

Determinants of Career Aspirations Among Selected Junior Secondary School Students in Oyo State

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the determinants of career aspiration among selected junior secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria. Two hundred and ten (210) participants constituted the study sample. Both the independent and dependent variables were measured with validated instruments with the validity reliability of 0.87. The data obtained was analyzed using simple percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistical method. Three (3) research questions were raised and answered. The result showed that there was a significant relationship between parenting styles and career aspirations of junior secondary school students ($r = .751$; $p = 0.00$; $p < 0.05$), between socio-economic status and career aspiration of junior secondary school students ($r = .436$; $p = 0.00$; $p < 0.05$) and between teachers' influence and career aspiration of junior secondary school students ($r = .511$; $p = 0.00$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this was that teachers had considerable influence on career aspiration of junior secondary school students. In view of these findings, it was recommended that school counselors should intensify their effort to organize conferences on the implications of the predictors (that is, parenting styles, socio-economic status, and teachers' influence among others) on students' career aspiration.

Keywords: *Parenting styles, Socio-economic status, Teachers' influence, Career aspiration and Junior secondary school students*

Introduction

Individuals from the earliest of their life often come across the question of what they want to be when they grow up. Early career developmental theorists explicitly have affirmed that childhood is a vital formative period for career development. Studies have shown that a number

of factors are associated with children's career aspiration development. Among them are parents, the favorite academic subject, social environment and planned or unplanned career guidance activities at schools. A career is a special grace given to an individual person upon which the mystery and purpose of their entire life finds its perfect meaning and solution. All the gifts individuals have of nature (body, soul, family, possessions, talents, education, and opportunities) have been given to us to help us accept and fulfill, in some way, the duties of our career. If individual chose career rightly, life would go well, and individual may settle safely in their lives. However, if career is badly chosen, individual will have much greater suffering coming to way, and will end in bad life. Aspiration is the target a person sets for him to achieve. They create a “desire” or “will” in him. Formation of an ardent desire and ambition motivates individuals to strive hard to achieve that goal.

Career aspiration refers to decision made by a student on his / her future work, occupation, career, or profession. Career aspiration is for young or older adults to either start a new career or enter a new career that they have never done. It is important now to note that youths involving in criminal tasks like internet fraud are brought back and taught to be more oriented and remain focused (Nancy and Teru, 2017). It is so important that individual pass the torch to our youth or adults who are changing career tracks to go to the career they aspire for more improved career development.

Career aspirations can be defined as what an individual wants or prefers to do in terms of work. According to Osa-Edoh and Alutu (2011), one of the greatest problems of a student is decision making and choice of career. A few years ago, career courses were thought to be for people who did not have the aptitude to study in a college and thus, needed skills in a particular field, to gain employment. Adolescents from affluent families tend to choose careers that they believe are befitting to their family's status even when such a career is against their own personal interest or capabilities while those from less privileged homes tend to grapple with careers that are within the financial capacity of their parents irrespective of their own interest or capability.

Due to the changing complexity of the global economy and occupational marketplace, career decision making is an essential matter to be investigated. Career is one of the most crucial facets in one's existential spheres. It encompasses a set of life chores that an individual is deemed to conduct ranging from educational to career endeavors (Nancy and Teru, 2017). Given that career progress has not been viewed as a single event, but a lifelong process that

one undergoes from early childhood to adolescence and into adulthood, making career decisions is a difficult undertaking one can engage in (Savickas, 2012). Studies of career aspiration have typically focused on one or two variables to the relative neglect of others. For example, investigators have examined career aspiration in lieu of social-demographic background variables (Animasahun, 2007; Leong and Gupta, 2017), social psychological variables (Goodale and Hall, 2016) and personality variables (Onoyase and Onoyase, 2019; Owoyele and Muraina, 2015).

