

Determining Indices of Vocational Aspiration Pattern of Students in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State

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Abstract

The focus of the study was to identify the vocational aspiration of the students and also investigate the factors that make students to aspire to certain vocation at the expense of some others. A survey research design was adopted for the study, a total of 300 secondary school students were randomly sampled and stratified along local government, gender and school location-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The reliability and validity coefficient was 0.75 and 0.70 respectively. Four research questions and two research hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance, guided the study. Frequencies, percentage and mean were employed to answer the research questions. The t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. It was found that a high number of the subject (242) which represents 80.66% of the sample aspired to such vocation like Medicine, Law, Accounting and Engineering. The dominant motivating factors were vocational benefits, parental influence, and peer group. Sex was not an influencing factor on the subjects' vocational aspiration. It was recommended among others that school administrator should organize workshop and seminar on a regular basis for parent and students on the benefit to be derived from all subjects, especially vocational education subjects experiencing low enrolment. Government should also improve the working conditions and increase salaries of other vocations in order to raise their status and encourage recruits.

Keywords: *Vocational Aspiration Pattern,*

Introduction

Aspiration is a determination and effort by an individual to attain a desired goal regardless of any limitation imposed by reality. Aspiration is a central phenomenon in the life of a human being. Both the young and old aspire to improve themselves in many areas as progress or success in one area or moment signals another level of aspiration. In other words, aspiration runs through the entire life of many human beings because different and diverse necessities of life are insatiable. Olayinka (1983) in Owolabi (1988) regards aspiration as what one aims to achieve or accomplish.

Although, aspiration runs through all ages, it is more important, expressive and dramatic in adolescence (Hurlock, 1973). Adolescence really is a period of many different kinds of aspiration which ranges from educational aspiration, peer group acceptability aspiration to vocational aspiration. Vocation, according to Joshua (1994) is a job or occupation in which one is engaged or for which one is being or hoping to be trained to provide means of living. Vocational aspiration is thus used to mean what the individual considers to be the ideal vocation or career for him regardless of any impeding factor(s) imposed by reality. Whatever is the vocational aspiration of the adolescent, their dreams can only be realized through education either by attending primary or secondary schools. Again, while primary education may provide introduction to career in the society, Nwokomah (1997) asserts that it is during the secondary school period that much of vocational exploration takes place *visa-a-vix*, Vocational aspiration. Besides, the National Policy on education specifies that one of the two broad aims of secondary education in Nigeria is preparation for useful living within the society which implies among other things training for a career (Federal Ministry of Information 2004). Thus, the secondary school period is a time when students who are mainly adolescents have the opportunities to learn and explore various subjects offered at the secondary school level. With the provision of ideal learning environment through the high investment of money, manpower and material resources into the public schools by the Ekiti State Government, there is the assumption that the vocational aspiration of the students are irrelevant to the need of the society. There is need to study the vocational aspiration pattern of the students to verify the assumption.

Confronted by the many problems that arise in normal adolescents' lives, students may make decisions that vary from the rational and enlightened to the bizarre and unrealistic. According to Durojaye (1976), Gesinde (1980) Nigeria adolescents are known to be mostly interested in fanciful and prestigious occupations. Thus, in the process of making a vocational choice some vocations are preferred to some others. Undoubtedly, there are certain attributes, theories and factors, which act as an affirmative for aspiring to some vocations. Some of these formulated theories include the need theory, socio-cultural theory and economic theory. These theories have identified several factors that are also generally accepted as being influential in vocational development of the individuals. Among these factors are environmental, parent, peer group and economic benefit

and esteem of a vocation (Olayinka, 1981; Walls, 1988; Adu, 1988; Owumanam, 1990 and Tobby, 1997). On this same vein Salami (1999) revealed that many youths go into unsuitable careers in Nigeria due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of the prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling regardless of sex or gender. Sex is biologically determined. It describes whether a person is male or female. Usman (1999) described gender as a social construction, which direct our behavior and position in society. This social construction also have direct influences on the vocation aspired to by both male and female adolescents. Some studies have shown significant relationship between sex and preferences on diverse issues including vocational aspiration. Studies conducted by Joshua (1994), Alonge (1985) shows that there is a significant relationship between sex and vocational choice. Their findings revealed that boys prefer career like Engineering, Medicine and Agriculture. On the contrary, to the above findings, Diraso (1998) asserts that the influence of sex is insignificant in vocational aspiration of students. This was his findings when he investigated the vocational aspirations of remedial science students of Federal University of Technology, Yola. Those factors, attributes or forces that motivate the students to aspire into their preferred vocation are thus worth investigation. The result of such investigation will be a useful tool for vocational counsellor in order to identify the patterns of aspirations of secondary school students and the reason for such aspiration so as to see if the aspired vocation has the potential for satisfying the hopes incumbent upon the aspiration. It is on the basis of this background that this research has been motivated to determine the vocational aspiration of secondary school students in Ekiti State and also to ascertain those factors that motivate the students to aspire to such preferred vocation.

