
Parental Expectations and Attitude to Academic Subjects as Correlates of Career Aspirations among Secondary School Students in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study investigated the relationship between parental expectation, attitude to academic subjects and career aspiration among senior secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis. A descriptive research design was adopted in this study. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select 10 out of the 21 Senior Secondary Schools in Sokoto Metropolis. 346 students were selected using Research Advisor table of determining sample size in a given population. Three instruments were used for data collection in this study namely: Adopted Version of Boyi Parental Influence Questionnaire to measure parental expectations on career aspirations of students, Adopted Version of Boyi Subject Selection Questionnaire to measure students' Attitude to Academic Subjects and Adapted version of Bakare Motivation for Occupation Preference Scale (MOPS) to measure students' career aspirations. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. The result showed that there was significant relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations of respondents. Also there was significant relationship between attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations of respondents. However, it was found that attitude to academic subjects is more related to career aspirations of senior secondary school students than their parental expectation. Based on these findings, it was recommended that counsellors and teachers should assist the students in developing positive attitude to academic subjects in order to improve their awareness of career aspirations and to minimize the level of ignorance while choosing career.

Keywords: Parental Expectations, Attitude to Academic Subjects and Career Aspirations.

Introduction:

Secondary school students come out of school with high hopes of pursuing careers they aspire for, but no sooner do they leave school than they realize that such careers are non-existent or non-available.

Technological advancements and general changes in the global market are changing perspectives of boundaries of work and therefore affecting career decisions (Barker & Kellen, 1998). Roberts (2006) asserted that rapid changes in the labour market have caused increased uncertainty and instability in people's careers. Therefore, the career decisions which youths currently have to make are different from those that young people in the 1960's and 1970's had to make (White, 2007). The increases and access to higher education have also expanded ambitions that people have, and this in turn has led to changes in the employment patterns of people as well as their expectations and their capabilities (Wood, 2000). As a result of the ever evolving nature of the world of work, individuals constantly face challenges that impact their career. Career choice requires the construction of a new identity that is dependent on a person's social interactions and the environment where such interactions take place (Kaufman & Feldman, 2004).

Research shows that occupational aspirations of students are poorly matched with labour market trends, and this contributes to unemployment problems which in turn pose a huge problem for career development (Stead & Watson, 2006). One of the major reasons that have been attributed to poor career seeking behaviour is lack of access to relevant information on careers and the labour market (Watson, Stead & De Jager, 1995). Although many people view career choice as a natural aspect of the life, for an adolescent it is a major decision in establishing career path that may open up or close opportunities. An important turning point involves making career choice while in secondary school (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Capara & Pastorelli, 2001). Career decision making in secondary schools provide the students (who are mostly adolescents) with the competencies they need to advance in their careers because when professional school counsellors provide career and educational guidance to their students, they influence the future by helping clarify developmental decisions that often last a lifetime (Erford, 2003). At the senior secondary school (between ages 15 and 19) the student is within the

mid- to late-adolescent stage of life. At the cross road of life typified by the stage in which the student finds him/herself – a period of turmoil resulting in a transition from childhood to adolescence – the key characteristics of this stage of development according to Erikson (1963) the search for identity. This stage is a critical period of development in the life of the adolescent. The major danger of this period is role confusion; thus, this stage is often designated “identity versus confusion” (Zunker, 2006).

Parental expectations are judgments that parents have about their children's future career aspirations as reflected in course grades, highest level of schooling attained, or college attendance (e.g., Glick and White 2004; Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese & Garnier, 2001). Parental expectations are based on an assessment of the child's academic capabilities as well as the available resources for supporting a given level of achievement. Most researchers operationalize parental expectations by asking student perceptions of parental expectations as a proxy for parental expectations themselves (e.g., Gill and Reynolds 1999). Parental expectation, also defined by Darling and Steinberg in Musa (2013), are the specific behaviours and attitudes demonstrated by parents in socializing their children, such as doing assignments with their children, providing their children with time to read, assisting their children when they encounter problems, and attending their children's school activities to enable them to succeed in schools.

