

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF STUDENTS
IN PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE BEREKUM
MUNICIPALITY, GHANA.

BY

ABRAHAM OWUSU

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidates signature..... Date.....

Name.....

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's signature..... Date.....

Name.....

Co- Supervisor's signature..... Date.....

Name.....

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors influencing career aspirations of Senior High School students in the Berekum Municipality of Ghana. The research design selected for this study was the descriptive survey design. Questionnaires were the instruments for data collection. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The results were presented in the form of tables. The results of the study showed that peer pressure had a great influence on the career aspirations of students. The study also revealed that students did not consider their interests as having a major influence on their career aspirations. Also, the study found that most of the teachers did not view themselves as playing significant roles in the career aspirations of their students. The study also revealed that parents had interest in the careers of their children and that their children would not take any career decisions without their approval. The study found also that there was a significant difference in the influence peer pressure had on career aspirations of male and female Senior High School students in the Berekum Municipality. Finally, the study revealed that there was no significant gender difference in the influence Senior High School students' interest had on career aspirations. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that peer pressure largely determines the career aspirations of students. It was recommended that school heads collaborate with the counselling unit in the schools to organise career workshops for students about how to deal with the negative influence of peer pressure on their career aspirations. It was suggested that future studies use larger sample sizes to increase the extent to which the results can be generalised.

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DEDICATION

To my family

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Thinking or making a decision about one's career is vital. According to Fry, Stoner and Hattwick (1998), being in high school is the time to be thinking about careers and aiming to have clear career direction in mind. Such thoughts and career directions can affect life in and beyond college. Career decision is a complex task for students since it determines the kind of profession that they intend to pursue in life (Edwards & Quinter, 2011). As students try to aspire for their career while in senior high school, they face some problems like matching their career with their abilities and school performance. This study is focused on the factors that influence career aspirations of senior high school students. This chapter presents the introduction to the study. It covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations, definition of terms and organisation of the study.

Background to the Study

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. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2011) viewed an adolescent as a young person, usually between the ages of 10 and 19, who is developing into an adult.

Bonnie, Stroud and Breiner (2015) defined adolescence as the phase of life stretching between childhood and adulthood. 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.

According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2011), adolescence should be a time when children have a safe and clear space to come to terms with cognitive, emotional, sexual and psychological transformation – unencumbered by engagement in adult roles and with the full support of nurturing adults at home, at school and in the community. It is therefore important to give adolescents all the information they need about career and the world of work exploitation. For too many children, such knowledge becomes available too late, if at all, when the course of their lives has already been affected and their development and well-being undermined (UNICEF, 2011).

According to Kerka (2010), a career is a continuous life process consisting of many work experience and life roles. Your career consists of your life history, which not only includes your vocation but the time you spent in school, in your community and with your family. Sears and Gordon (2011) also argued that a career is the imposition of direction in a person's vocational behaviour, subject to his or her comprehension and will. Therefore each decision one makes will have an impact on his or her life in the short run and in the future.

Hooley (2012) has opined that a career choice is a complex science with the advent of information technology. Industrialization and post industrialization has made it possible for a common person to be richer as long as she or he has due skills and knowledge (Wattles, 2009). One has not only to make due career planning but also exhaustive career research before making a career choice so as to adjust with the evolving socio-economic conditions (Wattles, 2009). Most of the students in Senior High Schools do not have accurate information about occupational opportunities to help them make appropriate career choice, but university students are considered mature enough to be able to make career choice decisions on their own (Hooley, 2012).

According to Kerka (2010), career choice is influenced by multiple factors including personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and finances. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (2008) also stated that each individual undertaking the process is influenced by several factors including the context in which they live in, their personal aptitudes, social contacts and educational attainment. Hewitt (2010) added that factors influencing career aspiration can either be intrinsic or extrinsic or both. Hewitt further states that most people are influenced by careers that their parents favour, others follow the careers that their educational aspirations have opened for them, some choose to follow their passion regardless of how much or little it will make them while others choose the careers that give high income. Students perception of being suitable for a particular job also has been found to be influenced by a number of factors including ethnic background, year in school, level of achievement,

choice of science subjects, attitudes and differences in job characteristics (McQuaid & Bond, 2003). Perception of students of being appropriate for certain jobs also has been found to be influenced by a number of factors including cultural background, period of schooling, accomplishment level, science subjects choice, attitudes and variances in job features (Stebleton, 2007).

Based on the premise that several factors influence career aspirations, career experts recommend identifying personal characteristics and matching them with compatible occupations (Kerka, 2010). For instance, a person who is excellent in math and enjoys the challenges and tasks associated with the field might explore math related occupations such as engineering or accounting (Sears & Gordon, 2011). Other people believe that our family and socio economic background really matter when it comes to making our careers (Stebleton, 2007). Still others believe our perceptions of who we are, or our self-concept, have influences on the career aspirations we make (Kerka, 2010).

Career aspirations take place in numerous steps or stages, since every person is unique in personality, characteristics, matures at a different pace, and lives in a specific environment, career decision making becomes an individual life journey (Hewitt, 2010). There is therefore the need to be flexible and open-minded is therefore critical in choosing career (Sears & Gordon, 2011).

In Ghana, at the Senior High School level, a student may choose to pursue either science, art, vocational or business based subjects. This is the first instance when a student is faced with the task of choosing a future career path. It can be suggested that a Ghanaian student's future career is predetermined by the choice of subjects pursued at secondary school

level and the level of achievement at WASSCE. Career orientation should therefore be an important exercise for Senior High School students.

A thoughtfully constructed career orientation process will provide a meaningful, productive, and satisfying career. According to Kisilu, Kimani and Kombo (2012), a career orientation process or outline might provide better answers than making life decisions based upon unexplored procedures. Borchert (2002) also opined career orientation and selection is one of many important decisions in life students will make in determining their future plans and this decision will impact them throughout their lives. It is in this light that, the Director of Pre-Tertiary Education of Ghana Education Service (GES), Mrs. Quaye, on Friday, 8th February 2013, called for career and guidance and counseling programme in Senior High Schools (SHS) to guide students toward achieving their goals.

According to Edwards and Quinter (2011), most students lack adequate information regarding various careers hence the aspirations that they make are embedded in their perception of the ideal job and the subjects they study in senior high school. On most occasions, the only support students get within the school is from career masters or counsellors as they are mostly referred to and the teachers who are expected to support students in their career choice. Brong Ahafo is one of the regions in Ghana in which students are faced with this challenge. It is against this background that this study is conducted.

Statement of the Problem

According to Ayiro (2016), a major turning point in adolescents' lives involves the career choice that they make while in high school. This is frequently viewed by the family and the community as a mere start to

workplace readiness. This decision however plays a major role in establishing adolescents on a career path that opens as well as closes opportunities, given the differences in the social and economic context of the individual (Bluestein, Phillips, Davis, Finkelberg, & Roarke, 1997). Globally, Edwards and Quinter (2011) have revealed that career decision creates a great burden for young people because of their wrong or deficient aspirations. Bhusumane (1993) posited that students have a limited knowledge about occupations and of the narrow range of alternatives available to them. This ignorance leads to unrealistic career aspirations.

In Ghana, several studies have found career aspirations of students to be problematic. For instance, Omotosho and Nyarko-Sampson (2012) demonstrated in their study that the career aspirations of students were poorly matched with the trends in the labour market. Omotosho (2014) also asserted that, in choosing our careers in a hit or miss fashion, we often miss more than hit. While a few students find career aspirations less cumbersome, many others struggle with career aspirations. Regardless of this, it appears that most students in Ghana have very little help in developing a career direction while still in the Senior High School (Otuei, 2017). They are often influenced by parents, teachers, peers, and with very little knowledge of what they might primarily be interested in or motivated to do. This leads to uncertainty about their career aspirations.

In the Berekum Municipality, a search of the literature revealed only the study of Takyi (2011) focused on career aspirations of students in Junior High School. Takyi indicated that there is insufficient knowledge on career issues in the Berekum Municipality and that despite the efforts by parents,

family members, friends and teachers to influence career aspiration decisions of students, the students struggled to make the right career aspiration decisions. Since the study of Takyi (2011), the problem with career aspiration decisions has not improved. Interactions with the Officers at the Municipal Education Office (2019) revealed that public Senior High Schools rarely organised career workshops to students and thus students mostly struggle with making career decisions. Specifically, it was indicated by the District Education Office that only two career workshops were organised in the past year by the District for public senior high schools. Also, interactions with school counsellors in the selected senior high schools showed that the schools organised only one career workshop for their students in the past year. There is therefore the need to investigate the factors that influence career aspirations of students in Senior High Schools in the Berekum Municipality.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing the career aspirations of students in public Senior High School in the Berekum Municipality. Specifically, the study sought to identify:

1. The influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality,
2. The influence of interest of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on their career aspirations,
3. The role teachers play in the career aspiration of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality,
4. The role parents play in the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality,

5. Whether peer pressure has influence on the career aspirations of male and female students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality,
6. Whether interest influence the career aspirations of male and female students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality,
7. Whether peer pressure has influence on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age,
8. Whether interest influences the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age,
9. Whether peer pressure has influence on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered and
10. Whether interest influences the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?
2. What is the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?
3. What role do teachers play in the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?
4. What role do parents play in the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?

Hypotheses

1. H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.
H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.
2. H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of interest on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.
H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of interest on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.
3. H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.
H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.
4. H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.
H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.

5. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.
- H_1 : There is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.
6. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.
- H_a : There is a significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.

Significance of the Study

This study aims to identify the role peers, teachers and parents play in SHS students' career aspirations and also to find out how students' interest influences their career aspirations. Specifically, the results of the study will be beneficial to several stakeholders including Officers at the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service, teachers, parents, students and other researchers. To those at the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service, the results of the study will provide information on the factors that can influence the career aspirations of students. The study's findings can help streamline policies that can help ease the difficulties that students face making decisions regarding their career aspirations.

