Factors Affecting Vocational Aspirations Among Secondary School Students In Nasarawa Local Government Area Of Nasarawa State, Nigeria

DR. MAYANGIE, L.T. & UMAR, U. S.

Guidance and Counselling Unit,
Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education,
Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria

ABSTRACT
The study investigated the factors affecting vocational aspirations of Secondary School students in Nasarawa Local Government Area (L.G.A.) of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The sample comprised 700 respondents derived from 34 Secondary Schools (26 public schools, 6 private schools and 2 voluntary agency schools) in Nasarawa L.G.A. through stratified random sampling. The instrument used was questionnaire, which was administered to the respondents. Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested by applying the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at .05 level of significance. The findings indicated that two hypotheses were rejected, while one was accepted. The data was also subjected to simple percentage to ease analyses of other variables. Further interpretations of the findings showed that there was no significant difference between parental socio-economic status and students’ vocational aspirations; there were positive and significant differences between parental level of educational attainment and environmental factors on students’ vocational aspirations. Based on the findings, recommendations such as the need for education providers to provide schools with adequate learning environments; parents to take the educational and vocational challenges holly in collaboration with governments; and parents should assist in the overall vocational aspirations of their children.

Keywords: Aspiration; Factors; Secondary School; Students; Vocational.

INTRODUCTION
The ultimate essence of any academic pursuit is to be gainfully employed (by public service, private or self-employment) using the certificate obtained or knowledge acquired during the process. According to Tor-Anyiim (2008), the onus of guiding students to gain employment in public service, private sector or self-employment rests with the educational institution from where the student graduates. This has laid credence from the Federal Government of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2004) which states inter alia:

In view of the apparent ignorance of many people about career prospects, and in view of the personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors shall be appointed in post primary institutions.

The above citation had laid down the subject groupings that the student must have to study in order to be ultimately and usefully employed so as to be relevant to himself/herself and the nation at large. The subject groupings according to Egbochuku (2008) are linked to vocational aspirations of students and thus they present simple guides for the students to choose based on their future vocational aspirations. Going through the subject combinations, for instance, the student who easily ties his/her vocational aspirations to the relevant subjects that would virtually lead to the achievement of their career goals. Thus a student who aspires to be a medical doctor or an engineer would select pure science subjects (of course including...
English and Mathematics). The students’ aspirations, Tor-Anyiim (2008) states are thus geared towards their future attainments in life and supported by their inner desires and urge to pursue them to their logical conclusions so as to be functional members of the society, rather than being passive and inactive or dormant ones. As rightly identified by Egbuchuku (2008), the goals set by students could be meddled with when they are not effectively guided by parents, teachers and counsellors; the absence of which could dampen their moods and aspirations.

In the school system, to accomplish this task effectively, the counsellor needs to be trained professionally and be adequately in consonance with the factors influencing individual student’s vocational aspirations. Secondary School stage in the development of adolescent is an ideal time to study the career development of young children. Vocational aspirations are influenced by factors such as gender, socio-economic status, race, parent’s occupation and educational attainment as well as environmental and peer group expectations (Khallad, 2000; Watson, Quatman & Edler 2002). The successful application and realization of the factors of career aspiration do impact on the student’s future social mobility and vocational self-esteem and satisfaction, according to Egbochuku (2008). It is encouraging for students’ vocational aspirations and career planning to be tied together in order to allow their future goals achievement to be fulfilled (Gautam, Nigam & Mishra, 2016).

Having acquainted with knowledge of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCR) of Bandura (1989) as expatiated by Gibbons (2004) states how school counsellors would assist their students achieve career expectations in schools. The theory also stressed the imperative of self-efficacy in a person’s choice of career behaviour where people tend to be involved in or avoid specific tasks based on their self-judgement in relation to their competence in finishing the tasks. Adding their weights behind the theory Lent, Brown Schmidt, Brenner, Lyons & Treisman (2002) stated that career choice behaviour is a result of outcome expectations, career interest, where career self-efficacy plays a middle role between student’s social background interests and their expectations. The theory further stressed the relationship between background factors and cognitive students’ factors on career development (Brown & Hackett, 2000). Thus, a student’s background and personal attributes would play a persistent role in guiding their learning processes and invariably, their self-efficacy, which influence interest and vocational aspirations.