Career aspiration especially among diverse options is usually a heroic task and is very important to life of junior secondary school students (Osipow, 2013). This therefore underscores the need to guide the adolescents in planning for careers and making mature decisions. The school system has the responsibility of assisting the youths in making competent career decisions that are appropriate to their abilities, aptitudes, interests, and other personality characteristics (Animasahun, 2007). Several studies have indicated that most secondary school leavers in Nigeria made poor career decisions because of unrealistic career aspirations. It had been reported that students with learning disabilities select occupations mainly because of the salaries, positions, glamour, and prestige attached to them (Ikeme, 2011; Salami, 2000). The problems of making unrealistic occupational choices and subsequent maladjustment on the job have been identified among the people already in the labour force by policy maker (Ogunsanwo, 2018). In view of these points the researcher intends to examine the determinants of career aspiration among junior secondary school students.

Parenting styles refers to diverse ways in which parents of junior secondary school students' act in raising their children in the society. This could be authoritarian, authoritative, or permissive parenting styles. Parents have constantly played vital roles in the upbringing of their children. These roles transcend the provision of material and financial needs and are met through varying approaches as have been identified by different psychologists (Bakare, 2014; Salami, 2000). In the same vein, an individual's career is one of the determinants of the level of success or failure which such an individual attains. The roles such a person plays in his entire life are predicated on his ability to make a wise and informed career aspiration. Cole and Hall (2017) found that parenting styles influence career aspiration of adolescents. Olayinka (2013) equally highlighted the fact that some children take certain careers because of strong parental motivation. Issues relating to the effects of such types of rearing patterns as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire patterns on career aspiration are yet to be fully investigated. In the

Philippine context, recognition of the fathers' familial role is pretty much evident (Tan, 2019). It is frequent for fathers to make crucial decisions on situations where critical judgments are called for in a family like choosing the educational plan of children, selecting the educational institutions where the children will study and the likes which are commonly seen as well among Nigerian parents (Chen, Dong, and Zhou, 2017). Parallel to such underpinnings, studies have consistently revealed the beneficial aftermaths of authoritative parenting on Caucasian children and adolescents, including greater academic, social, and psychological competence, self-esteem, and self-reliance, in comparison to parents who exhibit authoritarian or permissive parenting styles (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, and Dornbusch, 2016; Muraina, 2018).

Parental socio-economic status contextually refers to the total monthly money or income of the parents of junior secondary school students. This includes the parental occupation, educational level, and residents among other components of socio-economic status. In a similar vein, some studies have found that the family plays a critical role in career aspiration of junior secondary school students (Owoyele and Muraina, 2015; Otto, 2015). The variables that influence students' occupational goals include the family, level of parental education, school, peers, personality, and socio-economic status (Wilson and Wilson, 2016). There are varying opinions and findings, however, as to which specific family characteristics influence career aspirations. For instance, conflicting data exist regarding the influence of socio-economic variables. Other studies (Mau and Bikos, 2020) suggest that both parent education and income influence career aspirations, whilst other studies (Hossler and Stage, 2018; Muraina, 2018) show that only parent education is an influence. Other family variables that have been shown to influence career aspiration include the parents' occupation (Trice, 2014) and family size (Muraina, 2018). The father's occupational status is highly correlated with his son's occupation (Blau, 2014).

Teachers' influence refers to level at which the teachers contribute to the junior secondary school students' choice of career and career aspiration in the school. The school where junior secondary school students are educated plays an important influence on one's career aspiration (Bakare, 2014; Owoyele and Muraina, 2015). In his study, Garrahy (2018) noted that schools are social institutions that reinforce gender-appropriate behaviour, interests, and occupations for junior secondary school students. Such constructs including curricular subjects, quality of teaching, student participation in school activities, school practices and policies and learning materials for the student were found to impact on career aspiration among

learners (Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, 2016). In his study, Spade (2015) found that gender difference in the learners' experience starts at pre-school and continues throughout their educational careers. Teachers like parents are viewed as key players in the career paths that young people eventually pursue especially girls (Barnett, 2017). In her study in Nigeria, Denga (2014) found that sex-role stereotypes exist among children in primary schools as they aspire to traditional occupations. In fact, studies show that some teachers encourage students to take certain subject options that are congruent with aptitudes and abilities that they identify (Falaye and Adams, 2018). Similarly, Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2016) found that career aspirations of tertiary students from previously disadvantaged schools are negatively impacted by lack of finance, lack of career information, poor academic performance, and unsatisfactory career counseling services. Another study by Maree and Beck (2014) indicates that in disadvantaged communities, schools with career counselling programme were under-utilizing the facility which was also viewed as too expensive.

