	3		3			6	15	37
F	2	2	2	3		3	9	22	

The responses on whether some jobs were more appropriate for one sex showed 62% of the respondents agreeing while 38% of them disagreeing.

Question on whether anything prevented a woman from picking a taxi Job in Molyko

DEPT	AGRIC	COM	LING	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	Total	Total %
YES M	6	7		2			2	17	42
F	3	1	2	6		2	11	25	
NO M	11	3	1	5		3	5	28	56
F	8	3	2	6			9	28	

More than half (56%) of respondents said nothing prevented women from picking up jobs as taxi drivers in Molyko (half of whom are men). While more than two-fifths (42%) said something prevents a woman from picking up a job as taxi driver in Molyko.

Question on whether men and women should be paid same for the same Job

DEPT	AGRIC	COM	LING	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	Total	Total%
YES M	14	8	2	5		2	9	35	82
F	10	1	3	9		3	4	47	
NO M	3	1		1			3	8	18
F	1	2		3			1	7	

When asked if men and women should be paid the same if they did the same job, more than four-fifths (82%) of the respondent agreed while less than a fifth (18%) disagreed.

Summary findings on research question one; Does gender affect students career orientation?

DEPT	AGRIC	COM	LING	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	Total	Total%
YES M	32	22	4	11		4	14	84	62.6
F	20	4	8	24		5	24	102	
NO M	17	7	1	9		3	14	51	37.4
F	21	7	4	12		3	19	57	

The findings show majority the respondents agreeing (62.6%) that gender affects the career orientation of students by agreeing that some jobs are appropriate for some sex, nothing prevents women from being taxi drivers in Molyko and women and men should be paid equally for the same jobs.

Research Question Two: How does academic competence affect students' career orientation?

Occupational Choices of Respondents

Department	AGRIC	COM/ENG	LIN/LIT/EN	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	Total
Occupation								
Teaching			5	1	1	1	2	10

Trading					1			01
Farming								
Pharmacy								
Medicine(MD)						2		02
Housewife								
Nursing								
Accounting					6			06
Pastor								
Simtress								
Contraction								
Military						1		01
Driving								
Finance control					6			06
Divisional officer								
Administration				4				04
Plumber								
Dentist								
Engineer		7				8		15
Lecturing							1	01
Photography								
Pedagogic inspection								
Secretary					1			01
Banking					11			11
Mechanic								
Agric-technicians	20							20
Traditional ruler								
Telecom		10						10
Journalism				1				01
Carpentry								
Sailing								
Production director								
Interpreter			3					03
Counsellor							1	01
Lawyer				10				10
TOTAL	20	17	8	16	26	12	4	100

The findings showed that:

1. One-fifth (20%) of the sample (100% of agriculture students) indicated that they wanted to become agricultural technicians. This is expected.
2. One quarter (25%) of the sample said they wanted to become engineers or telecom experts. Of this 25%, 17 of them were students reading computer engineering and 8 of them were chemistry students.
3. One in every ten (10%) of the sample intended to be teachers (5 of them literature students, 2 EPY students and each from law, BNF and CHM). Two chemistry students intended to be medical doctors.
4. About one-twentieth (6%) of the sample intended to be Accountants, all of them Banking and Finance students. Another 6% intended to be finance controllers, all of them Banking and Finance students.
5. 1% of the respondents intend to be military people.

6. 4% of the respondents, all of them law students, intend to be administrators.
7. 1% of all of which are EPY students intended to lecture at a university and another 1% of EPY students intend to be educational counselors
8. 1%, from BNF, intended to be secretaries.
9. 1% of the law students indicated that they would want to become Journalists.
10. 3% of the linguistics students intend to be interpreters.
11. 10% of the sample, exclusively law students intended to be lawyers.

Research question three: To what extent do; external influence, extrinsic rewards, self expression and people oriented values affect students' career orientation?

		AGRI C	COM/ E	LING/ E	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	Total	%
Direct or indirect influence of parents, teachers, friends, TV, Radio and books A (external influence) 204(18%)	M	22	09	09	10	23	21	03	111	45
	F	17	12	05	31	18	06	04	93	55

1. Less than a fifth (18%) of respondents chose their careers due to external influence such as direct or indirect influence of parents, teachers, friends, TV, Radio and books. In this group, 45% of respondents were male while 55% were female.

