

## Factors Influencing the Aspiration of Secondary School Students on the Choice of Career in Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The study intended to find the factors influencing the Aspiration of Secondary School Students on the choice of Career in Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The Study adopted a descriptive survey research design with the use of questionnaire to collect information from the respondents. The population of the study comprised 5,256 secondary school students in Ado Local government area. The sample consisted of one hundred secondary school students in Ado local government area of Ekiti State. Two local council development area were carved out from Ado local government area making a total of three. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the sample of the study. In stage one, two local governments were selected out of the three local governments made up of one local government area and two local council development areas. In stage two, five secondary schools were selected from each of the local governments making a total of ten secondary schools. In stage three, ten students were selected from ten schools making a total of one hundred students. The reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were analysed and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The finding revealed that all the items presented in table 1 are factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students. It was also revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students on the factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students. The following recommendations among others were made that an attempt should be made by the government to improve and expand career guidance services in secondary school s across Ekiti State.

**Keywords:** Aspiration, Career, Secondary Schools, Environment, Activities

### Introduction

Aspiration is the process by which a person is willing to succeed in life by attaining his /her desired goals and objectives. Aspiration is a determination and effort by an individual to attain a desired goal regardless of any limitation imposed by reality (Ogundola & Owodunni, 2011). Accordingly, both the young and old aspire to improve themselves in many areas as progress or success in one are or moment signals another level of aspiration. Aspiration is the process by which a child is willing to succeed in life. Hurlock in Ogundola and Owodunni (2011), stated that aspiration runs through all ages, it is more important, expressive and dramatic among adolescent. Aspiration in the context of career development refers to a person's desire, ambition, or a goal regarding their future career path or profession. It reflects what individuals aspire to achieve in terms of their professional lives and the direction they envision for their careers.

Aspiration plays a vital role in shaping the life of individual students in secondary schools in Ekiti State. Decision of a child can also determine hi/her destiny. Some students are eager to become medical doctors, Engineers, lawyers, Lecturers among others. Understanding the nature and dynamics of these, aspiration is essential for educators, counselors and policy makers to provide adequate support and guidance to students as they navigate their educational and career journey. Career refers to different occupations a person exposes to through his/ her life time. Career is a life work or success in one's profession; it is the sequence of major position occupied by a person, throughout his lifetime. Career choice among students starts from childhood to adulthood. Students will be exposed to many occupations and each student will make a choice on the selected occupation. Career choice according to Anzag and David (2024) is a serious decision which concerns parents and their children. Accordingly,

this is because if wrongly chosen, it is likely to have negative impact on the parents and their children in future. Career selection is one of many important choices students make in determining future plans. There are many careers' options in secondary schools. Education career paths include teaching, education administration, school counseling and social work. Careers in medicine are pediatrician, ear, nose and throat doctors, dental hygienists, dental assistants or technicians, public health, doctors and surgeons, crowd doctor, pharmacist, pharmacy technicians, health journalist, medical researchers, medical-legal advisors, physician, nutritionist, transplant coordinator, therapists, optician, diagnostic among others. Medical sonographer, gynecologist, midwives' nurses and midwives. Career plays a very fundamental role and important role in the life of the individual not only because they determine

The pattern of income but also because it affects the individual personality and concepts in life. In a nutshell, career is the totality of work one does in his/her lifetime and the person concerned. It has been observed that the peer group influence, the student's environment, the student's personality, family parental influence and the student's religious belief and practice affect the choice of career of career. Environment in which a child lives determines his/ her behavior in career choice. Environment in which a child lives determines his /her career choice especially when the career is marketable in such an environment. Nursing is marketable in some areas while computer and engineering are marketable in other areas. Peer groups can influence students in pursuing any career. Steinberg in Folade, Bello, Uwaoma, Anwanane, Nwanghuruka (2019) maintained that peer group influence begins at an early age and increases through the teenage years.

