

The Influence of Self-Esteem and Peer Pressure on Career Choice of Adolescents in Greater Accra, Ghana

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of self-esteem and Peer pressure on the career choice of adolescents. The purpose was to determine the relationship between Peer pressure and career choice, the relationship between self-esteem and career choice, and compare the influence of self-esteem and Peer pressure on adolescent boys and girls. Cross-sectional and descriptive was the research design. Cluster sampling was used to select four schools, and stratified proportional, and simple random sampling was used to select 200 respondents. Rosenberg self-esteem, Peer pressure, and career decision scales were used to collect data from 200 Senior High School students in selected schools in the Greater Accra region Ghana. Pearson's correlation and regression analysis were the statistical tools for the analysis of data. The results indicate that self-esteem positively correlates with the career choice of adolescents. Peer pressure positively correlates career choices of adolescents. There is no gender differences in Peer pressure and career choice of adolescents. Challenges of career choice among adolescents include the lack of career guidance, the influence of family, general indecisiveness, the desire to pursue a career that earns much, and the opinion of their peer concerning career choice.

Keywords: Adolescence, Career Choice, Peer pressure, self-esteem.

Introduction

The study investigated the influence of self-esteem and peer pressure on career choice of adolescents in Greater Accra Ghana. At a certain stage in everyone's life, we all must choose a career path to pursue. In the case of children, they often have different dreams and interests they desire to pursue in life. However, as they all grow into adolescents, the choice of a career path becomes an important decision staring us in the face. Career decision-making is even more crucial for adolescents, as they may not have enough information to make an informed decision that will be suitable for their talents, abilities, and personality.

Preparation for a career during the adolescence period "is an important precursor for successful career development across the

life span and is closely related to adolescence adjustment and well-being. Since adolescence is a universal phenomenon, so is career choice. According to [1] in America, 20% - 60% of new students joining institutions of higher learning are usually undecided over their supposed career choices". Studies conducted by some researchers in assessing the individual factors causing difficulties in career decision-making far revealed the value of self-esteem among other variables [2].

This is to affirm that self-esteem and other variables such as peer pressure play a role in adolescents' career choice. According to [3] self-esteem has a long, prolific history on psychology. The issue of peer pressure on career choice is no exception to this phenomenon.

A recent study in Kenya found out that there was a significant influence of peer pressure on career decision-making among students [1]. Current research in Ghana has mostly focused on processes related to youths not choosing appropriate career hence the high unemployment rate. Studies conducted have not focused on causal factors of poor career decisions. This study is to fill the gap. The aim is to determine the relationship between self-esteem on adolescent and their career choice in the Ghanaian context and to determine the influence of peer pressure and self-esteem on the career choice of adolescents.

The main purpose of this was to find out if self-esteem and peer pressure will have a significant influence on adolescents' career choices. It is also to examine the level of self-esteem and peer pressure that can influence career decision-making or choice among adolescents. The objectives of the study include describing the influence of self-esteem and peer pressure on the career choice of adolescents, determining the relationship that exists between peer pressure and career choice of adolescents, determining the relationship that exists between self-esteem and career choice of adolescents, to identify the challenges of career choice among adolescents and to compare gender influence of self-esteem and peer-pressure on adolescents. The paper is organized as follows, an introduction which includes (problem statement and purpose of study), and brief empirical studies.

Then, the highlight of the method used in this study, result, and discussion of the findings and recommendations. In the work of [4] on self-esteem revealed that self-esteem affected the career prospects of males. The story was not much different for females as the study revealed that self-esteem influenced their career expectations and directly affected their career planning and exploration [5]. it is studied "the Relationships of Self-Esteem, Future Time Perspective, Positive Affect, Social Support, and Career Decision". They postulated that self-

esteem was related positively to career decision-making self-efficacy and negatively to career choice anxiety. Career according to [6] [15], is the application of a person's cognition and capabilities, providing command over the profession, timely work expertise, and a basis of developing and bettering business networks. According to [5], the study revealed that "individuals with a high self-esteem are more likely to choose challenging goals than those with low self-esteem".

Since career choices are goals in themselves, this study indicates that high self-esteem affects career choice. According to [1], who conducted research on the effectiveness of Peer Pressure on Students' Career Decision Making in Secondary Schools in Kenya and found out that there was a significant influence of peer pressure on career decision-making among students. In the research of [7], [19], who studied the factors affecting students' career choice, they reported that girls are more inclined towards their peers, and their choices are dependent on them.

