



Demographic Factors Influencing Career Aspirations of Secondary School Students in Kwara State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the demographic factors influencing the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Five research hypotheses were raised to guide the study. Simple and stratified random techniques were adopted to draw a total of 600 participants across the three senatorial Districts of Kwara State. Gregor and O'Brien's Career Aspiration Scale-Revised was used with the reliability coefficients of the three subscales ranging between 0.76 and 0.92. t. Test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics were used to test the six null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Descriptive statistics were used for the demographic data. The results revealed that students' career aspirations are influenced by gender, age, ordinal order and socioeconomic status but not by religion. Based on the findings, it was recommended that parents should relate well with their children and have a positive perception towards their ordinal positions. Career guidance/vocational counsellors should assist parents by providing them with information and support. School counsellors should collaborate with other school stakeholders to help students vocationally and educationally.

Introduction

Career psychological studies, from around the globe, recognize career aspiration as one of the major concepts in career development (Khampirat, 2020). Career aspirations are the goals individuals set to achieve in either their current occupation or desired profession. It is a goal or objective of an individual based on their career. Career aspiration depicts an individual's orientation toward a desired goal under ideal conditions. It provides information about an individual's tentative career interest which might even be changed later on in life. People who have career aspirations insist on improving their professional skills, and capabilities and boosting their related various vocational subjects/courses. Career aspirations can be influenced by gender, socioeconomic status and family support (Zeb et al., 2020). During adolescence which characterizes the period of secondary school, developing a career identity is a central developmental task. Career aspiration is especially important

because it allows students of secondary school age to evaluate the degree to which various aspirations help or hinder their chances of attaining desired goals. Career preparation for students of secondary school is a vital precursor for successful career development across the life span and is closely related to students' adjustment and well-being (Zeb et al., 2020). Every secondary school student undergoing the process of having a career aspiration is influenced by some factors such as the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes and educational achievement. While other socio-demographic factors also include family, school and peers (Jogdard & Naik, 2014).

Several demographic factors play influential roles in the career aspirations of teenagers. Family types play a prominent role in the career aspirations of secondary school students. A family is a group of people affiliated by consanguinity, affinity, or co-residence. It is the smallest social unit of a society through which a child comes into the world. Okafor (2019) defined family as a group united by marriage, blood and/or adoption to satisfy intimacy needs or bear and socialize children. The family environment is one of the factors which produce human personality since primary socialization requires a context which provides warmth, security and mutual support (Furo, 2017). It was indicated in a study that family types include single-parent families, a parent not living with a spouse or partner; dual or double-parent families, the children reared and cared for by both spouses or parents; blended families, one in which either parent brings with them children from a previous marriage; only child families, children who never have any siblings; and adoptive parent families, children living with parents who are not biologically parents; the grandchildren families, and the children reared by their grandparents (Jogdard & Naik, 2014). Okafor (2019) analyzed three family types in Nigeria: nuclear or immediate family, the smallest group, composed of husband, wife and children; the extended family comprised of several nuclear families and other relations; the compound family comprised of both nuclear and extended families.

The family, as a social and psychological identity, plays an important modelling role in the formation of the personal and professional identity of an individual. The influence of family on activities, information and role models relating to professions, puts it in a position to significantly mould the career aspiration of an individual. Thus, the family conveys not only values but also general life standards to individuals and helps them develop corresponding abilities in society (Okafor, 2019). The influence of family on the career aspirations of secondary school students has remained substantial and important. Family types among other factors were observed to be key factors which influence the career aspirations of secondary school students (Furo, 2019). The influence of family upon the career aspiration of secondary school students has been so strong as to override the influence of teachers, psychologists and career counsellors who likely know more about the career field in question but were not as well-known and/or trusted as students' parents for career decision making (Cheng, 2012).

