

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER PRESSURE AND SELF-CONCEPT ON  
CAREER INTEREST IN EDUCATION AMONG STUDENTS IN A NIGERIAN  
UNIVERSITY:IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

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## Abstract

The objective of the study was to ascertain if a relationship exists between peer pressure, self-concept and career interest in Education among students in a Nigerian University. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The correlational survey method was adopted for the study. Three research instruments were adapted for the study. They include Peer Pressure Assessment Scale (PPAS) and Self-Concept Inventory (PSCI), and vocational interest inventory (VII). The population of the study comprised of students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Benin. Data were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation. The result showed that a negative significant relationship exists between peer group pressure and students' career interest in education. On the other hand, a positive relationship was found to exist between self-concept and interest in education as a career. The following recommendations were proffered: parents and wards should be guided on how to forestall negative influence from peers and ensure appropriate parenting style that will encourage good self-concept and that will help advance positive adjustment of their adolescents. School counselors should initiate programmes that will help students have good self-concept and educate them on the negative influence of peer.

Keywords: congruence, adolescent, peer influence, self-concept, career interest/choice counseling.

## Introduction

Career development and choice which are predominantly guided by one's interest.

Self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal orientation, have been indicated as key driving factors of career interest by social cognitive theorist (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994). Likewise, Holland postulated that career interest is an expression of

one's personality, (Holland 1997). Whatever may direct and or motivate it, interest is widely acknowledged by researchers as a cardinal guide in career choice. Interest may strengthen creativity, work performance and

tenacity, and may also play a crucial role in career identity development in adolescence. One goal of career interest assessment has traditionally been to identify suitable occupations which correspond to an individual's traits (Holland, 1997). Holland also maintains that people whose interest is in congruence with their work environment will be more satisfied, hence productive than those whose interest is incongruent. Researches further suggest that being employed in an interest congruent job gives satisfaction, which in turn translates to good performance (Spokane, Meir & Catalano, 2000). Making a congruent career choice therefore is very important and a major

concern for students, parents as well as governments, since one of the aims of Education is to help the individual develop occupational competences and independence. Hence, the need to advocate for early initiation of guidance services in the school years (Alutu, 2004).

Peer group according to Obanewa (1994) are made up of playmates, friends or people within the same age bracket. They serve as confidants to their members. In most cases they belong to same social clubs where they share the same values and ideals. While Topping (1989) asserted that many educators consider peer groups to be an effective and powerful instructional strategy that can be used to develop academic as well as social skills in individuals. Through this process, children can easily influence their peers' career choice. Adequate information is intelligence given: this could take the form of instruction, direction, news or knowledge passing. This is crucial for making effective and proper career choice. Where this is lacking, the tendency to succumb to wrong peer pressure increases. Since subject studied or subject combination has direct influence and bearing on one's future academics and career, Egbochuku (2008), opined that it should not be left to students alone. It is necessary to assist the students in guiding them to choose the right subjects for their future vocation. Students who are left unguided may be prone to choose subjects out of pressure and sentiment from peers and these subjects may not be directly related to their future career. Consequently, from the above, many of these students may find themselves in careers or jobs where they are incongruent. When this occurs, they may become unhappy with themselves and unproductive to their employers. They may be unable to contribute meaningfully to the society and ultimately become liability to themselves and the nation.

Self-concept plays an important role in our choices. It is reflected in the totality of our belief, preferences, opinion, and attitude. It is how we see and think of ourselves. The self and social developments are symbiotic. They self-develop through interactions and acquired information within an environment to form the social self. Super (1973) opined that career choice and development is essentially a process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept. Super also suggested that self-concept is dynamic, tending to maturation, all as a result of complex factors, including physical and mental growth, personal experiences, and environmental attributes and stimulus. According to social identity theory, self-concept is composed of two key parts: Personal identity and social identity. Personal identity includes such things as personality traits and other characteristics that make each person unique. Social identity includes the groups we belong to such as our community, religion, college, and other groups, (Otta & Williams 2012).

It is important that one's career choice align with their true self because self-concept may influence what one may consider him or herself qualified for or capable of. Self-concept may determine to a great extent one's career choice, what we endeavour, attempt or strive at. A poor/wrong self-concept may inhibit an individual from reaching their full potential. According to Argyle (2008) there are four major factors that influence self-concept, the reaction of others, social comparison, self-evaluation, and identification.