According to [8], their review of other literature indicates that three main areas that influence the adolescent choice of career. These factors are environment, opportunity, and personality, in addition to self-esteem and Peer pressure. The influence of self-esteem and Peer pressure should be investigated in addition to environmental opportunity and personality to clearly identify compelling factors that influence the career choice of adolescents hence the study.

Methodology

The study was conducted using mixed research and descriptive design. Data was collected from 200 SHS students selected from the target population of 1,500 students in four districts in Greater Accra, Ghana. Cluster sampling was used to select 4 out of 8 schools put in 4 clusters. Stratified proportional was used to male and female students. Simple random was used to select respondents. A list of 8

schools was put in four clusters, and a simple random was used to select one school from each cluster. Standardized questionnaire including Rosenberg self-esteem scale, Peer pressure inventory scale and career decision scale were used to collect data. Ethical issues like permission sought from parents of respondents below 18 years. Data obtained from the respondent was used only for the research purpose. Data collected using questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. Internal consistency for the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale ranges from 0.77 to 0.88. Test re-test reliability for the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale ranges from 0.82 to 0.85. With respect to measuring adolescents peer pressure, the Peer Pressure inventory scale, which was developed by Bradford Brown and Donna Rae Clasen in 1985 was used.

According to Weist [10], “the overall reliability of the Peer Pressure Inventory is $\alpha = .93$ which demonstrates a good reliability”. *Career Choice*: The [11] Career Decision Scale was used to measure the career choice of adolescent students in the study. After permission was obtained, the researchers put the students into two groups (boys and girls) and sampled them. After simple random sampling, the researchers put the selected students in one class and administered the questionnaires to the respondents who gave their consent to participate in the study. The students were given specific guidelines regarding how the questionnaire should be filled in and allowed to ask questions for clarification if they did not understand anything. Ethical rules were not violated, and issues like confidentiality, anonymity were strictly adhered to.

Results

Table 1. Demographic Variables of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	100	50.0
female	100	50.0
Age		
12-13 years	5	2.5
14-15 years	102	51.0
16-17 years	93	46.5
Educational level		
JHS 1	200	100.0
Courses being studied in the SHS		
Agric Science	1	0.5
Business	33	16.5
General Arts	87	43.5
General Science	26	13.0
Home Economics	8	4.0
Science	29	14.5
Visual Arts	16	8.0

Table 1 presents the fair distribution of gender as data was collected from an equal number of males and females. Hence, males

represented 50% of respondents, and females as well represented 50% of respondents. In terms of gender, more than half of respondents were

within the age range of 14-15 years. In addition, 93 respondents representing 46.5% of respondents, were within the age bracket of 16-17. Those in the minority (5 respondents), representing 2.5% of respondents, were between the ages of 12-13 years. As indicated in Table 1, data was collected from SHS1 students; the level of education for all 200 respondents was SHS1. Data on respondents' course of study at the SHS 1 level shows that

43.5% of all respondents were General Arts students. This was followed by science students who made up 27.5% of all respondents. Business students involved in the study constituted 16.5% of respondents. Visual Arts students represented 8% of respondents. Home Economics and Agriculture Science students were in the minority, representing 4% and 0.5% of respondents, respectively.

Table 2. Summary of Pearson Correlation between Self-esteem and Career choice

Variables	Career choice	Peer pressure
Career Choice	1	
Self-esteem	0.2262	1

[Source: Field data (2019)] *p is significant @ .05 alpha levels

As can be seen from Table 2 at a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.23$ (2d.p.) approximately, there exists a positively weak relationship (correlation) between self-esteem and career

choice of the adolescents. Hence, the first hypothesis self-esteem has an influence on the career choice of adolescents is significant. Therefore, we fail to reject Hypothesis 1.

Table 3. Summary of Correlation between peer pressure and career choice

Variables	Career choice	Peer pressure
Career Choice	1	
Peer Pressure	0.1387	1

[Source: Field data (2019)] *p is significant @ .05 alpha levels

At a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.14$ (2d.p.), as evident in Table 3, it could be said that there is a positive relationship between the career choice of adolescents and their peer

pressure. Therefore, it can be said that peer pressure has some influence on the career choice of adolescents. We fail to reject hypothesis 3.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Results for Career Choice on Self-esteem and Peer Pressure

Career Choice	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Self-esteem	0.2334153	0.078715	2.97	0.003	0.0781826	0.38865
Peer pressure	0.1060162	0.07323	1.45	0.149	-0.0383986	0.25043
Constant	1.672256	0.244019	6.85	0	1.191031	2.15348
R –squared	0.0611					
Adj. R-squared	0.0516					
Root MSE	0.6064					
F(1, 198)	6.42					
Prob> F	0.002					