To further understand parental expectation, an important distinction must be made. Parental expectation differs from parental aspiration. The latter is regularly defined as the desire a parent holds about his or her child's future career aspirations, as opposed to a belief in the child's likely future career aspirations. Sometimes the answers to the questions are the same, but often they are not. The link between parental expectations and student career aspirations has been examined by researchers in different ways, from basic small sample correlation studies (Sanders, Field, & Diego in Yamamoto & Holloway 2010) to sophisticated cross-cultural examinations of student career aspirations. In all, the findings appear quite

consistent. For example, using multiple regression analysis, Jacobs and Harvey cited in Yamamoto & Holloway (2010) studied a sample of Australian students and found parental expectation was the strongest predictor of student career aspirations.

Attitude to academic subjects is one of the social factors that can predict students' career aspirations. Wrihstman in Chilota (2008) defined attitude as a positive or negative affective reactions towards a denotable abstract or concrete thing or proposal. Attitude describes a person's feelings, thinking or manner of responding towards particular activity, object, person or idea. Shau and Wright in Chilota (2008) argue that, attitude entails any existing predisposition to respond to social objectives which interact with other variables, guides and direct overt behaviour of the individual. The concept attitude to academic subjects, thus embrace the conditions under which some disposition are initially formed and consequently modified in a course of a person interaction with his physical and social matters of opinion and in deep seated sentiments that are properly regarded as constructive personality, changes that occur in the natural course of maturation and experiences as well as those that result to exposure to deliberate persuasion or propaganda (Tambawal 2012). Banu cited in Tambawal (2012) defined attitude to academic subjects as the tendency or disposition that student has to respond positively or negatively to teaching and learning or subject related activities. Psychologist Cromback in Oyelowo (2002) stated that so many factors influence students' attitude to academic subjects, the social environment of student plays an important role on shaping the students' attitude to academic subjects and academic success of the students. This is because attitude is always affected by the surroundings in which an individual lives and other people with whom he comes into regular contact with. Oyelowo (2002) had established that out of the agencies and influences that contribute to academic success or failure in the early years, attitude is the most potent source of influence. Morrisson and McIntyre cited in Rasaan (2011) also concluded that the interest that

students take in school activities is closely related to their success or failure in life.

Statement of the Problem:

It has been observed that most of the secondary school students lack adequate choice of career information. In some cases, they concern themselves with reading courses in schools without due regard to the marketability and employability of the graduates in the labour market such as medicine, engineering, law. This is because, as adolescents, they are anxious to realize their dreams in life. Moreover, the most crucial stage is the exploration stage, which coincides with the period of adolescence. Youths at this period normally face the discrepancy between their early ambitions and actual accomplishment of choice of career.

There is no adequate readiness into the world of work by the secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis as a result of the fact that students are not adequately oriented and prepared right from schools. They do not understand their own abilities, interests, aptitudes and values. These circumstances lead to frustration, such victims drop out of school and end up roaming the streets or constitute public nuisance.

It is in view of this that this study was designed to investigate the extent of relationship between parental expectations and attitude to academic subjects on career aspirations among secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.

Research Questions:

To guide the study, the following research questions are hereby raised:

1. Is there any relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations?
2. Is there any relationship between attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations?
3. Which of the independent variables; parental expectation and attitude to academic subjects is more related to career aspiration of senior secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis?

Research Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses are formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations.
2. There is no significant relationship between attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations.
3. Which of the independent variables; parental expectation and attitude to academic subjects is more related to career aspiration of senior secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis.

Purpose of the Study:

The main purpose of this study was to find out the extent of relationship among parental expectation, attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations of senior secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto, Nigeria.

Methodology:

Research Design:

This is a correlational study which is a type of descriptive research that is concern with determining or measuring the degree of relationship between two or more variables for the purpose of making predictions about relationships. A correlational study can be used to know if relationship exists between variables but does not indicate causation (Salawu in Boyi, 2011). Correlation survey studies include all research work in which an attempt is made to discover or clarify relationship between variables through the use of statistical procedure. This survey enables a researcher to ascertain the extent to which variations in one variable are associated with variables in another.