Again, the results of the study will be beneficial to teachers in that they would know the roles they play in influencing the career aspirations of

students. This can help the teachers effectively assist students in their career decisions. Further, the results of the study will equip students with the needed knowledge about the key factors that can affect their career aspirations. This can help make career decisions less difficult for students. Finally, the results of the study will add to the literature on career aspirations of students in Senior High Schools in Ghana. Thus, the results of the study will be beneficial to future researchers and other academicians.

Delimitation of Study

The study was conducted in the Berekum Municipality of Ghana. The participants of this study comprised the form three students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum Municipality. The study did not include private schools since they operate under different circumstances and as such their students may be affected by factors different from those affecting students in public schools. The target population for the study was the form three students because it was assumed that they had already had their career aspirations as they prepare to enter the university as compared to those in lower classes who are yet to make career decisions.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of the study had to do with the time for the collection of the data. Because of the large scope of the geographical area for data collection as well as the population for the study, the period of data collection had to be extended. Even though this did not affect the findings of the study, the time span for the data collection went beyond the estimated time span. This was a limitation because it caused a delay in the period for the study. Again, since the study was delimited to only 3 schools within the

Berekum Municipality, the findings could not be generalised to the entire Brong Ahafo Region. Thus, the extent to which the results could be generalised was affected. Therefore, the conclusions and recommendations of the study were limited mostly to the Berekum Municipality.

Definition of Terms

Career: This is used in the current study to refer to the broad opportunities that exist for lifelong vocations. It is a profession for which one is trained and which is undertaken as a permanent calling. Examples of careers are teachers, doctors, journalists etc.

Career aspiration: Career aspiration is used in this study to refer to the path that students want their careers to follow. It reflects the aims that students have concerning their future careers.

Career decision: This connotes the choices that students make concerning their careers. When career decisions are made, they are no more aspirations but rather definite career choices.

Occupation: A group of similar jobs found in similar organization, or ones trade, profession or business.

Vocation: An occupation distinguished by its psychological instead of economic meaning or a career towards which one believes oneself to be called to do in life.

Work: Conscious effort aimed at producing benefits for oneself or others

Organisation of the Study

This study comprises five chapters. The first chapter focused on the introduction and consisted of the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study,

the delimitation and the limitations of the study, definition of terms and the organisation of the study. Chapter Two comprised relevant literature works related to the study, while the third chapter examined the research methodology used in the study. It covered the research design, study area, population, sampling procedures, data collection instrument, data collection procedures and the data analysis. The fourth chapter provided detailed analysis on the data collected and presentation of the results. In the fifth chapter, conclusion, summary and recommendations of the study are provided.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing the career aspirations of students in Senior High School students in the Berekum Municipality. This chapter reviews related literature on student's aspiration of career decision making. The review was done in parts. These are the theoretical, conceptual framework and empirical review. The review focuses on what others have already discussed on the subject of career aspiration.

Theoretical Framework

Numerous theories have been postulated to describe the usefulness of career choices in an individual's life. The theoretical framework focuses on three main theories. These are the Social-Cognitive theory, Holland's theory of vocational types and Donald Super's theory.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura (1986) developed the Social-Cognitive Theory (SCCT) which concerns the belief and ideas based on the interconnection between personal, cognitive and environmental parameter in the decisions on the career choice. The Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the role of cognitive domain. Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994) believed that three social cognitive variables of self-efficacy belief, outcome expectation, and goal choice need to be given consideration. Based on this theory, students chose career based on their

personal desires and interest. Individual's interest has great influence of career choice. People also choose careers based on their cognitive or intellectual endowment. The cognitive abilities of children do dictate to the job they can effectively perform in future.

Individual's self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations present as key determinants of individual's career choice (Gainor & Lent, 1998). The concept of self-efficacy is the focal point of Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. By means of the self-system, individuals exercise control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Among the beliefs with which an individual evaluates the control over his/her actions and environment, self-efficacy beliefs are the most influential predictor of human behavior. The level and strength of self-efficacy will determine:

- a. whether coping behavior will be initiated;
- b. how much effort will result;
- c. how long the effort will be sustained in the face of obstacles.

According to Bandura (2009), among the mechanisms of human activity, none is more central or pervasive than beliefs of personal or self-efficacy. Bandura argued further that this core belief is the foundation of human motivation, well-being and accomplishments. This is because unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. Several other factors that serve as guides and motivators are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to effect changes by one's actions.

Self-efficacy therefore involves the belief in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given

attainments (Bandura, 1986). Some of the most influential sources of self-efficacy are:

- a. Personal Performance - Accomplishments-previous successes or failures (most influential)
- b. Vicarious Experience - Watching others, modeling, mentoring
- c. Verbal Persuasion - Verbal encouragement or discouragement
- d. Physiological and Emotional Factors - Perceptions of stress reactions in the body

The Social Cognitive Theory also posits that one's environment has a great impact on his or her career choice. The careers students are exposed to have the tendency for them to develop either positive or negative attitudes for them. Improved environment make students put up behaviour and choice that make them end up in elite occupations. Rogers, Creed, and Glendon (2008) also insist on the interconnection role of self-efficacy belief among personality characteristics as one of the personal factors and career decision behaviours. Throughout one's life, a person receives new ideas and acquires insights both about oneself, about possibilities, life and the chaotic experiences it offers, change human's understanding about oneself and one's possibilities, but the task of career counsellors is to make learners more aware of the fact that they will acquire certain information and experiences automatically through time when moving from one life event to another.

The importance of the Social Cognitive theory in the study of career choice behaviours of students, many researchers have seen and taken advantages of the theory in the studies. For instance Jin, Watkins and Yuen, (2009) studied the effects of parameters like personality characteristics, and

self-efficacy belief on the career decision making of Chinese students and found that preparation and students' belief in themselves are vital in career decision making. This study is used in the study because it is believed that this theory has the potency to help establish factors that influence career decision making of the Senior High Schools in Berekum municipality.

Holland Theory of Vocational Types

Another career theorist, Holland (1966), in his typology theory stated that career choices are expressions of the total personality of an individual, and that people tend to search for a working environment that will match their personality types. The satisfaction thus, derived from a career chosen depends on the compatibility of a person's work situation and personality style.

Holland (1973) based his theory on four assumptions as follows:

- 1) People can be classified into six different personality types, namely, the realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional depending on their interest areas, preference and skills.
- 2) All working environments can also be classified into the same six types and tends to be dominated by compatible personalities.
- 3) People search for working environment in which their personality type can be expressed and also to exercise their abilities, interest, attitude, values and to participate fully in the organization.
- 4) A person's behaviour in the work place and level of satisfaction derived from it is determined by an interaction between his personality and the characteristics of his working environment.

John Holland's Theory of Career choice states that job satisfaction and achievement are highest when personality types are matched with compatible

work environment. He emphasized that it is vital for persons to have adequate knowledge of themselves and known an occupational requirement in order to make informed career decisions.

Holland gave some six types of careers and the traits that matches them.

The theories are shown in the figure below:

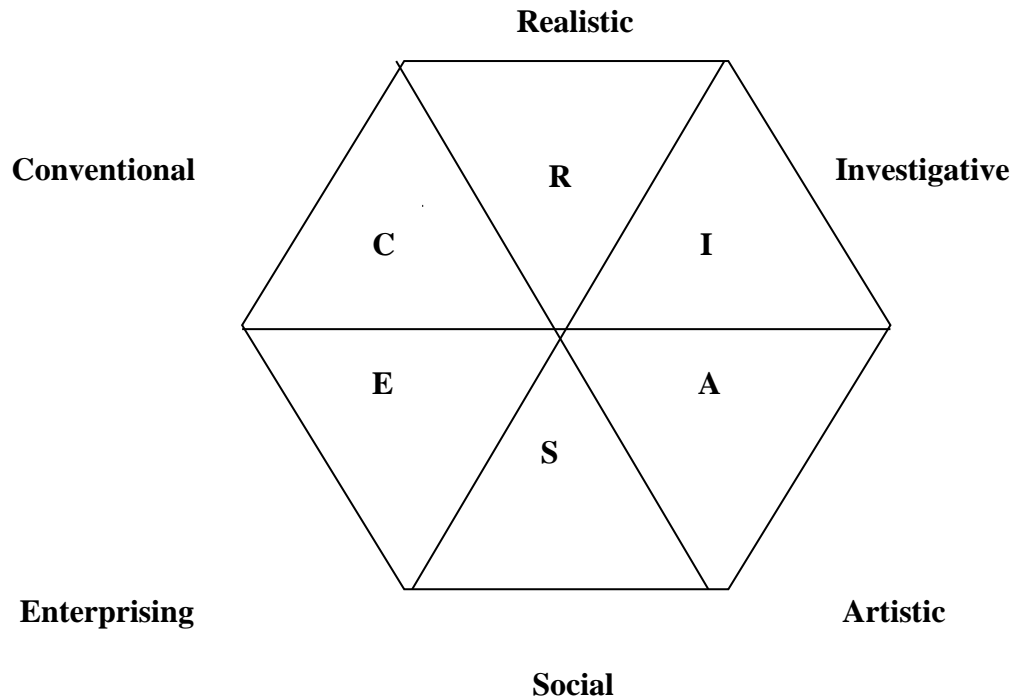


Figure 1: Holland's Hexagonal Career Types

Source: Brown and Lent (2005)

The categories of careers by Holland are explained below:

Realistic – Individuals within the realistic careers work with hands, machines, tools, and are active, practical, as well as adventurous.

High traits - practical, masculine, stable

Low traits - sensitive, feminine, stable

Occupations - construction, farming, architecture, truck driving, mail carrier

Investigative – Individuals within the investigative careers are thoughtful, adopt analytical approaches, explore knowledge and ideas, and are not social.

High traits – scholarly, intellectual, critical

Low traits – powerful, ambitious, adventurous

Occupations – biologist, chemist, dentist, veterinarian, programmer

Artistic – Within the artistic careers, individuals are literary, musical, emotional, creative, open, and engage in artistic activities.

