

RELATIONSHIP AMONG DIMENSIONALITY DECISION DIFFICULTIES AND CAREER CHOICE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MINNA METROPOLIS OF NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study accessed Relationship among Dimensionality Decision Difficulties and Career Choice of Senior Secondary School Students in Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria. Three objectives and three hypotheses guided the study. Correlational survey research design was used. Population consist of (3,141) with a sample size of (384) students in (SSI) drawn using random, proportionate and systematic sampling techniques. Data was collected using adapted instruments tagged “Dimensionality Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (DDDQ)” by Scott and Bruce (1995) and “Career Choice Questionnaire (CCQ)” by Sharf (2013) with face and content validity done by six experts and internal consistency reliability coefficient value of 0.79 for DDDQ and 0.82 for CCQ obtained. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation test to test the hypotheses. Results showed that there is a significant negative correlation between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice among students, it was indicated that there is a significant negative correlation between emotional decision difficulties and career choice among students and the study revealed that there is a significant negative correlation between motivational decision difficulties and career choice among students. It was recommended among others that organizing workshops and seminars that focus on developing effective decision-making strategies will help to module emotional regulation and motivational enhancement and lastly there is the need to integrate career decision-making modules into the regular curriculum that can cover topics such as self-awareness, career exploration, and decision-making processes.

Keywords: Dimensionality decision difficulties, career choice, Secondary School Students.

Introduction

In the contemporary educational setting, the process of career choice among senior secondary students is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by various internal and external factors. Among these factors, the dimensionality of decision difficulties emerges as a critical aspect influencing the career paths chosen by students. Understanding the complex relationship between decision difficulties and career choice is imperative for educational policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to devise effective interventions that facilitate informed decision-making among students (Gross, 2014).

Conversely, the relationship between the dimensionality of decision difficulties and career choice in the Minna Metropolis of Niger State traces back to the evolution of the Nigerian educational system. Historically, career guidance and counselling in Nigerian secondary

schools have undergone transformations in response to societal, economic, and educational changes. With the shifting landscape of employment opportunities and advancements in technology, the importance of informed career decision-making has become increasingly pronounced. Over time, the relationship between decision difficulties and career choice has evolved from a simplistic view to a more nuanced understanding, acknowledging the complex interplay of individual, familial, societal, and cultural factors (Stanovich & West, 2020). Traditional career guidance approaches, primarily focused on aptitude and interest assessments, have gradually integrated psychological theories and counselling techniques to address the multifaceted nature of career decision-making processes.

In this study, the dimensionality of decision difficulties refers to the various cognitive, emotional, and environmental challenges encountered by students when navigating the process of career choice (Gross (2014). According to Peterson and Sampson (2013) defined decision difficulties encompass factors such as indecision, uncertainty, lack of information, social influences, and self-efficacy beliefs. On the other hand, career choice can be seen as the selection of a specific occupation or field of study pursued by students based on their interests, abilities, values, and aspirations.

In senior secondary schools within the Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria, the relationship between the dimensionality of decision difficulties and career choice manifests in the form of diverse challenges faced by students during the career exploration and decision-making process. Limited access to career guidance resources, socio-economic disparities, cultural expectations, and inadequate counselling support contribute to heightened decision difficulties among students, impacting their career progressions (Ogwumike & Adebayo, 2019).

Nevertheless, understanding and addressing the relationship between decision difficulties and career choice have significant implications for educational policies, counselling practices, and student outcomes. In the same vein, investigating the factors influencing career decisions among senior secondary students, this research can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing career guidance services, promoting career readiness skills, and fostering holistic student development.

Statement of the Problem

The study examined relationship between the dimensionality of decision difficulties and career choice among senior secondary students in the Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria. The primary issue revolves around the prevalence of decision difficulties among senior secondary students in Minna Metropolis when making career choices. These decision difficulties encompass a myriad of cognitive, emotional, and environmental factors, including indecision, lack of information, societal expectations, and limited access to career guidance resources. The students' unresolved decision difficulties can lead to career indecision, underemployment, and dissatisfaction, hindering personal and professional growth. Also, educational institutions may face challenges in providing effective career guidance and counselling support to address students' diverse needs, affecting student retention and success rates. At the societal level, a mismatch between students' career choices and labour market demands may perpetuate unemployment, exacerbate socio-economic disparities, and impede national development efforts. The consequences of not addressing the issue can have

far-reaching consequences and students may experience prolonged periods of indecision, leading to delayed entry into the workforce or selection of suboptimal career paths. Educational institutions risk diminished efficacy of career guidance services and diminished student outcomes, perpetuating cycles of underachievement and disengagement. Societal consequences include a mismatch between labor market needs and workforce skills, hindering economic growth and exacerbating social inequalities.

