

The Influence of Peer Pressure on Career Aspirations Among In-School Adolescent in Kwara State

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Abstrak

Pentingnya pengambilan keputusan karir di kalangan siswa sekolah menengah atas tidak bisa terlalu ditekankan. Siswa pada jenjang ini merupakan remaja yang sedang beranjak dari tahap perkembangan menuju masa dewasa. Studi ini menyelidiki pengaruh tekanan teman sebaya terhadap aspirasi karir di kalangan remaja sekolah di Negara Bagian Kwara, Nigeria. Telah diamati bahwa siswa biasanya meniru diri mereka sendiri dalam cara hidup mereka, terutama pada masa transisi dari pendidikan dasar atas ke sekolah menengah atas, yang menentukan pilihan profesi mereka. Pendekatan penelitian kuantitatif digunakan, dan desain penelitian survei diadopsi untuk penelitian ini. Kuesioner yang dirancang sendiri digunakan, dan diperoleh konsistensi internal sebesar 0,87 untuk instrumen tersebut. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis menggunakan Korelasi Product Moment Pearson dan uji t untuk menguji hipotesis yang dirumuskan. Dua hipotesis penelitian diajukan dan diuji pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05. Hipotesis satu ($r\text{-cal} = 0,204$, $P\text{-value} < 0,05$) dan hipotesis dua ($t\text{-value} = 3,159$, $P\text{-value} < 0,05$) ditolak. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara tekanan teman sebaya dan aspirasi karir di kalangan remaja sekolah di Negara Bagian Kwara. Selain itu, gender mempunyai dampak yang signifikan terhadap aspirasi karir di kalangan remaja sekolah di Negara Bagian Kwara. Direkomendasikan agar institusi pendidikan di Negara Bagian Kwara mempertimbangkan penerapan program dukungan sebaya yang bertujuan untuk menumbuhkan pengaruh positif teman sebaya. Program-program ini dapat memberikan wadah bagi siswa untuk mendiskusikan aspirasi karir mereka, berbagi pengalaman, dan menerima bimbingan dari rekan-rekan mereka.

Kata kunci: Aspirasi Karir, Gender, Tekanan Teman Sebaya, Remaja

Abstract

The significance of career decision-making among senior high school students cannot be overemphasized. Students at this level are adolescents who are moving from this stage of development into adulthood. The study investigated the influence of peer pressure on career aspirations among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria. It has been observed that students usually imitate themselves in their way of life, especially during the transition from upper basic education to the senior secondary stage, which determines their choice of profession. A quantitative research approach was used, and a survey research design was adopted for the study. A self-designed questionnaire was used, and an internal consistency of 0.87 for the instrument was obtained. The collected data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and a t-test to test the formulated hypotheses. Two research hypotheses were raised and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis one ($r\text{-cal} = .204$, $P\text{-value} < 0.05$) and hypothesis two ($t\text{-value} = 3.159$, $P\text{-value} < 0.05$) were rejected. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and career aspirations among in-school adolescents in Kwara State. Also, gender has a significant impact on career aspirations among in-school adolescents in Kwara State. It was recommended that educational institutions in Kwara State consider implementing peer support programs aimed at fostering positive peer influence. These programs can provide a platform for students to discuss their career aspirations, share experiences, and receive guidance from their peers.

Keywords: Career Aspirations, Gender, Peer Pressure, Adolescent

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1. INTRODUCTION

In traditional cultures, social role-playing has been crucial to one's sense of ability, contribution, and development, particularly in Nigerian society. The likelihood of job dissatisfaction is raised by the frequency of job mobility (Zacharo et al., 2018; Zulkarnain et al., 2021). Enough information must be made available to help people understand the value of autonomy in their job decisions. Making a career decision is a difficult undertaking for students, as it dictates the type of vocation they wish to follow in the future. Students in

senior secondary school encounter challenges when trying to align their career goals with their skills and academic achievements (Fidan et al., 2018; Tian et al., 2021). The influence of peer pressure on senior secondary school students' career aspirations is the main focus of this study (Bhaskar et al., 2014; Jacob-John et al., 2021).

The significance of career decision-making among senior high school students cannot be overemphasized. Students at this level are adolescents who are moving from this stage of development into adulthood. Previous study viewed an adolescent as a young person, usually between the ages of 10 and 19, who is developing into an adult (Kim et al., 2014). Other study defined adolescence as the phase of life stretching between childhood and adulthood (Suggate et al., 2018). The adolescent period encompasses elements of biological growth and major social role transitions, both of which have changed in the past century. Early puberty has accelerated the onset of adolescence in nearly all populations, while understanding of continued growth has lifted its endpoint age well into the 20s (Froiland & Davison, 2020; Hermino & Arifin, 2020).

