

## Relationship Between Parental Socio-Economic Variables And Adolescents Vocational Aspiration

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### Abstract

This study is aimed at determining the influence of parental socio-economic variables on adolescents' vocational aspiration. A stratified random sampling was used to select four schools from Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria and a sample of two hundred students (100 male, 100 female). Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) was used for data collection. Analysis of data was done using simple percentages for the research questions and chi-square for the hypotheses. The findings revealed that Parental socioeconomic status has strong influence on adolescents' vocational aspiration, Adolescents' vocational aspiration is not necessarily influenced by their parental level of education. Adolescents' are well disposed to their parents' vocation. Recommendations given includes admonishing parents not to project their aspirations/ambitions on their children, the role of guidance counsellors in assisting a child realise his/her potential should not be underestimated, children should be allowed free rein in pursuing careers of their choice. It was recommended among others that parents should encourage the development of a secure and enduring attachment relationship with their children.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, parental influence, counsellors, vocational interest.

### Introduction

Adolescents from affluent families tend to chose vocations that they believe are befitting to their family's status even when such a vocation is against their own personal interest or capabilities while those from less privileged homes tend to grapple with vocations that are within the financial capacity of their parents irrespective of their own interest or capability. Family members are among the most important forces in preparing youth/adolescent for their future role in the society. Social workers, sociologists, psychologists and those involved with child development all agree that the family exercises a powerful socializing force on the adolescent and his/her work experience (Hotchkiss and Brown, 1996). Frank (1941) in Woodfolk and McCune (1984) is of the opinion that vocational aspiration can be determined by the socio-economic status of a family, parental expectations, work orientations, family or social support, success or failure of an individual. The influence of friends and peer groups also play a part in the vocational aspiration of an individual (Omrod, 2004).

Vocational aspirations can be defined as what an individual wants or prefers to do in terms of work. According to Osa-Edoh and Alutu (2011), one of the greatest problems of a student is decision making and choice of career. Socioeconomic status tends to classify families in terms of wealth, property whether they are low, middle or high class. These classes can also be influenced by the family's social awareness to educational attainment. Socioeconomic variables are measures of an individual or groups standing in the community/society. It usually relates to the income, occupation, educational attainment and wealth of an individual or group. Families with high socioeconomic status often have more success in preparing their young ones for school because they have access to a wide range of resources to promote and support their children's educational development (Crnic and Lambert, 1994). According to Rojewski and Yang (1997) socioeconomic status was the most significant indicator of how occupational aspirations are chosen while McCandles, Lueptow and McClendon (1989) found that traditional gender/stereotypes were more common in high income families' occupational choice. Both of these indicate that there is a relationship between socioeconomic status and career choice/vocational aspiration.

Berdie (1995) is of the opinion that families with high occupational aspirations have higher occupational aspirations for their children and are more inclined to value their children's occupation. The socioeconomic pressure on the parents of large families is such that their children including the able ones generally have to leave school early in order to bring a wage and seek their higher education through more strenuous correspondence routes (Olayinka, 1983).

Hopes and vocational aspirations of youths are the product of their parents and society (Rubin & Zauallon, 1969), vocational choice broadens with greater social opportunities and personal goal but may be bounded by social realities. In these modern days, manpower skills are more essential to development programmes than the traditional occupation of medicine and law. A parent's level of education can influence an

adolescent's vocational development. Mortimer (1992) found that parents with low socioeconomic status are less likely to have completed high school than those high socioeconomic status. Students who come from families with limited education are less likely to go to college or achieve a professional occupational goal (De Ridder, 1990)

### Statement of Problem

Many adolescents have their choice of vocation influenced by their parents. The result is that many are ill-fitted to such vocations, gradually become dissatisfied on such jobs leading to low morale with attendant productivity. Many parents engage in unwholesome practices to ensure that their children choose courses or vocations that they believe is befits their status in the society, the result is adolescents choosing a vocation/career that they do not have the natural ability or flair for, which will ultimately give them a sense of fulfilment. It is on this premise that the researcher wants to highlight the relationship between the socioeconomic variables of the parents and the adolescents' vocational aspirations

### Hypothesis

The following hypotheses guided the study

1. There is no significant relationship between parental level of education and adolescents' vocational aspiration
2. There is no significant relationship between parental occupation and adolescents' vocational aspiration
3. There is no significant relationship between parental level of income and adolescents' vocational aspiration

### Methodology

The research design used for the study was survey research design. A sample of two hundred students (100 male and 100 female) was drawn using stratified random sampling technique. The criteria for stratification was based on the school type i.e. girls only, boys only, and population. They came from various backgrounds, which reflected the socio-economic status of their parents/guardians. They also came from various ethnic groups. Their age range lay between 11-17years.