Despite efforts to understand and mitigate decision difficulties among senior secondary students, significant gaps persist in current knowledge and practice. Existing research often overlooks the unique socio-cultural context of Minna Metropolis and fails to provide comprehensive insights into the specific challenges faced by students. Moreover, limited attention has been paid to innovative approaches and interventions tailored to address decision difficulties effectively within the Nigerian educational system. Addressing the relationship between decision difficulties and career choice requires a multifaceted approach encompassing research and innovation. It is based on the above background; the study investigated the relationship among the Dimensionality Decision Difficulties and Career Choice of Senior Secondary Students in Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship among Dimensionality Decision Difficulties and Career Choice of Senior Secondary Students in the Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of study are as follows:

1. To examine the relationship between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis.
2. To determine the relationship between emotional decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis.
3. To examine the relationship between motivational decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study and they are:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between emotional decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between motivational decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis.

Methodology

The study used the correlational survey design. Thus, correlational survey design involves the use of one or more variables to determine particular link between them using questionnaire or other inventory. The study was only interested in describing certain variables that is the relationship among dimensionality decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary students in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria. The populations of this study consist of three thousand, one hundred and forty one (3,141) secondary school students (SSI) in Minna, Niger State (Niger State Ministry of Education, 2021). A sample size of 384 respondents in secondary schools Minna metropolis of Niger State was selected for the study.

Simple random sampling technique was used to select six senior secondary schools via hat and draw. The proportionate sampling technique was used sampled students based on the population size of the selected schools and lastly systematic sampling technique was used in which at interval of 5th student will be pick to reach a sample size of 384 students in all. The major instrument(s) for data collection were adapted and tagged “Dimensionality Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (DDDQ)” by Scott and Bruce (1995) and “Career Choice Questionnaire (CCQ)” by Sharf (2013). Thus, both DDDQ and CCQ consist of statements used to generate information on the cognitive, emotional and motivational dimensionality decision difficulties and career choice of students to be rated on a five points Likert scale. The validity of the instruments used in collecting data was subjected to face and content validity through six experts in the field of counselling psychology and measurement and evaluation. The corrections and recommendations made were effected and the instruments were valid and good for the study. The reliability of the instruments were established using internal consistency and it was administered on (40) respondents who were not part of the study and reliability coefficient index value of 0.79 for DDDQ and 0.82 for CCQ which were high enough to confirm the reliability coefficient index values. The instrument(s) were administered personally by the researchers on the respondents. The researchers’ ensured that the respondents completed the questionnaire in good time. The researchers’ analysed data collected using Pearson Product Moment Correlation test for the null hypotheses formulated for the study.

Results

The results are presented below.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis.

Table 1: Showing Pearson Correlation Analysis between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis

		Cognitive Decision Difficulties
Career Choice	Pearson Correlation	-0.32
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	384

The result in table 1 showed that there was a significant relationship between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students, $r(384) = 0.001$, $p < 0.05$. The results suggest that cognitive decision difficulties do have relationship with career choice. Therefore, the hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis was rejected.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between emotional decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis.

Table 2: Showing Pearson Correlation Analysis between emotional decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis

	Emotional	Decision
Difficulties		
	Pearson Correlation	-0.30
Career Choice	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	384

The result in table 2 showed that there was a significant relationship between emotional decision difficulties and career choice, $r (384) = 0.001, p < 0.05$. The results suggest that emotional decision difficulties do have relationship with career choice of students. Therefore, the hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between emotional decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis was rejected.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between motivational decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis.

Table 3: Showing Pearson Correlation Analysis between motivational decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis

	Motivational Decision Difficulties
	Pearson Correlation
	-0.35
Career Choice	Sig. (2-tailed)
	0.001
	N
	384

The result in table 3 showed that there was a significant relationship between motivational decision difficulties and career choice, $r (384) = 0.001, p < 0.05$. The results suggest that motivational decision difficulties do have relationship with career choice. Therefore, the hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between motivational decision difficulties and career choice of senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis was rejected.