The effects of environmental factors such as whether students live in urban or rural dwellings, the types of home they reside and the types of cultural hotchpotch communities they core-habit have direct and moderating effect on career choice. Later, Lent & Brown (2003), discovered that environmental factors influence vocational choice only through their impact on self-efficacy. The impacts of the theory had drawn further research which had found that it had dwelt on interrelationship of persons’ vocational interests and decisions (Florens & O’Brien, 2002; Lent, Brown, & Nota, 2003; Rottinghaus, 2002; Turner & Lepan, 2002). Few studies have been conducted to examine possible gender differences in factors related to the theory among Secondary Schools, though Byars and Hackett (1998) in Tang, Pan and Newmeyer (2008) have suggested that gender influences may affect career self-efficacy and outcome expectations as well as impact vocational aspirations.

**Gender Stereotypes**

At adolescence level of development students have mustered two glaring competencies of career development in the forms of self-concept and perceptions of occupations they would want to pursue (Gottfredson, 2005). During adolescence stage, they have also achieved an adult level understanding of the sex type and prestige level of common careers, for instance, female students might avoid choosing careers that are generally perceived as low social prestige. In their quest to discover why women shun male dominated vocations (Betz & Hackett, 1981) in Tang (2008) found that the lack of confidence rooted in their look of encouragement, role models or similar experiences in the vocations. A study by Zeldein & Pajares (2000) found that career self-efficacy beliefs are critical in the choices made by and the persistence of females entering into mathematics, scientific and technological vocations.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study aims at investigating the factors which form the basis for vocational aspirations among Secondary School Students in Nasarawa Local Government Area (L.G.A.) of Nasarawa State, Nigeria.
Research Questions
The specific research questions of the study were as follows:
1. What is the effect of parental social-economic status on the vocational aspirations of students in Nasarawa L.G.A?
2. Does parental level of educational attainment affect the vocational aspirations of their children?
3. What is the effect of environmental factors on students’ vocational aspirations?

Research Hypotheses
The under listed null hypotheses were tested thus:
Ho1: There is no significant difference between parental social status and students’ vocational aspirations;
Ho2: There is no significant difference between parental level of educational attainment and the vocational aspirations of students;
Ho3: There is no significant difference between environmental factors and students’ vocational choices.

METHODOLOGY
To explore vocational aspirations among students of Nasarawa L.G.A., sample survey-design was employed. It aimed at finding the impact of vocational aspirations among the students. The population of this study comprised all the Secondary Schools (public, private and voluntary agency) students in Nasarawa L.G.A.

Sample and Sampling Techniques
The sample comprised 700 students derived from all 34 Secondary Schools through stratified random sampling method. The strata were the Public, Private and Voluntary Agency secondary Schools in the Nasarawa L.G.A. this comprised 350 females and 350 male students. Their ages ranged between 13 and 16 years. They were children from parents of diverse socio-economic strata of the L.G.A. with different occupational and educational backgrounds.
A questionnaire titled “Factors Affecting Vocational Aspirations” was designed by the researcher for collection data. The instrument was tested and assured of validity by two experts in measurement and evaluation, while its reliability was guaranteed using the Split-Half reliability method with a reliability quotient of r=0.78.
The instrument was administered employing the services of 15 trusted National Youth Service Corps interns with background in tests administration. The first section (A) inquired about the participants’ age, gender, ethnicity, class parents’ educational attainment and occupation. The other section (B) concerned questions regarding family activities related to vocational awareness and exploration. The instrument collected responses that had to do with information about the frequencies of discussing vocational plans with parents or whether the parents had ever taken them field trips. The next section (C) concerned questions of whether school programmes included focus on vocational counselling. A two-point Likert Scale (Agree/Disagree) response was administered to obtain the respondents’ attitudes towards the instrument.
RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the effect of Parental Social-Economic Status on the Vocational Aspirations of Students of Nasarawa L.G.A.?

