

IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS ON VOCATIONAL CHOICES OF THE FEMALE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ONDO WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigates the impact of educational aspiration on vocational choices of the female secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State, Nigeria. The study used descriptive survey design targeting some of the female students from the 3 Female Secondary School in Ondo West Local Government. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 3(three) schools, from which 200 students were selected from each schools using simple random sampling. Data was used using questionnaire. Simple percentage and frequency count were used to analyze data obtained. From the analysis of the data collected, it was established that environment has a great effect on the educational aspiration on vocational choices of the female secondary school students. However, the socio-economic status of parent also has an impact on the educational aspiration of vocational choices of the female secondary school students. Based on the findings, the following recommendation were made: since the environment affects the educational aspiration of vocational choices of the female secondary school students, Ondo State should provide some schools that are adequately staffed and equipped with all the facilities that are necessary for upward performance in education. It is hoped that the findings of the study will equip the administrators to know the impact of educational aspiration on vocational choices of female students, in order to benefits the students, parents and the school system.

Keywords: Aspiration, vocational choices, social status, self efficacy

Introduction

A female has seen herself to possess great potentialities which can be trapped like the male through education. Hence, the female aspiration and keenness for educational pursuit.

Today, many offices are been headed by the women as they obtain the education as a ladder to success in life. The western education which gradually wipe away a tradition which compels and paved way for positive aspiration of female education.

According to Lent, Brown and Hackett's (2000), career development model was utilized to examine the interactive relationships among learning experiences, career self efficacy beliefs about our abilities to succeed, social persuasion, physiological and affective states.

Education can be viewed broadly from two main perspectives. Firstly, it can be seen as:

- i. The process of transmitting the cultural heritage of a society from generation to another.
- ii. The channel by which individual are equipped to participate in the social life of the community and to make their contributions as members of the society.

iii. Perceived as one of the main mechanisms of prompting social change and for adjusting the role of individual to meet the demands of social and economic changes. The cost of these functions of education is perhaps of great importance in a developing country, such as Nigeria where institutionalized ideas, beliefs and practices about women and their status to impede their education. These beliefs and practices inhabit their education because it is logical that the status of women in any society will determine to some degree the kind of opportunities including those relating to education, which will be provided to them. The types of careers women choose and factors influencing their choices are relevant issues to examine especially since most research reveals women continue to work in lower paying, traditionally female-oriented jobs (Watson, 2002).

Educational aspirations are important variable in predicting academic achievement and may be seen as an element in academic achievement motivation focusing as they do on the desire for success and the development of academic objectives to succeed in education, particularly educational feeds or to gain particular degree. of equal importance, the need to study female adolescents in the early stage of career development, as aspirations are often crystallized during time (Hellenga, Aber, & Rhodes, 2002).

Parent Socio-Economic Status and the Educational Aspiration on vocational Choices of the Female Secondary School Students

Many renowned schools has advanced research on the impacts of educational aspiration on vocational choices which might be used as a yardstick to assess female secondary school student in Nigeria. Research findings has shows that people of high socio-economic status send their female children to school earlier than those of low socio-economic status. Mau & Bikos, (2000) believes that parent's educational level has been positively related to aspirations of youth.

According to Signer and Saldana (2001), the positive relationship between adolescent females career aspirations and their mothers educational achievement.

Mau & Bikos, (2000) cited previous findings showing a positive association between a family's Socio- economic status and aspirations. Youth from higher socio economic statuses were more likely to be knowledgeable of and choose professional occupations. In contrast, Brown & Barbosa (2001) found career aspirations of young females who came from low income families were confined to experiences of their relatives and friends. Influential Siblings are thought to play a key role in the career development of adolescents from lower socio-economic background Ali, Mcwhirter, & Chronister, (2005) studies show a positive association between high school students aspirations and their family's socio economic status, which is frequently related to parental education levels (Mau & Bikos, 2000; Signer & Saldana, 2001).

Trusty (2002) indicated that a low socio-economic status resulted in reduced and unrealized expectation. Additionally, Socio-economic status had a direct effect on unequal aspirations and expectation. Signer's and Saldana's (2001) in a study found the social status of mother's occupation as opposed to the social status of father's occupations had a stronger correlation with the social status of female student's career aspiration. The researcher attributed this finding to the fact that mother's exhibit a greater presences in many home.