Statement of the Problem

Different people have different reasons for aspiring to their preferred vocation. Despite the huge investment of human and material resources on vocational education subjects like Automechanic, Agricultural Science, Woodwork etc. these subjects still witness low enrolment in the state public secondary schools (Olojuolawe, 2002). Such subjects like Accounting, Christian religious Knowledge, Government etc. are at the same time witnessing over population in the same schools despite the in availability of adequate personnel in these subject areas, Ekiti (TESCOM, 2003). The factors that are thus responsible for students aspiring to certain vocations at the expense of some other vocation were the main focus of the study.

Research Question

1. What are the vocational aspirations of students in secondary schools in Ekiti State?

2. What is the degree of the influence of external influence (influence by parent, teachers, friends, and mass media) on the vocational aspiration of secondary school students?
3. To what extent does vocational benefit (provision of good salary, attractive working conditions stable and secure future, good social status) influence vocational aspiration of secondary school students?
4. Is there any significant difference between the response of respondents on external influence and benefit of a vocation based on gender?

Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO₁ : There is no significant difference between the mean rating of external influence and vocational benefit on vocational aspiration of secondary school students.

HO₂ : There is no significant difference between the factors that influence the vocational aspiration of male and female secondary school students in Ekiti State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This was on the basis that no treatment was given subjects and on manipulation was carried out on the data collected. The data used were not newly created nor manipulated but described. The approach thus allowed for the study of phenomenon after events have taken place.

The population for this study consisted of all senior secondary school students in all the 175 public secondary schools spread across the 16 Local Government Areas in the State.

The sample for this study consisted of 300 male and female students randomly selected from 10 secondary schools in five Local Government Areas of Ekiti State. A systematic random sampling technique was used to draw out five Local Government Areas out of the 16 local governments in the state. Two secondary schools were sampled in each of the five local governments chosen as samples. Thirty students were thus sampled from each of the 10 secondary schools that were chosen for the study based on stratified random sampling technique.

Research Instrument

The instrument that was used to elicit data for this study was titled Vocational Aspiration Rating Scale (VARs). It is a self-rating scale which consisted of three major sections. The first section required the subject to complete some personal information. The self-rating scale consisted of three major sections. The first section required the subject to complete some personal information. The second

section required the respondents to identify their two most preserved vocations. The third section, which was the main section of the scale, was designed to identify the reasons why people aspire to certain vocation and the hierarchy among these reasons. Eight reasons why people aspire to different vocations were provided. The subjects were required to rate each of the items on a five point scale according to how important it has been in determining their vocational aspiration. The eight reasons were classified into (i) external influence, dealing with sources of influence which are external to the individuals. Individual who fall into this group have been influenced in their vocational aspiration by other people or by sources external to them, i.e. influence by parents, teachers and friends and (ii) vocational benefits, consisting of reasons which deal with the outward advantage or material benefits which can be derived from the aspired vocation, i.e. provision of good salary, attractive working conditions, stable and secure future and good social status

The instrument which was originally designed by Bakare (1969) was adapted for the study after consultation with specialists in test construction. The modified instrument was validated on 28 Nigeria students in some secondary schools. The original instrument by Bakare was first administered on the students while the adapted instrument was later administered on the same students on separate occasion. The data obtained from the administration of the two instruments were analysed by the use of the Pearson-product moment correlation. A concurrent validity of 0.70 was obtained. Thus, the instrument was adjudged appropriate for the study. The reliability coefficient computed for the VARS instrument with the use of the Cronbach Alpha yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.75

Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Any item with a mean of 3.00 and above was interpreted as positive (important factor), while items with mean below 3.00 was regarded as negative (not important). The postulated hypotheses for the study were subjected to t-test statistics at 0.05, level of significance

Results and Discussion

Research Question one

What are the vocational aspirations of students in secondary schools in Ekiti State?