Table 1: The Effects of Parental Social-Economic Status on the Vocational Aspirations of Students in Nasarawa L.G.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Parental Socio-Economic Status Has a Strong Influence on the Vocational Aspirations of Students</td>
<td>78.33</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Availability of Good Social Amenities At Home And School Affects Vocational Aspirations</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Peer Group Influence Affects Vocational Aspirations</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Conducive Environment Affects Vocational Aspirations</td>
<td>71.67</td>
<td>28.33</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 1, it is evident that the effect of parental socio-economic status on the vocational aspirations of the students was strong at 78.33%, while 21.67% disagreed. Similarly, 75% agreed that availability of good social amenities at home and school affected their vocational aspirations, while 25% disagreed. Again, 70% agree that peer group influence affect their vocational aspirations, while 30% disagreed. Finally, it was realized that 71.67% agreed that conducive environment affected their vocational aspirations, with 28.33 disagreeing. Again,

In order to verify the relationship that exists between the variables identified by the research questions, they were subjected to Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) with the following outcomes:

Table 2: Summary of Relationship between Parental Socio-Economic Status and Vocational Aspirations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>r-Calculated</th>
<th>r-Critical</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Socio-Economic Status</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>.53452</td>
<td>-.993</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient is Significant at .05 Level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Aspirations</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>50.000</td>
<td>25.61907</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result indicates that there is a negative and significant relation between parental socio-economic status and students’ vocational aspirations (r = -0.993, P<.05).
Research Question Two: Does Parental Level of Educational Attainment affect vocational aspirations of their children?

Table 3: Parental Level of Educational Attainment and Vocational Aspirations of Their Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parental Monthly Income Affects Vocational Aspirations of children</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Parental Qualification Affects the Interest of Their Children’s Vocational Aspirations</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parental Usually Encourage Their Children to Pursue Higher Vocational Aspirations</td>
<td>71.67</td>
<td>28.33</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parents Give Financial Support to Their Children to Aspire Beyond Secondary School Education</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 above showed that 75% of the respondents agreed that parental monthly income affect their children’s vocational aspirations, while 25% disagreed. Also, the table showed that 75% agreed that parental qualification affect their children’s vocational aspirations, while 25% disagreed. It was found that 71.67% agreed that parents usually encourage their children to pursue higher vocational aspirations, while 28.33% disagreed. Finally, 75% of the respondents agreed that parents give financial support to their children to aspire beyond Secondary School education, 25% disagreed.

Similarly, when the responses were subjected to Pearson’s Moment Correlation Coefficient to ascertain the relations that existed between the variables identified by the research, the results were as follows:

Table 4: Summary of Relationship between Parents’ Educational attainments and Vocational Aspirations of their students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>r-Calculated</th>
<th>r-Critical</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Aspirations</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>25.61907</td>
<td>.998</td>
<td>.0275</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient is Significant at .05 Level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Educational Attainment</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>.53452</td>
<td>.998</td>
<td>.0275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above, it is evident that there is positive and significant relationship between parents’ level of educational attainment and their children’s vocational attainment. ($r = .998$, $p<.05$).
**Research Question Three:** What is the effect of environmental factors on students’ vocational aspirations?

**Table 5: The Effect of Environmental Factors on Vocational Aspirations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Conducive Environment Affect Teaching &amp; Learning.</td>
<td>71.67</td>
<td>28.33</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Environment Has a Strong Influence on Academic Performance of Students.</td>
<td>78.33</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Peer Group Influences Affect Vocational Aspirations of Students.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Availability of Good social amenities affect Vocational Aspirations of Students</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above (Table 5) showed 71.67% of the respondents agreed that conducive environment affects teaching and learning, while 28.33% disagreed. It was evident that 78.33% agreed that the environment had strong influence on their vocational aspirations, while 21.67% disagreed. Also, 70% agreed that peer group influences affect vocational aspirations among the students, while 30% disagreed. Finally, 75% agreed that availability of good social amenities affect vocational aspirations, while 25% disagreed.

When the PPMCC was subjected on the data to ascertain the relationship between the variables identified by the research questions, the result was as follows:

**Table 6: Summary of Relationship between Environmental Factors and Vocational Aspirations of Students.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>r-Calculated</th>
<th>r-Critical</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Aspiration</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>50.000</td>
<td>25.6197</td>
<td>.991</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>Coefficient Is Sig. at .005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1.5000</td>
<td>.53452</td>
<td>.991</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result (r = .991, p < .05) signifies that there is positive and significant relationship between environment and vocational aspiration of the students of Nasarawa L.G.A.