Sample and Sampling Techniques:

The population of this study is made up of all students in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis. Purposive sampling was used in choosing 10 schools, this method was used because all the schools were located within Sokoto metropolis. Using Research Advisor (2006) table for determining sample size in a given population, 346 students' participants were selected. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the population sample for each school according to the strength of the population of each school. In selecting students to represent the sample in each school, the researchers

used simple random sampling by writing 'YES' and 'NO' on folded piece of papers. All those students that picked 'YES' were selected to represent students sample of the population while those that picked 'NO' were not selected, this indicate that all students were given equal chance of being selected.

Instrumentations:

Boyi's (2011) Parental Influence Questionnaire (PIQ):

The Parental Influence Questionnaire was originally developed by Boyi (2011) which was designed to find out the degree at which parental influence affect the occupational preference of students. The instrument has 20 structured items that is, 1-20 statements in the scale. The responses are on a four likert- scale is which ranges from "Strongly agreed" to "Disagreed" from (4 to 1) point respectively.

Validity of the Parental Influence Questionnaire (PIQ):

In validating the instrument, Boyi (2011) gave the questionnaire containing 20 items to the dissertation supervisors who are experts in the field of educational guidance and counselling and other experts in the field of educational measurement evaluation in the department of Education, Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. The judgment from the experts indicated the level to which the items could actually measure what they are designed to measure and thus the instrument was which adjudged to posses content validity. Thus, the current researcher adopted the instrument for use.

Reliability of the Parental Influence Questionnaire (PIQ):

The reliability of the questionnaire was obtained by Boyi (2011) by giving it to 30 students in selected secondary school using measure of stability. After 4 weeks interval between first and second administration, the scores were correlated using Pearson 'r' correlation co-efficient. The reliability index obtained was 0.86 which was considered high enough to have reliability and the current researcher accepted it for use in this study.

Scoring of the Instrument Parental Influence Questionnaire (PIQ):

The scoring of the instrument was done on a (5) five point Likert scale.

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|---------------------------|---|----------|
| SA | - | Strongly Agreed | - | 4 |
| A | - | Agreed | - | 3 |
| SD | - | Strongly disagreed | - | 2 |
| D | - | Disagreed | - | 1 |

The rating ranges from “Strongly agreed” to “Disagreed” from (4 to 1) point respectively. At the end, the total score of each respondent is calculated to determine the statistical standard of each student in the study as per the questionnaire.

Boyi’s (2011) Subject Selection Questionnaire (SSQ):

The Subject Selection Questionnaire was originally developed by Boyi (2011) which was designed to find out the degree at which students subject selection influence their occupational preference. The instrument has 20 structured items that is, 1-20 statements in the scale. The responses are on a four likert- scale is which ranges from “Strongly agreed” to “Disagreed” from (4 to 1) point respectively.

Validity of the Subject Selection Questionnaire (SSQ):

In order to validate Subject Selection Questionnaire, Boyi (2011) exposed the instrument to some expert in Department of Educational Foundations in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The independent judgments of the experts were obtained which indicated that the instrument can measure what it is purported to measure. The instrument was therefore adjudged to be valid. Since it has been found to be valid, this researcher will adopt it for use.

Reliability of the Subject Selection Questionnaire (SSQ):

The reliability of the questionnaire was obtained by Boyi (2011) by giving it to 30 students in selected secondary school using measure of stability. After 4 weeks interval between first and second administration, the scores were correlated using

Pearson ‘r’ correlation co-efficient. The reliability index obtained was 0.72 which was considered high enough to have reliability and the current researcher accepted it for use in this study.

Scoring of the Subject Selection Questionnaire (SSQ):

The scoring of the instruments was done in a 4 point Likert scale. That is Strongly Agreed response carries 4 marks, Agreed response carry 3 marks, strongly disagreed response carry 2 marks and Disagreed response carry 1 mark respectively. The total score obtained by a student represents his/her attitude.

