



## **SELF-CONCEPT, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND GENDER AS PREDICTORS OF CAREER ASPIRATION AMONG PART-TIME STUDENTS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (SPECIAL) OYO, OYO STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*Career aspiration of students is a variable that has been studied by various researchers. This study, which adopted an ex-post facto research design, investigated the effects of self-concept, socio-economic status and gender as predictor of career aspiration among Part-time students in Oyo state. Three hundred participants were chosen from part-time students in FCE(Sp), Oyo using stratified random sampling. Ages ranged between 21 and 40years, mean of 27.21 years (SD= 12.25). Three research questions were tested using multiple regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. A structured questionnaire consisting of demographic section, and measures of self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration were used to collect data. The findings revealed that there was significant positive relationships between self-concept( $r = 0.540, p < 0.05$ ); socio-economic status ( $r = 0.425, p < 0.05$ ), gender ( $r = 0.212, p < 0.05$ ) and career aspiration among the participants. The three variables jointly accounted for 52.5% variance in predicting career aspiration among the participants. The independent variables made positive relative contribution to career aspiration in the following order: self-concept ( $\beta = 0.410, t = 4.561; p < 0.05$ ), socio-economic status ( $\beta = 0.201, t = 3.251; p < 0.05$ ), gender ( $\beta = 0.128, t = 2.578; p < 0.05$ ) had relative contribution to career aspiration. Based on these finding, it recommended that students should consult counsellors in their respective schools on making career plans. Parents and guardians should bridge communication gaps between them and their wards. This will help to enlighten their wards on career aspiration. Part-time students should be guided and taught how they can boost their career aspiration through adequate guidance and counselling.*

**Keywords:** Career aspiration, Gender, Social economic status, Self-concept

## Introduction

Career aspiration is the eagerness to aspire in one's profession in order to achieve better in life. It is a way of which an individual put in his best so as to attain the desired goal in that chosen career. Career aspiration can be defined as the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward achieving goals in one's desired career, conditioned by the effort and ability to satisfy one's need in a chosen career (Eyo, 2021). Career aspirations are underpinned by motives which refer to 'the inner drive that activate the direct behaviour towards certain career goals and are responsible for this goal-seeking behaviour being persistent for at least a certain length of time and the goal of the motives are the object, conditions, or activity toward which the motive is directed (Eyo, 2021). Studies have shown that people aspire to become great in life in the career they have chosen for themselves, but they neglect the aspect of their health. For one's career aspiration to come to reality and or be fulfilled, the health status of such individual must be sound or be in good shape, simply because it is when one is healthy that he/she can become whatsoever he/she has designed to become in his /her career path.

Career aspiration among students are an important part of their development because they build the groundwork for future career options and professional paths. Personal interests, cultural expectations, family influences and educational experiences could play a role in shaping these inclinations. Career aspiration is usually a

challenging undertaking, especially when there are competing variables, but it is an important step towards a happy life. Students all across the world are typically faced with the herculean task of determining their career aspiration. Prospective students must always make difficult decisions about their occupations, subjects, and courses of study in school, as well as their future pathways. Choosing the proper topic combination that leads to the right profession can often be the difference between liking and despising your job in the long run. Dedicating oneself to unrealistic career paths leads to frustration. Thus, many Nigerians consider work as a mere source of income or as a means to an end rather than an end in itself, with its own inherent fulfilment and satisfactoriness, as well as an opportunity to show one's talents or creative potential. A negative attitude towards work and the resulting problem of low productivity become prevalent. The net effect of this external predicament is the devastation of the country's economy (Issa & Nwalo, 2023).

Career aspiration necessitate a high degree of creativity, exploration, decision-making and solid judgement. A functional understanding of a certain topic is essential for generating and nurturing interest in that career. Self-defining activities that are essential for the soul, heart, and power of an in-school adolescent are strongly drawn to passion. Professional success is most likely to occur when an in-school adolescent's professional route matches his/her talents,

personality, background and intelligence quotient. Many students base their decisions on personal preferences rather than what the labour market requires (Magdadaro, 2020). Career aspiration is one of many key decisions that in-school adolescents will make as they plan their future. This decision will have a long-term impact on their lives. The essence of who the student is will be determined by what they desire to do with their life's work.