**DISCUSSION**

This study examined the factors affecting vocational aspirations among secondary School students in Nasarawa Local Government Area. Results in Table 2 shows that r-computed (-.993) is less than r-critical (.275) at .05 level of significance. This result accepts the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between parental socio-economic status and students’ vocational aspirations. The finding supports the notion that parental socio-economic status influences children’s vocational aspirations (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). It also lays credence to the findings of Signer & Saldas (2001) father’s occupation was highly correlated with children’s vocational aspirations. Similarly, Khallad (2000) states that socio-economic status is a factor to be reckoned with in influencing vocational aspirations of their children. It is also evident, Mau and Bikkos (2000) in Mung’ara (2012) that there is higher association between a family’s socio-economic status children’s vocational aspirations. Studies by Mau Biko, 2000; Signer & Saldana, 2001 have all indicated positive association between parental socio-economic status and students’ vocational aspirations.
Results in Table 4 showed that that r-computed (.998) is greater than r-critical (.275) at .05 level of significance. This result rejects the null hypothesis by accepting the alternative that there is significance difference between parental level of educational attainment and vocational aspirations of students. This supports Egbochuku (2008) who states that the level of parent involvement in a child’s vocational, whether positive or negative can impact how the child chooses his/her future vocational. He added that modernization and changes in perception of children’s vocational aspirations have necessitated for less encouragement from parents to have their children follow their vocational. The influence of family on vocational aspirations of adolescents has been a subject of a research conducted by Isaac; Olusakin, & AyokaMopelola (2014) in which several conclusions were drawn including one that states that parental level of education has positive impacts on adolescents’ vocational aspirations and that girls are more inclined to follow their mothers’ vocations.

From Table 6, it was found that r-computed (.991) is greater than r-critical (.275) at 0.05 level of significance, which rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is significant difference between environmental factors and students’ vocational aspirations. The finding supports the work of Helenga, Aber & Rhodes, (2002) that there is strong bond between environment and students’ vocational aspirations. The influence of peers in an environment can tilt the vocational aspirations of girls to those decided by the group in order to ensure their security and belongingness Luzzo and Me whiter, 2001. This is also the conclusion reached by Ferry (2006) who states that parents’ career-fit for their children has great influence in the selection of vocations for them. While Opoke-Ware (2010) opined that the impacts of environment on the community and its inhabitants can either make or mar the future vocational of its people. Studies by Mau & Bikos (2000) had discovered positive relationship between families’ socio-economic status and vocational aspirations of children. The studies also found that female respondents indicated a leaning towards their parents’ socio-economic status as focus for their vocational aspirations, while Trusty (2002) found out that low socio-economic status had a direct effect on unequal vocational aspirations of adolescents.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded as follows:

1. There is no significant difference between parental socio-economic status and students’ vocational aspirations.
2. There is significance difference between parental level of educational attainment and vocational aspirations of students.
3. There is significant difference between environmental factors and students’ vocational aspirations.
4. The students should be allowed to pursue their instincts regarding what they want to become in their future devoid of parental interferences especially, when the students’ perception go head on with their parents’ expectations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Schools should emphasise on their students the need to start early in life, habitation of personality traits that fit their interest, ability, capability and confidence coupled with their cognitive stand.
2. Parents should guide rather than impose their unfulfilled vocational ambitions on their children.
3. Students should be encouraged by parents, older peers, teachers and counsellors to explore their innate hopes and aspirations at home and at school so that they mitigate the syndrome of stereotyping and imposition of expectations which are unachievable.
4. Governments at all levels through the ministries/ departments of education should provide soft landing pads for students of low income homes to enable them attain their vocational goals by actualizing their career aspirations.
5. Role modelling as a therapy for career hunt should be introduced in schools so as to strengthen the interest of students and explore or expose them to numerous career options.
vi. Governments should create more job avenues for graduating students to enable them actualize and attain their vocational aspirations.

REFERENCES

