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Table of Conteris

	PAGE
1.	AREMU, AMOS OYESOJI
	A Psychological Assessment of the Problem- Solving Skills of Nigerian Police Force Officers
2.	ALAO, KAYODE and ADELEKE, ADEMOLA A Study of the Prevalence and Factors Influencing Phobia for Mathematics among Nigerian Secondary School Students
3.	AKINYELE. OLUROTIMI SAMSON. The Influence of Masculinity on Mathematics Achievement19
4.	AFOLABI, E.R.I. Effects of Confidence Scoring Procedure on the Reliability And Validity of Three Multiple Choice Tests Formats
5.	OKORODUDU, G. N. A Psychological Perspective of Deviant Behaviour Among Adolescents in Educational Institutions
6.	OJO. OLUGBENGA DAVID Adolescents Reproductive Health Training: An Expository Study of Osun State Post Primary School Teachers
7.	Knowledge And Attitude
8.	OSIKI, J.O. and MCHOFANG, P.A. Psychological Factors Prompting and Sustaining Prostitution In Selected Brothels in Ibadan Metropolis: The Clinical

Psychological Implication.

PERSONALITY AND NEED FACTORS IN CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF PROSPECTIVE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

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ABSTRACT 10

This research examined personality and need factors in career aspiration of prospective Nigerian University undergraduates. It identified the career needs of 454 introverted and extroverted secondary school students preparing for Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination. Subjects' career aspirations defined as a person's conscious desire, intention and efforts which are aimed at getting involved in a sequence of occupations, jobs and positions in his or her lifetime, cut across 8 different occupational groupings. Personality factors were defined as behavioural attributes or characteristics which an individual is distinctly identified with in some known or unknown degrees and over an enduring period of time. Need factors described those things or benefits which attract a person to aspire to make a certain career. Using partial correlation and Pearson correlation statistics, subjects' responses on career aspiration need questionnaire were analyzed. Results showed a general dominance of money, and popularity needs among subjects in the different occupational groupings. Discussion centred on the need for understanding individual and group differences as a way of maximizing organizational productivity and individuals' job satisfaction. practical implications of the findings for occupational counseling and job placement were also mentioned.

INTRODUCTION

The choice of a career is central to human living. Whatever activity we find ourselves doing (e.g. what we say, do think, interpret, etc.)

would be a reflection of the impact of our choice of careers; and sometimes those that our parents, guardians or relatives made for us (Shenge, 1997). Friends are made, incomes generated and status acquired, successes and failures recorded, etc. all through career choice. Our future, more or less, is without doubts, shaped principally by the choices of our careers. Careers are part and parcel of human existence. Consciously or unconsciously, it is difficult to live responsible life outside of one's career choice.

Makinde and Alao (1987) recognize the concept and practice of work (which is central to career) to be as old as the emergence of human civilization. For illustration, shortly after God created Adam and Eve, they transgressed against the will of their creator. As a punishment for this misdemeanor, God imposed work on Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:17-19). For those who do not believe in the story of creation, Darwin's (1859) idea of natural selection and survival of the fittest encompasses the concept of work. Also indicating that the concept and practice of work are as old as human civilization is, and it fits the postulation of a German philosopher, Fredrick Engel, that "Labour Maketh Man".

From time immemorial attempts have been made at guiding individuals to choose vocation and professions. Although we may never know the nature and form of career guidance that took place in pre-historic era was as rudimentary as the concept and the subsistent practice of work of during and form of career guidance that took place in pre-historic era was as rudimentary as the concept and the subsistent practice of work of during era. Even in traditional African societies, the misconception that there was no glimpse of career guidance and counseling before the introduction of the Western mode! has been debunked by many African Scholars (Makinde, 1973, Faloju, 1976, and Ali, 1984). Many of these scholars noted different indigenous forms of career guidance activities amongst the Yoruba, Igala, the Angas and other tribes in Nigeria. Through apprenticeships, youth were encouraged to enter professions of their choice, although there was a higher tendency for youths to enter family professions. As career guidance in the West developed, so also did it in "African Communities"

Career guidance has been variously hinged on a number of models or approaches. These models or theoretical foundations include trait-factor theories, personality theories, psychoanalytic theories, and decision theories. Frank Parson's (1909) trait-factor approach to career guidance par excellence lays a concrete foundation for understanding personality characteristics. He recognized personality as the various enduring and distinctive patterns of behavior and thought, characteristic of a particular person. Parson (1909) exemplifies the wise choice of vocation in three broad factors:

- a clear understanding of oneself, one's aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes.
- a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages, and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work, and
- 3. true reasoning on the relation of these two groups of facts.