As such, the constant call for national development may be in vain if the youth are not adequately equipped for these experiences through proper career guidance in schools. Hence there is need for vital information that prepares them for a productive career and future which may cradicate to a large degree the

2010). This may also influence their career choice.

In this regard, students' career choice may be adversely influenced through peer

unproductiveness in the workforce of the country at present. This study therefore examined the influence of peer pressure and self-concept on career interest in education among students in a Nigerian University.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem of peer pressure cannot be over emphasized. Among peers, children learn to form relationship on their own and have the chance to discuss interest. Within peer groups children bond with age grades and a child begins to develop a new sense of social commitment, helping each other in various ways including academics (Topping 1989). Peers usually form hierarchies and distinct pattern of behaviour thus providing standards of behaviour in ways of rules and regulations, attitudes and opinions to be obeyed by members and they invariably determine the larger extent of members' choices and decisions. This influence may extend to the child's choice of subject and possibly career. With this, the risk of incongruence in career increases.

Self-concept may affect occupational maturity. Otta and Williams (2012), occupational aspiration/career interest and motivation. It may influence one's subject choice and eventually one's career and how he/she performs. Good self-concept may bring out the best in an individual. It could foster in the child the confidence required for academic endeavours and productiveness. Choosing a career is an intricate thing that often requires one's acknowledgement of their true disposition and passion. A poor self-concept may hinder a child in many ways. A child may not be able to attain the peak of his/her ability if he/she has a poor self-concept. The lack of proper self-concept in learners may deter them from coping with the challenges of education (Ahamadu,

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1. To ascertain the relationship between peer pressure and vocational interest of students in a Nigerian University.

2. To determine the association between self-concept and

pressure and self-concept, such that they are removed from their congruent career path or interest area, hence, they may not do well in school or be productive or satisfied with themselves after school. There is a need to address these problems. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the influence of peer pressure and self-concept on career preference in education among students in a Nigerian University

#### Research Question

1. Is there any relationship between peer pressure and the vocational interest of students in a Nigerian University?

2. Is there any relationship between the self-concept and the vocational interest of students in a Nigerian University?

#### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

H01: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and career interest in education among students in a Nigerian University.

H02: There is no significant relationship between the self-concept and career interest in Education among students in a Nigerian University.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between peer pressure and career interest in Education among students in a Nigerian University and also to examine the relationship between self-concept and the career interest in education among students in a Nigerian University. The specific purpose includes:

career interest in Education  
among students in a Nigerian  
University.

TOTAL	4679	468
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Scope of the Study

The study covers peer pressure and self-concept and the career interest of students in a Nigerian University and was delimited to the Faculty of Education of the University of Benin in Edo state.

Methodology

A correlational survey research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study comprised of 4679 undergraduate students in a Nigerian University.

A multi stage sampling technique was employed. Purposive sampling was used to select the institution, University of Benin and Faculty of Education. The participants were sampled using proportionate stratified random sampling techniques to sample 10% of the entire population of 4679 in 2017/18 academic session, by sampling 10% from each undergraduate level. Giving 124. 160. 98, 86, of students from 100 level, 200 level. 300 level, and 400 level respectively. The sample of 10% however was selected using simple random sampling techniques.

Table 1.1: Table of Population and sample size

Undergraduate Level	Population size	Sampled size of 10%
100 level	1243	124
200 level	1605	160
300 level	976	98
400 level	855	86

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between peer pressure and career interest in Education among students in a Nigerian University.

Information was obtained from the respondents via questionnaire. The instrument consisted of four sections; section A comprises of some demographic data of respondents. Section B contained the Peer Pressure Assessment Scale (PPAS) by Bradford and Rac(2005) which was used in collecting data for hypothesis one (1). Section C contained the Self Concept Inventory (PSCI) by Fleming (2007) which was used in collecting data for hypothesis two (2) in order to evaluate the relationship between respondents' self-concept and their career interest. Section D contained the Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) by Bakare (1977). Section B, and C contained seven (7) items each. Section D contained thirty-five(35) items consisting of seven (7) interest areas including teaching and 6 other professions. Five (5) items were raised for each respective area of interest. The instrument comprised of 4 point Likert scale type. Responses were graded 4, 3, 2, 1 for SA, A, D. and SD responses respectively. Forty-four (44) copies of the instrument was administered to respondents who did not participate in the study and the data collected was analyzed using Cronbach alpha statistics and a reliability of 0.727 was obtained. The instrument was administered to respondents from the sampled population after carefully informing them of what the research was about. It was collected immediately after their responses. The null hypotheses were analyzed using Pearson's Product Correlation Coefficient and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1.2:Peer Pressure and Career Interest in Education

