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## Influence of Personality Factors on Career Choice of Senior Secondary School Students in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the influence of personality factors on the career choice of senior secondary school students in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two research hypotheses. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study was 22, 693 students while the sample was 900 students, which was selected via simple random and stratified sampling techniques. An adapted questionnaire titled "Influence of Personality Factors on Students' Career Choice Questionnaire (IPFSCCQ)" was validated and trial tested to 30 students in Government Secondary School, Girei, with test-retest reliability showing a coefficient of 0.78. The data gathered were analysed using both descriptive statistics (of frequencies, mean and standard deviation) for answering the research questions and inferential statistics of t-test and one-way ANOVA analyses to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that there is no significant gender difference in the specific roles of counsellors in the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone, with  $t = -5.74$ , when  $p = 0.566$ . Also, there is a significant mean difference among personality factors influencing the career choice of students in senior secondary schools ( $F(2, 865) = 63.099$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). Thus, the study concludes that school counsellors and personality factors play pivotal and positive roles in influencing the career choices of students in secondary schools within the Yola Education Zone. The study recommends amongst others that school counsellors should incorporate personality assessments as part of the career guidance process. As this would help them understand students' personality traits, interests, and strengths, which can help counsellors tailor their guidance and support, in alignment with their unique characteristics and aspirations.*

**Keywords:** Personality Factors; School Counsellors; Gender; Students' Career Choice; Yola Education Zone

## Introduction

Education is a transformative journey that not only imparts knowledge but also shapes the future trajectory of individuals. One critical juncture in this journey is the senior secondary school phase, where students are tasked with making decisions that will significantly impact their career paths. The choice of a career is a complex process influenced by various factors, and personality traits play a pivotal role in shaping these decisions. According to Kutlu and Bedel (2021), personality can be defined as a compilation of qualities or features that exhibit a certain level of stability across various situations. It is a set of characteristics within an individual influencing his cognitions and behaviours in different contexts. The personality factor of an individual will include the interests, values and skills of a person. Interests are a person's likes and dislikes which is characterized by the person's intensity of feelings about a subject or thing.

Eremie and Okwulehehie (2019) opined that interest changes, as students experience life and meet more people; they become interested in new things and discard some of their old interests. They also develop more complex thinking and understanding processes, and may even seek new interests and activities with the hope of improving themselves and making life more exciting. As interest changes so does the career choice of a person change. Students seek a career that meets their interests at a particular time hence the career that they may have wished to take when they were younger is not what they eventually do. Values are basic beliefs; that one holds most dear. Students often tend to pursue more vigorously the values that have more meaning to them than those that are less important to them. Hence, students' personality traits that are likely to influence these decisions include students' perception of a career path, interest, self-concept, anxiety for a career, aptitude and ability (Anake, Adigeb & Basse, 2017).

Additionally, certain personality characteristics are important in career decision-making. For instance, a gregarious student may perform better as a politician or a sales representative than an introvert (Garg, 2020). In addition, students who are empathetic and compassionate may be inclined towards careers that involve helping others, such as healthcare, social work, counselling, or community development. They may derive satisfaction from making a positive impact on individuals' lives and contributing to social or environmental causes, while students who are inclined towards analytical thinking, problem-solving, data analysis, and logical reasoning may be interested in careers such as engineering, finance, computer science, or research (Eremie & Okwulehehie, 2019; Younyi & Nkemanjen, 2020). Therefore, understanding students' personality traits may help students make more informed career decisions and find fulfilment in their chosen paths by aligning their work style and preferences with the demands and opportunities of different careers.