Summary of Findings

1. The study showed that there is a significant negative correlation between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice among students.
2. The study indicated that there is a significant negative correlation between emotional decision difficulties and career choice among students.
3. The study revealed that there is a significant negative correlation between motivational decision difficulties and career choice among students.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of research hypothesis one indicated that there is a significant negative correlation between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice among students. The finding of previous research has consistently shown that cognitive overload and the complexity of information can significantly impact decision-making confidence. For example, Gati and Levin (2014) found that high levels of cognitive decision-making difficulties are linked to lower career decision-making self-efficacy, aligning with the current study's finding. Their work emphasized the importance of reducing cognitive load to enhance decision-

making confidence among students in their study area. However, the finding is in disagreement with that of Gross (2012) that reported no significant positive correlation between cognitive decision difficulties and career choice among respondents.

The findings of research hypothesis two indicated that there is a significant negative correlation between emotional decision difficulties and career choice among students. This finding agrees with that of Kelly and Lee (2012) who reported a significant negative correlation between career decision-making anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy. Their study, similar to the current finding ($r = -0.30$), suggesting that high emotional decision difficulties reduce students' confidence in their career choices. The finding of the study aligns with emotional decision-making models of Gross (2014); Stanovich and West (2020) that stress the detrimental impact of emotional distress on decision-making clarity and confidence. The reason for similar result with previous findings could be attributed to emotional factors such as anxiety and stress can served significant barriers to effective career decision-making of students.

The findings of research hypothesis three revealed that there is a significant negative correlation between motivational decision difficulties and career choice among students. Motivational difficulties, including lack of drive or unclear goals, have been shown to negatively impact career decision-making processes. For instance, Peterson and Sampson (2013) found that students with high motivational decision difficulties often exhibit lower career decision-making self-efficacy. The current study's finding supports this, indicating a strong negative relationship between motivational challenges and career choice confidence. This finding is consistent with the work of Ryan and Deci (2000) which posits that intrinsic motivation and clear goals are crucial for effective decision-making and confidence.

Conclusion

The study investigated the relationship between dimensionality decision difficulties and career choice among senior secondary students in Minna Metropolis. The findings revealed significant negative correlations across three dimensions of decision difficulties: The study concluded that higher cognitive decision difficulties are associated with lower confidence in making career choices. Also, the study found out that students who experience higher levels of emotional difficulties have lower confidence in their career decisions. Lastly, the study concluded that greater motivational difficulties are linked to reduced confidence in career choices among students in the study area. These results showed the importance of addressing cognitive, emotional, and motivational in the career decision-making process among senior secondary students.

Implications for Counselling

The significant negative correlations found between cognitive, emotional, and motivational decision difficulties and career choice confidence among senior secondary students in Minna Metropolis highlight the critical role that targeted counseling interventions can play in supporting students' career decision-making processes. There is the need for school counsellors to organize a programme for students experiencing cognitive decision difficulties struggle and help simplified ways of processing information and making informed career choices through structured guidance where counsellors can help students break down

complex information into manageable parts. This can include step-by-step instructions and decision-making frameworks.

Also, decision-making workshops should be conducted focusing on cognitive strategies for effective decision-making, such as critical thinking, information sorting, and evaluating alternatives. There is the need for need resource availability to ensure that students have access to comprehensive and easy-to-understand resources about various career options, including job descriptions, educational requirements, and potential career paths. Similarly, emotional decision difficulties, such as anxiety and stress, significantly impact students' confidence in their career choices. School counsellors use strategies such as emotional regulation techniques to teach students emotional regulation techniques such as mindfulness, relaxation exercises, and stress management strategies to help them manage anxiety and emotional distress. Moreover, creating a supportive and non-judgmental counselling environment where students feel comfortable expressing their fears and concerns about career choices. The use of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to help students reframe negative thoughts about their abilities and career prospects, promoting a more positive and realistic outlook. On the other hand, school counsellors need to understand the motivational difficulties, including lack of drive and unclear goals, which negatively influenced students' career decision-making confidence and use appropriate counselling strategies like goal setting and planning to assist students in setting clear, achievable career goals and developing action plans to reach these goals. Use tools like SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) to structure their students' plans.

Recommendations from the Study

Based on the study findings, and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools should implement comprehensive career counselling programmes that specifically address cognitive, emotional, and motivational decision difficulties. Counsellors should be trained to help students manage cognitive overload, reduce emotional stress, and enhance motivation.
2. Organize workshops and seminars that focus on developing effective decision-making strategies. These should include modules on emotional regulation, coping mechanisms, and motivational enhancement.
3. Integrate career decision-making modules into the regular curriculum. These modules can cover topics such as self-awareness, career exploration, and decision-making processes

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