Research has shown that students who are not passionate about their chosen field of study tend to struggle academically (Nwosu & Ugwuegbu, 2020). Adolescents who are forced into careers they are not passionate about often experience emotional distress. In-school adolescents may feel frustrated, anxious, or even depressed due to disconnect between their true interests and the career path they are pursuing. This emotional turmoil can lead to a lack of self-confidence and a sense of hopelessness about the future. Studies have indicated that career dissatisfaction among adolescents can lead to high levels of anxiety and stress (Bakar, Mohamed & Zakaria, 2012).

This study also investigates the influence of self-concept on career aspiration of Part-time students in FCE. According to Melanie & Sulistio (2020), self-concept is the composition of the picture of self-perception, that perception is belief, feelings, and attitudes about the values that are recognized by the individual as his traits. Melanie & Sulistio (2020) further explains that the composition of self-concept is formed from a variety of

experiences on the stage. This means that the composition is formed from experience since childhood. Anyamene & Nwosu (2019) note that the main causes of low self-concept among secondary school students are illogical and irrational thoughts and that low self-concept hinders students from the opportunity to maintain a healthy personality. According to Herrera & Al-Lal (2020), a positive self-concept acquired in the formative years could help in the development of the strategies and skills needed for confronting life challenges. Positive or high self-concept is a leading factor for success in life (Herrera & Al-Lal, 2020). Ackerman (2021) states that people's self-concept is accepted by how they feel about themselves and how they judge their abilities, competencies and worth. He adds that when putting some effort into self-evaluations, self-concept will adjust to accommodate those changes.

Socio-economic status is the perceived hierarchy resulting from the amount of possession of social resources an individual believes he/she has and controls (Han, 2024). Individuals from higher socio-economic status backgrounds often have greater access to resources, opportunities, and networks, which can facilitate their career preference of in-school adolescent. Han (2024) indicates that adolescents from different socio-economic backgrounds display varying career preference. For instance, students from low socio-economic status families may prioritize immediate employment opportunities over long-term career planning due to financial constraints.

Socio-economic status encompasses a range of factors, including income level, educational attainment, and occupational status of individuals and their families.

It serves as a key determinant of access to resources, opportunities, and social capital, which in turn influence career preference. Higher SES is often associated with better educational facilities, access to information, and networks that facilitate career exploration, while lower SES can limit these opportunities and restrict the career aspirations of adolescents (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Swanson & Fouad (2022) have argued that there is a strong link between the effects of poverty and occupational preference. They believe that income has a direct impact on career preference. Thus, adolescents from low socioeconomic backgrounds rarely graduate and perform poorly in examinations.

Socio-economic considerations play a crucial role in inspiring students to choose their chosen path. According to Kazi & Akhlaq (2017), students from low socioeconomic backgrounds made poor career options and picked professions that needed little training, owing mostly to budgetary limitations.

Gender has been found as an influential component in job desire, implying that male and female school adolescents may follow different paths in terms of gender norms and career aspiration processes (Degol, Wang, Zhang & Allerton, 2018; Rocha & Van Praag, 2020). The impact of society on children's professional development stems from gender-role stereotyping of career aspiration and social

pressures (Olsson & Martiny, 2018). Gender is the state of being either male or female. Some studies have found a link between gender and career aspirations and choices.

Boys and girls have diverse socialising experiences; therefore they learn different sex roles and interests, which eventually become major factors in profession aspiration (Eyo & Edet, 2021). In their investigation of certain drivers of career aspiration among students, Gerange & Sagwe (2023) discovered that gender differences were a major factor.

Despite researchers' understanding of the importance of gender in career aspiration, secondary school pupils have received comparatively little study in this area. Although both girls and boys have equal educational possibilities in our current educational system, gender appears to reinforce differences in profession aspiration (Dasgupta & Stout, 2021).