Despite their increasing numbers, women have tended to enter the workforce in lower- status; lower paying jobs and remains clustered in a limited number of conventional career (Tinklin, Croxford, Ducklin & Frame, 2005). Low –paying traditionally female careers, including administrative support, sales, nursing, teaching, social work and clerical jobs, reflected society's persistent attitudes regarding stereotypical occupational roles for females (Watson, Quatman and Elder, 2002).

However, women earned roughly two-thirds the income of their male counterparts. This discrepancy in income was partially attributed to the disparity between traditionally male and traditionally female occupation. For example, women are less likely to be employed in science or engineering jobs as these are considered traditionally male occupations. However, females who are employed in these jobs earn roughly 20% less their male counterparts Graham & Smith (2005). Factors narrowing women into traditional role occupations included social and family influences, a lack of awareness regarding non-traditional options, an unwelcoming environment in many male-dominated fields discrimination within career fields, high turnover rates for women, and less seniority in given occupation.

Pupils Intelligence and its effect in Educational Aspiration on Vocational Choices of the Female Secondary School Students

Female vocational choices and expectations have been viewed as significant determinants of both short-term educational and long-term career choices. (Mau & Bikos, 2000; Schoon & Parsons, 2002), and as a reflection of adolescents future social mobility and career self concept. The critical role of vocational choices and expectations in career development of female is reflected in their integral position in most career theories and in the large body of research conducted over the last half century Rojewski (2005).

Gottfredson (2002) proposed a similar process occurring in the last developmental stage of orientation to inner self (age 14 onwards). she described two critical processes in the development of occupation aspirations, those of circumscription and compromise. Circumscription describes the process whereby adolescents limit their occupational aspirations to a range of acceptable alternatives. Within this range, female will also compromise their occupational aspirations, exchanging more ideal aspirations for more real expectations in terms of their eventual career choice. (Schoon & Parsons, 2002) argued that the traditional emphasis on individual factors in the development of occupation aspirations does not sufficiently recognize the constraints of the social circumstances within which adolescents aspire, emphasizing that for many adolescents.

Current research on female occupational aspirations (Schoon & Parson, 2002) has been conceptualized within the theories that more reachly recognize the influence of contextual factors. According to Lent, Brown & Hackett, (2002), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) emphasizes the psychological and social significance of demographic influences on female occupational aspirations. SCCT holds that vocational choices are influenced by the different socialization practices that female student are exposed to, as well as the internalization of these different experiences. These influences include psychological, historical, cultural, economic and socio-political variables. SCT focuses on the interaction between the female cognitive variables and the contexts that may limit or encourage personal agency in her career development. Specifically, SCCT views occupational aspirations and expectation as a reflection of the female career self efficacy. The core variables in SCCT include person (self efficacy, outcome expectation, interest , goals) and contextual (support, barrier) variables, which are posited to represent proximal influences on career outcomes, meaning that personal goals interrelate with person, contextual and learning factors to explain academic and career choice and attainment. While SCCT does not specifically name occupational aspirations, the construct is related closely to goals Rojewski (2005). SCCT is concerned with two types of goals, choice content goals, which refers to the type of activity domain, and performance goals, that is, the level or quality of performance in which one aspires in the given domain.

The Effects of Religious Beliefs on Educational Aspiration in the Vocational Choices of the Female Secondary School

The beliefs of parents are reflected on the educational aspiration of their female children for it is what parents believe that they will pass to their children. The present exploratory research attempts to address some of the gaps in the border literature identified by Rojewski (2005) by testing the nature of the relationships between female occupational aspirations, expectations, and aspiration/expectation discrepancies and traditional research variables of gender and occupational status, and extending this examination to include career development constructs, namely career decision status, career decision-making self efficacy, the perception of barriers, and the development construct of career maturity and career indecision. The family is the first place where the child learns the appropriate behaviours patterns, attitudes, and activities of female secondary school and higher institutions are significantly influenced by distinctive youth culture found among them. Many of them left their homes as adolescent for secondary school where they lack parents' adequate cultural socialization to mix up with other youths, values, attitude and modes of behaviour. Significantly, most of these youth variables have considerable effects on their future vocational choices either positively or negatively.