Furthermore, Gender is another factor that can influence the career aspirations of students. Reyes et al. (1999) reported a study aimed at establishing the influence of the

socio-economic status of parents on the career aspirations of their wards. The study used Mexican-American teenagers as respondents. The finding indicated that a significant difference was observed in the career aspirations of the participant based on the socio-economic status of their parents. Fickman (2020) stated that ordinal position influences personality, intelligence, career aspiration and success. Children who are the oldest, youngest, middle, only and twins develop distinctive personality traits because each child experiences the family differently. Factors that influence personality development are not about ordinal position, but rather the interpretation the child gives to the position. No ordinal position is better than another. Each has merits and demerits (Katz, 2020). According to Katz (2020), firstborns are responsible, assertive, task-oriented, perfectionists and supporters of authority. They often aspire for careers that require precision like science, and medicine, among others. Middle-born individuals are generally independent nonconformists. They are intuitive, creative and adaptive. Popular careers include entrepreneur and social work. Later-born people are typically more popular and socially oriented. Popular careers include actors, psychologists and so on. Only children are often classified as first-born, they tend to be highly motivated, confident, and achievement-oriented but not competitive. Their career aspirations are similar to those of first-borns (Predko, 2020). The interactive process within the family both with parents and siblings could either be positive or negative towards the career aspiration of an individual. This study intends to investigate the influence of family type and ordinal position on the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

In Nigeria today, due to people's specious philosophy about children's career prospects, there have been medical doctors who could have excelled as teachers; lawyers who could have excelled as engineers and engineers who could have been more productive as industrial artists or traders. This mismatched professionalization resulted from both parents' ill advice and negative interpretation of the ordinal position (Links et al., 2019). Cheng (2012) researched the factors influencing adolescents' career aspirations. The results indicated that gender and family, socio-economic status were not associated with continuing educational aspiration. However, academic achievement influences continuing education both directly and indirectly through academic self-efficacy or career self-efficacy. Black (2017) study indicated that birth order has an impact on the career aspirations of children. Boler (2020) reported that birth order did not significantly influence the career aspirations of adolescents. The study revealed among others that birth order is not linked to jobs an individual ends up doing; that is, a small correlation only exists. The previous research carried out focused on the influence of family on the career choices of secondary school students. An all-encompassing study is, however, needed on the influence of family type and ordinal position of career aspirations on secondary school students in Kwara State. That is what this researcher intends to do in this study.

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on gender.
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2. There is no significant difference in the career aspiration of secondary school students in Kwara State based on age
3. There is no significant difference in career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on religion.
4. There is no significant difference in career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on ordinal order.
5. There is no significant difference in career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on the socio-economic status of parents.

Research Methods

The research design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey research design with a quantitative approach. The study employed questionnaires to determine the opinions, preferences and perceptions of the respondents on the influence of family type and ordinal position on their career aspirations. The population for the study was senior secondary school students in Kwara State which is 79,174 (Kwara State Ministry of Education and Human Power Development, 2020). The multi-stage and simple random sampling procedures were used. Thirty-two students were selected from each of the twelve randomly selected schools from six local government areas of the three senatorial zones of Kwara State using the Conroy (2019) sample format. Demographic data survey requested information from five areas: (1) gender, (2) age, (3) class, (4) nature of school, (5) area of high school, and (5) father and mother's highest educational level as a proxy for socioeconomic status. Gregor and O'Brien's (2016) Career Aspiration Scale-Revised was used. The scale has 24 items measuring three subscales of career aspirations including leadership (8 items), achievement (8 items), and education (8 items). The items were structured using a 5-point Likert-type with response options ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 5 (very true of me). Included were five negative items which were reverse-scored before the analysis of the data. The minimum and maximum obtainable scores are respectively 24 and 120. The scale was reported to have relevant and expected psychometric properties. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the three subscales showed an acceptable level of reliability, ranging between 0.761 and 0.916 (Kunchai et al., 2021) The researcher employed both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyze the data collected for the study. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used for the demographic data and section C, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools were used to test the hypotheses.

Findings

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Demographic Data

S/NVariable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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1. Gender		
Female	173	45.05
Male	211	54.95
Total	384	100
2. Age		
13-16 years	123	32.0
17-20 years	247	64.3
21-24 years	14	3.7
Total	384	100.0
3. Religion		
ATR	10	2.6
Christianity	96	25
Islam	278	72.4
Total	384	100.0
4. SES		
Low	153	39.84
Moderate	122	31.77
High	109	28.39
Total	384	100
5. Ordinal Position		
Only child	57	14.84
1st child	106	27.60
2nd child	97	25.26
3rd child	56	14.58
4th child	45	11.72
Others	23	5.99
Total	384	100.0