Career, for the purpose of this research, has been defined as a sequence of occupations, jobs and positions engaged in or occupied throughout a person's lifetime. It is a manifestation of a person's learned and acquired abilities and relationships to society through work. Career aspiration, based on the above definition of career, is a person's conscious desire, intention and efforts, which are aimed at getting involved in a sequence of occupations, jobs and positions in his or her lifetime. Personality factors, on the other hand, refer to behavioral attributes or characteristics which an individual is distinctly identified with in some known or unknown degrees and over an enduring period of time.

In this research, two personality factors have been considered. The first is introversion which could be described as tendency for people to manifest characteristics such as shyness, social withdrawal, and a tendency not to talk much. The second is extroversion which describes people who are outgoing, friendly, and talkative. Almost every dimension

of personality-friendliness, sociability, and so on – is distributed according to a normal bell-shaped curve, and introversion and extroversion are not exception.

Need factors are the complex motive states or needs which are causes of many human actions. In this research, need factors represent the motive or motives which an individual having career aspiration(s) has at the time of having such aspiration(s). Pursuing a career which an individual wants to pursue is known to be instrumental to the satisfaction of the individual's needs or motives. Need factors considered in this work have been broadly grouped into three. These are dominant need for money, dominant need for popularity, and dominant need for other (unspecified) things.

In Nigeria today, career aspirations are conceptualized in secondary schools and colleges. Oladele (1992) and Shenge (1997) described this career choice formation process as involving the selection of subjects at the secondary school or college level. But Oladele (1992) adds that choosing a career does not necessarily stop at the level of formal educational institutions of learning. In fact, it goes on so long as a person is willing to adjust to changing situations. But the very critical stage at which most youths really come to terms with career choice decision making is the time of taking qualifying examination to the tertiary institutions.

In Nigeria, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is charged with the responsibility of conducting examinations into these tertiary institutions (i.e. Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education). Thus, students (or applicants) in large numbers are yearly faced with the problem of choosing courses which will prepare them for careers later in life.

As students and parents consider economic, material and social factors in career decisions, not much attention is paid to personality or psychological factors (which are as important as economic and social factors). Different types of works require different personality characteristics for one to succeed in them. Early and contemporary psychologists, for example, Baron (1963) and Burgers (1989) have

established that some people enjoy working with human beings (i.e. people-oriented), while others, especially introverts, enjoy working with objects or materials (i.e. non-people oriented). Some people like working with human beings indoors while others like working with human beings outdoor. Still, others like working with objects or materials indoors while others like working with objects or materials outdoor. All these variations, coupled with abilities, interests, aspirations, motives, needs and the realities of the time and the environment tend to guarantee a rich and productive career life and hence, should be considered while choosing a career.

Researchers (Weiner, 1987 and Feshbach, 1982) on extroverts and introverts have indicated that extroverts bys their nature have more need for money and popularity than introverts. This makes them seek jobs that can lead to the satisfaction of such money and popularity needs. In Nigeria, no known research has yet been carried out on personality dimension and money, although there have been some survey reports (see the Guardian Newspaper of Tuesday, February 4, 1997, pp. 1 and 2) that Nigerian graduates have been trooping into business related professions which are more likely to earn them higher pay.

The need to study personality and need factors in career aspirations of prospective Nigerian University undergraduates is hinged on the fact that not only is the population of the prospective undergraduates so large, it also represents the potential work force for the nation. For job satisfaction and high productivity to be attained, there is need to, among other considerations, fundamentally fit individuals into careers which they are psychologically, physically, and educationally qualified for.

Psychologists and counselors, more than other categories of people are better at ascertaining people's abilities and interests. But rather than optimize their career choice decisions by employing the services of psychologists and counselors, many Nigerians often emphasize economic and social factors in career choice. This tendency has made a lot of professionals to be ill-equipped and irrelevant to chosen professions. It is not surprising that many of such ill-advised professionals often lack professional commitment, and may easily desert such professions at adult

life. Thus, Makinde and Alao (1987) observe that the determination of career success in Nigeria is faulty.