Furthermore, the study focused on Yola Education Zone, which is situated in Adamawa State, Nigeria, and has a diverse region with unique cultural, social, and economic dynamics. The local context plays a crucial role in shaping the aspirations and perspectives of students. Understanding the specific personality factors that influence career choices in this region is vital for designing interventions that resonate with the aspirations and values of the students. Also, while career choice and personality factors have been widely studied, there was a need for a focused investigation within the context of Yola Education Zone. Identifying the specific personality factors that significantly influence career decisions

among senior secondary school students in this region could help bridge existing gaps in knowledge. This study therefore aimed to fill this void by providing insights that can inform educational policies, counselling services, and career guidance programs tailored to the unique needs of students in Yola Education Zone. Therefore, the primary objective of this study was to explore and analyse the influence of personality factors on the career choices of senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

## Problem Statement

The process of career choice among senior secondary school students is a pivotal aspect of their educational journey, shaping their future paths and contributing to personal and societal development. Within the unique context of Yola Education Zone in Adamawa State, Nigeria, there exists a need to address the intricate interplay of personality factors influencing career decisions. The identification and understanding of these factors are critical for designing targeted interventions that align with the aspirations and characteristics of students, ensuring informed and fulfilling career choices. However, there is a gap in the current understanding of the specific personality factors that significantly influence career choices among senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone. While it is acknowledged that personality plays a role in career decisions, a comprehensive exploration of the influence between personality traits and career preferences within this specific context is lacking.

Additionally, in the absence of a comprehensive understanding of personality influences, there is a risk of a mismatch between students' career aspirations and the actual demands and characteristics of chosen professions in the study area. This disconnect may lead to dissatisfaction, unfulfilled potential, and difficulties among graduates in adapting to the realities of chosen career paths. Addressing this misalignment is essential for fostering a workforce that is not only skilled but also fulfilled and engaged in their chosen professions. This study therefore aimed to fill the identified gaps by investigating the influence of personality factors on the career choices of senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to:

1. determine the specific roles school counsellors play in assisting senior secondary school students to make career choices in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria.
2. establish the extent of which personality factors influence the career choice of senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria.

## Research Questions

1. What are the specific roles, school counsellors play in assisting senior secondary school students to make career choice in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do personality factors influence the career choice of senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria?

## Research Hypotheses

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant gender difference in specific roles of counsellors in the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant mean difference in mean response scores among personality factors influencing the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State.

## Research Methodology

The research design that was used for this study was a survey research design. The area of the study was Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State. The population of the study was 22, 693 respondents. The population of the study consisted of all the senior secondary school students in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State. The sample of this study was 900 senior secondary school students. Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were used to select the sample. The simple random sampling technique was used to select three senior secondary schools in each of the three Local Government Areas in Yola Education Zone. The stratified sampling technique was used to select 100 students from each school selected from the Local Governments leading to a total of 300 students comprised of 150 male and 150 female. These were selected from each of the three Local Government Areas that make up Yola Education Zone.

The instrument that was used for data collection in this study was an adapted structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled: "Influence of Personality Factors on Students' Career Choice Questionnaire (IPFSCCQ)" and adapted from Fareo and Garkuwa (2018)'s study. The IPFSCCQ was used for collecting data from sampled respondents in the sampled schools. The instrument was based on a modified 4-point Likert rating scale, as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The questionnaire had 15 items overall seeking to provide information about the influence of personality factors on the career choices of senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the instrument was subjected to validation, by some experts from the Department of Science Education of the Adamawa State University, Mubi, to ascertain whether the instrument can measure what it was purported to measure. The instrument was trial tested on 30 students in Government Secondary School, Girei, Adamawa State; who were not part of the sampled population. This was directed at pilot testing the instrument of which a test-retest reliability was conducted. The reliability co-efficient revealed a co-efficient of 0.78, which meant that the instrument was reliable. At the end of the exercise, 866 questionnaires were retrieved, which equalled to 96.2% of the total questionnaires administered. The data collected were analysed using frequency and percentage to present the demographic data of the respondents while mean and standard deviation were specifically used for answering the research questions. T-test and one-way ANOVA analyses were used to test the null hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05 through SPSS. The decision rule for the null hypothesis was that if the calculated value (p) was greater than the level of significance (0.05), then we accept the null hypothesis. Otherwise, we reject the null hypothesis; when  $p < 0.05$ .