Other studies show that peers play a key role in career aspiration of junior secondary school students (Owoyele and Muraina, 2015; Stuart, 2016). For example, Stuart (2016) found that peers' attitudes toward gender and ethnicity may increase or decrease a person's confidence in pursuing a career. Adolescents are easily influenced by their peers because they rely on their friends to provide validation of the choices that they make including career decisions. Holland (2017) argued that the choice of an occupation is an expression of personality and members of an occupation share similar personality characteristics. For example, in their study of socio-demographic factors that anchor career aspiration among psychology students in South Africa, Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2018) found that the participants who attended rural-situated public schools made delayed career decisions. The same study also found that participants were mainly influenced by parents, teachers and friends to choose psychology as a career. Southwick (2015) observed the trend towards a decline in graduate enrollments in health-related fields and in science and engineering. In view of the findings above, the present study will concentrate on the determinants of career aspiration among selected junior secondary school students in Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the activities of the guidance counsellors posted to secondary schools by both the Federal and State governments in Nigeria, to conduct career, educational and personal-social counselling, most secondary school students and junior secondary school students were

usually not vocationally mature by the time they leave school (Muraina, 2018). There is evidence that certain students leave secondary schools quite deficient in occupational information. The system of education in Nigeria has failed abysmally to launch the nation to technologically advancement as envisioned by the Education policy makers. Many Nigeria students leaving secondary schools have neither the awareness of the diversity of occupation available nor the one to develop interest in. In most schools, there are insufficient counsellors to assist the students make appropriate career decisions based on their interest (Owoyele and Muraina, 2015). The result is that several are ill-fitted to such careers, gradually become dissatisfied on such jobs leading to low morale with attendant productivity. As such, the present study concentrated on the determinants of career aspiration among selected junior secondary school students in Oyo State.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate into the determinants of career aspiration among selected junior secondary school students in Oyo State. Specifically, other objectives of the study include to:

1. examine the meaningful relationship between parenting styles and career aspiration of junior secondary school students
2. find out the meaningful relationship between socio-economic status and career aspiration of junior secondary school students
3. investigate the meaningful relationship between teachers' influence and career aspiration of junior secondary school students

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between parenting styles and career aspiration of junior secondary school students?
2. What is the relationship between socio-economic status and career aspiration of junior secondary school students?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' influence and career aspiration of junior secondary school students?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research approach of *ex-post facto type*. Such an approach does not involve the manipulation of variables in the study. It is therefore, after the fact study. It

is neither adds to nor subtracts from the existing fact. However, it carefully observes and record information as it naturally occurred at the time the study was conducted. The target population for the study was all adolescents in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was used in this study. From the thirty-three (33) local government area (LGA) in Oyo State, five (5) local government areas were selected. Also, in each randomly selected LGA, five (5) public secondary schools were randomly chosen. However, ten (10) junior secondary school students were chosen as participants in each selected public secondary schools. On the whole, total numbers of participants selected were two hundred and fifty junior secondary school students (250) and these consist of both male and female.

Data Collection Instruments

Parenting Styles Questionnaire

To measure the parenting styles of the respondents, the parenting style scale of Nancy and Teru (2017) was adapted. The scale contained twenty-one (21) items to measure the parenting styles. The scales were rated using the following options; Strongly Agree -SA, Agree - A, Strongly Disagree - SD and Disagree - D. According to the Authors, the scale had 0.81 reliability value.

Teachers' Influence Questionnaire

To measure the teachers' influence of the respondents, the teachers' influence scale developed by Bakare (2014) was adapted. The scale contained eight (8) items to measure the teachers' influence on career aspiration of the students. The scales were rated using the following options; Strongly Agree -SA, Agree - A, Strongly Disagree - SD and Disagree - D. According to the Authors, the scale had 0.78 reliability value.