[Source: Field data (2019)] *p is significant @ .05 alpha levels

Table 4 depicts that the regression model is statistically significant, $F(2,197) = 6.42$ and $p = 0.002$. Since the F-statistic ($p = 0.002$) is less

than 0.5 degree of freedom at a 95% confidence interval, the model is, therefore, considered valid and fit to test the statistical significance of

the influence that both self-esteem and peer pressure respectively have on career choice of adolescents. Again, the Adjusted R-Squared of 0.0611 shown in Table 4 explains the respective percentage of self-esteem and peer pressure that results in the career choice of adolescents. It thus, indicates that both self-esteem and peer pressure explain 6.11% variability in career choices of the population of the adolescents studied. Further, the result of regression analysis in Table 4 depicts a regression coefficient of 0.2334153 for a p-value of 0.003 at a confidence interval of 0.0781826 and 0.388648 with respect to the influence or effect of self-esteem on career choice. It also indicates 0.1060162 as the regression coefficient for a p-value of 0.149 at the confidence interval of -

0.0383986 and 0.250431 with respect to the effect of peer pressure on career choice. The regression results here explain that both self-esteem and peer pressure positively influence career aspirations of the 200 adolescents studied. It describes that a percentage (1.00%) change in career choice decision or preference of the adolescents could be approximately explained by 23.34% and 10.60% changes in both self-esteem and peer pressure of the adolescents, respectively. Since this occurs at a p-value less than 0.05, the influence of these two predictive variables on career choice is deemed significant. The findings indicate that there is a statistically significant influence of self-esteem and peer pressure on the career choice of adolescents.

Table 5. Regression Analysis of Peer Pressure on Gender of Adolescents

Variables	Peer Pressure					
Gender	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	p>[t]	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Female	0.020336	0.08457	-0.24	0.81	-0.1871	0.146442
Constant	2.413591	0.0598	40.36	0	2.29566	2.531521
R –squared	0.0003					
Adj R-squared	-0.0048					
Root MSE	0.59802					
F(1, 198)	0.06					
Prob> F	0.8102					

From Table 5, it can be seen that F (1, 198) = 0.06, p = 0.8102 for peer pressure and gender. Since the F-statistic (p = 0.8102) is greater than 0.05 degree of freedom at 95% confidence interval, the model, therefore, could not be regarded as statistically significant to test the influence that peer pressure has on gender. If the lack of the model’s statistical fitness is anything to be withheld; then, an Adjusted R-Squared of -0.0048 shown in Table 5 could only explain that there is -0.048% variability in

career choices. The test for model fitness shows that F statistics (1, 198) is 0.06, F probability (which represents the p-value for the regression model) is 0.81 and R squared is 0.0003. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, it could be said that the regression model lacks the fitness to test the significance of the relationship between peer pressure and gender. The regression table also shows that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and gender.

Table 6. Regression Results Self-esteem on Gender of Adolescents

Variables	Self-Esteem					
Gender	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	p>[t]	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Female	0.3185555	0.07536	4.23	0	0.169938	0.467173
Constant	2.355	0.05329	44.19	0	2.249911	2.460089
R –squared	0.0828					

Adj R-squared	0.0781				
Root MSE	0.5329				
F (1, 198)	17.87				
Prob> F	0				

[Source: Field data (2019)] *p is significant @ .05 alpha levels

From Table 6, it can be seen that results for the model fitness shows that F (1, 198) is 17.87, F probability is 0.000, and R-squared is 0.0828. Since the p-value (F-probability) is less than 0.05, it could be said that the model is fit enough to test the relationship between self-esteem and gender of adolescents. Furthermore, the coefficient of 0.318555 in the regression results shows that for each unit increase in gender, self-esteem increases by 0.318 points in females than in males, and the difference is

statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. The R-squared value shows that 8.3% (0.0828) of the variation in self-esteem is explained by gender being female.

Additional Findings: The researcher also examined the relationship that exists between peer pressure and career choice as well as self-esteem and career choice using correlation analysis. The results are presented in table 7 and 8.

Table 7. Correlation Result for Relationship between Peer Pressure and Career Choice

Variables	Career choice	Peer pressure
Career choice	1	
Peer pressure	0.1387	1

[Source: Field data (2019)] *p is significant @ .05 alpha levels

At a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.14$ (2d.p.) as evident in Table 7, it could be said that there is a weak but positive relationship

between the career choice of adolescents and their peer pressure.