Nonetheless, the explanation for this divergence has not been thoroughly investigated. Gender beliefs are broad assumptions about the attributes and qualities that society assigns to men and women. Gender is distinct from sex in that sex is defined by biology, anatomy, hormones, and physiology, but gender is produced by social, cultural, and psychological factors (Dasgupta & Stout, 2021). In general, males are characterised as aggressive, risk-taking, decisive, and autonomous (agentic traits), whereas females are characterised as kind, caring,

relational, and humble (communal attributes), resulting in gender stereotypes of male and female.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of career aspiration among students has generated a lot of questions and answers among scholars. The problem has been a delicate issue that has to be approached with caution. There is no clear process that students have used to make career choice that that allows them to investigate all of the options accessible in order to build a reasonable educated strategy when selecting a vocation. Career aspiration among adolescents is a significant issue in Nigeria, influenced by multiple factors such as gender, self-concept and socio-economic status. In-school adolescents face challenges in making informed career aspiration, often due to inadequate guidance and social pressures. Gender stereotypes further complicate these choices, as traditional roles influence the types of careers considered appropriate for males and females. For instance, societal expectations may encourage boys to pursue careers in engineering or technology, while girls are steered towards careers in education or healthcare. This skewed perception limits the potential for adolescents to explore diverse career paths based on personal interests and aptitudes. Self-concept, or how individuals perceive their abilities, shapes career interests as well. Adolescents with a positive self-concept are more likely to explore and pursue challenging career paths, while those with a negative self-concept may limit their choices due to fear of failure

or perceived inadequacies.

A significant gap exists in career information, especially in rural or under-resourced schools, where students lack access to career counselling or accurate labour market information. This leaves many adolescents with limited knowledge about career opportunities and the requirements for different professions, leading to poorly informed decisions. Addressing these factors is crucial to fostering a more balanced and fulfilling career decision-making process among in-school adolescents in Nigeria. This study therefore, investigates self-concept, socio-economic status and gender as predictor of career aspiration among part-time students in Federal College of Education Special Oyo state, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. Is there any significant relationship among the independent variables (self-concept, gender and socio-economic status) on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo state, Nigeria?
2. What is the joint contribution of the self-concept, gender and socio-economic status) on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo state, Nigeria?
3. What is the relative contribution of the self-concept, gender and socio-economic status) on the career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo state, Nigeria?

## Methodology

### Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design to achieve the purpose of the study.

### Population

The target population for this study consisted of all students in Part-time programme available in FCE Special Oyo, Oyo State Nigeria. LASU programme having 1530 students, while the NCE part-time having 230 students in all.

### Sample size and Sampling techniques

The participants for the study were drawn from the Part-time students in FCE Special Oyo, Nigeria. 300 hundred respondents were selected as the sample of this study. It is assumed that the selected samples have common characteristics or elements of the population of the study. Based on this, an inference was drawn and generalization was made on the population of the study.

Stratified random sampling was used to select the respondents from the study population. This method ensured that all key subgroups were proportionally represented in the sample, enhancing the accuracy and generalizability of findings.

### Instrumentation

The questionnaire used in this study comprised three standardized instruments divided into three sections:

**Section A** contains the bio-data which sought demographic information such as age, gender etc. the other section contains the following:

**Section B** contains the Career Aspiration Scale. The Career Aspiration Scale (CAS) is a psychological tool designed to measure an

individual's career aspiration and orientations toward various career paths and work environments. It was developed by Michael Driver in 1980. The CPS is a 15-item 4-point Likert scales for responses (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). The scale provided insights into different areas, such as preferences for stability, creativity, autonomy, leadership, and achievement. The CPS has been widely used in both academic research and professional settings to help individuals better understand their career motivations and to assist organizations in career planning, development, and personnel selection processes. The author reported an internal reliability co-efficient ranging from .77 to .89.

**Section C** contains the Self-Concept Scale (SCS) by Adam & Khoo (1996) assessed an individual's self-concept.

Self-Concept Scale (SCS) is a psychological tool designed to measure an individual's perception of self across various domains. It consists of 15 items, each targeting dimensions such as self-worth, confidence, academic ability, and interpersonal relationships. The items were rated on a Likert scale. The sample of items in the scale included; *I feel less physically attractive; I am in charge of the choices in my life and I am hopeful about myself in the future.* The scale's internal consistency is robust, with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, indicating high reliability.