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What are the specific roles, school counsellors play in assisting senior secondary school students to make career choices in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Specific Career Choice Roles, School Counsellors Play in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria**

S/N	ITEMS	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1.	Information on future opportunity	866	2.86	1.05	Agreed
2.	Help in self-assessment	866	2.96	1.00	Agreed
3.	Personality and career opportunity test	866	1.91	1.27	Disagreed
4.	Organise career field trip	866	2.47	1.24	Agreed
5.	Present career lesson	866	2.61	1.19	Agreed
	<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.56</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

**Decision rule:** 2.50 – 3.49 as Agreed; 1.50 – 2.49 as Disagreed

Table 1 reveals the responses of the respondents to Research Question 1. The table further shows that most of the respondents were in agreement with item 1, which implies that information on future opportunities is being provided by school counsellors to senior secondary school students. Also, the respondents agreed with item 2, which implies that school counsellors provide help in self-assessment for students. Item 3 was however disagreed with by the respondents, this implied that personality and career opportunity tests were not being utilised by the school counsellors. However, most of the respondents were in agreement with item 4, which implies that school counsellors often organise career field trips for senior secondary school students. In addition, item 5 was mostly agreed to by the respondents, this means that school counsellors often present career lessons to senior secondary school students in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State. With an overall grand mean of 2.56, the finding indicates that school counsellors play roles such as providing career information, self-assessment help, organising career field trips and presenting career lessons to assist senior secondary school students' career choice in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent do personality factors influence the career choice of senior secondary school students in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Personality Factors Influence on Career Choice of Senior Secondary School Students in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State**

S/N	ITEMS	n	Mean	Std Dev	Decision
1.	I choose my career based on my	866	2.93	1.02	Agreed

	interest in the field of study				
2.	Socio-economic status of my chosen career was one of the reasons for my choice of career	866	3.11	1.06	<b>Agreed</b>
3.	My choice of career was not influenced by anybody	866	2.68	1.17	<b>Agreed</b>
4.	My strength in my core subjects was one of the reasons why I choose this career	866	3.03	1.02	<b>Agreed</b>
5.	My choice of career was as a result of my values in life	866	2.83	1.08	<b>Agreed</b>
6.	I chose this field because I am fully confident that I will give my best here	866	2.88	0.98	<b>Agreed</b>
7.	My inherent skills were the main reason I choose this career	866	3.09	0.96	<b>Agreed</b>
8.	I choose this career because of my positive attitude to it	866	2.80	1.06	<b>Agreed</b>
9.	My performance level in BECE and junior WAEC was what influence my career choice	866	3.53	0.86	<b>Strongly Agreed</b>
10.	The prestige of the profession is an important parameter for me	866	3.23	0.97	<b>Agreed</b>

	to choose this career			
	<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.01</b>	<b>1.02</b>
				<b>Agreed</b>

**Decision rule:** 2.50 – 3.49 as Agreed; 3.50 – 3.99 as Strongly Agreed

Table 2 shows the responses of the respondents to Research Question 5. The table further reveals that most of the respondents were in agreement with Item 1, which means that their career choice is based on personal interests. Item 2 was also agreed to by the respondents, which meant that the social-economic status of the career aided the respondents' choice. Item 3 was also agreed to by most of the respondents, which implies that there were no external human influences on the career choice of the respondents. Item 4 was also agreed to by most of the respondents, which showed that the respondents' strengths in core subjects were a deciding factor in their choice of career. Item 5 was also agreed to by most of the respondents, which revealed that the respondents' values were factors in their choice of career. Item 6 was also agreed to by most of the respondents, which revealed that the respondents' confidence in their ability was a deciding factor. In addition, the respondents also agreed that their inherent skills helped them choose their career in Item 7; while the respondents' positive attitude as an influence of career choice was agreed to by the respondents in Item 8. In item 9, most of the respondents strongly agreed that their performance level in BECE and junior WAEC influenced their career choices. Also, in item 10, most of the respondents indicated that the prestige of the profession influenced their choice of career. Overall, and with a grand mean of 3.01, the Table further reveals that personality factors such as personal interest, socio-economic status, subject strengths, personal values, confidence, inherent skills, attitude, performance at BECE and career prestige influence the career choice of senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State.