Prideux (2007) argues that, it is therefore important that these career constructs be examined in addition to the demographic, cognitive- personal and contextual variables that have received so much attention in the study of vocational choices. However, Lapan, Adams, Turner & Hinkelman (2000) reported that female seventh graders expressed higher self efficacy when they believe that their vocational choices matched their gender.

The Effect of Academic Achievement of parents on the Educational Aspiration on Vocational Choices of Female Secondary School Students

Occupational status and educational level of female's parents had a significant impact on their career choice. Replications in 1980's of earlier studies showed girls had broadened their career attainment remained low, especially for high status. (Wahl & Black burst, 2000). Recent studies refuted earlier findings and asserted that females demonstrated and interest in a greater number of careers and displayed more gender-role flexibility in their career aspirations than male. (Francis, 2002; Mendez & Crawford, 2002)

However, Watson, *et.al* (2002) noted adolescent females were more conflicted between their future careers and commitment to marriage and family. Studies on gender and career aspiration in the 1970's revealed girls had more restricted career aspirations than boys, and girls often opted for a narrow range of occupational categories. (Mendez & Crawford, 2002; Wahl & black burst, 2000). Adolescence would be an ideal time to study the career development of young women, as many changes occur during this time that strongly influence the formation of career aspirations and preferences.(Watson *et al*, 2002)

In contrast, Brown & Barbosa (2001) found vocational choices of young females who came from low income families were confined to experiences of their relatives and friends. Influential siblings are thought to play a key role in the career development of adolescents from lower socio- economic background (Ali, McWhirter & Chronister, 2005).

A women's educational level has also been a strong predicator of the number of years she will be employed. With more women choosing majors that require continuous employment, women are extending their participation in the work force. In addition, women themselves have tended to associate a post secondary degree with success and increased salary, thus, perceiving a greater payoff of pursuing post secondary education than men. (Troupoucis, 2004).

How to Encourage Female Educational Aspiration on Vocational Choices in Secondary School

A research carried out by Aber & Rhodes (2002) revealed that career aspirations represent an individual's orientation toward a desired career goal under idea condition. Many rational government had resisted the establishing more primary, secondary and university education in the urban areas than the rural areas where most female populace dwell and lack accessibility to education in other to benefit both the male and female students. The federal government of Nigeria has come out with a laudable programme of Universal Basic Education (UBE) envisaged as war against illiteracy. The researcher also showed light that the various loan boards has been established where female students who are financially handicapped could have access to loans. Many states government award bursary to students of their origin, while the federal government introduced federal character in admission into the universities and other higher institutions as students are admitted on merit whether female or male. This stops discrimination against talented students.

Statement of the Problem

The non-challant attitudes towards work of the female secondary school students as affected the educational aspiration on the vocational choices of the female secondary school students. Therefore, this study will investigate some of the impact of educational aspiration on vocational choices of the female secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised by the researcher for this study;

1. What is the effect of the environment on the educational aspiration of female secondary in vocational choices in Ondo State?
2. Does the level of education of the parents affect the educational aspiration of their female students on vocational choices in Ondo state?
3. How does the socio-economic status of parents affect the educational aspiration on vocational choices of female secondary students in Ondo State?

Methods

The research design for this study is descriptive research of the survey type. It aimed at finding and to the impact of educational aspirations on vocational choices of female secondary school students in Ondo west local Government, Ondo State.

The population of this study comprises of all the female secondary schools students in all public Secondary Schools in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Out of the three (3) Female Secondary Schools in Ondo West Local Government area of Ondo State, all the (3)Female Schools were selected. Purposive and Random Sampling Technique was used in selecting students of the school as respondents.

Results

Research Questions One

What is the effect of environment on the educational aspiration of female secondary schools student on vocational choices?

Table 1 The Effect of Environment on the Educational Aspiration of Female Secondary Schools Student on Vocational Choices

S/N	Items	% Agree	% Disagree	Total respondents	% Total
1	The environment has a strong influence on the academic performance on the female student	78.33	21.67	600	100
2	Peer group influences affect vocational choices in female secondary school	70	30	600	100
3	Conducive environment affect effective teaching and learning	71.67	28.33	600	100
4	Availability of good social amenities affect vocational choices in female secondary school	75	25	600	100
	Average Total %			600	100

Source: Fieldwork

From table 1, the effect of the environment on the educational aspiration of female secondary schools students in vocational choices was observed. 78.33% agreed that the environment has a strong influence on the academic performance on the student while 21.67% disagreed. Also, 70% agreed that peer group influences affect vocational choices in female secondary schools while 30% disagreed. Furthermore, 71.67% agreed that conducive environment affect effective teaching and learning. While, 28.33% disagreed. Finally, 75% agreed that availability of good social amenities affect vocational choices in female secondary school while, 25% disagreed.