High traits – expressive, creative, spontaneous

Low traits – orderly, efficient, conventional, social, masculine

Occupations – artist, musician, poet, interior designer, writer

Social – People who are within the social category of careers train inform, educate, help, support and avoid technical skills. They are also empathic and more involved in relationships.

High traits – cooperative, friendly, humanistic

Low traits – ambitious, creative, strong,

Occupations – social work, counseling, police officer, LPN

Enterprising – Enterprising individuals are verbally skilled, persuasive, direct, dominant and more directed towards leadership activities.

High traits – ambitious, adventurous, energetic

Low traits – intellectual, creative, feminine

Occupations – lawyer, business executive, politician, TV producer

Conventional – The conventional individual is more focused on rules and routines, provides order or direct structure, has great self-control and interested in respect, power and status. The individual can be punctual and orderly.

High traits – stable, efficient, dependable, controlled

Low traits – intellectual, adventurous, creative

Occupations – bank teller, clerk typist, cashier, data entry

Holland's theory is advantageous in the sense that it helps students get oriented to the worlds of work that isn't overwhelming and provides helpful ways of understanding varied work environments. However, the theory of Holland has been criticised to be not forthcoming in the provision of insights into how counsellors can help students understand and work towards successful careers. Holland's theory is considered relevant in the current study because of students can be helped to consider their traits and interests in their career aspirations.

Donald Super's Theory

Super's theory of career preference and choice is a development theory. According to Super the adolescent stage is the Exploration Stage (14 - 24), where students have to crystallize their occupational preference and specify their occupational preference before they enter into the next stage (establishment from 24 - 44 years). According to Zunker (2006), Super views occupational development as continues process and occupational preference as a synthesizing process: the synthesizing of an individual's personal needs and resources on one side and the economic and social demands of the culture on the other.

Donald Super proposed some stages of development in individuals. They are discussed as he proposed:

Growth (Birth to mid-teens) – The major developmental tasks of this stage are to develop a self-concept and to move from play to work orientation.

Sub stages

- i. Fantasy (4-10 years old) - needs dominate career fantasies and little reality orientation.
- ii. Interest (11-12 years old) - identifies likes/dislikes as basis for career choices
- iii. Capacity (13-14 years old) - more reality incorporated; can relate own skills to specific requirements of jobs.

Exploration (Mid-teens through early 20's) – The major tasks in this stage are to develop a realistic self-concept and implement a vocational preference through role tryouts and exploration. There is also a gradual narrowing of choices leading to implementation of a preference. Preferences become choices when acted upon.

Sub Stages

- i. Tentative (15-17 years old) – At this stage there are tentative choices incorporating needs, interests, abilities are tried out in fantasy, coursework, part time work, volunteer, shadowing. Individuals may identify field and level of work at this sub stage.
- ii. Crystallization of Preference (18-21 years old) - General preference is converted into specific choice. Reality dominates as one enters the job market or training after high school. Choosing a major or field of training in higher education is evident at this stage.
- iii. Specifying a Vocational Preference (early 20's) – There is trial/little commitment at this stage. The first job is tried out as life's work but the implemented choice is provisional and person may cycle back through crystallizing and specifying if not appropriate.

Establishment (mid 20's through mid 40's) – The major task during this stage is to find secure niche in one's field and advance within it.

Sub Stages

- i. Trial and Stabilization (25-30 years old) - There is the process of settling down, if unsatisfactory may make 1-2 more changes before the right job is found.
- ii. Advancement (30-40 years old) – Efforts of individuals are directed at securing one's position, acquiring seniority, developing skills, demonstrating superior performance, and resuming building actions.

Maintenance (40's through early 60's) – The major task in the maintenance stage is to preserve an individual's gains and to develop non-occupational roles for things the individual always wanted to do. Some new grounds are broken and the individual continues established work patterns. However, the individual faces competition from younger workers. This could be a plateau situation.

Disengagement or Decline (Late 60's through retirement) – This is the last stage in which the major tasks involve deceleration of the career, gradual disengagement from world of work and retirement. The individual is challenged to find other sources of satisfaction. Work duties may shift to part time to suit declining capacities.

Most career education programs have been affected by Super's ideas. They provide gradual exposure to self-concepts and work concepts in curriculum that represents Donald Super's ideas of career development.

Donald super proposed a Model for Realistic Career Choice (Igberadja, 2015).

The model is shown below:

1. **Crystallization** (14 to 18 years of age): Adolescents develop ideas about work that mesh (network) with their already existing global self-concept. Individuals form a general vocational goal at this period.
2. **Specification** (18 to 22 years of age): narrow career choices and initiate behavior that enables them to enter some type of career. The individual moves from tentative to specific preferences.
3. **Implementation** (21 to 24 years of age) young adults complete their education or training and enter the world of work.
4. **Stabilization** (25 to 35 years of age): The decision on a specific, appropriate career is made. The choice of the individual is confirmed through experience.
5. **Consolidation** (after age of 35): individuals seek to advance their careers and reach higher-status positions.

Donald Super's theory is relevant in this study because it brings to light the role of counsellors in helping students clarify their self-concept because any task that enhances self-knowledge will increase vocational maturity. Individuals can then be helped to relate their self-knowledge to occupational information.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study has been presented in this section. The framework was designed by the researchers based on the variables in the study. The conceptual framework is depicted diagrammatically in Figure 2.

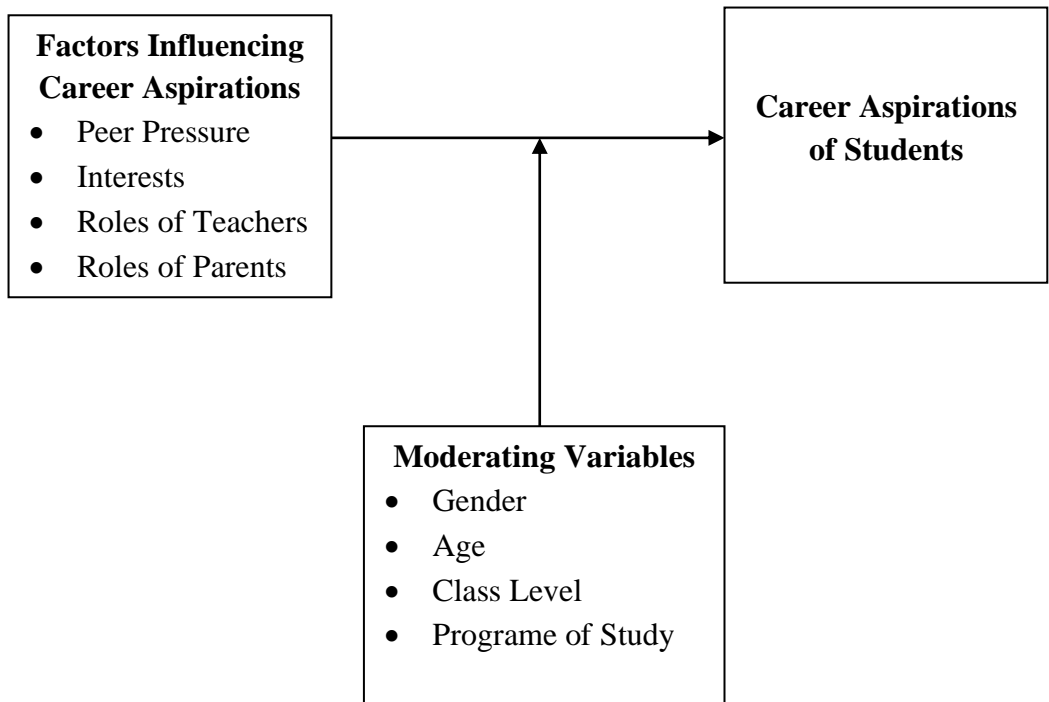


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Factors Influencing Career Aspirations of Students

Source: Researcher's Own Construct

Figure 2 shows the relationship between the factors influencing the career aspirations of students. Some of these factors are peer pressure, interests of students, roles of teachers and roles of parents. However, the influence of these factors on career aspirations can be moderated by the gender, age, class level and programme of study of the respondents. This is because, for instance, the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students can be influenced by the gender, age, class level and programme of study of students.

Conceptual Review

In this section, some of the key concepts in the study are reviewed.

Concept of Career Choice and Aspirations

According to Zunker (2006), career is the totality of work one experiences in a lifetime. It is a chosen pursuit, life work, success in one's profession (Oladele, 2000). Career has also been seen by Okobia and Okorodudu (2004) as a variety of work and non-work situations which usually span through the entire life of an individual. Thus, career is generally related to a pattern of decisions, transactions and adjustments which affects one's role of work, education, family, community development and leisure.

The choice of career is a delicate issue that requires caution and serious considerations (Salami & Salami, 2013). This is because the kind of career that young people pursue can affect their lives in many ways. Career choice can influence how much education the individual will have and also determine the amount of money or income the individual will earn. Students have to make due career planning and also do exhaustive career research before making a career choice so as to adjust with the evolving socio-economic conditions in society (Wattles, 2009). This implies that information is highly important in career choice. According to Salami and Salami (2013), students should be thinking about career choices in senior high school. It is therefore at this level that students develop aspirations for specific careers.

The young adolescent who enters school is encouraged to set high aspirations for him or herself and to work to achieve these aspirations. According to Dudovitz, Chung, Nelson, and Wong (2017), career aspirations might provide quick insight into how adolescents perceive themselves and

their futures. Career aspirations may therefore reflect an adolescent's emerging identity or values.

Factors that Influence Career Aspirations and Choice

Career choice is not an easy task, yet individuals are faced with the task of making a choice in career, preparing for it, starting it and making progress in it at one time in their lives (Salami & Salami, 2013). A major factor that needs to be considered in career choice is career aspiration. Such aspirations may be influenced by several factors. Some of the factors are explained below:

Peer Pressure and Career Aspirations

According to Salvy, Haye, Bowker, and Hermans (2012), peers are great sources of motivation for one another. Lifelong friendships are formed at school and peers have been known to stand up for one another sometimes even more than siblings. They assist one another with school work and also become mentors to one another in their personal lives (Salvy et al., 2012). Very often, one finds that some students pursue some courses just because their friends are doing same. Such students sometimes find it difficult to perform well because they do not have an interest in the course. Adolescents choose friends who have characteristics or talents that they admire, which motivates them to achieve and act as their friends do. Friends encourage adolescents to study hard at school and can also help them think more creatively (Brown & Barbosa, 2009). This is true but it becomes a problem when the talent or interest of the student does not lie entirely in that of his friend.