**Section D** Socio-economic status was developed by Salami (2000). It is a comprehensive tool designed to assess an

individual's socio-economic position within society. The scale comprised 10 items that evaluate various dimensions of socio-economic status, including income level, educational attainment, occupational status, housing conditions, and access to social amenities. Each item is scored using a standardized Likert format, allowing for the quantification of socio-economic disparities. This makes it suitable for use in diverse populations and contexts, particularly in social science, education, and health-related studies. Salami's scale is often employed to examine the relationship between socio-economic status and outcomes such as academic achievement, health, and social

mobility. Its simplicity and reliability make it a valuable instrument for researchers and policymakers alike. The scale has been rigorously validated and exhibits a high level of internal consistency, with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, indicating strong reliability.

**Analysis of Data**

Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the relationship among the independent and the dependent variable, while Multiple Regression Analysis was used to analyse the joint contributions and the relative effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

The summary of data analysis is presented below:

**Analysis of Demographic Variables of the respondents**

**Table 1 Distribution of the respondents by Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	196	65.3
Female	104	34.7
<b>Total</b>	300	100.0

The above table 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender. The result shows that 196(65.3%) of the respondents are male while 104(34.7%) are female. This implies that majority of the respondents are male.

**Table 2: Frequency Distribution of respondents by Age**

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
21-24 years	90	30.0
25-39 years	202	67.3
40-45 years and above	8	2.7
Total	300	100.0

Table 2 reveals that 90 (30%) of the respondents are within the ages of 21-24 years, 202 (67.3%) of the respondents are within the ages of 25-39 years while 8 (2.7%) of the respondents are within the age of 40-45 years and above. This implies that majority of the respondents are within the ages of 25-39 years

**Table 3: Frequency Distribution of respondents by Course Level**

Level	Frequency	Percentage %
200L	70	23.3
300L	225	75.0
400L	5	1.7
Total	300	100.0

Table 4.3 reveals that 70 (23.3%) of the respondents are 200L student, 225 (75%) of the respondents are 300L students while 5 (1.7%) of the respondents are 400L students. This implies that majority of the respondents are 300L students

**Table 4: Frequency Distribution of respondents by Family Background**

Family Background	Frequency	Percentage %
Monogamous	189	63.0
Polygamous	111	37.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 4 reveals that 189 (63%) of the respondents were from monogamous home while 111 (37%) of the respondents were from polygamous home. This implies that majority of the respondents were from monogamous homes.

**Research Questions**

**RQ1:** What pattern of relationship exists between independent variables (self-concept, socio-economic status and gender) and career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo, Oyo state, Nigeria?

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics and Inter-correlations among self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration among participants**

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Career aspiration	43.14	7.11	1.000			
Self-concept	85.22	7.19	.540**	1.000		
Gender	34.12	7.09	.212**	-.041	1.000	
SES	37.10	7.32	.425**	.082	-.146	1.000

\*\* Correlation significant at 0.05 level

Table 5 above reveals there was significant relationships between each of the independent variables: self-concept ( $r = 0.540, p < 0.05$ ); gender ( $r = 0.212, p < 0.05$ ); socio-economic status ( $r = 0.425, p < 0.05$ ) and career aspiration among the participants.

**RQ<sub>2</sub>:** What is significant joint contribution of self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo, Oyo State?

**Table 6: Summary of regression on joint prediction of the self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo, Oyo State**

R=.485 R <sup>2</sup> =.336 Adj. R <sup>2</sup> =.525 Std. Error=15.41179						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	21586.319	3	7195.439			
Residual	70069.401	296	236.720	30.396	.000	Sig.
Total	91655.720	299				

As indicated in table 6; the result showed that there was joint contribution of self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Oyo, Oyo State ( $F_{(3/296)} = 30.396, p < 0.05$ ). The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regression of  $R=0.485$  and multiple R-square of 0.336. The result also revealed that Adjusted

$R^2=0.525$ ; indicating that about 52.5% of variance was accounted for by the independent variables. This hypothesis was rejected this implies there was a significant joint contribution of self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Oyo, Oyo State.

**RQ<sub>3</sub>:** What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (self-concept, socio-economic status and gender) on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Oyo, Oyo State?