However, responses were subjected to Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient to ascertain the relationship that exists between the variables identified by the research questions.

Table 2 Summary of Relationship between Environment and Educational Aspiration of Female Secondary School Students on Vocational Choices

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r- cal	r-tab	Decision
Educational aspiration	600	50.0000	25.61907			
Environment	600	1.5000	.53452	-.991	.275	*

* correlation coefficient is significant at 0.05 level

The result of the test performed indicates that there is a negative and significant relationship between environment and educational aspiration of female secondary school students in Ondo State ($r = -.991, P < 0.05$).

Research Question Two

Does parents’ level of education affect the educational aspiration of their female students on vocational choices?

Table 3 Parents’ Level of Education and The Educational Aspiration of Their Female Students on Vocational Choices

S/N	Items	% Agree	% Disagree	Total respondents	% Total
5	Parent monthly income affect the career of their children	75	25	600	100
6	Parent qualification affect the interest of their children in their career choice	75	25	600	100
7	Parent usually urge their children to aspire more on their education	71.67	28.33	600	100

8	Parent gives financial support to their children in order for them to look beyond secondary school education	75	25	600	100
	Average Total			600	100

Source: Fieldwork

In table 3, 75% agreed that parent monthly income affect the career of their children while 25% respondents disagreed. Also, 75% agreed that parent qualification affect the interest of their children in career choice while 25% disagreed. Moreover, 71.67% agreed that parent usually urge their children to aspire more on their education while 28.33% disagreed. Finally, 75% agreed that parent gives financial support to their children in order for them to look beyond secondary school education, while, 25% disagreed.

These responses were also subjected to Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient to ascertain the relationship that exists between the variables identified by the research questions.

Table 4 Summary of Relationship between Parents’ Level of Education and Educational Aspiration of Female Secondary School Students on Vocational Choices

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r- cal	r-tab	Decision
Educational aspiration	600	50.0000	25.61907			
Parents Level of Education	600	1.5000	.53452	-.998	.275	*

* correlation coefficient is significant at 0.05 level

From table 4, the result of the test performed indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between parents level of education and educational aspiration of female secondary school students in Ondo State ($r = -.998, P < 0.05$).

Research Question Three

How does the socio-economic status of parents affect the Education Aspiration on vocational choices of female secondary students?

Table 5 Parents Socio-economic Status of and Educational Aspiration on Vocational Choices of Female Secondary School Students

S/N	Items	% Agree	% Disagree	Total respondent	% Total
9	The level of sociality of the parent affect career choice	78.33	21.67	600	100
10	Parent influences the decision of their children in their choice of career	83.33	16.67	600	100
11	Parent occupation affect the vocational choices of their children	75	25	600	100
	Average Total			600	100

Source: Fieldwork

In table 5 reveal that 78.33% agreed that the level of sociality of the parent affect their children career choice while, 21.67% respondents disagree. Also, 83.33% agreed that parent influences the decision of their children in their choices of career while, 16.67% disagreed. Finally, 75% agreed that parent occupation affect the vocational choices of their children while, 25% disagreed.

Table 6 Summary of Relationship between Parents Socio-economic Status and Educational Aspiration of Female Secondary School Students on Vocational Choices

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r- cal	r-tab	Decision
Educational aspiration	600	50.0000	31.87			
Parents Socio-economic status	600	1.5000	.5477	-.993	.275	*

* correlation coefficient is significant at 0.05 level

From table 6, the result of the test performed indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between parents socio-economic status and educational aspiration of female secondary school students in Ondo State ($r = -.993$, $P < 0.05$).