Ogutu, Odera and Maragia (2017) examined the influence of peer pressure on students' career decision-making. The stratified, purposive and

simple random sampling techniques were used to obtain a sample size of 364 respondents in Kenya. Questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents. Data were analyzed using Spearman's correlation (ρ) and Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR). Peer pressure had a weak positive significant correlation with students' career decision making ($\rho(364) = 0.165, p < 0.01$). 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. 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. It was recommended that career guidance in schools be enhanced to create awareness on career decision making without over emphasizing on peer pressure. This may be realized with secondary schools conducting regular career activities.

Naz, Saeed, Khan, Khan, Sheikh and Khan (2014) explored the nature, level and extent of peer and friends influence in career decision making process of an individual. The data was collected through library method i.e. searching relevant books, journals, articles, newspapers and even internet sources while field information was obtained through questionnaires from 100 students using random sampling method. All the collected information were critically analyzed, debated and explained to produce theory for generalization while the field information was analysed in the form of frequencies and percentages through chi-square test. The study initiated the argument that although family primarily geared and transformed the behaviour of children in

multiple ways, peer influence was an asset for developing career opportunities and decision making among youth.

In Uganda, Okiror and Otabong (2015) revealed that peer interactions play important roles in career choice. In Kenya, Walaba and Kiboss (2013) indicated that peer interactions influence students in choosing careers. As the students interact, they share information about careers. In his study in China, Yi-Hui (2006) revealed that students' interactions with peers of diversified interests, races and backgrounds have the potential to stimulate reflection, knowledge and beliefs which may lead to new ways of thinking about the world, other peers and eventually themselves.

Kiuru (2008) conducted a study in Finland, peer group members who are closely related are likely to end up in similar educational trajectories as they are likely to accept opinions from members who are similar to themselves. Kiuru indicated further that peer group members resembled each other, not only in their educational expectations, but also their subsequent educational trajectories. In a Nigerian study by Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015), peer relationships were revealed to be significant in helping students choose careers.

Researchers in the field of sociology and social psychology have tended to view students' peers as determinants of school context, which acts as a referent against which students evaluate themselves (Alwin & Oto, 1997). In the current study, the peer group was thought of as a reference group encompassing the entire student body. As Feldman and Newcomb (1969) have noted, peer group can also be thought of as membership group within such social group, shared consensual sets of norms developed through interpersonal

interaction. Individual then changes under the pressure of direct approval (or disapproval) in the choice of a vocation. This process of peer influence is theoretically distinct from that occurring via reference groups. Researchers assert, however that micro social processes particularly interpersonal interaction within membership groups, mediate these institutional level of career choice (Alexander & Eckland 1975). A separate line of research focusing on the effects of student's involvement in development has in fact shared that interpersonal interactions are a primary contributor to overall development in the choice of career among school mates (Astin 1977, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

In a study of peer effects on adolescent vocational exploration (AVE), for example, Epstein (1983) found that both initially low and high scoring students who had high achieving friends had higher aspiration for similar vocations. With the use of such locally defined environment, Epstein was able to offer interpretation in terms of interpersonal dynamics that provide deeper insight into the social experience of the people in their choice of career.

Role of Teachers in Career Aspirations of Students

Teachers are often faced with three types of students: the overachiever, underachiever, and the child who is somewhere in between. However, teachers, parents, and school systems are constantly looking for ways to motivate students. Some may say that motivation starts at home. Others may even say that if parents train their child early on to do well in school and to be enthusiastic about learning then most children would do well in school. Then students would not need to be motivated by teachers. In order for motivation to occur all parties must be willing to work together as a whole unit.

Khan, Murtaza and Shafa (2012) explored the role of teachers in career counselling in Senior High Schools in Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan. The key findings showed that teachers have vital roles to guide students for their careers. They voluntarily act as informal counsellors guiding students in their choices of subjects and career paths. In addition, students also see their teachers as role models and attach high value to their advice and guidance related to the subjects and career selection.

Shumba and Naong (2012) sought to determine factors influencing career choice and aspirations among South African students. A quantitative paradigm was adopted for the study. A survey method was used in the study in order to identify the factors that influence career choice and aspirations among South African students. A purposive sample of 133 first and second year university students (77 females, 56 males; age range 15 to 30 years) participated in the study. Career Aspirations Questionnaire was used in collecting the data in the study. Data were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The study found that the family; the ability of the student to identify his/her preferred career choice; and teachers were significant factors that influenced the career choice and aspirations of students.

Njeri (2013) investigated the factors that influence career choice among undergraduate students sponsored by Compassion International. The researcher adopted a census survey design. The population of the study comprised 295 participants which included 293 undergraduate students sponsored by Compassion International and two members of staff who run the sponsorship programme. The data collection instrument was self-administered questionnaire. This was mailed to the participants of the study and a date was

set when the participants responded. An additional interview guide was used to interview the two members of staff. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that role models had the greatest influence on career aspirations.

According to Chauhan (2001), the teacher's role is that of being a good teacher. This means that the teacher organizes learning experiences first in terms of the abilities and needs of the group, and then within that framework adopts instructional content, method and personal relationship to the optimum learning potential of the youngster. The teacher plays an important role in the total guidance programme. The teacher contributes to and draws benefit from the programme of guidance.

Chauhan (2001) indicated that the "teacher supplies the following information:

- a) The marks of the students indicating achievement in each subject.
- b) The report which includes any outstanding achievement of the student in and outside school.
- c) He can, on the basis of his objective and interaction with the students, report the cases which need immediate help. The student with problem should be reported in the form of anecdote or note describing a list of behaviours of student.
- d) The teacher can inform the students of educational and occupational opportunities available in helping the child to plan his future career.
- e) The teacher can render invaluable aid by participating in case conferences.
- f) The teacher also has a definite duty in the counseling programme. His primary responsibility is working with students who have problem

related to learning in the particular course. This may include individual contact. The teacher is the primary referral agency. The student whose difficulties do not respond to classroom treatment is referred with information to the counselor.” (p. 132)

The teacher is a person who knows his or her students’ abilities and capabilities and can help students to have knowledge about the SHS courses and the career that best suits each of them and may help direct students to a particular course according to their interest. In this case, the student will have the idea that if he chooses this particular course he or she can become what he wishes for in future.

Role of Parents in the Career Aspirations of Students

Families, parents and guidance in particular play significant roles in the occupational aspiration and career goals development of their children. Without parental approval or support, students and young adults are often unable to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities. Although parents acknowledge their role and attempt to support the career development of their children, parental messages contain an underlying message of “don’t make the same mistake that I did.” According to Mau and Bikos (2000), this interaction may influence the child or the young adult to select specific college majors or pursue particular occupations.

Numerous studies (Knowles, 1998; Marjoribanks, 1997; Smith, 1991; Wilson & Wilson, 1992) have found that college students and young adults cite parents as an important influence on their choice of career. Yet parents may be aware of the influence they have on the career development and vocational choice of their children. University career service of the University

of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC Chapel Hill) decided to survey parents of incoming freshmen in order to learn more about their beliefs regarding their college-aged children's career choice and their influence on that choice.

Werts (1968) used 80,000 first year college students, compared their father occupation with their sons career choices to find out whether there was a correlation between the sons choice and their fathers occupation. His findings suggest that certain groups of occupations (examples, physical sciences, social sciences medicine) are inherited.

Other studies have separately examined the influences of each parent on the career choices of their sons or daughters and have found that mothers tend to have more influence on the career decisions or aspirations of their children than father. For instance, Mickelson and Velasco (1998) cited their interviews conducted with 70 young adults in 1986. They found out that mother were the most influential and that daughters occupation aspirations were often similar to their mothers chosen professions.

Jungen (2008) also noted in her research paper that choosing a career is often considered a major turning point in a young adult's life. This decision alone has the potential to open the door for success or close the door of opportunity. While often perceived to be an individual choice, research suggests that a variety of influences such as family, school, community, social and economic factors are likely to manipulate one's ultimate career decision. Among these factors, students report that parents have the greatest influence on which career they choose (Kniveton, 2004).

Most parents believe that they should remain neutral in regard to their child's career development. However, studies show that parents have a

greater influence than even teachers on student's career choice (Kniveton, 2004). While direct parental career advice may be influential, parents may be unaware that they can also exert a strong career influence simply by serving as examples of good workers to their children (Kniveton, 2004). In fact, children as young as five years old begin to identify with the occupation of their mother or father as soon as they can pronounce their job title (Jungen, 2008). Even though adolescents actively begin demonstrating their independence from their parents in their high school years, these young adults are still very much dependent on their parents for their career growth (Peterson, Stivers, & Peters 1986, as cited in Clutter, 2010). In fact, parents tend to create the strongest impression on their adolescent's vocational choice more than any other group including counsellors, teachers, friends, or even people working in the identified occupation of desire (Bardick, Berns, Magnusson, & Witko, 2004).

As children begin to transition into adulthood through the formation of their own identity, the more comprehensive view of parental influence regarding the child's career development is preferred, from a counselling standpoint, as it takes into account the entire context of the adolescent's decision-making (Middleton & Loughead, 1993). Other studies have revealed that parenting does not occur in a unidirectional manner, but rather, parenting occurs as a part of a larger system of daily life (Bryant, Zvonkovic, & Reynolds, 2006).

Additionally, even though parents have been typically thought of as positive influences on their children's career decision making, it is also possible that parents may be negatively affecting their children's vocational

development as well (Clutter, 2010). The foregoing research findings indicate that parental education level, parents' occupation, the family socioeconomic status, values and expectations of the parents and the parent-child relations and interactions are among the parental factors that influence career choice of students.