The research instrument was the Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) which was adopted for the study. The instrument was administered personally by the researchers to the participants in the sampled schools. The purpose of the investigation was briefly explained to them as contained in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was carefully explained to them for proper understanding of what was required of them, they were then encouraged to give true and unbiased responses to every item. Assurance was given to respondents for the confidentiality of the information.

### Results

**Research question:** To what extent do parental socioeconomic variables affect adolescent vocational aspiration?

Table 1: Parents' socioeconomic status and adolescents' vocational aspiration

socioeconomic status	Number of responses				Total	
	Agree		Disagree		f	%
	f	%	F	%		
High	70	35	20	10	90	45
Low	30	15	80	40	110	55
total	100	50	100	50	200	100

From Table 1, it can be seen that 40% of the participants responded that low socioeconomic status of parents does not affect the vocational aspiration of adolescents while 35% responded that high socioeconomic status of parents does affect the vocational aspiration of adolescents.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between parental level of education and adolescents' vocational aspiration

Table 2: Parental level of education and adolescents' vocational aspiration

Sex	Number of responses		Total
	Agree	Disagree	
Male	70 (65)	30(35)	100
Female	60 (65)	40(35)	100
Total	130	70	200

Significant at 0.05 level of significance,  $df=1$  Critical  $X^2 = 3.84$ , Calculated  $X^2 = 2.2$

Calculated  $X^2$  is less than critical  $X^2$ , thus null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant relationship between parental level of education and adolescents' vocational aspiration.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between parental occupation and adolescents' vocational aspiration

Table 3 Parental occupation and adolescents' vocational aspiration

Sex	Number of responses		Total
	Agree	Disagree	
Male	30 (55)	70(45)	100
Female	80 (55)	20(45)	100
Total	110	90	200

Significant at 0.05 level of significance,  $df=1$  Critical  $X^2 = 3.84$ , Calculated  $X^2 = 50.6$

Calculated  $X^2$  is greater than critical  $X^2$ , thus null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between parental occupation and adolescents' vocational aspiration.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between parental income and adolescents' vocational aspiration

Table 3 Parental income and adolescents' vocational aspiration

Sex	Number of responses		Total
	Agree	Disagree	
Male	55 (55)	45(45)	100
Female	55 (55)	45(45)	100
Total	110	90	200

Significant at 0.05 level of significance,  $df=1$  Critical  $X^2 = 3.84$ , Calculated  $X^2 = 50.6$

Calculated  $X^2$  is greater than critical  $X^2$ , thus null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between parental income and adolescents' vocational aspiration.

## Discussion

The results of analysis (Table 1) show that 40% of the participants responded that low socioeconomic status of parents does not affect the vocational aspiration of adolescents while 35% responded that high socioeconomic status of parents does affect the vocational aspiration of adolescents, thus parents with high socioeconomic background tends to affect/influence the vocational aspirations of their children more than those with low socioeconomic background. This finding is in agreement with O'Brien & Fasinger (1993) that socioeconomic level is often cited as a potentially confounding variable in studies on adolescents' career choice and commitment. Rojewski and Yang (1997) found that socioeconomic status was the most significant of low and high occupational aspiration; they also indicated that correlation might exist between socioeconomic level and career choice/aspiration of the adolescent.

There was no significant relationship between parental level of education and adolescent vocational aspiration, this further means that the adolescent's vocational aspiration is not necessarily influenced by their parental level of education. McCandles, Lueptow and McCiendon (1989) discovered that low parental education was an unexpected influence on adolescent's education; parents with low levels of education were more likely to stress to their children the importance of commitment to education. This can be explained by the fact that parents who are not educated know the importance of education irrespective of the fact that they are not educated and tend to expend effort and energy to ensure the education of their children.

There is significant relationship between parental occupation and adolescents' vocational aspiration. This is supported by Burlin (1976) who stated that both parents' occupational level wielded a strong influence on career choice of adolescents

There is significant relationship between parental level of income and adolescents' vocational aspiration. According to Berida (1995), a child from a wealthy home is more likely to have the financial resources to pursue whatever level of education he/she wants while a child from a less privileged home is less likely to have such resources at his/her disposal and this thus acts as a limiting factor to the level of education he/she can attain.

## Conclusion

The findings reveal that

1. Parental socioeconomic status has strong influence on adolescents' vocational aspiration
2. Adolescents' vocational aspiration is not necessarily influenced by their parental level of education.
3. Adolescents' are well disposed to their parents' vocation.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings and subsequent conclusion, the following recommendations have been given

1. Parents should be discouraged from projecting their ambitions into the life/career of their children; rather the adolescent should be allowed to make career choices within their personal interests, aptitudes and abilities.
2. School counsellors should assist parents in providing the vocational guidance that the adolescents needs.
3. Government should create the opportunity for all vocations so that the adolescent can fit into occupations based on their interests.

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