Discussion of Findings

Findings on research question one which states, what is the effect of environment on the educational aspiration of female secondary school students on vocational choices? Findings indicated that the environment has a strong influence on the academic performance of the female student. These findings in tune with the work of (Helenga, Aber, & Rhodes, 2002) who stated that the educational aspiration represents an individual orientation toward a desired goal under idea conditions. More simply stated, educational aspiration “provide information above an individual’s interests and hopes, unflattered by reality” in addition, peer group influences affects vocational choices in female secondary and these findings is also in tune with the work of (Luzzo, & Mc whiter, 2001) which states that, a peer group provides a control mechanism to the female daily activities. Such control mechanism can be in the form of praise and acceptance when the girl does what the group expects from her. That is, the girl because of her daily interaction with this group, acts in line with the dictates of the group.

As regard to the Research question two, which states, does the level of education of the parents affect the educational aspiration of the female students on vocational choices? Findings indicated that, parent monthly income affect the career of their children and also parent qualification affect the interest of their children in career choice has supported by (Mau & Bikos, 2000) work which states that, parent educational level has been positively related to aspirations of the female students. And also, Burlin (2001) stated that both parents education level wielded a strong influence on career choice of their daughter. In addition, (Signer & Saldana, 2001) noted that there is positive relationship between adolescent female’s career aspirations and their mother’s educational achievement.

Findings on Research question three which states, how does the socio- economic status of parents affect the educational aspiration on vocational choice of female secondary schools? Findings show that parent influences the decision of their children in the choice of career and also parent occupations affect the vocational choices of their children. {Wahl & Blackhurst ,2000) indicated children’s career aspirations were more closely related to parental occupation. Among adolescent females in particular, career choice was strongly influenced by the mother’s occupation. The mother’s occupation was credited with impacting female’s aspirations because children often attended work with their mother’s and were more likely to know what their mother’s did for living. Also, Signer & Saldana (2001) study found that social status of father’s occupation had a stronger correlation with the social status of female students’ career aspirations. Furthermore, Mau & Bikos (2000) cited previous findings showing a positive association between a family’s socio- economic status and aspirations. Female students from higher socio- economic status were more likely to be knowledgeable of and choose professional occupation. Also, in contrast, (Brown and Barbosa 2001) found career aspirations of young females who came from low income families were confined to experiences of their relatives and friends. Additionally, socio- economic status

had a direct effect on unequal aspirations and expectations. Finally, Trusty (2002) indicated that a low socio-economic status had a direct effect on unequal aspirations and expectations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study the conclusion drawn was that environment in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State has a great influence on the educational aspiration of vocational choices. Furthermore, the socio- economic status of parents has a strong influence on the educational aspiration on vocational choices of female secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are given:

- (1)It is important to examine the resulting problems confronting students during and even after their secondary education. There are considerable differences between socio-economic classes and high level of educational opportunity. Our educational system is so structured in a way that some schools are adequately staffed and equipped with all the facilities that are necessary for upward performance in education and entry into these schools are competitive and determined by socio-economic background of the applicants.
- (2)Many other schools are ill-equipped and not well staffed and this adversely affects the educational aptitude and aspiration of the students in these schools. The only way out of this ambivalence is that a single compulsory curriculum be provided for all students. If this could be done, the elements of choice in the selection of school, course and duration in the system will be removed. The individual will no longer be influenced by her class position since all students will take exactly the same subject and remain in full time education for the same time.
- (3)Although, this seems to be what planned adequately, the inequality sector pursuit is not planned adequately. The inequality among the schools in terms of curriculum staffing and provision of facilities and entry pre-requisite still exists.
- (4)Another way out, although this might sound unrealistic, a move in direction of economic equality in order to reduce inequality of education opportunities outside rather than inside the school, but since there is little sign that economic inequality in Nigeria would be reduced. One sees no real evidence to suggest that class differences in educational attainment will reduce significantly in the fore- seeable future.
- (5)It has to be pointed out at this junction that those schools which are not adequately supported by the government should be provided with necessary tools for equal educational attainment. Children in early and forceful marriages which inhabit zealous female students. More enlightened programmes should be set in machinery for parents and their children to understand and accept the relevance of education while the principles of equalitarianism for all woman folk should strictly be followed to the grass root to eradicate favoritism and partiality among classes of workers and the government should provide along establishment of schools with job opportunities, so that huge financial expenses and knowledge attain are not wasted eventually.

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