According to Sears and Gordon (2002), additional aspects of one's family background can be influential in career decision making. In several studies among college students, researchers have found that parents are the most influential career role models for students. Mothers in particular seem to exert greater influence during their children's high school years and fathers seemed more influential in their college-aged children's decision-making. Herbart (2006) also opined that if teenagers are raised in a home with a healthy environment that parents live in harmony, the individual's career aspiration can be influenced by their family environment.

The study of Shumba and Naong (2012) among South African students found that the family was a significant factor that influenced the career choice and aspirations of students. Similarly, Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) examined the factors which affect the choice of career among students in two public sector universities in Lahore city. Kazi and Akhlaq found that the influence of parents influence was the most significant factor in the career aspirations of students.

In Hong Kong, Law and Yuen (2011) revealed that students value the opinions of their parents. This implies that parents can foster interest in certain careers in their children from childhood. Bardick, Berns, Magnusson and Witko (2004) have also revealed that Canadian adolescents tend to appreciate

their parents' opinions more than any other source for answers to career related issues. Many parents are in the position to influence their children's career development because they have observed their children's development, know their interests and strengths and have developed a trusting relationship with them. In Singapore, it was revealed that parental involvement had a significant influence on the selection of nursing careers (Ching & Keith, 2011).

In Ghana, Takyi (2011) investigated the nurture experiences that influence JHS Students career aspirations in the Berekum Municipality. The study covered a sample of 303 respondents randomly selected from students of five Junior High Schools in Berekum Municipality. Descriptive survey method was used for the research design. Questionnaires were used to collect the data. The data were analyzed by using research questions based on percentages, frequencies and mode. The study revealed that most Junior High School (JHS) students in Berekum Municipality had clear idea about their future career aspirations. The main sources of career information to JHS in the municipality were teachers, parents and the mass media. The major influence of JHS students in the Municipality were parents, teachers, peers and siblings, but parents were the most influential factor.

The influence of parents on career choice can be positive or negative. This is because when students are forced into careers that they are not interested in they are likely not to enjoy their careers in the future. However, when students are encouraged by their parents into careers that they are interested in then they are more likely to enjoy their careers in the future. This

view has been confirmed by Clutter (2010) who revealed that it is possible for parents to influence their children's career choices negatively.

Influence of Students' Interest on their Career Aspirations

Interest can be defined as the things that hold one's attention or arouse one's curiosity (Sears & Gordon, 2002). Interests are the likes or dislikes of a person and are characterized by the person's intensity of feeling about a subject or things (Hooley, 2012). Interests are learned from parents, in school, from friends, and from your life long experiences. One continues to acquire interests throughout his or her life and this in return influences the reasoning and choices one makes including career choices (Hewitt, 2010). Scholars believe that the more interested people are in their work, the more likely they will succeed. Interest is an intrinsic factor since it deals with individual's likes and dislikes. An individual thus chooses an occupation he likes and avoids occupation he does not like. According to Hooley (2012), people who choose to work in an environment similar to their personality type are more likely to be satisfied and successful.

Choosing an occupation involves choosing a work that interests individuals most. An individual's interest develops out of one's original drives, appetites and needs, fluctuating into our age, experience and opportunity. Super and Bohn (1970) asserted that interest is a moderately effective predictor of vocational success. Interests can change, as one experiences life and meet more people; one become interested in new things and discard some of his/her old interests. One also develop more complex thinking and understanding process, and one may even seek new interest and activities with hope of improving his/her and making life more exciting

(Hewitt, 2010). Once the interest of one keeps changes so does the career choice of a person changes. One seeks a career that meets his interest at time hence the career that one may have wished to take when he was young is not what he eventually does.

According to Hewitt (2010), interest has become the most important factors in determining and measuring occupational selection. Most people would like to work at something they enjoy. Sears and Gordon (2002) also opined that interest inventories have been developed to help identify interests and relate them to career and occupations. Interests inventories tall ranking for specific career and occupational preferences. By measuring interests of successful and satisfied people in an occupation, researchers have developed scales that compare the interests of individuals to the interests of people who are certain about what they want to do.

Otuei (2017) sought to identify the career decision-making difficulties of Senior High School (S.H.S) students in Koforidua Municipality. The descriptive survey method was employed for conducting the study. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 364 senior high school students from Koforidua Municipality. Data were collected mainly by the use of an adapted questionnaire. Means, standard deviation, frequency counts, rank order, t-test and analysis of variance were used in the analysis of data. The study found that dysfunctional myths were the most prevailing difficulties that senior high school students encountered in their career decision-making. These dysfunctional myths affected the career aspirations of the students.

Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) have revealed that the interest of students is the least significant factor that influences career aspirations of students. Kazi and Akhlaq compared the influence of interest, peers, teachers and parents and found interest to be the least influential factor. They explained their finding to be due to students being young and as such valuing the opinions of peers, teachers and parents more than theirs. Nyamwange (2016) also found that student interest is significant in determining career choice decisions for an individual's career. Suutari (2003) however reported that several studies have indicated a positive relationship between interests and career choice. Kerka (2000) indicated that the interest of student influence students' career choice when considered along with personality, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and financial. The implication of the view of Kerka is that students' interest alone does not significantly influence the career aspirations of students.

Other Factors that Influence Career Aspirations of Students

Socio-economic background of students

One's social and economic background has some bearing into family's resources. According to Bolles (2011), individuals at one point inherit from their parents certain financial and other resources that, to some extent, influence their career aspirations. An individual's financial status determines things like where he/she live and which school he or she attends. In turn, these can affect the individual's values, occupational expectations, opportunities, and gender role expectations. Usually, social status is passed down from generation to generation. One may not benefit by being exposed to many opportunities or on the other hand you may not have the opportunity to

recognize all the career options open to you (Hooley, 2012). Even though an individual's socioeconomic status may have affected their career aspirations so far, many career-related decisions lie ahead. High aspiration and motivation to achieve will help individuals to reach their goals (Hooley, 2012).

Although few studies exist on the topic of effects of socioeconomic status on career aspirations, researchers concur that socioeconomic status influences career aspirations (Gottfredson, 2008; Sellers, Satcher, & Comas, 2009). Specifically, individuals raised from higher socioeconomic statuses were more likely to be knowledgeable of and decide on professional occupations (Sellers et al., 2009). Mau and Biko (2010) also cited previous result showing a positive relationship between the family's socioeconomic status and one's career aspirations.

In contrast, Brown and Barbosa (2009), established that career aspirations of young females who came from low-income families were restricted to experiences of their family and acquaintances. Prominent siblings are thought to play a key part in the career direction of teenagers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ali, McWhirter, & Chronister, 2005).

Gender of students

Gender can influence the high school an individual attends, whether the individual is encourage to take risks or not, and the choices of academic major (Hooley, 2012). Often gender-based messages are subtle and their influence may be difficult to discern. For instance, Sears and Gordon (2011) argued that the common career of a specific gender in an individual's family can influence the career aspirations of the individual.

In a study on factors affecting female students' career choices and aspirations conducted in Zimbabwe, Mutekwe, Modiba and Maphosa (2011) found out that the way students often answered questions relating to career choice divulges their intrinsic social prejudices distinctive of their backgrounds. Mutekwe et al. also revealed that gender was a significant factor that influences the career aspirations of students.

Perera and Velummayilum (2008) noted that conferring to theories on gender roles and work, masculinity is categorized habitually as dominance and effectiveness, whereas, in contrast, females choose occupations that have steady hours of work to allow them to accomplish domestic duties. It is also proposed that females like work that is foreseeable, inferior and less financially productive, with low pressure levels, and they do not aim to occupy leadership and decision-making positions (Hewitt, 2010). The preceding argument supports the fact that career aspirations are usually a product of one's socialization since society's gender role socialization regulates what roles men and women should aim at (Sear & Gordon, 2002).

In many African civilizations there are careers that are believed to be male or female fields and society attempts to impart this attitude in boys and girls during socialization (Momsen, 2000). For instance, if a female student has been taught that occupations such as nursing, teaching, and clerical jobs are the jobs reserved for only women, the individual's career aspirations may be limited option (Sears & Gordon, 2011). Men may be encouraged to explore wider variety of occupations, yet the areas of child care and nursing may not be seen as appropriate for them while women may be discouraged from seeking education and training in science

and math related courses such as construction, manufacturing, and transportation (Hewitt, 2010).

Stuart (2000) conducted a study and found that peers' attitudes towards gender may increase or decrease a person's confidence in pursuing a career. Adolescents are easily influenced by their peers because they rely on their friends to provide validation of the choices that they make including career decisions. The implication of the finding of Stuart is that there is difference between males and females in terms of how peers can influence their career aspirations and decisions. In a similar vein, Garrahy (2001) revealed that the social situations that students find themselves in reinforce gender-appropriate occupations of the students. Thus, school activities, social environment and peer influence on career decisions vary in terms of the gender of students (Bojuwoye & Mbanjwa, 2006). In his study, Spade (2001) found that gender difference in students' experiences in terms of how peers influence their careers exist throughout school. In her study in Nigeria, Denga (2004) found that sex-role stereotypes exist among boys and girls in schools as they aspire to traditional occupations. This implies that the beliefs of significant others influence children's self-perceptions of ability and consequently career choice. All these studies have confirmed that peer pressure influences career aspirations and decisions of students differently in terms of gender. This is probably explains the finding of Hooley (2012) that whether one is male or female determines the influence that environmental factors such as peer pressure have on career choice.

Further, Shumba and Naong (2012) have revealed that interest is not a major factor that influences the career choice of both male and female

students. Sax (1994) also examined students' initial interest in science careers, factors influencing career choice during college, and how these factors differ between men and women students. Sax found that men who abandon career aspirations appear to be driven by financial concerns while women were more concerned with the social good of their career choice. By implication Sax revealed that interest influences the career aspirations of male and female students differently. In addition, Garrahy (2001) found that interest influences males and females differently in terms of their career aspirations.