Table 1 : summary of vocation aspired to by sampled students

S/N	Vocation	No. Aspiring to the Vocation	%
1	Teaching	03	1
2	Accounting	71	23.7
3	Nursing	18	6
4	Medicine	54	18
5	Pharmacy	15	5
6	Lecturing	04	1.3
7	Agricultural/Farming	-	-
8	Banking	09	3
9	Force	05	1.7
10	Engineering	48	16
11	Police	02	0.66
12	Secretary	-	-
13	Civil Servant	-	-
14	Typing/Computer Operator	02	0.65
S/N	Vocation	No. Aspiring to the Vocation	%
15	Clerk	-	-
16	Printing	-	-
17	Journalism	-	-
18	Land Surveying	-	-
19	Law	69	23
20	Furniture Making	-	-
21	Automechanic	-	-
22	Metal Work	-	-
23	Electrical Installation work	-	-
24	Radio/Television	-	-
25	Technician	-	-
26	Catering	-	-
27	Management Messenger	-	-

Table 1 revealed that Medicine, Law, Accounting and Engineering alone, account for about 80.66% of the vocations indicated by the subjects out of the 26 listed vocations. Eight other vocations account for the remaining 19.34% of the aspired vocation. Fourteen of the listed vocations were not picked by the subjects.

Research Question Two

What is the degree of external influence (influence by parent, teachers, friends, and mass media) on the vocational aspiration of secondary school students?

Table 2 – frequency mean and standard deviation responses of students on the influence of Vocational Benefits, of their vocational aspiration

Responses of students as regard Vocational Benefits on their Vocational aspiration	No impt.	Little impt.	Average impt.	Considerable impt.	Extreme impt.	X	SD	Decision
Provides good salary	27	29	35	72	137	3.88	1.29	Positive
Provides attractive working condition.	25	17	29	163	66	3.76	1.13	Positive
Ensures stable and secure future	34	40	35	152	41	3.44	1.20	Positive
Gives an improved social status and Prestige	18	41	30	68	143	3.92	1.30	Positive

Table 2 indicate that all the factors exerts considerable influence on the students vocational aspiration

Research Question Three

To what extent does vocational benefit (provision of good salary, attractive working conditions stable and secure future, good social status) influence vocational aspiration of secondary school students?

Table 3 – frequency mean and standard deviation responses of students on external Influence, of their vocational aspiration

Responses of students as regard External Influence on their vocational aspiration	No impt.	Little impt.	Average impt.	Considerable impt.	Extreme impt.	X	SD	Decision
Direct Influence of Parents	21	33	54	119	75	3.67	1.78	Positive
Direct Influence of Teachers.	39	37	115	68	43	3.15	1.20	Positive
Direct Influence of Friends.	57	51	36	101	55	3.15	1.41	Positive
Direct influence of Radio, T.V. or Books	81	95	47	33	44	2.54	1.36	Negative

Table 3 indicate that all the factors exerts considerable influence on the students vocation aspiration except the influence of radio, T.V. or books

between the factor that influences vocational aspiration of male and female subjects used in the study. The findings corroborated the study of Diraso (1998) that the influence of sex is insignificant in vocational aspiration of remedial science students of FUT Yola, it is also in agreement with the studies of Onwuamanan (1982) who assert that the differences noticed between male and females in their job preferences might be due to the differences in their social roles and role expectations.

In contrast to the findings of this study that sex is insignificant in vocational aspiration of the students, is the studies of Idacwo and Ofovwé (2000), Abe (1998), Joshua (1994) whose various studies showed significant relationship between sex and vocational choice of students. The mean scores for male respondents in the study was 14.2957 while that of female was 14.3586 it was discovered that both sexes were influenced by the same factors at almost the same level. Vocations such as medicine, pharmacy, accounting, law and even engineering were identified proportionately by both sexes as vocations they will like to aspire to. The above findings may indeed be as a result of the rapid technological advancement whereby vocation such as engineering or even soldiering no more requires extra high human strength. Computer aided machines and reboot are now employed to perform task that are formerly handled manually. The above findings may indeed be as a result of the rapid technological advancement whereby vocation such as engineering or even soldiering no more requires extra high human strength. Computer aided machines and reboot are now employed to perform task that are formerly handled manually. Again, the saying that what a man can do, a woman can do it better seems to be in play in the study, this especially, at a period when the standard of living of Nigerians is experiencing depression. Every Nigeria, male and female inclusive will want to aspire or choose a vocation that will bring more economic benefit rather than stick to vocations that were formerly tagged for male or female. Most parents have also woken up to their responsibility of adequately training and caring for all their wards regardless of sex. This again must have contributed to the confidence of the female students to intend to choose vocation that transcribe beyond the traditional male female barrier. Most female students in the study also want to exercise position of leadership as the male counterpart, this account for the reason why some women nowadays find themselves in politics, struggling with men over leadership positions. This finding points to the gradual changes that are taking place all over the world. The women liberation league has greatly influenced the Nigerian women's attitude toward life in so much that they are found in almost every occupation previously meant for men.