### Testing of Research Hypotheses

The null hypotheses were tested using t-test analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the following acronym stands as; n = sampled number of respondents; X = Mean; S.D = Standard Deviation; df = degree of freedom; sig = level of significance and t = t-test.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant gender difference in specific roles of counsellors in the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State.

**Table 3: t-Test Analysis of Gender Difference in Specific Roles of Counsellors in Career Choice of Students in Senior Secondary Schools in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State**

Variables	n	X	SD	df	sig. (2-tailed)	t	Remark
Male Students	441	2.54	0.69				Not
				864	0.566	-5.74	Significant
Female Students	425	2.57	1.00				

p > 0.05

Table 3 shows the t-test analysis of the significant gender difference in the specific roles of school counsellors between the

mean scores of senior secondary school students in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State. The t-value is 0.566 and when comparison is done between the p-value and alpha. However, since

the p-value is greater than the alpha level ( $p > 0.05$ ); hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. This means that there is no significant gender difference in the specific roles of counsellors in the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, ( $t = -5.74$ ,  $p = 0.566$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant mean difference among personality factors influencing the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State.

**Table 4: Summary of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Response Scores of the Mean Difference among Personality Factors influencing Career Choice of Students in Senior Secondary Schools in Yola Education Zone**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	64.759	2	32.379	63.099	.000
Within Groups	442.848	863	.513		
Total	507.607	865			

\*\*Significant  $p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows an ANOVA analysis of the response scores of the mean difference among personality factors influencing the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State. The F-value of 63.099 for the group is significant when the comparison is done between the p-value and alpha. Since the p-value is less than the alpha level ( $p < 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. This means that there is a significant mean difference among personality factors influencing the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, ( $F(2, 865) = 63.099$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ).

## Discussion

The finding of research question 1 in Table 1 reveals that school counsellors play roles such as providing career information, self-assessment help, organising career field trips and presenting career lessons to assist senior secondary school students' career choices in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State. This finding concurred with the findings of Ukala (2020); Zagi, Ayu and Daniel (2018) and Egenti (2020) studies that revealed that school counsellors provide career counselling services in schools. This finding therefore highlights the multifaceted nature of school counsellors' responsibilities, encompassing career information provision, self-assessment assistance, career field trip organization, and career-related lesson presentations. Overall, the finding underscores the critical role of school counsellors in the career development of senior secondary school students in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State. Their provision of career information, self-assessment support, organization of career field trips, and delivery of career-related lessons collectively contribute to a more informed, self-aware, and motivated student body. As a result, students are better equipped to make well-considered career choices that align with their strengths and aspirations, leading to a more fulfilling and successful future.

The finding of research question 2 in Table 2 reveals that personality factors such as personal interest, socio-economic status,

subject strengths, personal values, confidence, inherent skills, attitude, performance at BECE and the career's prestige influence the career choice of senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State. This finding concurred with the findings of Nyamwange (2016); Anuja (2017); and M'manga, Boonroungrut and Shuliang (2019) studies that students' personality traits of attitudes and perception have an influence on students' career choices in schools. This finding highlights the complex interplay of individual traits and external factors in shaping students' career aspirations. First, when students are passionate about a particular field or profession, they are more likely to pursue it with dedication and enthusiasm. Also, subject strengths and academic performance are crucial factors that can influence career choices. Students tend to lean towards careers that align with their strengths and achievements in specific subjects. A high performance in subjects like mathematics or science may lead a student to consider a career in engineering or technology, while excellence in humanities might influence the pursuit of a career in social sciences or arts. In addition, the prestige associated with certain careers can also influence students' choices. This finding also agreed with Kemboi, Kindiki and Misigo (2016) finding that most students are in careers that are not in line with their personality types. This finding implies that it emphasizes the significance of personality factors in influencing the career choices of senior secondary school students in Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State.