Two considerations, according to Shenge (1997), come to mind as to how success or failure in a person's career can and should be assessed. The first is at the individual level, and the second, is at the social level. Though in varying proportions, both are very important in measuring professional success or failure. At the individual level, a person's success depends on his or her commitment to a chosen career and the satisfaction he or she derives from such a career. Commitment comes from the urge to add to existing knowledge and or improve the individual and societal quality of life. Satisfaction is derived when the individual has actually contributed to the advancement of knowledge or to solution of problems in his/her society. Professional success has little or nothing to do with wealth accumulation, even though wealth could help the individual to sustain and/or maintain his/her contributions to the advancement of the society as a whole.

At the societal level, success in a chosen career is seen as a relationship between what the society demands of a person in terms of his/her service through his/her career and what the person is actually offering to society. In essence, success in a career in the eyes of a society basically and ideally means using one's career to advance society. Anything short of this expectation is regarded as a failure, Shenge (1997).

Based on the general outward tendency of extroverts and the general inward tendency of introverts, as well as the alleged dominance of money and popularity needs in career aspirations of Nigerians, therefore, it is hypothesized that:

- 1. Dominant need for money among extroverts will positively and correlate with dominant need for popularity.
- 2. Dominant need for money among extroverts will positively and significantly correlate with other needs.
- 3 Dominant need for popularity among extroverts will positively and significantly correlate with other needs.
- 4. Dominant need for money among introverts will positively and significantly correlate with dominant need for popularity.

- 5. Dominant need for money among introverts will positively and significantly correlate with other needs.
- 6. Dominant need for popularity among introverts will positively and significantly correlate with other needs.
- 7. There will be a negative, but significant correlation between extroverts and introverts' need for money.
- 8. There will be a negative, but significant correlation between extroverts and introverts' need for popularity.
- 9. There will be a significant correlation between other needs of extroverts and other needs of introverts

METHOD

Design: This research is a correlational design. It employed both the Pearson correlation and the partial correlation statistics in the testing of its hypotheses.

Subjects: Subjects were 454 candidates of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) who enrolled for preparatory lessons in a JAMB preparatory centre in metropolitan Lagos. They represented about one quarter of the total population of the preparatory centre (which was put at about 1850 candidates). Candidates' career aspirations (as were reflected in their stated courses of study) showed that they belonged to anyone of the following 8 occupational categories:

- i. Social Science and helping professions
- ii. Mathematical and Scientific Occupations
- iii. Medical and Life-Saving Occupations
- iv. Mass Media Occupations
- v. Teaching and Related Occupations
- vi Agricultural Occupations
- vii Engineering Occupations and
- viii. Business and Service oriented Occupations.

Initially, 680 randomly selected candidates of the preparatory centre completed Eysenck's Extraversion-Introversion dimension scale

which was earlier used by Burke (1986). Subsequent scoring of the subjects' responses on the scale led to the emergence of 227 introverts and 259 extroverts. In order to balance up the number, a table of random numbers was used to eliminate 35 people from the serialized list of 250 extroverts. The mean age of the finally selected 454 subjects (which comprised of 182 females and 272 males) was 18.2 while the standard deviation was 4.3.

INSTRUMENTS

Budke's (1986) Extraversion – Introversion Dimension Scale: This is a modified version of Eysenck's (1970) Extroversion Introversion Scale. Burkes scale has 32 items which have a correlation between forms (Split-Half) of .87 and an equal-length Spearman Brown (overall reliability) of .84.

Career Aspiration Need Factor Questionnaire (CANFQ): This was developed by Henshaw (1994). Its conceptualization and development was based on observed dominance of money and popularity needs in the career aspirations of Costa Rican College Students. The scale (with 30 items mixed together to guide against subjects' patterned responses) had three sections, namely: need for money, need for popularity and other needs. Each part had 10 statement items, which were each scored 5-1. Earlier administered on a sample of 80 other JAMB candidates in Lagos, the CANFQ showed standardized item alphas of .8C, .77 and .64 for need for money, need for popularity and other needs respectively. It also showed split-half reliabilities and overall reliabilities of .59 and .84, .69 and .71 and .83 and .71 for need for money, need for popularity and other needs respectively.