Career Aspiration Questionnaire

To measure the career aspiration of the students, the Career Interest Inventory developed by Animasahun (2007) was adapted. The scale contained fifteen (15) items extracted to measure the career aspiration of the students. The scales were rated using the following options; Strongly Agree -SA, Agree - A, Strongly Disagree - SD and Disagree - D. According to the Authors, the scale had 0.83 reliability value.

Socio-Economic Status Questionnaire

To measure the socio-economic status of the parents of the students, the socio-economic status scale developed by Salami (2000) was adopted. This was based on their parents'

occupation, educational level, residence, and types of equipment in the house. The scale contained twelve (12) items to measure the socio-economic status. The point from the scale were further divided into three parts in the scorings: lower socio-economic Status, medium socio-Economic Status, and high socio-economic status.

In order to measure the extent to which the instrument have been able to achieve their aims, the process of content validity was employed by cross-examination and verification. The knowledge gained from other investigation, literature review, theoretical framework and research method helped immediately to validate contents of the instruments. In addition, a more practical avenue of validity explored included consultation within and outside the department of the researcher. These provided the opportunity to check and assess the items as the work progressed.

The test re-test reliability co-efficient was used for the study. The instruments were pre-tested on twenty respondents which were not included in the scope of the study to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. After the pre-test, the instruments were scrutinized, and necessary modifications were made before final administration. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was determined yielding 0.87.

The instruments were administered to the respondents on the day approved by the school authorities for the exercise. The researcher was assisted by three research assistants in administration and collection of the instruments. In each selected school, both administration and collection of instruments were done on the same day. On the whole data collection lasted for two weeks. Out of two hundred and fifty questionnaires distributed only two hundred and ten (210) were properly filled in and considered useful for research purpose. The data collected in the study was analysed using simple percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical analysis of SPSS. Simple percentage was used to analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents while PPMC was used to answer the research questions raised in this study.

Results

The results were presented below based on the research questions raised and answered in the study.

Research Question One: What is the relationship between parenting styles and career aspiration of junior secondary school students?

Table 1: Meaningful relationship between parenting styles and career aspiration of junior secondary school students

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	N	r	p	Remark
Parenting Styles	64.91	27.65					
Career Aspiration	51.51	21.23	208	210	.751	.000	Significant

The table 1 above showed that there was significant relationship between parenting styles and career aspiration of junior secondary school students ($r = .751$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this showed that parenting styles had noteworthy influence on career aspiration of junior secondary school students.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between socio-economic status and career aspiration of junior secondary school students?

Table 2: Meaningful relationship between socio-economic status and career aspiration of junior secondary school students

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	N	r	p	Remark
Socio-Economic Status	49.62	18.28					
Career Aspiration	51.51	21.23	208	210	.436	.000	Significant

The table 2 above showed that there was significant relationship between socio-economic status and career aspiration of junior secondary school students ($r = .436$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this showed that socio-economic status had considerable influence on career aspiration of junior secondary school students.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between teachers' influence and career aspiration of junior secondary school students?

Table 3: Meaningful relationship between teachers' influence and career aspiration of junior secondary school students

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	N	r	p	Remark
Teachers' Influence	46.71	16.45					
Career Aspiration	51.51	21.23	208	210	.511	.000	Significant

The table 3 above showed that there was significant relationship between teachers' influence and career aspiration of junior secondary school students ($r = .511$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this showed that teachers' influence had noteworthy influence on career aspiration of junior secondary school students.

Discussion of Results

The result of the first research question revealed that there was meaningful relationship between parenting styles and career aspiration of junior secondary school students. The implication of this showed that parenting styles had considerable influence on career aspiration of junior secondary school students. This finding is consistent with the finding of Cole and Hall (2017) who found that parenting styles influence career aspiration of adolescents. Olayinka (2013) equally highlighted the fact that some student's choice to a particular type of career is as a result of strong parental motivation. Issues relating to the effects of such types of rearing patterns as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire patterns on career aspiration are yet to be fully investigated. Parents have constantly played vital roles in the upbringing of their children. These roles transcend the provision of material and financial needs and are met through varying approaches as have been identified by different psychologists (Bakare, 2014; Salami, 2000). In the same vein, an individual's career is one of the determinants of the level of success or failure which such an individual attains. The roles such a person plays in his entire life are predicated on his ability to make a wise and informed career aspiration. In the Philippine context, recognition of the fathers' role is pretty much evident (Tan, 2019). It is frequent for fathers to make crucial decisions on situations where critical judgments are called for in a family like choosing the educational plan of children, selecting the educational institutions where the children will study and the likes which are commonly seen as well among Nigerian parents (Chen, Dong, and Zhou, 2017).