The finding of hypothesis 1 in Table 3 reveals that there is no significant gender difference in the specific roles of counsellors in the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, with  $t = -5.74$ , when  $p = 0.566$ . Given the negative t-value, it suggests that there may be a slight difference between males and females in the roles of counsellors; however, this difference is not statistically significant. This finding therefore indicates that gender does not play a significant role in shaping the specific roles performed by school counsellors in assisting students with their career choices in the region. This finding however agrees with the finding of Dodge and Welderufael (2014) that a significant difference was found based on gender about having career options and about how knowledge about careers was gained, which was not attributed to counselling services. The study finding is however noteworthy as it indicates that school counsellors in the Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State are providing similar support and assistance to both male and female senior secondary school students regarding their career choices. It suggests that counsellors are not favouring or discriminating against any specific gender when it comes to career guidance and support.

The finding of hypothesis 2 in Table 4 reveals that there is a significant mean difference among personality factors influencing the career choice of students in senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone of Adamawa State, ( $F(2, 865) = 63.099$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). This finding is in agreement with the findings of M'manga, Boonroungrut and Shuliang (2019) and Anake, Adigeb and Bassey (2017) studies that personality traits of attitude and perception have a significant influence on career decisions among secondary school students. The results, as indicated by the F-statistic ( $F(2, 865) = 63.099$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), suggest that there are notable variations in the mean scores of personality factors across different categories. In this case, the obtained F-statistic of 63.099 is substantial, and the associated p-value of 0.00 is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05. This implies a high level of confidence in rejecting

the null hypothesis, indicating that there is a statistically significant mean difference among the personality factors influencing career choice in the specified population. The practical implication of these findings is that the various personality factors considered in the study, such as traits, interests, and preferences, exert a significant influence on the career choices made by students in the senior secondary schools within the Yola Education Zone. This insight has implications for educational institutions, career counsellors, and policymakers who may need to tailor interventions and guidance programs to better align with the diverse personality profiles of students. In conclusion, this statistical analysis underscores the significance of considering individual personality differences when addressing career choices among students. The findings provide a valuable foundation for further research, program development, and targeted interventions aimed at optimizing the alignment between students' personalities and their chosen career paths in the senior secondary schools of Yola Education Zone, Adamawa State.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from the study indicate that school counsellors and personality factors play pivotal and positive roles in influencing the career choices of students in secondary schools within the Yola Education Zone. Firstly, school counsellors are instrumental in providing valuable career guidance and support to students. Their roles encompass assisting students with career information, conducting self-assessment exercises, organizing career field trips, and delivering career-related lessons. By equipping students with relevant and accurate career information and fostering self-awareness, school counsellors empower students to make informed and well-considered career choices that align with their interests and abilities in senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone.

In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of considering personality factors in career choice decisions. Personal interests, confidence, attitudes, inherent skills, and values all contribute to students' career aspirations. Recognizing and understanding these individual traits helps educators and counsellors provide tailored career guidance that respects the uniqueness of each student. Collectively, the positive influence of school counsellors and personality factors creates a dynamic interplay that shapes the career choices of students in senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone. The implications of these findings extend beyond the Yola Education Zone and can serve as valuable insights for educational institutions and policymakers worldwide. Senior secondary school administrators need to foster a supportive and inclusive career guidance environment that recognizes the importance of counsellors, and students' traits can lead to more fulfilling and successful career outcomes for students. By nurturing students' career aspirations and potential, schools can contribute to the development of a skilled and motivated workforce that positively impacts society as a whole.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Public senior secondary schools in Yola Education Zone should invest in and enhance career counselling services. School counsellors should be adequately trained and equipped to provide comprehensive and personalized career guidance to students.

2. School counsellors should incorporate personality assessments as part of the career guidance process. As this would help them understand students' personality traits, interests, and strengths, which can help counsellors tailor their guidance and support, in alignment with their unique characteristics and aspirations.
3. Schools should organize career fairs, field trips, and workshops that expose students to various professions and industries. Career exposure opportunities help students gain insights into different career paths and make informed decisions about their future careers.

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