PROCEDURE

Subjects were approached en mass and given a notice of their participation in the study one week before the study date came. After being told the essence of being honest and sincere with the way they were to answer questions, subjects (who were seated in 8 different spacious classrooms) were given the CANFQ questionnaire to complete and return

to the researchers or the research as sistants. Subjects' completion of the Questionnaire lasted thirty minutes after which the completed questionnaires were collected.

RESULTS

TABLE 1: PARTIAL CORRELATIONAL COEFFICIENTS FOR EXTROVERTS WITH DOMINANT NEED FOR MONEY (a), POPULARITY (b) AND OTHER THINGS OR NEEDS (c) p>0.05.

rab.c	rab. b		rab.a	
0,76	0.48	0	0.65	
df = 187	df = 122		df = 141	

The above results confirm hypothesis 1 and 3, which respectively state that dominant need for money among extroverts will positively, and significantly correlate with dominant need for popularity, and that dominant need for popularity among extroverts will positively, and significantly correlate with other needs. Hypothesis 2, which states that dominant need for money among extroverts, will positively, and significantly correlate with other needs is, however, not accepted.

TABLE 2: PARTIAL CORRELATIONAL COEFFICIENTS FOR INTROVERTS WITH DOMINANT NEED FOR MONEY (a), POPULARITY (b), AND OTHER THINGS OR NEEDS (c) P>.05.

rab.c	rac.b	rbc.a	
-0.72	0.65	0.32	
df = 181	df = 164	df = 109	

The above result in Table 2 confirm hypothesis 5 which states that dominant need for money among introverts will positively, and significantly correlate with other needs. Although the relationship between dominant need for money and dominant need for popularity among introverts (when other needs are partialled out) is significant, it is a negative one. This does not support the positive relationship which

hypothesis 4 predicted. Also, the significant positive relationship between need for popularity and other needs among introverts which hypothesis 6predicted has not been confirmed as the result appears insignificant.

TABLE 3: PARTIAL CORRELATIONAL COEFFICIENTS FOR EXTROVERTS WITH INTROVERTS NEED FOR MONEY, POPULARITY AND OTHER THINGS OR NEEDS P>.05

NEED FOR MONEY	NEED FOR POPULARITY	OTHER NEEDS	
Extroverts Vs Introverts	Extroverts Vs Introverts	Extroverts Vs Introverts	
r = 0.59	R = 0.81	r = .25	
Df = 200	df = 164	df = 84	

The above result in Table 3 shows that there is a positive, and significant correlation between extroverts' need for money and introverts' need for money. Hypothesis 7, having predicted a significant negative relationship is, therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 8 has been confirmed. It states that there will be a negative but significant correlation between extroverts' need for popularity and introverts' need for popularity. The ninth and last hypothesis has not been accepted. It stated that there will be a negative, but significant correlation between other needs of extroverts and other needs of introverts.

TABLE 4:

AN OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY SHOWING OF EXTROVERTS AND INTROVERTS' INDICATION OF DOMINANT NEED FOR MONEY, POPULARITY AND

OTHER THINGS (NEEDS)

No			A Dominant Need for Money	B Dominant Need for Popularity	C Others
1	Social Science and Helping	Extroverts_	19	20	1 2
	Professions	Midoverts	20		
2	Mathematical and	Extroverts	3	4	14
	Science Occupations	Introverts	6	6	9
3	Medical and Life-	Extroverts	10	16	0
	Saving Occupations	Introverts	OP IS	9	2
4	Mass Media	Extroverts	9	15	4
ie.	Occupations	Introverts	17	8	. 3
5	Teaching and	Extroverts	2	6	13
	Related Occupations	Introverts	5 -	,1	15
6	Agricultural	Extroverts	5	10	1
	Occupation	Introverts	8	5	3
7	Engineering	Extroverts	6	7	3
	Occupations	Introverts	7	6	2
8	Business and	Extroverts	30	25	5
	Service-oriented Occupations	- Introverts	32	18	10
	***************************************		1 = 84	E = 103	1: = 40
			1=118	1= 63	1 = 46

Total = 454

DISCUSSION

The acceptance of hypothesis 1 points to the fact that as extroverts' need for dominance go up so also does their need for popularity. Accepting hypothesis 3 also means that as popularity needs of extroverts go up, so also do their other needs. In the case of hypothesis 2, however, its non-acceptance is an indication that need for money and other needs do not have a significant positive relationship amongst extroverts.