Adapted Version of Bakare’s (1977) Motivation for Occupational Preference Scale (MOPS):

The instrument that was used in data collection is an adapted form of motivation for occupational preference scale (MOPS) developed by Christopher G. M. Bakare. Motivation for Occupational Preference Scale (MOPS) has three sections A, B and C. Section A consists of personal information such as sex, age etc section B consists of parent occupational choice for their children with five questions and section C consists reason for occupational preference with five sub-section A – E with twenty one (20) questions.

3.5.3.1 Validity of Occupational Preference Scale:

The validity of the instrument was established by using the content validity method, hence, the items in the questionnaire aimed at meeting the content specification set for it. That is the item represents the content of the test to which it is designed to measure in validating the instrument. In view of the above the researcher took the items to the lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundation, Faculty of Education and Extension Services of the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto and Shehu Shagari College of Education School of Education for validation. In the four point Likert scale table of motivation for occupational preference scale table, the correction that was made on the table was a change from the word important to influence while a space was made to be created in the choice of subjects. Also a list of occupations was to be

mentioned. Finally section E was created for the parental preference on the vocational aspiration questionnaire. After the scrutiny and correction of items in the instrument the researchers effect all the corrections. Hence, the obtained independent judgment from the experts were meant to indicate the degree to which the item can actually measure what they are designed to measure. Thus, this researcher will adopt it for use.

Reliability of Occupational Preference Scale:

The reliability of motivation for occupational preference scale was obtained using test re-test method, by administration of the instrument to the respondents and re administration after an interval of four (4) weeks and use Pearson product moment correlation. Coefficient statistics to analyze the score and reliability coefficient index of 0.75 was obtained and is therefore adjudge to be reliable the study and the current researcher adopted it for use in this study.

Scoring of Occupational Preference Scale:

There are (20) twenty items for the motivation for occupational preference scale and the score using four (4) point Likert scale for all positive items indicated in the answer. The symbol Extremely Influenced (E.I) is 4, Fairly Influenced (F.I) is 3, Little Influence (L.I) is 2 and Not Influenced (N.I) is 1.

Data Analysis:

The data collected were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient statistics and Multiple Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypotheses Testing:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations of senior secondary school students.

Table 1: Relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations (N= 346)

| Variables | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | r-Cal | P-value | Decision |
|-----------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-------|---------|-------------|
| Parental Expectations | 346 | 51.62 | 18.991 | .246 | .042 | Significant |
| Career Aspirations | 346 | 17.14 | 12.711 | | | |

From the above table 1, it can be seen that the relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations has a calculated r-value of .246. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is significant relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis because the p-value is less than .05 level of

significance. Therefore, hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations of senior secondary school students.

Table 2: Relationship between attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations (N= 346)

| Variables | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | r-Cal | P-value | Decision |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-------|---------|-------------|
| Attitude to Academic Subjects | 346 | 56.37 | 13.201 | .231 | .000 | Significant |
| Career Aspirations | 346 | 16.94 | 6.983 | | | |

From the result of table 2 above it can be seen that relationship between attitude to academic subjects

and career aspirations has a higher calculated r-value of .231. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This

indicates that there is significant relationship between attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis because the p-value is less than the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations of

senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis is rejected. **H₀₃:** Which of the independent variables; parental expectation and attitude to academic subjects is more related to career aspirations of senior secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis.

Table 3: Regression analysis on parental expectation, attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations

| Variables | R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | SE | F | B | T | P-value |
|-------------------------------|------|----------------|-------------------------|-------|------|------|------|---------|
| Parental Expectation | .021 | .000 | -.002 | 10.83 | .155 | .021 | .393 | .694 |
| Attitude to Academic Subjects | .034 | .001 | -.005 | 10.84 | .198 | .027 | .492 | .623 |