**Table 7: Summary of regression on relative contribution of self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Oyo, Oyo State**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	4.449	3.314		1.343	.000	Sig
Self-concept	.545	.067	.410	4.561	.000	Sig
Gender	.321	.120	.128	2.578	.000	Sig
SES	.124	.494	.201	3.251	.002	Sig

a Dependent Variable: Career aspiration

Table 7 indicates the relative contributions of each of the independent variables to the prediction of career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Oyo, Oyo State. In terms of magnitude of the contribution: self-concept contributed most to the prediction of career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Oyo, Oyo State self-concept ( $\beta = 0.410$ ,  $t = 4.561$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by socio-economic status ( $\beta = 0.201$ ,  $t = 3.251$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), gender ( $\beta = 0.128$ ,  $t = 2.578$ ;  $p < 0.05$ )

### Discussion

In response to research question one stated that what pattern of relationship exists between independent variables (self-concept, socio-economic status and gender) and career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo, Oyo state, Nigeria. The finding revealed positive significant relationship between self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo, Oyo state, Nigeria.

The findings of the study showed that self-concept had significant relationship with career aspiration. The finding also enjoyed

the support of Otta & Njoku (2022) who reported that self-concept and career aspiration among in-school adolescents delves into how in-school adolescents understanding of themselves influences their career aspiration. The study showed that self-concept significantly predicts the career aspiration of public high school students. Almaida & Febriyanti (2019) found that self-concept in career aspiration making represents the confidence of the individuals in which they can engage in activities associated with choosing appropriate career path. The findings of the study also showed that gender had significant relationship with

career aspiration. This assertion is in line with the findings of Mishra (2022) found that no gender differences in low stakes assessment scores. Another study by Kaur & Kumaran (2021) showed that even though the male students had slightly better performance compared to the female students, it was not significant. Girls often reported feeling less confident in their abilities in STEM subjects, even when they performed equally well as boys in those areas. The lack of female role models in STEM fields further exacerbated this gender divide, making it harder for girls to envision themselves in those careers. According to Glenn (2019), there is a significant gender discrepancy in career preference, which further supports the presence of a gender gap in some American schools. They discovered from an investigation of minimal variety that there was nearly universally high potential for career aspiration among girls and that there was only a minor difference in the gender gap among schools. Furthermore, findings showed that socio-economic status had significant relationship with career aspiration. The finding also enjoyed the support of Kazi & Akhlaq (2017), who found out that socio-economic factors are important in motivating the students to make career aspiration. Kazi & Akhlaq reported that students from poor socio-economic backgrounds made wrong career aspiration, and chose professions which required a short duration of training, primarily due to financial constraints. As the old adage goes, nothing succeeds like success; similarly, a student who fare well academically have better

career prospects and preferences as compared to the struggling ones (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

This study was reinforced with the realization that the lingering career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo state had permeated in to the system. This study has therefore, established linking pathways between some variables and career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo state. These include self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration. Changing the face of career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo state requires a lot of psychological re-orientation especially considering interventions that employ the independent variables in this study (self-concept, socio-economic status and gender). Strategies should be developed along these lines and taught in school environment. Where this is consistently done with corresponding support from government, agencies and other educational stakeholders, the entire perspective would change for good. Also, there is a positive relative effect between self-concept, socio-economic status and gender on career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo state. From this study, it becomes clear that various strategies should be design to access the issue of career aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo state in different states, attention should also be given to the identified means or factors through which the researcher has been able to identify that can affect the career

aspiration among part-time students in FCE Special Oyo state through the self-concept, socio-economic status and gender.

### Recommendations

In the light of these findings, the following recommendations are hereby proffered:

- Students should learn to consult counselors in their respective school for clarification on how well they can make good career preference.
- Parents and guardians should bridge up the communication gaps between them and their adolescents. This will help them to enlighten their wards on career preference.
- School administrators and policy makers should make themselves more aware of how the career preference develops in young adolescents, what are essential factors that contribute to career aspiration and what steps must be done to facilitate the career development among students that are about to leave the secondary school and make their first decision towards future career.
- Teachers and Counselors in school should gather information relevant to various world of work; this should be use enlighten and counsel the students in school.
- There should be improvement in guidance and counseling services through expansion of counseling centres in schools, and above all, it is recommended that

counselors themselves should be encouraged to attend workshops and

- conferences on guidance and counseling so that they may be conversant with the new trends in counseling practices.

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