Joshua, Terungwa and Saanyol (2018) also examined correlates of career choice among 210 senior secondary school students in Tarka LGA of Benue State, Nigeria. The respondents were in the age range of 12-22 years. The study consisted of 93 male and 117 female students. Data were collected using career choice scale (CCS), Locus of control scale (LCS) and Conscientiousness scale (CS). Four hypotheses were tested using independent t-test. There was no significant difference between male and female students on career choice. There was no significant difference between students with internal and external locus of control on career choice. There was no significant difference between students from educated and uneducated parents on career choice. It was also found there was no significant difference between students who scored high and low on conscientiousness on career. It was concluded that all the study variables did not relate to career choice. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that guidance counselors should not consider sex difference, parental education, locus of control and conscientiousness when guiding the younger ones on which career to go for, but instead focus on the interest of the child.

Opportunity factors in making career aspirations

The Ghana National Commission for UNESCO (2012) on Cooperative Education stated that cooperative education combined educational, financial, and career building opportunities. Senior High school students (and parents of those students) should be aware of opportunities such as cooperative education. The commission stated that cooperative education, which has existed for over 90 years, should be an important criterion for selecting the right college (Sear & Gordon, 2002). Many times the career that the student may have finally settled on, after much anguish, may no longer exist when the student is ready. Olsten Corporation, a temporary hiring agency, stated that as a result of the downsizing and reorganization of the past decade, many organizations have decided to focus on "core groups of full-time employees complemented by part-timers and networks for flexible staffing" (Kerka, 1997). Kerka stated that training to be portfolio workers, managing our skills as if we were our own job entity, may be the opportunities students will be faced with in the future. He stated that individuals should consider themselves a collection of attributes and skills, not a job. The key skills of the portfolio worker are versatility, flexibility, creativity, self-direction, interpersonal and communication skills, a facility with computer and information technology, the ability to learn continuously, and the ability to manage work, time, and money (Kerka, 1997).

Age

Age has been studied by researchers as part of the demographic variables that can be influential in career choice of students. Liang (2016) examined the factors affecting career decision making among young

generations in China. The results showed that young generations are affected by preference between international and domestic hotels, perceived external prestige, and career indecision when making career decisions. Furthermore, university students prefer international hotels, while vocational students prefer domestic hotels. The study revealed also that career indecision mediated the relationship between brand preference and perceived external prestige through the career decision-making process.

Migunde, Othuon and Mbagaya (2015) sought to determine the moderating role of age in the association between career readiness and career indecision. A sample of 369 secondary school students was surveyed on career indecision and career readiness. Using multiple regression analysis, the predictor variables were able to account for 25.7 % of variance in career indecision. Career indecision was significantly negatively correlated to career readiness. Increase in career readiness was significantly predictive of decrease in career indecision. The interaction term between career readiness and age significantly predicted career indecision. Because the interaction term was significant this implies that age was a significant moderator in the relationship between career readiness and career indecision. The relationship between career maturity and career indecision was found to be stronger at younger ages.

Hellen, Omari and Mong'are (2017) examined the factors influencing choice of careers among university students in the school of Business and Economics in Kisii University. The specific objectives of the study were to; determine whether gender, Age, peer group and parents do influence the students in career choice. The target population for the study was 1998

students in the School of Business and Economics. A sample size of 231 was used. The study adopted stratified random sampling technique to obtain data from all school of Business and Economics students in Main Campus. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was determined by the use of the university supervisors and research assistants while testing for reliability, Cronbach's Alpha Co-efficient was calculated on the piloted questionnaires. Data was tabulated and the measures of central tendency, weighted mean and simple regression used for analysis after which results were summarized in tables, charts and graphs. The results revealed that gender strongly influenced the student's career choice. The findings also showed that age is the second strongest factor influencing the choice of career. The study also found out that Peer group and parental guidance had a moderate influence on the student's choice of career. The study made the following recommendation; a lot of emphasis on development of well nurtured career guidance department should be established in Kisii University main campus to help our students with career guidance, this is due to the findings that students need information on career prospects that they take.

In addition, Fabunmi and Adedayo (2017) explored issues of gender and adolescents age difference as they relate with choice of career among secondary school students in southwest Nigeria. A total of 100 SSII students responded to the study, who were selected through a multistage random sampling technique. The instrument, tagged "Student Career Inventory (SCI) was constructed by the researchers and validated against two similar instruments namely - the Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) and Career

Inventory Survey (CIS) for content and construct validities using factor analysis. This yielded coefficients of 0.58 and 0.63 respectively. The same process of factor analysis was used to test the reliability of the instrument which was found to be reliable with a coefficient of 0.966. The finding of the study showed a significance difference in the choice of career between male and female students, but not significant as with respect to age difference between 15 and 17 years. Based on this, it was recommended among others that gender issue should be put into consideration when career choice is to be treated. Several other researchers have studied the relationship between age and career indecision and found no significant relationship between the two (Lopez & Ann-Yi, 2009; Schmidt, Miles, & Welsh, 2011).

Programme of Study

The relationship between level and programme of study and career choice of students has also been explored in the literature. Barrow (2009) conducted a mixed methods ex post facto study was used to examine intrinsic and extrinsic influences on the degree of certainty students felt in their career decision-making processes. The study was conducted in a high school located in the Southeastern United States wherein 242 girls and 238 boys in grades 9 through 12 participated. The theoretical framework of this study consisted of (a) a theory of vocational personalities and work environments, (b) a theory of vocational interest and vocational choice, (c), a theory of self-efficacy (d) and a theory of cognitive information processing. Two commercial instruments were used to investigate the research questions. The independent factors used to predict the dependent variable of Career Decision-Making Certainty were (a) Decision-Making Confusion, (b) Commitment Anxiety, (c) External

Conflict, and (d) Career Indecision. Statistical analyses indicated that Decision-Making Confusion and Career Indecision had negative influences on Career Decision-Making Certainty whereas External Conflict had a positive influence; Commitment Anxiety was not a significant predictor. An investigation of predictors by gender, grade level, and ethnicity indicated girls had higher levels of Decision-Making Confusion and Commitment Anxiety than boys. An analysis of students' Total Decision-Making Negative Career Thoughts indicated girls had higher levels of Career Decision-Making Negative Career Thoughts than boys. Content theme analysis revealed students' perceptions of positive and negative influences on their levels of certainty in their career decision-making processes. Four themes of positive influences emerged: (a) support from parents and friends (b) interest, (c) self-confidence, and (d) job experience. Four themes of negative influences emerged: (a) career indecision, (b) do not know how to get there, (c) lack of self-confidence, and (d) lack of knowledge about careers. In general, Decision-Making Confusion and Career Indecision exhibited negative influences on Career Decision-Making Certainty whereas External Conflict exhibited positive influence; Commitment Anxiety was not a significant influence. Post hoc comparisons revealed students did not vary by grade level or ethnicity on the dependent or independent variables but some variances were found by gender.

Tolegenova (2017) also explored the factors influencing grade 11 students' decision to study World History as their major subject at a specialized school in Kazakhstan. The school follows International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. Using qualitative research methods, data for

the study was collected by semi structured one-on-one interviews with students who chose World History subject, teachers who teach World History, parents of 11 grade students and a member from the school leadership. Focus group interview was also conducted with teachers from different subject areas. The finding of the study revealed a number of factors influencing students' choices of World History subject. These include students' own personal interests in knowing about the world, their career choice and aspirations, effect of information technology, and scholarship opportunities.

James (2007) also explored the reasons why International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) students choose particular Experimental Science (Group 4) subjects in Finland and Portugal. The findings suggest that interest, enjoyment, university course and career requirements have most influence on students' choices. Significant differences in the stated influence of certain factors on subject choice were found between nationalities, host countries, and the sexes, and also in the choices of Chemistry, Design Technology and Physics.

Korkmaza (2015) investigated the factors influencing Turkish high school students' career choices in science and technology. 1192 high school students (629 female, 558 male, 5 did not indicate their gender, age range 14-17) were administered Career Choice Instrument (CCI) in ROSE survey together with demographic measure. Series of MANOVAs demonstrated that high school students' career choices and preferences were influenced by gender, school type, mother and father education level and family income. Univariate ANOVA on the six sub-scales of CCI revealed significant and insignificant effects of these selected factors.

Issa and Nwalo (2008) investigated the influence of age, gender, subject background and predisposing factors on the admission choice of undergraduates in Nigerian library schools. This is to allow for a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding the admission choice of this set of undergraduates in Nigerian universities. The study adopted survey research design, with the Career Choice Influence Questionnaire (CCIQ), $r = 0.92$, as the major instrument of data collection. In all, 1,228 students from eight, proportionally stratified Nigerian university library schools selected by proportionate sampling were surveyed; based on the population of students per library school and for every class involved in the study. Secondary data were obtained from the students' admission records. The questionnaire was validated through expert advice and pre-test. Students from the Federal University of Technology, Minna Library School were involved in the pre-test. Chi-square statistics were used to test the study's four hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The study revealed that there are slightly more male librarianship students (50.3%) than females (49.7%), indicating that the course is popular with both sexes. That 46.9% undergraduates were in the 22-26 age bracket indicated that the younger undergraduates constitute the majority. Chi-square tests revealed significant relationships between undergraduates who chose the course originally and those who did not, regarding age and career choice ($X^2=11.1$, $df=5$, $p<0.05$); gender and career choice ($X^2=3.84$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$); subject background and career choice ($X^2=7.81$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$) and admission predisposing factors and career choice ($X^2=11.1$, $df=5$, $p<0.05$). Thus, the variables tested influenced the career choice of undergraduates in Nigerian library schools. The study concluded that the choice of library and information

science as a course of study was influenced more by the identified admission predisposing factors than other factors.

Yamin-Ali (2014) conducted a case study focused on subject selection in a secondary school (School S) in Trinidad. Feedback from 77 Form Four students and 54 Lower Six students revealed that more than half of the Form four students were not satisfied with their subject selection, and there was evidence of some mismatch between students' career preferences and their subject selection. Parents were the source of advice on subject selection for a large number of students at both levels. Lower Six students were more satisfied than those of Form Four with the choices they made. Generally, students felt they needed more options in the subject offerings. Some teachers felt that procedures for entry into Form Six need to be more just and that more transparency is needed in the subject selection process.