The result of the second research question revealed that there was meaningful relationship between socio-economic status and career aspiration of junior secondary school students. The implication of this finding showed that socio-economic status had considerable influence on career aspiration of junior secondary school students. In line with this finding, studies have found that the family plays a critical role in career aspiration of junior secondary school students (Owoyele and Muraina, 2015; Otto, 2015). For instance, conflicting data exist regarding the influence of socio-economic variables. Other studies (Mau and Bikos, 2020) suggest that both parent education and income influence career aspirations, whilst other studies (Hossler and Stage, 2018; Muraina, 2018) show that only parent education is an influence. Other family variables that have been shown to influence career aspiration include the parents' occupation (Trice, 2014) and family size (Muraina, 2018). Some of the variables that influence students' occupational goals include the family, level of parental education, school, peers,

personality, and socio-economic status (Wilson and Wilson, 2016). There are varying opinions and findings, however, as to which specific family characteristics influence career aspirations. The father's occupational status is highly correlated with his son's occupation (Blau, 2014).

The result of the third research question revealed that there was meaningful relationship between teachers' influence and career aspiration of junior secondary school students. The implication of this showed that teachers' influence had considerable influence on career aspiration of junior secondary school students. This finding is in collaboration with the finding of Garrahy (2018) who found that schools are social institutions that reinforce gender-appropriate behaviour, interests, and occupations junior secondary school students. Such constructs including curricular subjects, quality of teaching, student participation in school activities, school practices and policies and learning materials for the student were found to impact on career aspiration among learners (Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, 2016). In his study, Spade (2015) found that gender difference in the learners' experience starts at pre-school and continues throughout their educational careers. The school where junior secondary school students are educated plays an important influence on one's career aspiration (Bakare, 2014; Owoyele and Muraina, 2015). In her study in Nigeria, Denga (2014) found that sex-role stereotypes exist among children in primary schools as they aspire to traditional occupations. In fact, studies show that some teachers encourage students to take certain subject options that are congruent with aptitudes and abilities that they identify (Falaye and Adams, 2018). Another study by Maree and Beck (2014) indicates that in disadvantaged communities, schools with career counselling programme were under-utilizing the facility which was also viewed as too expensive.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, persistent career crisis of Nigerian junior secondary school students need not to continue indefinitely. There is hope that with the improvement of some factors (e.g., parenting styles, socio-economic status, and teachers' influence among others) the situation can be changed for the better. The study discovered that some of these factors influence the career aspiration of adolescents in the school. Parenting styles, socio-economic status and teachers' influence has a profound influence on the adolescents' career aspiration in the school. As such, it is very crucial to improve these factors to eradicate the persistent occurrence of career crisis among junior secondary school students in this great country. This means that poor parenting styles, low socio-economic status and bad teachers' influence will have a negative effect on adolescents' career aspiration.

Recommendations

1. The parents or guardians should be enlightened on the significance of their parenting styles on the students' learning processes and career aspiration. This will help in the earlier discovery of the students' career aspiration and work towards appropriate ways of achieving it.
2. Teachers are to be geared towards the improvement of students' career information and enlightenment and guide the students appropriately towards the choice of career. This will help in increasing the students' career aspiration and career enlightenment in the school.
3. School counselors should intensify their effort to organize seminars on the implications of psychological factors (e.g. parenting styles, socio-economic status and teachers' influence among others) on students' career aspiration.
4. Students are to be encouraged to choose the career based on their interest and ability rather than being influenced by the parents, teachers, or material thing (money).

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