		AGRI C	COM/ E	LING/ E	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	Total	%
Provision of good salary, attractive working conditions, stable and secure future, improved social status and prestige B(extrinsic-reward oriented values) 282(25%)	M	30	33	16	13	36	25	02	153	54
	F	16	08	10	35	43	09	08	129	46

2. A quarter (25%), of the respondents chose careers due to extrinsic reward oriented values, such as provision of good salary, attractive working conditions, stable and secure future, improved social status and prestige. 54% in this category was male and 46% was female

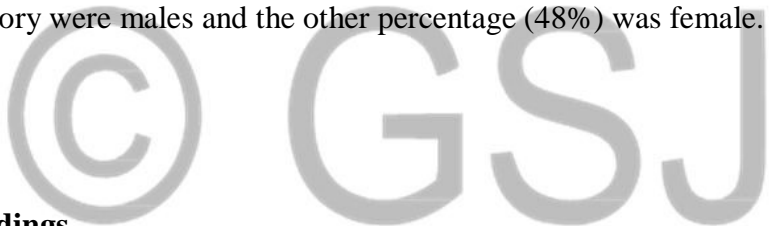
		AGRI C	COM/ E	LING/ E	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	Total	%
Fondness for school subjects which bear upon profession, permit to use special aptitude, permit to use special creativity, permit use of things C(self-expression)	M	29	35	17	16	31	31	03	162	54
	F	26	16	08	29	37	10	10	136	46

values)298(27%)										
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3. About a quarter (27%) of respondents chose career due to , self-expression values such fondness for school subjects which bear upon profession, permit to use special aptitude, permit to use special creativity, permit use of things came second in their effect on career orientation. 54% of this percentage were male while the remaining 46% are female.

		AGRI C	COM/ E	LING/ E	LAW	BNF	CHM	EPY	Total	%
Chance to exercise leadership, opportunity to work with people, opportunity to serve, permit to serve less fortunate people	M	36	39	19	16	32	29	04	175	52
	F	36	14	09	38	45	08	12	162	48
D(people oriented values)337(30%)9										

4. Less than a third (30% of the respondents) chose their careers due to people oriented values such as chance to exercise leadership, opportunity to work with people, opportunity to serve, permit to serve less fortunate people. More than half (52%) in this category were males and the other percentage (48%) was female.



Summary of findings

Summarily, the findings revealed the following:

Re sea rc h qu est ion s	Summary of findings
Ho w do es ge nd er aff ect car eer ori ent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender roles are changing significantly • Respondents agreed that .some jobs are more appropriate for one sex. • majority of respondents agreed that men and women should be paid the same when they do the same job

<p>ati on of stu de nts ?</p>	
<p>Ho w do es ac ad em ic co mp ete nc e aff ect the car eer ori ent ati on of stu de nts ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students tend to choose careers in fields where they are academically competent• Students find themselves in some fields of study that do not complement their career interests <p>© GSJ</p>
<p>To wh at ext ent do; ext er nal inf lue nc e, ext rin sic re wa rds , sel f</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• external influence 18%• extrinsic-reward oriented values 25%• self-expression values 27%• people oriented values 30%

ex pr ess ion an d pe opl e ori ent ed val ues aff ect stu de nts , car eer ori ent ati on ?	
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DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

How does gender affect students' career orientation?

Gender roles between 1983 and 2008 showed consistent patterns in the work structure. Pre-primary and primary teachers, secretaries, nurses, cashiers, social workers, managers in health and medicine, and sales related occupations had women representing more than 58% of the total workforce (Provist, 2010). However, pharmacist, computer programmers, lawyers, physicians, dentists, architects, clergy and air pilots still had less than 27% female representation in the workforce. In spite of the fact that financial managers and pharmacists have grown more rapidly in female representation, it could be argued that female representation is still lagging behind.