Table 8. Correlation Result on Relationship between Self-esteem and Career Choice

Variables	Career choice	self-esteem
Career Choice	1	
Self-esteem	0.2262	1

[Source: Field data (2019)] *p is significant @ .05 alpha levels

At a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.23$ (2d.p.) approximately, it was found that there exists a positively weak relationship (correlation) between self-esteem and career choice of the adolescents. Finally, the

researcher used the qualitative method to find out the challenges faced by adolescents in making career choices at the SHS level. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Results from analysis are Table 9.

Table 9. Challenges of Career Choice among Adolescents

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Fear of failure	7	3.5
Lack of confidence	9	4.5
Influence of family	90	45
Lack of sufficient information about occupations	35	17.5
General indecisiveness	67	33.5

Lack of motivation	41	20.5
Lack of proper career guidance	98	49
Inability to identify talent	13	6.5
Desire to pursue a career that earns much	65	32.5
Ability of family to afford cost of training for the career	15	7.5
Lack of role models in the family with career choice of student	36	18
Peer's opinion of some career choices	54	27
Inconsistent information about careers	18	9
Internal conflict	14	7

[Source: Field data (2019)]

From the Table 9, it can be seen that adolescents face numerous challenges in making career decisions.

Discussion

The first hypothesis of the study was that “Self-esteem has a correlation with the career choice of adolescents. The findings of this study is consistent with the findings of [4], which revealed that self-esteem was not much different for females as their self-esteem influenced their career expectations and directly affected their career planning and exploration [5].

However, this study further explains that females were more influenced by their self-esteem in making a career choice than their male counterparts. Proponents of Donald Super’s Career Model are of the view that “at every development stage, people encounter different experiences and as such their career choice was influenced by these experiences at varied stages” [14]. The theorist also believes that as self-concept keeps changing, a person’s career choice will also keep changing as they go through the different stages in life. This theory, therefore, supports the findings of the study, which states that self-esteem has an influence on the career choice of adolescents [15]. Hence, the first hypothesis of the study has been supported since self-esteem positively influenced the career aspirations of adolescents.

The second hypothesis states that “Peer pressure has a correlation with the career choice of adolescents”. The result, therefore, revealed

that there is a significant positive relationship between peer pressure and career choice. The findings of this study are also consistent with the findings of [1], who conducted research on the “effectiveness of Peer Pressure on Student’ Career Decision Making in Secondary Schools in Kenya and found out that there was a significant influence of peer pressure on career decision making among students”.

The third hypothesis Self-esteem and peer pressure have no influence on the career choice of adolescents”. From the results, there is a weak but positive relationship between the career choice of adolescents and their peer pressure. Since the regression analysis shows that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and gender and the correlation analysis revealed that there is a weak but positive relationship between the career choice of adolescents and their peer pressure, the hypothesis was rejected. The findings of [7], who studied the factors affecting students’ career choice, are not consistent with the findings of this study. The findings of [7] found out “that girls are more inclined towards their peers, and their choices are dependent on them”. Hence, peer pressure affects the career choice of adolescent girls. Findings in relation to challenges of career choice among adolescents indicate that adolescents face many challenges in making a career choice. Hence the recommendation of [16], [19]. Key challenges include the lack of career guidance, the influence of family, general indecisiveness, the desire to pursue a career that earns much, the

opinion of their peer's concerning their career choice, lack of motivation, lack of role models in the family with career choice of student, inconsistent information about careers, lack of sufficient information about occupations, the ability of adolescents' family to afford the cost of training for a chosen career among others. The gap has been filled that self-esteem and Peer pressure influence the career choice of adolescents.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher's interaction with adolescents during counselling sessions and what adolescents normally say influence the choice of variables self-esteem and peer influence on career choice. Though a number of studies exist on adolescent career choice, most of them focused on finding the factors that affect the career choice of adolescence and not how the career choice of adolescence is influenced by peer pressure and self-esteem. The researcher's decided to investigate this area as a means to develop strategies for career facilitative counseling of adolescents in senior high Schools given the high rate of youth unemployment in Ghana. Research works

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available that focused on gender in relation to career choice also mainly concerned itself with why adolescents who were males or females preferred some particular courses of study, for instance, science, mathematics, and arts that make it difficult to review data on the study, however, the research was able to obtain relevant literature for the study. Beyond self-esteem and Peer pressure, there may be other factors that could influence the career choice of adolescents worth researching into.

Conclusions

Findings in relation to challenges of career choice among adolescents show that the lack of career guidance, the influence of family, general indecisiveness, the desire to pursue a career that earns much, low self-esteem, and peer pressure were some of the challenges experienced by adolescents.

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