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by gender, age, religion, socio-economic status and ordinal position. The Table shows that 384 respondents participated in the study, out of which 173 (45.05%) were female and 211 (54.95%) were male. The age distribution of the participants indicated that 123 (32%) fell between 13 and 16 years; 247 (64.3%) participants' ages ranged between 17 and 20 years; 14 (3.7%) participants' ages ranged

between 21 and 24 years. The religion distribution of the participants showed that 10 (2.6%) participants were practising African Traditional Religion; 96 (25%) participants were practising Christianity; and 278 (72.4%) participants were practising Islam. The distribution based on socioeconomic status revealed that 153 (39.84%) participants were from low socio-economic homes; 122 (31.77%) came from moderate socio-economic homes; and 109 (28.39%) came from high socio-economic homes. The distribution of the participants from the perspective of ordinal position disclosed that 57 (14.84%) participants were only children; 106 (27.6%) participants were 1st children; 97 (25.26%) participants were 2nd children; 56 (14.58%) participants were 3rd children; 45 (11.72%) participants were 4th children; and 23 (5.99%) participants were other children.

H01: There is no significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on gender.

Table 2. Test Table Showing the Career Aspiration of Secondary School Students in Kwara State Based on Gender

VariableNo	Mean	St. Dev	Df	t. Cal	Sig.	P
Male	211	79.55	14.87	382	24.34	0.00
Female	173	40.88				

** (Significant at 0.05 critical region).

Table 2 shows the result obtained from testing hypothesis one. From the table, it is shown that t. calculated is 24.34, the degree of freedom is 382 and the significance level is 0.00. Since the significance level is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on gender. Male secondary school students in Kwara State have significantly higher career aspirations than their female colleagues

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the career aspiration of secondary school students in Kwara State based on age

Table 3. ANOVA Table Showing the Difference in the Career Aspiration of Secondary School Students in Kwara State Based on Age

	The sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	1011802.96	2	50901.48	506.42	0.00
Within Groups	38295.23	381	100.31		
Total	140098.19	383			

** (Significant at 0.05 critical region)

Table 3 shows the results obtained from testing hypothesis three. From the table, F. calculated is 506.42, the degree of freedom is 2/381 and the significance is 0.00. Since the significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on age. The ages of the secondary school students in Kwara State exerted a significant influence on their career aspirations

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on religion.

Table 4. ANOVA Table Showing the Difference in the Career Aspiration of Secondary School Students in Kwara State Based on Religion

	The sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	1144.31	2	572.16	0.81	0.45
Within Groups	268840.79	381	705.62		
Total	269985.10	383			

NS (Significant at 0.05 critical region)

Table 4 shows the results obtained from testing hypothesis three. From the table, F. calculated is 0.81, the degree of freedom is 2/381 and the significance is 0.45. Since the significance level is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on religion. Being Muslim, Christian or traditional worshippers did not significantly influence their career aspirations.

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on ordinal order.

Table 5. ANOVA Table Showing the Difference in the Career Aspiration of Secondary School Students in Kwara State Based on Ordinal Order

	The sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	127878.97	5	25575.79	62.24	0.00
Within Groups	15533.47	378	410.94		
Total	283215.44	383			

** (Significant at 0.05 critical region)

Table 5 shows the results obtained from testing hypothesis four. From the table, F. calculated is 62.24, the degree of freedom is 5/378 and the significance is 0.00. Since the significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on ordinal order. This means that the position of secondary school students in Kwara State on birth order that being the first, second, third or subsequent born exerted significant differences in their career aspirations.

Hypothesis Five

There is no significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on the socio-economic status of their parents.

Table 6. ANOVA Table Showing the Difference in the Career Aspiration of Secondary School Students in Kwara State Based on Socio-economic Status of Parents

	The sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	101802.96	2	50901.48	506.43	0.00
Within Groups	38295.23	381	100.51		
Total	140098.19	383			

** (Significant at 0.05 critical region)

Table 6 shows the results obtained from testing hypothesis five. From the table, F. calculated is 506.43, the degree of freedom is 2/381 and the significance is 0.00. Since the significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on the socio-economic status of their parents. This means that secondary school students in Kwara State who are from high, moderate and low socioeconomic backgrounds have significantly different career aspiration