A lot of change has taken place over the years in terms of work structure. Evidence from the current study however suggests that the change however is not yet satisfactory, given that 62.6% of the sample still attested to gender still being an issue to some career pursuits. As mentioned earlier, pattern has been largely stagnant and not sustainable. For instance, when organizations and NGOs as well as government, introduce intervention programs, some are usually to improve female representation in the workforce. Particular interest has been female representation in STEM related careers.

The intervention programs have not produced the desired results in that; they have not changed the work structure to provide equal gender representation. Possibly, this is because

the intervention programs do not usually do enough analysis to identify historical, psychological and contextual root causes that have handed over the current work structure to the present generation. In as much as this is necessary, artificial means to improve female representation through positive discrimination, have not sustainable. Some women are not out there in some professions, simply because they have not found someone out there in the profession.

It is therefore necessary that career stakeholders in our universities and secondary schools, especially Guidance counselors should have a rethink. Findings showed a high correlation in succession of the occupations. The issue of modeling cannot be over emphasized. There was a lot of chunking; a situation in which a peer doesn't fall far away from the tree. People usually have little control of their environments as individuals. For instance, the type of school the student finds themselves already earmarks the possibilities and limitations. In other words, why would the son of a peasant farmer envy becoming a pilot? In the biggest reality, he would envy becoming a bigger farmer.

It is downed therefore on the current research that there are eminent factors which are not obvious to scholar hood, which are deeply rooted in the value system, history and customs of the traditions of every society that perpetrate the current work status quo; guidance counselors must be alert to this. Firstly, there is not much disparity in the enrolment of both genders in our schools. Therefore the fact that the imbalance in work structure continues in our society may be castrated by glass ceilings which are either not obvious or may in actual fact be natural

Furthermore, having more girls in our schools should represent a lot of wastage of human resources; of unused human potential. This is accentuated by the fact that they acquire the skills and never put them into use. To illustrate this, how many girls are enrolled in an electricity department in your local school compared to boys, and then find out how many women are practicing as electricians in that community. So the question is where are they? Therefore the pointer could be that the problem may not only be at the level of acquisition of STEM related skills, but the fact that these girls and women have not seen the relevance in the first place which doesn't sustain their intrinsic motivations.

How does academic competence affect students' career orientation?

One key determinant to career orientation is academic competence. The study coroneted academic competence, as the major determinant to career orientation among the factors that were under consideration. Notwithstanding, it also asserted that there are students in fields of study that do not complement their career interests. It is important that we agree the evidence for academic competence to be operationalized by academic performance, in spite of the fact that this is an assumption. There was a high correlation between academic competence and career interest.

To illustrate this point, all the students who were interested in becoming either accountants or Financial Controllers, were all Banking and Finance students. All the students who wanted to become Lawyers were law students. Furthermore, all the students who wanted to become

telecom experts were Computer Engineering students. All the students who wanted to become agric technicians were students of agriculture. No one showed interest in becoming an interpreter except students of Linguistics. In fact, the correlation between the students' interests and academic competence were glaring. The adage is that a snake doesn't deliver a bird. It downs therefore that career counselors must consider the intricate and permeable relationship between Academic Counseling and Career Counseling (AC and CC).

In spite of the fact that interest can drive competence and vice versa, it is important that counselors carry out their primordial responsibilities early enough, when the decision making process is still at its plastic phase. It is disheartening when students develop interest in particular careers and then realize that either they do not have what it takes to exercise those roles or that it is 'too late' to acquire the required competences to achieve those goals.

During science spheres, open door days, club activities, career days, women's day and so on, counselors can take advantage to sew interest in STEM related careers by inviting resource persons and models who can initiate activities in those fields that will imbue intrinsic motivation in learners. We must do serious biasing towards STEM related occupations. This is the bed rock that will provide man power requirements that are required to emerge Cameroon to middle income economy by 2035.

In as much as the study did not deal with the number of women retained in these departments to project the work structure representation, it is important for counselors to be sensitive to gender issues when providing modeling to students. Choice of model may send the wrong signals if not adequately done. Its old news that most names of scientists being male and having more male science teachers may have affected the perception and subsequent performance of women in the sciences over the years. However, there is the need for a conscientious effort to encourage girls and women to offer science as a necessity, given that they constitute a bulk of the school population.