Values

Values are one's basic beliefs. They comprise the beliefs he or she holds most dear to his or her heart (Sear & Gordon, 2002). Values are sources of motivation that can be seen in one's action; in the attraction to or avoidance of the pursuit of things such as money, power, or spirituality. Some values hold more meaning than others (Hooley, 2012). We tend to pursue more vigorously the values that have more meanings to us than those that are less important to us. For instance, getting education; must have positive implications to us. How actively one pursues education is related to the strength of the value he or she places on education (Hewitt, 2010).

Values at times conflicts, thus, fulfilling one interferes with achieving another (Hewitt, 2010). Individuals would encounter conflicts throughout

your life that will require you to rank your values, whether you are or you are not aware of the choice. Sometimes identifying your personal life values is difficult. One way of accessing values is to examine choices you have made in past (Sear & Gordon, 2002). In Sears and Gordon's (2002) assessment, values that a community or society hold plays a commanding role in influence the type of career students make. They argued that students come from a society that is cultured with some deeply rooted values that they hold to and any career that seems to undermine this values are unlikely to be pursued.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed related literature on student's aspiration of career decision making. The review focused on the theoretical and empirical framework. The Social-Cognitive Theory, Holland's theory and Donald Super's theory of vocational types were reviewed under the theoretical framework. Issues relating to career aspirations as well as the factors influencing career aspirations were also reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The study sought to determine factors influencing career aspirations of Senior High School students in the Berekum Municipality. This chapter focuses on the research design, study area, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, data collection procedures, and the data processing and analysis methods.

Research Design

According to Pride and Ferrell (2008), a research design is a combined plan for obtaining the information needed to address a research problem. The research design appropriate for this study is that of a descriptive survey. This was because the descriptive research design provides data about the population being studied. It also depicts the participants in an accurate way by describing the people who take part in the study. According to Orodho (2012), the descriptive survey design is effective and easy to conduct and it also ensures ease in accessing information. The descriptive survey design allows the researcher to gather information, summarize and interpret data for purposes of clarification.

Descriptive survey research in the view of Neuman (2000) is also helpful in indicating trends in attitudes and behaviours, and enabling generalization of the findings of a study. Thus, in the context of this study, the

descriptive survey was helpful in knowing the thoughts of students, parents and teachers on the factors that influence career aspirations of students.

Regardless of these merits of the descriptive survey design, there are some criticisms. One specific criticism of the descriptive survey research design has been the view that it is superficial and not worthy of recognition as a research approach to private or personal matters which respondents may not be completely truthful to delve into (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). This criticism did however not affect the current study because the researcher made the respondents aware that their views would not be used against them in anyway and as such they felt freer to give their views.

Study Area

The Berekum Municipal is one of the 260 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana, and forms part of the twelve Municipalities and Districts in the Bono Region. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2010), the Municipality can be located in the Western part of Ghana in the Bono Region. It lies between latitude 7°15' south and 8.00' north and longitudes 2°25' east and 2°50' west with the capital as Berekum.

The Municipality lies in close proximity to Cote d' Ivoire. This is another remarkable feature which promotes economic and commercial activities between the District and Cote d' Ivoire (GSS, 2010). The Municipality shares boundaries with Wenchi Municipal and Jaman South Municipal to the northeast and northwest respectively, Dormaa Central Municipal to the South and Sunyani Municipal to the east. The population of

the Municipality according to 2010 population and housing census stands at 129,628 with 59,869 males 69,759 females (GSS, 2010).

Population

According to Cooper and Schindler (2011), a population is the entire collection of components about which inferences are made. In the Berekum Municipality, there are five Senior High Schools made up of three public and two private Senior High Schools. In this study, the population was made up of form three students in the three public Senior High Schools, the teachers in these schools and the parents of the form three students. The population therefore comprised 401 students, 142 SHS teachers and 200 parents.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample has been defined by Ofori and Dampson (2011) as the segment of the population that is selected for an investigation. Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population. Generally, sampling enables the researcher to study a relatively small number of units in place of the target population, and obtain data that are representative of the whole target population (Creswell, 2009). Creswell indicated further that sampling provides a better option since it addresses the survey population in a short period of time and produce comparable and equally valid results. It is also less demanding in terms of labour requirement, since it requires small portion of the target population. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size, a sample of 196 students, representing 48.9% of the student's population, 30 teachers, representing 21.1% and 50 parents, representing 25.0% of parent's population. The use of

these percentages was based on the view of Niles (2006) that, to ensure that the margin of error is reduced, it is important to increase the percentage of sample to be used in a study, particularly for larger population. Based on this, the researcher considered a higher percentage for students since the students population was high compared to the population of teachers and parents.

The students were sampled by using stratified sampling procedure. Stratified sampling has been defined by Fink (1995) as a sampling method in which the population is divided into subgroups or 'strata,' and a random sample is then selected from each subgroup. Ogah (2013) noted that using stratified sampling ensures that important characteristics of the population are fairly represented in the sample and left to chance.

In doing the stratification, the students were put into strata of their schools and gender. This stratification was done because those were the two main groupings under which the students could be selected. Stratified sampling was used to put the sample into strata of school and gender (male and female). The use of these strata was to ensure a fair representation of the three public schools as well as both genders (males and females) in the study. The sample size of each stratum was gotten by calculating on the basis of the size of each stratum within the main population. According to Ahmed (2009) in stratified sampling, the proportion of each stratum sampled is identical to the proportion of the stratum in the population.

After stratifying the sample, the simple random sampling was used to select the actual participants from each of the stratas for the study. Simple random sampling has been viewed by De-Vos (2002) as the method of sampling where participants are selected from the population so that all

members of the population have the same probability of being chosen. The students were put into strata of their schools and gender. The parents and teachers were also sampled using the stratified approach. They were put into strata of the three schools. After that a random sample was taken from each school to form the total sample. Thus, parents and teachers were selected from each of the three schools. This ensured each of the three schools was represented in the sample.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instrument that was used in this study was a questionnaire. Specifically, three sets of questionnaire were used, one each for students, teachers and parents. The questionnaires were used for the purpose of collecting primary quantitative data. According to Owens (2002), questionnaires help to reach out to a large number of respondents within a short time, give the respondents adequate time to respond to the items, and provide objective method since no bias resulting from the personal characteristics (as in the case of an interview).

The questionnaires were designed by the researcher after thorough review of literature. Thus, several studies in the literature review were consulted and items were gleaned from them to make up the questionnaires. The questionnaires were structured. The questionnaires for the students had three sections. The first section covered the background information of the respondents made up of three items. The second section covered the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of respondents and was made up of five items. The last section comprised six items and dealt with the influence of

students' interest on their career aspirations. Overall, the questionnaire for the students was made up of 13 items.

The questionnaire for the teachers was made up of two sections. The first section comprised two items and dealt with the background data while the last section comprised five items and dealt with the role teachers played in students' career aspirations. Thus, the questionnaire for the teachers was made up of a total of seven items.

The questionnaire for the parents was made up of two sections. The first section comprised two items and covered the background data while the last section comprised eight items and covered the role parents played in the career aspirations of students. Thus, the questionnaire for the parents was made up of a total of 10 items. Even though not all the parents were literates, the researcher explained the items to those who couldn't read and write and then based on their answers the researcher ticked the corresponding portion on the questionnaires.

Pilot Testing

Pre-testing enabled the researcher to fine tune of the questionnaire and enhances the objectivity and effectiveness. A pilot testing of the questionnaire was used at All for Christ Senior High School at Kato which is part of Berekum Municipality but was not included in the population. Even though, it was a private school, it was chosen for the pilot study because there was no other public school in the Municipality. Again, since the school was located in the Municipality, the likelihood of having similarities in characteristics was high. The researcher used 30 form 3 students, 20 teachers and 20 parents from the school to test the questionnaire. Data was collected within a week. After

the pilot test, the researcher was able to establish reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach co-efficient alpha.

Validity

The validity of instrument is the extent to which it does measure what it is supposed to measure. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. Mugenda and Mugenda added that validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the variables of the study. In other words, it is concerned with whether the instrument measures what it intends to measure. The questionnaires were validated in terms of content and face validity.

Content validity is concerned with establishing whether the content of the instrument is measuring what it is supposed to measure. Towards this end, the researcher sought the opinion of supervisors on the relevance of the initial draft questionnaires constructed. Such inputs enhanced the validity of the instruments to measure what they were intended to measure in relation to the research questions. This was done because according to Nitko (1996), expert judgment is used to provide evidence of content validity. Corrections were made based on the views of supervisors before the final questionnaires were done. For instance, in the earlier design of the questionnaires the rating scale did not have the 'undecided' option. This was added to the final design of the questionnaires.

Reliability

Reliability is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure characteristics of interest over time. It is the degree to which a

research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. If a researcher administers a test to a subject twice and gets the same score on the second administration as the first test, then there is reliability of the instrument (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Reliability is concerned with consistency, dependability or stability of a test (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). In other words, it is the degree to which a measurement technique can be relied upon to secure consistent results upon repeated application. The researcher measured the reliability of the questionnaire to determine its consistency in testing what they are intended to measure. The internal consistency method was used. Thus, after the pilot test, Cronbach co-efficient alpha was used to determine the reliability.

The reliability co-efficients were 0.77 for the students' questionnaire, 0.74 for the teachers' questionnaire and 0.79 for the parents' questionnaire. In terms of subsections, the questionnaires for the teachers and parents had only one section each. However, the questionnaire for the students had two subsections. The reliability co-efficient for sub-section A was 0.79 while that of the sub-section B was 0.76.

Data Collection procedures

Accompanying the questionnaire was a letter of introduction from College of Distance Education (CoDE). This letter served as permission for the researcher to collect data comfortably in selected schools. In its administration, the questionnaire took 10-15 minutes to complete. The researcher assisted the respondents, where necessary, to understand the significance of the study and also to ensure that the responses were compatible

with the objective of the study. This further ensured respondents' cooperation, as well as a high response rate.