Adolescence, in the opinion should be a time when kids have a clear, safe space to process their changes in cognition, emotion, sexuality, and psychology without being constrained by adult responsibilities and with the full support of caring adults in their community, at home, and at school (Sanchez et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2020). For this reason, it's critical to provide teenagers with all the information they require regarding professions and the realm of labor exploitation. Too many kids don't have access to this information until much later in life, if at all, which compromises their growth and well-being and alters the trajectory of their lives (Alhalafawy & Zaki, 2019; Chu et al., 2020).

A career can be defined as an ongoing life process made up of numerous work experiences and responsibilities. Your life history, which encompasses not only your profession but also the time you have spent in education, community service, and familial relationships, makes up your career (Shahroom & Hussin, 2018; Soeprijanto et al., 2022). According to previous study a person's career is what gives their vocational behavior direction, based on their understanding and free will (Singhal & Rastogi, 2018). As a result, every choice a person makes will affect their life both now and in the future. Other study claims that the majority of senior secondary school students lack the accurate knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about their careers regarding occupational opportunities (Sulistyaningsih et al., 2019). However, college students are thought to be mature enough to be able to choose their careers on their own.

Previous study states that a person's personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role models, social support, and financial situation are some of the factors that affect their choice of career (Fidan et al., 2018). According to previous study each person going through the process is impacted by a number of variables, such as their educational background, social networks, personal aptitudes, and living environment (Bandura, 2012). Previous study also mentioned that extrinsic, intrinsic, or both types of factors can influence a person's career aspirations (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). The majority of people are influenced by the careers that their parents choose, others pursue the opportunities that their educational goals have presented to them, some decide to pursue their passion regardless of how much or little it will earn them, while others decide to follow in the footsteps of their friends and pursue high-paying careers. Numerous factors, such as ethnic background, year in school, achievement level, choice of science subjects, attitudes, and variations in job characteristics, have also been found to impact students' perceptions of their suitability for a given job (Bridgstock et al., 2019; Ehindero et al., 2023).

Students' perceptions of their suitability for particular jobs have also been found to be influenced by a variety of factors, including their cultural background, educational history, level of accomplishment, choice of science subjects, attitudes, and differences in job

requirements (Eğriboyun, 2022; Sugiman et al., 2020). Career experts advise identifying personal characteristics and matching them with compatible occupations, based on the premise that multiple factors influence career aspirations. For example, someone who excels in math and enjoys the tasks and challenges involved in the subject might consider careers in engineering or accounting (Fakhri et al., 2018; Lorenzo et al., 2019). Some people think that our career decisions are largely influenced by our family and socioeconomic background. Some people maintain that our career aspirations are influenced by our self-perceptions or self-concepts.

Peers can be extremely motivating to one another. School is where lifelong friendships are forged, and classmates have a history of supporting one another, sometimes even more so than siblings (Ayish & Deveci, 2019; Widayati et al., 2021). They mentor one another in their personal lives and help one another with schoolwork. It's common to discover that some students enroll in certain courses only to follow in the footsteps of their friends. These students occasionally struggle to do well because they lack interest in the subject matter. Teenagers select friends based on traits or skills they find admirable, which inspires them to follow in their footsteps and attain their goals. Friends' help teenagers think more creatively and encourage them to work hard in school (Ali AL-gasem, 2019; Cincera et al., 2022). This is accurate, but it becomes problematic when a student's interest or talent overlaps with that of his friend. Therefore, the present study investigated the influence of peer pressure on career aspirations among secondary school adolescents in Kwara State (Nasamu, 2021; Suleiman et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of peer pressure on career aspirations among school-age adolescents in Kwara State. Specifically, the study sought to identify: The influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of in-school adolescents in Kwara State based on gender. Peer interactions and the cultural expectations in Kwara State may differ from those in other regions. The novelty of this study investigating how these local dynamics impact adolescents' career aspirations adds unique insight into the role of cultural factors in career development.

2. METHODS

The study investigated the influence of peer pressure on career aspirations among in-school adolescents in Kwara State using a quantitative research approach. This approach allowed for the measurement of the scope and impact of peer pressure, ensuring reliability and generalizability due to the large sample size (Creswell, 2014). A survey design was employed, as described to collect data at a specific point in time. The population consisted of SS2 class secondary school students from various types of schools in Kwara State. The multistage sampling technique involved selecting 5 local government areas (LGAs) randomly, from which 10 secondary schools and six teachers (male and female) in each LGA were chosen, totaling 300 participants. Consent was obtained from school authorities, and participants completed a questionnaire developed specifically for the study. The Peer Pressure Career Aspiration Questionnaire (PPCAQ) used in the study had two sections: Section A covered demographic information, and Section B had five items on peer pressure influence, rated on a 4-point scale. The questionnaire's reliability was validated through a pilot test with 50 students and achieved a Cronbach alpha value of 0.87. Out of 300 distributed questionnaires, 275 were properly filled and analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and t-test at a 0.05 confidence level with SPSS Version 20.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Demographic Description of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were described with frequency counts and percentages, as illustrated in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution Shown Sex and Age