Hypothesis two states that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of external influence and vocational benefit on vocational aspiration of students used in this study. The result showed that there is a significant difference between the external influence and vocational benefit as factors influencing the vocational aspiration of the subjects, despite the fact that the two variables are pointing to the same external orientation factor. For instance, most of the subjects

are youths and social influence bear upon youths by significant others. These students are still under the control of their parents and depend on them for the satisfaction of their needs until they are free totally. The external influence factors plays significant role in the subjects occupational preference. This finding is in agreement with the studies of Werts (1988) and Adu (1988) who differently discovered that parents are important forces in the choice of the career of their children. It is also in agreement with the study of Aghamelu (1980) indicating a relationship between parental occupation and their children's occupational preferences. He discovered that 60% of his subjects are willing to take after their fathers' occupation. This might be because family members expect to benefit from the savings of their wards in future. The influence of radio, television, and books on the students vocational aspiration witness low responses. One probable explanation for this finding may be as a result of the poor reading attitudes, non-interest in listening to radio and watching of educative programmes by teenagers, instead the youths are involved in watching violent and "nollywood" non educative movies. The findings corroborated an earlier study by Issa and Nwalo (2008) when they observed in their study titled factors affecting the career choice of undergraduates in Nigerian library and information science schools, that the mass media in the country do not seems to provide information about careers and career choices. Hence it exerts low influence on the study subjects. It is also in agreement with studies of Aina, Ogungbemi, Adigun and Ogundipe (2011) In their study titled poor reading habit among Nigerians ,the role of libraries, where they opined that poor reading habit that exists among present day Nigerians, especially children and youths, Is a great concern. Furthermore, the findings are also in agreement with that of Solomon and Ogonu (2000), Bolarin (1987) who separately discovered that students, most especially girls are influenced by peers on varying issues which include vocational choice.

Hidiffes (1986) findings also corroborated the above findings when he found that the influence of friends was an important factor in University students' choice of career. Large percentages of his subject confirm that the job they had chosen were the same as those that their friends would choose. The significant difference noticed between the two influencing factors, may be an indication that such factors as good salary, attractive working condition, stable and secure future, improved social status and prestige exert a more considerable influence on the vocational aspiration of the students used in study. In Nigeria today, success is measured in terms of material wealth benefits and privileges that can be derived from a particular occupation. Again, it was also revealed by the study that there is a significant relationship between job security, attractive working condition, good salary and vocational aspiration among the studied subject.

Everybody is aware of the present economic situation in the country and even in the labour market. There is high inflation and unemployment, permanency of job or profession is needed to attract aspirants. Therefore, jobs that are perceived

to guarantee self-reliance and independence are aspired to by the students rather than job that do not. It was revealed that such vocations like Medicine, Law, Accounting and Engineering alone, account for about 80.66% of the vocations indicated by the subjects used for the study, out of the 26 listed vocations in the questionnaire. Eight other vocations account for the remaining 19.34% of the aspired vocation. Fourteen of the listed vocations were not picked by the subjects. The above finding also corroborated the study of Onocha (1985), Ofoegby (1984), where they all observed that the vocational aspirations of students in Nigeria have tendered to be limited to a few well rewarding professions like Law, Medicine, Engineering and Accounting. Diraso (1998) also noted in his study conducted on the remedial students of FUT Yola to determine their vocational aspiration that majority of the students aspired to vocation that are prestigious, this assertion also support the findings of this study. The finding is in contrast to studies by Odebunmi (1983) and Aghamalo (1980) who in their various studies identified other factors other than vocational benefit in vocational choice of students.

Conclusion

The result of this study has some implications for education. It was observed from the findings that influence of vocational benefit attract the highest numbers of the study subjects. Gender is not also indicated as a strong determinant of vocational aspiration. It thus implies that both male and female students should be given equal opportunity to aspire to any vocation of their choice within the context of their ability regardless of the traditional male, female vocational barrier. The inability of some vocation to arouse the interest of the subjects should be a source of worry to managers of education most especially vocational education oriented subject on which government have expended a lot of money.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Workshops and seminars should be organize for parents and students in Ekiti sate secondary schools on a regular basis so as to educate them on the opportunities and prospects in different vocations most especially vocational education.
2. Teachers and parents should be made to meet formally and informally to discuss the welfare of the students. This will allow for a cross-bread of ideas on the need to allow their children to choose occupation of their choice without undue pressure from them.
3. The students should be encouraged and given the opportunity to participate in excursions. This will arouse their interests toward vocations perceived as inferior by them.

4. Government should also improve the working conditions and increase salaries of other vocations in order to raise their status, increase their morale and encourage recruits especially into vocational education oriented careers.

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