The negative significant correlation between dominant need for money and dominant need for popularity among introverts contradicts the position of hypothesis 4. It points to the fact that as dominant need for money goes up in introverts, their need for popularity goes down and vice versa. The acceptance of hypothesis 5 means that as introverts' dominant need for money goes up, so also does their other needs. The acceptance of hypothesis 6, on the other hand, means that increase in dominant need for popularity among introverts takes place along with increase in the introverts' other needs.

The rejection of hypothesis 7 (which predicted a negative significant correlation between extroverts' need for money and introverts' need for money) means that as the dominant need for money in extroverts increases, it also increases in introverts. The acceptance of hypothesis 8, however, indicates that extroverts and introverts differ significantly in their dominant need for popularity. With regard to hypothesis 9 which has not been accepted, the indication is that the relationship between other needs of extroverts and other needs of introverts is positive but not statistically significant.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Different occupations and professions have different entry requirements and offer different benefits to their members. Individuals also, based on their needs and the realities on ground; go into occupations and professions with different needs and potentialities. These needs are satisfied in different ways and in different degrees. To some individuals or groups, money may be a dominant need. To others, it may be popularity and still to others, job satisfaction or other unspecified needs.

A look at the results of the research shows that money popularity are the two dominant needs among potential Nigerian University undergraduates. This is irrespective of whether they are extroverts or introverts (see table 4). It is also interesting to note that the dominant need for money and popularity cuts across the 8 occupational groupings covered in this study, namely: social science and helping professions, mathematical and scientific occupations, medical and life saving occupations, mass media occupations, teaching and related occupations, agricultural occupations, engineering occupations and business and service oriented occupations.

The acceptance of hypothesis 1 has some practical implications. It is logical that extroverts engage in a lot of social activities and naturally need money to finance such social activities. But the dominance of and satisfaction of these two complementary needs has implication for company or organizational time and resources. This is because financial resources are limited just as involvement in social activity lead to wasting of precious man-hours.

Concerning the acceptance of hypothesis 3, it is also not surprising that extroverts' dominant need for popularity positively and significantly correlate with other needs. Although not specified, these other needs will most likely be such that will heighten or maximize the popularity needs of The negative significant relationship between introverts' dominant need for money and their (introverts) dominant need for popularity (hypothesis 4) is also striking. Introverts may be in need of and, in fact, have money, but due to their withdrawn nature, they may not use the money in a way that may earn them popularity. For hypothesis 5, the positive significant correlation between dominant need for money and other needs among introverts may mean that extroverts may need and, in fact, strive to get money. But they may decide to spend it in a way that will maximize their introverted tendencies. Introverts have little or no need for popularity and they are not likely to have other needs that may heighten the likelihood of becoming popular. This fact is demonstrated by the non-acceptance of hypothesis 6, which states that dominant popularity

needs and other needs of introverts, will be positively and significantly correlated.

An explanation for the positive significant correlation between introverts and extroverts' dominant need for money could be that both introverts and extroverts have dominant need for money. But owing to their different personality predispositions, they are much more likely to spend money in different ways. The explanation for the negative significant correlation between extroverts and introverts on popularity could be hinged on the fact that popularity is a dominant need for extroverts and not for introverts. By extension, this explanation also applies to the rejection of hypothesis 9, which states that there will be a negative and significant correlation between other needs of extroverts and other needs of introverts. This means that other needs of introverts and extroverts may go together, but not significantly so.

The implications these findings have for career guidance and counseling is that many Nigerians aspiring to pursue careers go about it without due regard to their own individual personality differences as well as peculiar nature of these careers. The challenge to psychologists and career guidance counselors in this regard is to help such individuals wanting to pursue careers discover or rediscover themselves. They need to become aware of there sometimes, negative thinking patterns and to begin the process of refraining these thoughts. Counseling prospective careerists to embrace good social values is one way of making this thought refraining process possible. For it is based on poorly conceptualized social values that individuals parochially hinge career success on just popularity and money. With the findings of this research identifying prospective university undergraduates as being at risk in making wrong career decisions, psychologists and guidance counselors may do well to accordingly give this high-risk group the attention it deserves. Only then will future individual job satisfaction, high company and organizational productivity and overall national growth and development be guaranteed.

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