Discussion

The study revealed that the career aspirations of secondary school students are influenced by gender. This means that the career aspirations of male secondary school students are significantly different from their female colleagues. This finding implies that the gender of the secondary school students in Kwara State exerted significant differences in their career aspirations. This finding supports the previous findings of ÓBrien (2012) who reportedly found significant gender differences in the career aspirations of his respondents. The reason for this may not be unconnected with the traditional African thinking that men are a major provider of family means of sustenance and that the contribution of women is secondary. Based on this, it is expected that the career aspirations of the primary providers should be greater than those of secondary providers.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also revealed that there was a significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on

age. This shows that the career aspirations of different age categories were significantly different. This result shows that as the students advance in age, they also experience high career aspirations. This implies that the ages of the secondary school students in Kwara State significantly influenced their career aspirations. This finding contradicts the previous finding of ÓBrien (2012) which indicated that the ages of his participants did not influence their career aspirations. The reason for this may be the fact that children attain adolescence at an earlier age in the Western world than in African countries including Nigeria. The differences in the ages of attaining adolescence may explain the difference in the findings concerning age's influence on the career aspirations of adolescents.

In addition, the findings of this study show that the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State were not influenced by their religion. The career aspirations of the students from the three religious affiliations were not significantly different. The implication of this is that the religions of the secondary school students in Kwara State did not exert significant influence on their career aspirations. This finding is in contrast with Omotosho and Nyarko-Sampson (2012) which found that there were differences in senior secondary school students' aspirations for entrepreneurial careers based on religion. Also, it was found that there was a significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on ordinal order. The position of the child in a family significantly determines their career aspirations. Anderer (2020) stated that later-born children are more likely to invest themselves in a more creatively oriented field s in which they can utilize their imaginations. In this regard, the only child is likely to aspire to a career in engineering, medicine or ICT. The first child usually aspired to be an engineer or medical practitioner. According to Fickman (2020), firstborn adolescents are conscientious, logical, scholarly and status-conscious; thus, they often choose occupations that require precision, like careers in science, medicine and engineering. The second child usually aspires to Law while the third and fourth children were found to aspire to Accounting. Boler (2020) noted that middle children are predominantly focused on justice and interpersonal connections. They find their passions in service majors and those in which relationships with clients and co-workers are stressed. The middle children might have the ability to please and successfully interact with a variety of people because they often assume the role of peace-maker or coordinator in the families.

Finally, the findings of this study indicate that there was a significant difference in the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State based on the socioeconomic status of their parents. Students from high, moderate and low socio-economic backgrounds reported to be significantly different on their career aspirations. This finding implies that the socio-economic status of the parents of the secondary school students in Kwara State exerted a significant influence on their career aspirations. This shows that family plays a significant role in the child's occupational aspiration in terms of social/financial position, mentality, culture and parental educational status. According to Kbia-Acquah et al. (2020), teenagers are influenced in their choice of profession by their parents, especially by their father's profession. On Mothers' role in the family, Zeb et al. (2020) carried out a study amongst 17-18-year-old students, where they found that girls who had professionally successful mothers

aimed at high-prestige professions which corresponded to their abilities, anticipating their future success. Jogdard and Naik (2014) also noted that children whose mothers do not work show a higher probability of succeeding in entering university than those whose mothers work. All these demonstrate the justifications of secondary school students in Kwara State having significantly different career aspirations based on the family's socio-economic background.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State are influenced by their gender, age, ordinal order and socio-economic status of their parents but not influenced by their religion. It was observed that the career aspirations of male secondary school students are significantly different from their female colleagues. It was found that the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State are different based on age. Part of the conclusion is that the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara state are not different based on religious affiliations. Irrespective of the religious affiliation of the students, career aspirations are not significantly different. The study also concluded that the ordinal order of the secondary school students in Kwara state exerts significant differences in their career aspirations. It was also concluded that the career aspirations of secondary school students in Kwara State were significantly different based on the socio-economic status of their parents. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should relate well with their children to enable them to identify their potential and help them to maximize such potential to the fullest. Mothers, especially, as caregivers in the family should be concerned about the school performance of their children and be involved in their children's basic and educational needs regardless of their tight schedules.
2. Parents should have a positive perception towards their child's ordinal position as no one position is better than the other. They should endeavour to properly monitor and channel the potential of every child towards the appropriate career of their choice.
3. School counsellors should collaborate with other school stakeholders to gather necessary information on student's family background and their birth positions about their vocational and educational interests to identify their areas of strength and weakness.

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