This study did not investigate if the students became interested in the fields or occupations in question before enrolling in the various fields of study or not. Was this the case, it is a pointer to the fact that biasing should be deliberate. It is therefore based on the labor requirements of the State that the ministries of education can boast the career numbers required. There is acute shortage of people in some careers, with the case in STEM glaring, so much so that some areas are still capitalized by expatriates.

There are fields of study which are relatively new to the curricula in Cameroon Universities. In spite of that, those that are existent and subservient to the economic progress are not fully utilized. While there are departments without the basic numbers required to run them, there are others that are over saturated. Unfortunately, these which are over saturated, do not have readily available jobs in Cameroon. For example, the nursing department which seems to be at a boom, as at 2023, may largely be there to feed the huge demand for nurses overseas. What does Cameroon stand to gain from training nurses for other countries with state resources when it has personnel that it needs are doesn't seem to be able to harness these resources for the training.

To what extent do; external influence, extrinsic rewards, self expression and people oriented values affect students' career orientation?

The major influence to career orientation was people oriented values. The chance to exercise leadership, the opportunity to work with people, the opportunity to serve and the opportunity to serve less fortunate people were some of these characteristics. People oriented values people want careers that relate directly with people. Such people want to be close to people and carry activities that directly or immediately have an impact on people. The least influence was the external influence. External influence like extrinsic motivation is expected to have the least influence on long term goals which in turn would less likely affect career oriented.

These influences; like the influence of parents, teachers, friends, TV, radio and books are superficial to some extent. Career goals are usually long term and deeply rooted. As one would expect, an influence from outside or external cannot have as much an effect as that from within. Similarly, extrinsic rewards are stronger factors than external as demonstrated by the findings. These factors; such as a good salary, attractive working conditions, stable and secure future, improved social status and prestige are more profound in their effect than do external influences.

More so, self expression values were not projected to be the strongest influences as would be expected, given that their locus is more from within. However, fondness for school subjects which bear upon the profession, permit to use special aptitudes, permit to use special creativity and permit of use of things are members of this category. The note is that for different groups of students, the locus of their career interests will continue to vary. In line with Hollands' assertion, that different personalities beget different professional interests.

The inference we make is that there was no particular pattern in terms of the distributions of locus of control for the various departments. The most important thing would usually be for counselors to identify the locus of career interest for their clients. When they identify these attributes, they stand a better chance to determine which ones are going to endure the most and to work on them. Some of the loci will fade away with time, depending on the developmental stage and environment or context of the client.

Furthermore, a single approach does not provide the panacea required to groom students successfully into their optimum career aspirations and potentials. Therefore, it is suggested that other tests such as Career Assessment Inventories, Aptitude Tests, Scholastic Aptitude Tests, Personality Tests can provide more clues on best recommendations for particular student clients. In as much as there has been advocacy on the importance of testing. Tests by themselves do not replace other conventional methods and techniques that have provided prior leadership in Career Counseling. Rather, they are meant to compliment. It is therefore suggested that counselors identify the long term goals of the ministry they work for, and counsel students accordingly.

Counseling will not always mean 'talking' to clients, but it will also mean talking to policy makers and politicians and leaders in the industry, on the need for a concerted effort if the

goal to emerge Cameroon will materialize. It is by so doing that labor requirements will most likely be met.

Recommendations

A quarter of the respondents indicated that they would change their field of studies if they had a second chance. This number was small but significant. It is important for schools and institutions to educate pupils and students on the stakes on various careers. Sometimes students come to university just to discover that a subject that was neglected in the past takes a central pivot in their field of interest or career path. Counselors in various schools should endeavor to intensify the enlightenment of students about various careers. In schools where there are no guidance counselors, guidance workshops on careers should regularly be arranged such that resource persons and people from various walks of life can present what it takes to students to become various professionals. The project should be funded by the school and PTA.

Suggestions for further research

It would be important to find out the impact of career activities like open door games, and common effective practices that are explored by other countries that can be emulated in Cameroon.

A study could examine the relationship between the Ministries of Secondary Education, and Higher Education as well as Vocational and Technical Education to find possible areas of cooperation and activities that can boast career development opportunities for students.

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