Variables		R	p-value
Peer Pressure and Career Interest	468	-.299**	.000

Significant at 0.05 level

From the Table 1.2 peer pressure had negative correlation of -.299 with education as a career interest. This implies that there is a relationship between peer pressure and interest in career in education. A negative relationship, (as peer pressure increases. interest in career in education decreases). weak but significant even at the 99% confidence level where  $p < 0.05$  (rs -0.30. N=468, P=0.00). The null hypotheses which

espoused that no relationship exist between peer pressure and career interest in Education among students in a Nigerian University is rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that peers discourage each other from pursuing a career in Education. Apparently, as peer influence increases, the lesser students are interested in a career in education.

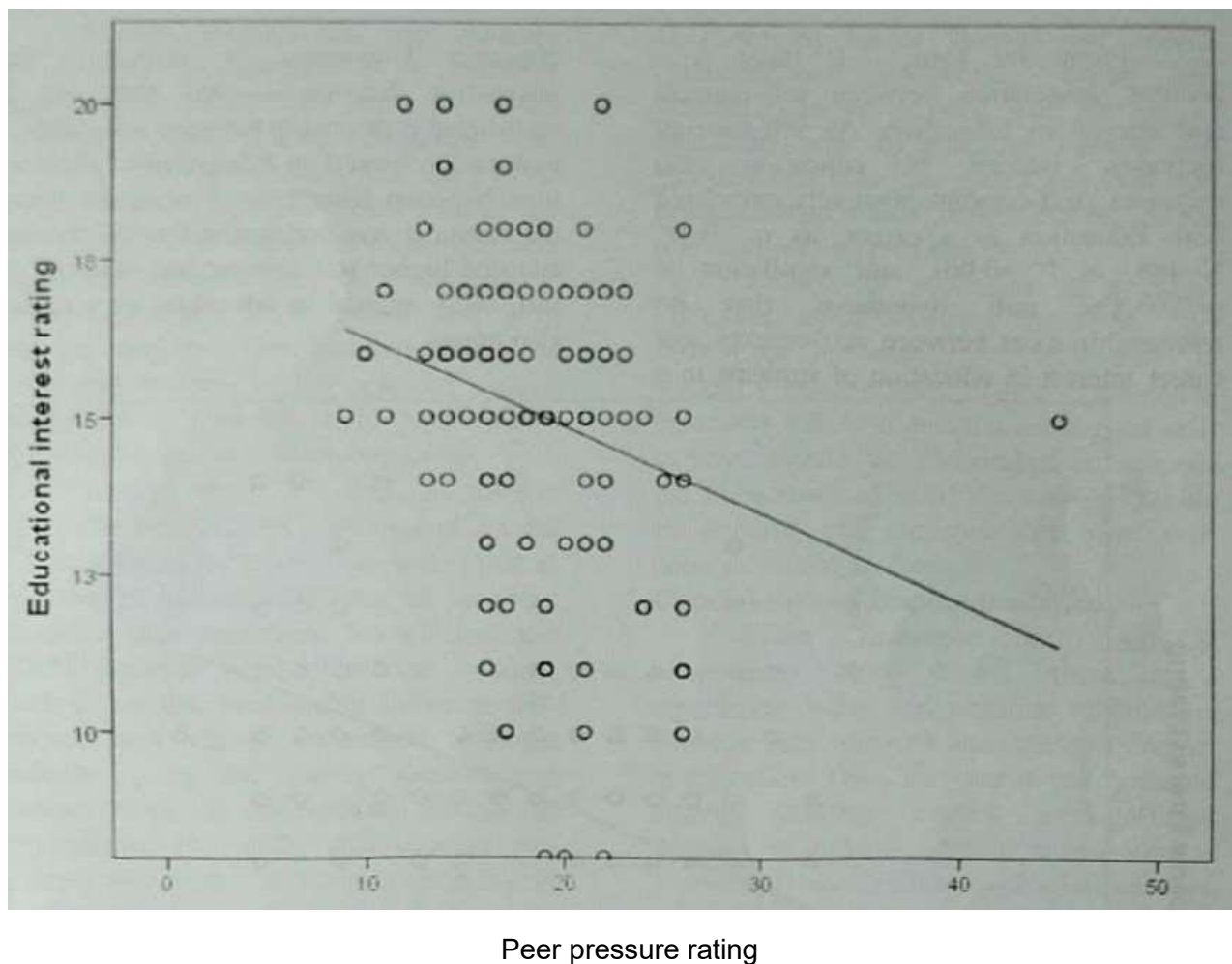


Figure 1.1: Relationship between peer pressure and interest in career in Education

This diagram shows a graphic relationship between peer pressure and career interest in education. The graph connotes a negative significant relationship between the variables peer pressure and career interest in education. From the graph, increase in peer pressure stimulates decrease in interest in education in the students. This

This diagram shows a graphic

may imply that pcers most likely discourage each other from pursuing a career in education.

Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between self-concept and career interest in education among students in a Nigerian University.

Table 1.3: Self Concept and Career Interest in Education

Variables	N	R	sig(2-tail) p-value
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Self Concept and Career Interest	468		.000
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Significant at 0.05 level.

From the Table 1.3. there is a positive association between self-concept and interest in Education.As self-concept increases, interest in education also increases (self-concept positively correlated with Education as a carcer, as rs 0.48. N=468, at P =0.00), and significant at  $p<0.05$ .The null hypothesis that no relationship exist between self-concept and career interest in education of students in a

Nigerian University is rejected. The alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between self-concept and career interest in Education of students in a Nigerian University is accepted. From the result,it was concluded that as students attained higher self-concept and maturity of self,their interest in education as a career also grew.