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	110	40.0
Female	165	60.0
Total	275	100.0
14-16 years	97	35.3
17-19 years	109	39.6
20-22 years	69	25.1
Total	275	100.0

[Table 1](#) shows that out of 275 respondents that participated in the study, 110 (40%) were male and 165 (60%) were female. Also it was appeared in the table that 108 (40%) were within the age of 14-16years, 132 (48%) were within the age of 17-19 years while 35 (13%) were above 20 years. Hence, it was realised that the large participants were female and within the age range of 14-16 years. The relationship between peer pressure and career aspirations of in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria is show in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Peer Pressure and Career Aspiration

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df.	r-cal	P-val	Decision
Peer pressure	275	24.16	5.27	273	0.204	0.001	
Rejected Career Aspiration		275	22.97	3.26			

In [Table 2](#) show the result of the analysis shown a pearson correlation coefficient of 0.204 which indicates a positive relationship between peer pressure and career aspiration. The p-value of 0.001 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant. Hence the result indicates that there is a weak, but statistically significant positive correlation between peer pressure and in-school adolescents career aspiration.

The significant difference on the career aspirations of in-school adolescents in Kwara State on the bases of gender is show in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. T-test Analysis in the Difference on the Career Aspiration

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df.	t-cal	tcrit	
Male	110	23.72	2.69				
Female	165	22.47	3.50	273	3.159	0.002	Rejected

In [Table 3](#), the independent sample t-test shows a 2-tailed significance level (sig) of.002 and a t-value of 3.159, which indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in career aspiration between male and female in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected, and there is a significant difference in career aspiration between male and female in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Discussion

The study investigated the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria. The result revealed that peer pressure is statistically significant in career aspiration among in-school adolescents in Kwara State. This finding is consistent with previous study who identified that peer pressure has a positive relationship with career decision-making (Fidan et al., 2018; Tian et al., 2021). This means that among the factors that propel students to consider careers is peer pressure. In the same vein, other study explored the nature, level, and extent of peer and friend influence in the career decision-making process of an individual (Uy et al., 2015). The result of this finding is in consonance with the study who examined correlates of career choice among 210 senior secondary school students in Tarka LGA of Benue State, Nigeria and was found significant (Osuji & Nyebuchi, 2021). The findings is also in line with the findings' who submitted that students of the same peer usually imitate themselves in all areas of life. The study initiated the argument that although family primarily geared and transformed the behavior of children in multiple ways, peer influence was an asset for developing career opportunities and decision-making among youth (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2020; Baker et al., 2020). Students emulate one another in which usually resulted to their career aspiration.

Hypothesis 2 revealed that there is a significant difference between the career aspirations of males and females among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria. This implies that students usually imitate themselves which in turn affect the carrier aspirations'. This finding is in line with study who explored issues of gender and adolescent age differences as they relate to choice of career among secondary school students in southwest Nigeria (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020; Osuji & Nyebuchi, 2021). The findings of the study showed a significant difference in the choice of career between male and female students. The result of this finding is also in line with the study of who posited that gender significantly influence social activities of secondary school students (Awofala & Blessing, 2014; Sofoluwe et al., 2015). This means that it is essential to consider the potential reasons underlying this disparity in career aspirations. Traditional gender roles and social expectations may play a significant role in shaping the career choices of male and female students.

Previous study examined the influence of peer pressure on students' career decision-making. stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques were used to obtain a sample size of 364 respondents in Kenya (Okoye, 2014). Thus, peer pressure has a positive relationship with career decision-making. The results suggest that as peer pressure increases, career decision-making among students also increases in the same direction (Lin et al., 2021; Pope et al., 2023). This implied that there is a statistically significant influence of peer pressure on career decision-making among students, even though the influence is weak. From the research, it was concluded that peer pressure influenced career decision-making among secondary school students in Busia County.

Educational institutions in Kwara State should consider implementing peer support programs aimed at fostering positive peer influence. These programs can provide a platform for students to discuss their career aspirations, share experiences, and receive guidance from their peers. School management and career guidance counselors should adopt a gender-inclusive approach to career guidance. Efforts should be made to challenge traditional gender stereotypes and expand the range of career options presented to students by ensuring that all students, regardless of gender, have access to diverse and fulfilling career pathways.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that peer pressure has a significant influence on the career aspirations of in-school adolescents. Gender disparity plays a significant

role in shaping the career choices of male and female students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Counselors in schools across Kwara State should show more interest and support to these adolescents in order to choose a career based on the potential, ability, and skills they can maintain right from their admission into senior secondary school.

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