Dependent Variable: Career Aspirations

A look at the squared part correlations reveals that parental expectation accounted for 0.0% of the variance in career aspirations $R^2_{adj} = -.002$, $F(1, 344) = .155$, $p > .05$. And attitude to academic subjects accounted for 0.1% of the variance in career aspirations $R^2_{adj} = -.005$, $F(2, 343) = .198$, $p > .05$. Thus, the significant results of the procedure indicated that attitude to academic subjects was able to account for significant amount of variance in the dependent variable (career aspirations). Although parental expectation was a related variable to career aspirations, analysis of regression coefficients indicates that attitude to academic subjects, $\beta = .027$, $t = .492$, $p > .05$ emerged as the more predictor of the senior secondary school students' career aspirations than their parental expectation. Thus, this adequately analyzed hypothesis three and it is concluded that attitude to academic subjects is more related to career aspirations of senior secondary school students than their parental expectation.

Discussion:

As revealed in the results, there was a significant positive relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis. By the positive nature of relationship, there is direct or linear association between the career aspirations and parental expectations. The plausible reason for this might be

that children may choose what their parents desire, simply to please them, and as the parent expectations increases, there will be a corresponding increase in students' aspirations for careers. The finding is in line with the study of Osa – Edoh and Alutu (2011) who found that parental influence greatly contributes to the occupational preference of secondary school students. Also Taylor, Harris and Taylor (2004) found that parental support and encouragement are important factors that have been found to influence career aspirations. According to Adeleke (2005) regardless of whether children are exposed to other factor or not, disclosed that parental influence appears to take upper hand and to be a determining factor in pushing their children to certain careers because of the prestige people attached to them without due consideration for the interest and capabilities of their children.

The result also showed that there was a significant positive relationship between attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis, even though the relationship was low. The finding affirms the study by Stake in Buah (2016) who interviewed 54 male and 54 female students of two Midwestern Universities and one Nursing school the United State of America. The subjects were first of all matched in their occupational goals and through interview; the

bases for their subject selection were explored. Results of Stake's study showed that females expressed expectation for greater intrinsic work enjoyment and fewer for financial responsibilities. Males clearly expected greater financial responsibility than did females. Stake explained the results of the study in terms of the subjects' anticipation of a breadwinner. Since most of the males in the study had earlier expressed their anticipation of a breadwinner role, the males' greater need for financial reward was probably influenced by an awareness of their future role. In their process of occupational selection, the males therefore might have been less focused on possibilities of intrinsic work enjoyment than were the females. According to Onwuka in Christopher (2011) the skill that teachers exhibit in teaching influences the students' enrolment in subject area selection. Christopher (2011) postulated that the method of approach is very vital in teaching/learning situation. The way the teacher presents the subject matter on the learner may stimulate a student to like or dislike a subject area. Nwogugwu in Yaro (2013) pointed out the need for blending theoretical and practical work in teaching of subjects so as to stimulate student's interest more especially on vocational and technical subjects.

Hypothesis three indicates that attitude to academic subjects is a better predictor of the senior secondary school students' career aspirations than their parental expectation in Sokoto metropolis. Thus, this adequately analyzed hypothesis three and it is concluded that attitude to academic subjects is more related to career aspirations of senior secondary school students than their parental expectation. There are a lot of empirical findings regarding determinants of subject area selection, interest and personality now plays a vital role in determining subject area selection. Even students sometimes rely on parental support/approval, but nowadays, student mostly make choices based on their interest, more especially now that subjects are mostly chosen for their prestige giving. Abida in Yaro, (2013), have found out that ability, interest, intelligence and personality are the determinants of subject choice.

Conclusion:

From the analysis of data and interpretation of results, the following conclusions were drawn;

1. There was a significant relationship between parental expectations and career aspirations.
2. There was a significant relationship between attitude to academic subjects and career aspirations.
3. Attitude to academic subjects is more related to career aspirations of senior secondary school students than their parental expectation.

Recommendations:

In view of the above findings, it is recommended that:-

1. Parents should be incorporated into career intervention programmes and plans. That is, parental expectations must be considered in career counselling.
2. Counsellors and teachers should assist the students in developing positive attitude to academic subjects in order to improve their awareness of career aspirations and to minimize the level of ignorance while choosing career.
3. Students should be encouraged to seek information on academic subjects whilst sufficient information on career is made available to students.

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