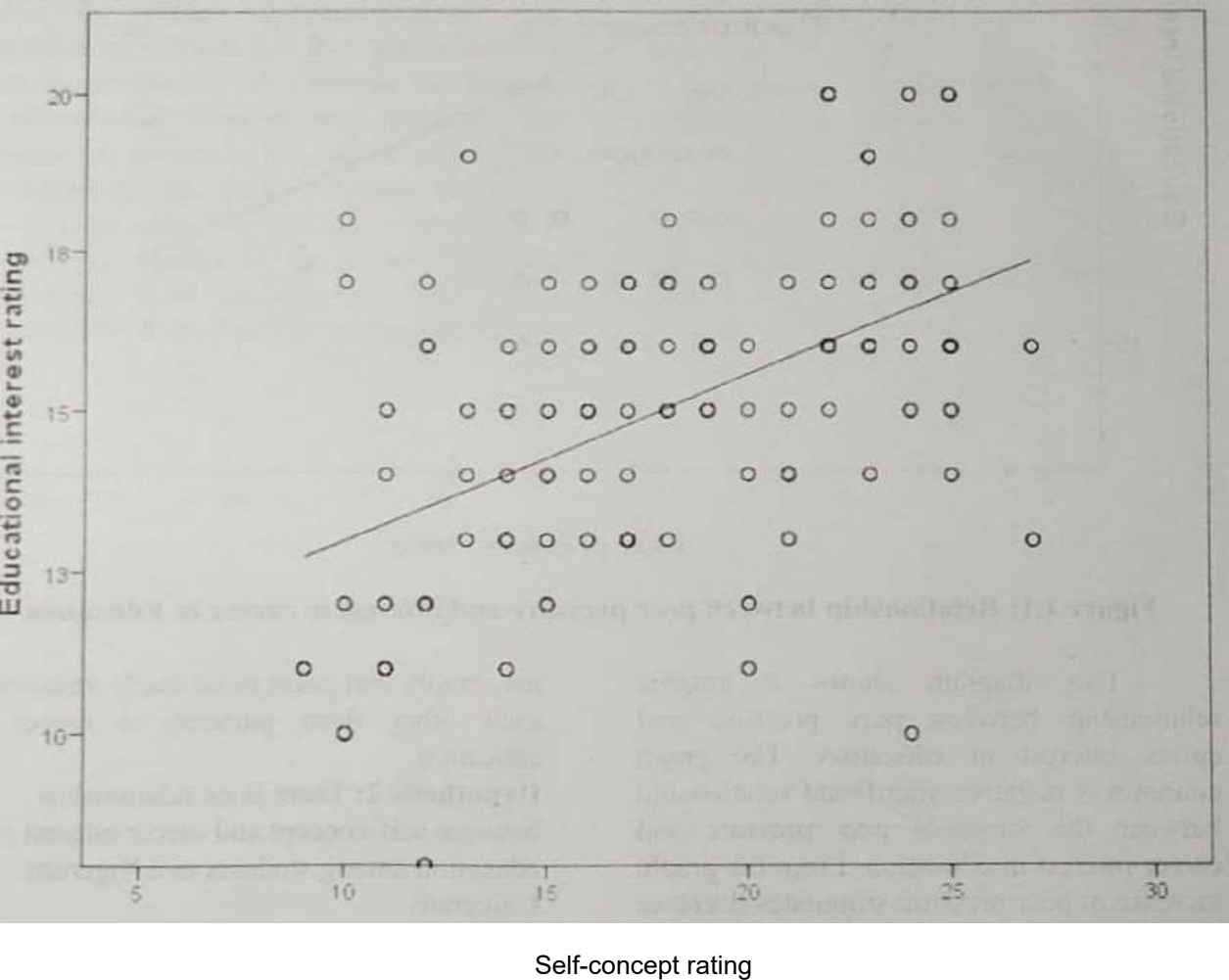


Figure 1.2: Relationship between self-concept and interest in Education.

Figure 1.2 shows a positive relationship between self-concept and vocational interest in education. From the graph, increase in self-concept causes a proportionate increase in interest in education among the students. This may be

interpreted to mean that improved self-concept directly increases the students' appreciation for and/or acceptance of a vocation in education.

Discussion

Results showed that peer pressure and interest in education as a career is significant at  $p < 0.05$ , ( $r_s = -0.30$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ) negatively. This finding disagrees with Alika (2010) who reported that there is no significant influence on career choice by peer pressure. The researcher found that peer group and career choice do not correlate. Also, Azubuike (2011) found that peer pressure had no significant influence in vocational interest in his research, which disagrees with findings in this work that a significant negative relationship exists.

Lastly, there is also a positive correlation between self-concept and interest in Education as a career. This means that as self-concept increases, interest in career in education also increases. Nasir and Lin (2013) reported similar outcome in their research on the relationship between self-concept and career awareness amongst students, using the survey method and students from an international school as respondents. The study also showed that students with higher self-concept had higher levels of career awareness. The result is also consistent with findings by Annan (2006) that personality was the most influential factor that influenced career choice among senior secondary students.

#### Limitation of the study

There were some limitations in this investigation. One of which may be in the sampled population which does not proportionately represent every Department in the Faculty of Education. Furthermore, the researcher was not able to test the hypotheses on a more diverse population due to stringent conditions.

#### Implication for Counseling

Parents and wards should be properly informed of the possible negative influence

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Students' perception of factors that

of peers on career interest and choice. Guardian-ward counseling group and seminars can be initiated with the aim of educating and enlightening parents and guardians on how peer group activities may influence their wards' career interest and the implications and precautions.

Interest in education as a career increased, as self-concept increased. This shows the importance of self-concept in student's occupational choice. Counseling programs that help develop/teach good self-concept should be encouraged in schools, the importance of good self-concept should be stressed and students with poor self-concept placed on therapy.

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

From findings, the following conclusions were drawn: there is a significant, weak and negative relationship between peer pressure and interest in career in education. Thus, increase in peer pressure among students caused a significant decrease in students' interest in education as a career. However, the association between self-concept and interest in education as a career was found to be positive. As self-concept increases, interest in career in education also increases. The study therefore recommended that parents and wards should be guided on how to forestall negative influence from peers and ensure the appropriate parenting style for their adolescents that will help build good self-concept and guide against negative peer influence. That school counselors should initiate programmes that will help students have good self-concept, avoid bad peer influences and choose the appropriate career.

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