Peer group is an important influence throughout one's life but they are more critical during the developmental years of the childhood and adolescence. Group reference records provides definite advantages for measuring peer group status and friendship in young children. Parents and teachers have major roles to play in the choice of career in secondary schools. Secondary education is a vital stage of education aiming at the provision of students for future careers and higher education (Education Policy in Alam, Arshard, and Azizullah &Ihsan. (2020). At junior secondary school level, students would be exposed to pre- vocational subjects such as woodwork, computer, typing, and shorthand agricultural science among others. The choice of career would be on the mind of the students. The preparatory aspects of pre-vocational training offered to students at the junior secondary school level is for the purpose of exposing students to career awareness by exploring usable options in the world of work and enabling youths to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology (FGN in Olaoye, 2019). At this level, vocational skills acquired could not lead to employment but at senior secondary school level, students could be able to make choices and open their workshops, operate business tycoon after graduation depending on the gender base. It appears that the importance of parental influence upon their children's career choice is consistently important, even across gender and racial lines. There has been a national debate on gender issues with regard to gender inequality, gender disparity, gender segregation and gender discrimination (Adeoluwa & Akhigbe, 2015). Accordingly, the male in the indigenous society often considers the girl child as a parent, as a wife and therefore it may be wise to commit resources to her education especially, higher education as the economic returns for such investment can hardly be realized by her parent. Female students in secondary schools have career choice in nursing, teaching, while male students have career choice in Engineering, Technology and Agriculture. Nowadays, the decision on choice of career has been changed in such that female students are studying technical education courses such as Woodwork Technology, Electrical Technology, Automobile Technology and Metalwork Technology.

Secondary schools in various local governments in Ekiti State are numerous. These include Olaoluwa Muslim Grammar School, Ado Ekiti in Ado Local government area IN Ekiti State. The major occupation of the people in Ado local government is farming. These people engage in planting arable crops such as maize, yam, cocoyam, beans and cash crops such as cocoa among others. Ado local government area like other local governments across Nigeria, grapples with diverse challenges and opportunities in education and employment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Students in Junior Secondary School III usually have aspirations in making career choice of their occupations. The aspiration tends to increase when they get into Senior secondary school one. At this level, students are exposed to all the subjects usually in the first term for them to choose the subjects of their occupations but in some schools, students are required to make choices of their occupations during the first term without exposing them to all the

subjects. The choice of career is very difficult among secondary school students. They usually seek the help of school counselor and each subject teacher. Some students choose career options which make it difficult for them to make choices. The subject teachers and school counselors would use their performance in various subjects to determine their career choice. Some personnel can be invited to schools for the purpose of giving lecture to students on career talk. Despite the role of counselors, subject teachers and personnel in shaping career aspirations of secondary school students, there exists many factors that contribute to the formation, evolution and realization of these aspirations. Secondary education serves as a crucial juncture for students to explore and articulate their vocational interests and ambition. If these factors can be identified in shaping the career aspiration of students in secondary schools, this would help them in selecting occupations according to their abilities and trait.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to find out the factors influencing the aspiration of Secondary School Students on the choice of career in Ado Local Government area of Ekiti State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students in Ado local government area.
2. Identify the factors that influence peers group on the choice career among secondary school students in Ado local government area.
3. Outline the activities of secondary school teachers on the choice of career among secondary school students.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised.

1. . What are the factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students?
2. What are the factors that influence peers group on the choice career among secondary school students?
2. What are the activities of secondary school teachers on the choice of career among secondary school students

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between male and female students on the factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference between Junior secondary school three and Senior secondary school one on the factors that influence peer group on the choice of career among secondary school students.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with the use of questionnaire to collect information from the respondents. According to Nworgu in Oke and Soetan (2021), descriptive survey design is a type of research design in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of entire group. The population of the study comprised 5,256 secondary school students in Ado local government area. Two local council development areas were carved out from Ado local government area making a total of three local governments. The sample consisted of one hundred students in secondary schools in Ado local government area. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the sample of the

study. In stage one, two local governments were selected out of the three local governments made up of one local government area and two local council development areas. In stage two, five secondary schools were selected from each of the local governments making a total of ten secondary schools. In stage three, ten students were selected from ten schools making a total of one hundred students.

The reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained for the study. Four- point likert type of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used. Any mean rating from 2.50 and above was positive otherwise negative. Based on the cut off-point of 2.50, any mean score equal to 2.50 or greater was regarded as agreed while any items with less than 2.50 was disagreed. When p-value is greater than the significant level ( $p < .05$ ) null hypothesis is accepted, otherwise, the hypothesis is rejected. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were analysed and tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

### Research Question 1

What are the factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students?

**Table 1: Factors that Influence Parents on the Choice of Career among Secondary School Students**

S/N	Factors	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Environment in which a child is brought up determines his/ her career choice	3.80	0.47	Agreed
2.	Parents' own educational backgrounds and levels of attainment can influence their perspectives on career choices for their children	3.37	0.56	Agreed
3.	Socio –economic factors such as income level, employment and access to resources can impact parents' perceptions of viable career options for their children	3.59	0.67	Agreed
4.	Cultural and societal expectation	3.47	0.67	Agreed
5.	Peer influence and social networks can also shape parents' perceptions of career options for their children	3.49	0.76	Agreed

The respondents agreed with all the items presented in table 1. This implies that all the items presented are the factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students. The agreeable items ranged from 3.37 to 3.80.

### Research Question 2

What are the factors that influence peers group on the choice career among secondary School students?

**Table 2: Factors that Influence Peer Group on the Choice of Career among Secondary School Students**

S/N	Factors	Mean	SD	Remarks
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1. Peer group could influence career choice of students	3.71	0.46	Agreed
2. My friends usually help in choice of career	3.42	0.57	Agreed
3. Type of peers, students associate with plays important roles in their career choice.	3.43	0.69	Agreed
4. Students often rely on the assistance of their peers on career Choice	3.40	0.70	Agreed
5. Students choose their career because their friends choose the same career	3.59	0.71	Agreed

Table 2 shows the factors that influence peer group on the choice career among secondary School students. The mean ranged from 3.42 to 3.71 showing that peer group influences the choice of career among secondary school students in Ado local government area.

### Research Question 3

What are the activities of secondary school teachers on the choice of career among secondary school students?

**Table 3: Activities of Secondary School Teachers on the Choice of Career among Secondary School Students**

S/N	Factors	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Teachers often provide one on one counseling session to help Students explore their interests, values, strengths and aspirations.	3.79	0.52	Agreed
2.	Teachers assist students in developing educational plans that align with their career goals and aspirations.	3.22	0.56	Agreed
3.	Teachers share information about various career opportunities, industries and market trends with students.	3.47	0.77	Agreed
4.	Teachers organize guest speaker sessions and career affairs where professionals from different fields share insights into their careers and experiences	3.45	0.64	Agreed
5.	Teachers offer personal support and mentoring to students based on their individual interests, needs and goals.	3.73	0.62	Agreed
6.	Teachers often provide group counseling session to help students explore their interest, values strengths and aspirations.	3.48	0.77	Agreed

The respondents agreed on all the items presented in table 3. This shows that all the items are the activities of secondary school teachers on the choice of career among secondary school students. The most agreeable item was item 1 while item 2 was the least agreeable item.

### Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between male and female students on the factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students

**Table 4:** t-test Summary of the difference between Male and Female Students on the Factors that Influence Parents on the Choice of Career among Secondary School Students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	P <sub>value</sub>	Decision
Male	29	3.55	0.59	98	0.67	0.59	N/S
Female	71	3.54	0.64				

\*P > 0.05

Table 1 shows that P-value of 0.59 was greater than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, there was no significant difference between male and female students on the factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students.

## Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between Junior secondary school three and Senior secondary school one on the factors that influence peer group on the choice of career among secondary school students.

**Table 5:** t-test Summary of the Difference between Junior Secondary School Three and Senior Secondary School One on the Factors that Influence Peer Group on the Choice of Career among Secondary School Students.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	P <sub>value</sub>	Decision
JSS 111	16	3.43	0.78	78	0.76	0.44	N/S
SSS 1	29	3.60	0.58				

\*P > 0.05

Table 5 shows that P<sub>value</sub> was of 0.44 was greater than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, there was no significant difference between junior secondary school three and senior secondary one on the factors that influence on the choice of career among secondary school students.

## Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed that environment in which a child is brought up determines his /her career choice. This is consistent with the finding of Okunola (2017) who stated that environment can be likened to a system encompassing physical, chemical, biological, social, economic, cultural and institutional components which interact with each other through several processes. The interaction of these factors in school and home environment respectively determines the occupational choice. Everything a child becomes is influenced by his/her environment and experiences. The finding also revealed that social economic factors such as income level, employment status and access to resources can impact parents' perceptions of viable career options for their children. This is in support of the finding of Akinlolu and Oyewole (2017) who stated that national directorate of employment is capable of solving unemployment in Nigeria. This body is in position to solve this problem.

Table 2 shows the influence of peer groups on the choice of career among secondary school students in Ado local government area. This indicates that peer group could influence career choice of students. This finding is in support of the finding of Grovira and Raphael in Abiodun and Adetule (2021) who attested that peer groups are so powerful that members are willing to deviate from the norms of the society to protect the interest of their peer group. Peer group is highly important in making choice of career. Peer group can deviate their colleagues to right or wrong place.



Table 3 shows the activities of secondary school teachers on the choice of career among secondary school students. The finding portrays that teachers often provide one on one counseling session to help the students explore their interests, values, strengths and aspirations. The finding supports the finding of Werner and Woessmann in Aniko and Aranka (2023) who stated that mentoring relationship can help to set students on a more positive and lasting developmental trajectory. Teachers serve as mentors and provide ongoing support to students as they explore their career options. They offer encouragement, advice and resources to help students overcome obstacles and make informed decisions about their future careers. This study also supports the finding of Falaye and Adams in Alam, Arshad and Atta (2021) who stated that teachers assist students to choose careers according to their ability, assist students in choosing school subjects appropriate for their abilities and will have successful careers in the future. It also supports the finding of Henry in Abaa, Iwowari and Ihuoma. (2021) who observed that secondary school students tend to work with their teachers' choice of career which are usually the whole class with whom the young students spend their academic days. Teachers are in position to identify the students' short comings in choosing their career, as some of the students are not rational in thinking while making choice of career. The finding revealed that teachers organize guest speaker sessions and career affairs where professionals from different fields share insights into their careers and experiences. This finding is in support of the finding of Gyansah and Guaantai in Amie-Ogan, Epelle and Prince (2020) who stated career awareness involves a well-planned career development programme which entails hunt, career letter and career counseling.

There was no significant difference between male and female students on the factors that influence parents on the choice of career among secondary school students. This finding supports the finding Basoro in Babatunde (2013) who stated that gender role stereotypes are transmitted from one generation to another. Accordingly, gender stereotyping promotes the belief that females are traditionally feminine and males are traditionally masculine. The era of saying some occupations belong to male and female students has gone. The belief is that what a man can do a woman can do it better.

There was no significant difference between junior secondary school three and senior secondary school one on the factors that influence on the choice of career among secondary school students. This finding is not consistent with the finding of Abaa, Iwowari and Ihuoma (2021) who stated that there is significant difference between personal interest and career choice of students of public secondary schools in Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers state. This is attributed to many factors in such that students differ in many ways. They reason and make choices in different ways.

## Conclusion

It was concluded that environment in which a child is brought up determines his/her career choice. Students often rely mostly on the assistance of their peers on career choice. It was also concluded that activities of secondary school teachers on the choice of career include teachers share information about various career opportunities, industries and market trends with students. Teachers organize guest speaker sessions and career affairs where the students can be exposed to many career options. It would help the students in making career options.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made

1. An attempt should be made by the government to improve and expand career guidance services in secondary schools across Ekiti State Nigeria. This can be made by constructing and equipping a standard building for career services in secondary schools
2. Career counselors should provide students with experiences that expand the exploration, process and a wide range of career information on all the available careers so that they can be able to explore widely before making their choices.
3. Career counselors should make use of follow up studies to encourage successful career development by identifying sources of psychosocial support available to students after initial career decisions have been made.

4. Persons that offer career advice to students should ensure that they are well informed so as to provide accurate information that will lead students to correct career choice.
5. Students should be warned by the teachers, parents and career counselor on the danger that revolves career chosen based on friendship level. Their friends can advise them but they should choose careers according to their ability

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