The collection of the data was done with the help of two teachers from each school. The researcher provided a short training to the assistants on ethical issues such as confidentiality and the procedure in collecting the data. A total of three weeks was used for the data collection using a week for each school. Parents were contacted to answer the questionnaires during the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings for the various schools. The questionnaires were collected after the respondents had finished answering them. Thus, a 100% return rate was achieved from all the administered questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Data analysis process involves organising and summarizing data extracted from the instruments concerning factors that influence career aspirations of the Senior High School students in the Berekum Municipality. The data obtained in this study was quantitative in nature. Quantitative data are observations measured on a numerical scale. Specifically, data for the research questions were analysed using means and standard deviations. The first two hypotheses were tested using independent samples t-test while the remaining four hypotheses were tested using One-Way ANOVA. The results were presented in tables and discussed in relation to previous literature.

Ethical Issues

The research instrument included instructions on how to fill the questionnaire. The preamble to the questionnaire had explanations on the purpose and nature of the study and assured all the respondents of their

confidentiality. This ensured that the participants were able to make informed decisions on whether to participate in the study or not. To ensure anonymity, the participants were not required to write their names on the questionnaires. Also, the information obtained from the respondents were kept confidential and only used for academic purposes.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methods involved in conducting the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A sample of 196 students, 30 teachers and 50 parents was used for the study. They were selected via stratified and simple random sampling procedures from public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality. The data was collected using a questionnaire. Specifically, three sets of questionnaire were used, one each for students, teachers and parents. The validity and reliability of the questionnaires were established after conducting a pilot test. The reliability coefficients found were 0.77 for the students' questionnaire, 0.74 for the teachers' questionnaire and 0.79 for the parents' questionnaire. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to determine factors influencing career aspirations of the Senior High School students in the Berekum Municipality. This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study. The results of the study are presented first after which the discussion of the results is done.

Results

The results of the study are presented in two parts. The demographic part is presented first after which the results answering the research questions are presented.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in this section. The three categories of respondents are all described in this section. The demographic characteristics of students are presented in table 1. The characteristics include the gender age, and the course of study of the respondents.

It is seen in Table 1 that majority of the respondents (118, 60.2%) are males while 78(39.7%) are females. In terms of age, Table 1 shows that 168(85.7%) are within the ages of 17 to 19 while 8(4%) are within 14 to 16 years. In addition, Table 1 shows that 55(28%) were offering General Arts,

40(20.4%) were offering Business while only 20(10.2%) were offering Agriculture Science.

Table 1 – *Demographic Characteristics of Students (N=196)*

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	118	60.2
Female	78	39.8
Age		
14-16	8	4.0
17-19	168	85.7
20 years and above	20	10.2
Course of Study		
Science	28	14.3
General Arts	55	28.1
Home Economics	27	13.8
Business	40	20.4
Agriculture Science	20	10.2
Visual Arts	26	13.2

Source: Field Survey (2019)

From the demographic data, it is clear that majority of the respondents are males, within the ages of 17 and 19 and also offering General Arts. This was understandable because in most Senior High Schools in Ghana, the students are mostly males. Again, in Senior High Schools, the students are also mostly within the ages of 17 and 19. Finally, General Arts is the most popular course in many Senior High Schools in Ghana. The demographic

characteristics of the students are relevant in the current study because they can affect the career aspirations of students.

The demographic characteristics of the teachers are presented in Table 2. The characteristics include the gender and ages of the teachers in the study.

Table 2 – *Demographic Characteristics of Teachers*

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	17	56.7
Female	13	43.3
Age		
21-30	6	20.0
31-40	17	56.7
41 years and above	7	23.3

Source: Field Survey (2019)

It can be seen in Table 2 that majority of the respondents (17, 56.7%) were males while 13(43.3%) were females. Again, majority of the respondents (17, 56.7%) were within the ages of 31 and 40 while the minority (6, 20%) were within the ages of 21 and 30.

The demographic characteristics of the parents are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 – *Demographic Characteristics of Parents*

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	31	62.0
Female	19	38.0
Age		
31-40	10	20.0
41-50	19	38.0
51 years and above	21	42.0

Source: Field Survey (2019)

It was shown in table 3 that 31(62%) of the respondents were males while 19(38%) of the respondents were females. In terms of age, 21(42%) were 51 years and above while 10(20%) were within the ages of 31 and 40.

Answers to Research Questions

In order to determine if the composite weight of any item on the five-point, Likert-type scale was high or low, a cut-off point was established as follows: Range between the highest and lowest possible scores. Thus, $5-1=4$. The midpoint of the range was obtained as 4 divided by 2. Establishing the cut-off point therefore involved subtracting the midpoint of the range from the highest possible score. Thus, $5-2=3$. A cut-off point of 3 was set for the data. This implies that any mean value more than 3 was regarded as high and a mean value less than 3 regarded as low. The interpretation of the mean scores was based on the nature of the items.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?

This research question was meant to identify the influence of peer pressure on the career aspiration of the respondents. The data were analysed using means and standard deviations. The results are presented in Table 4.

It is shown in table 4 that the statement ‘what I hope to be in future is influenced by my friends’ recorded the highest mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 1.26. Also, it is shown that the statement ‘My friends influenced me in choosing my course in SHS’ recorded a mean of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 1.38.

Table 4 – *Influence of Peer Pressure on Career Aspirations of Students*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
My friends are great source of motivation for me	2.44	1.31
My friends influenced me in choosing my course in SHS	3.91	1.38
The friends I admire most motivate me to be who I am	2.95	1.53
The way I learn is as a result of how my friends learn	3.39	1.31
What I hope to be in future is influenced by my friends	4.11	1.26
Average of Means & Standard Deviations	3.36	1.36

Source: Field Survey (2019)

In addition, it is seen that the statement ‘The way I learn is as a result of how my friends learn’ recorded a mean of 3.39 and a standard deviation of 1.31. The results in table 4 imply that most of the respondents agreed that what they want to be in future is influenced by their friends, their choices of courses are influenced by their friends and the ways they learn are also influenced by their friends. The average of the means was computed by adding all the means and dividing by the number of items. The average of means was 3.36. This

was higher than the 3.0 cut-off set for the study. This implies that overall the respondents agreed to most of the statements showing that peer pressure had a great influence on the career aspirations of students.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?

This research question sought to identify the influence of students’ interest on their career aspirations. The data obtained from the students were analysed using means and standard deviations. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 – *Influence of Students’ Interest on Career Aspirations*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
I have a clear idea of what I want to be in future	1.55	0.92
I am really interested in the type of work I will do in future	1.40	0.72
What I personally want to do or be is more important than what my parents want	1.97	1.05
I will never choose a career I have no interest in	1.83	1.33
My teacher(s) know best what career I should choose	2.21	1.32
My parents know best what career I should choose	2.60	1.29
Average of Means & Standard Deviations	1.93	1.11

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 5 shows the influence of students’ interest on their career aspirations. It is shown that the statements ‘my parents know best what career I should choose’ recorded a mean of 2.60 and a standard deviation 1.29. This

mean was closer to the cut-off point of 3.0. This implies that some of the respondents shared this view. Similarly, the statement ‘my teacher(s) know best what career I should choose’ recorded mean of 2.21 and a standard deviation of 1.32 implying that some of the respondents shared this view. The statement ‘I will never choose a career I have no interest in’ recorded a low mean of 1.83. This means that most of the respondents disagreed to this. Therefore, it means the respondents were of the view that they will choose careers that they are interested in.

The average of the means was computed by adding up all the means and dividing by the number of items. It is shown that the average of the means is 1.93 which is below the cut-off point of 3.0. Therefore, it can be inferred that the students did not view interest as having a major influence on their career aspirations. Comparing the mean of means (1.93) with that of the mean of means of peer pressure in Table 4 (3.36), it can be inferred that the students viewed peer pressure as having more influence on their career aspirations compared to their interests.

Research Question 3: What role do teachers play in the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?

This research question aimed at identifying the role teachers played in the career aspirations of students. In answering this research question, the teachers were asked a series of questions. The data obtained were analysed using means and standard deviations. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 shows the roles that teachers play in career aspirations of students. It is shown in Table 6 that all the mean scores are below the cut-off score of 3.0. Therefore, it can be inferred that all the statements recorded

lower mean scores. This implies that most of the teachers did not agree with the statements and as such the teachers did not view themselves as playing significant roles in the career aspirations of their students.

Table 6 – *Roles Teachers Play in Career Aspirations of Students*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
As teacher,		
I suggest future careers for my students	2.47	1.01
I am interested in what careers my students choose	2.03	1.25
I interact with my students to know their preferred career choice needs	2.13	1.22
I give relevant education and occupational information to my students	2.20	1.24
I give special attention to students who struggle with career choice issues	2.57	1.17
Average of Means & Standard Deviations	2.28	1.18

Source: Field Survey (2019)

However, out of all the statements in the table, it can be seen that teachers giving special attention to students who struggle with career choice issues recorded a mean of 2.57 and a standard deviation of 1.17. This mean was slightly closer to the cut-off score of 3.0 and thus implies that some of the teachers gave special attention to students with career choice struggles. Overall, the mean of means (2.28) indicate that the role teachers played in the career aspirations of students was low.

Research Question 4: What role do parents play in the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?

This research question aimed at identifying the role that parents play in the career aspirations of their children. The data obtained from the parents were analysed using means and standard deviations. Using the same cut-off point of 3 since the questionnaire was on a five-point likert scale, any mean value more than 3 was regarded as high and a mean value less than 3 regarded as low. A higher mean implied that most of the respondents agreed to the statement while a lower mean implied that most of the respondents disagreed to the statement. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 – *Roles Parents play in the Career Aspirations of their Children*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
As a parent, when it comes to career choice:		
I suggest the best future career of my child or children	2.88	1.32
I try to make my child/children pursue my own career area	3.26	1.36
I do not force my wishes above the career interest of my child/children	1.80	0.90
My child will never make any decision without my approval	3.32	1.43
I am aware that I have great influence on my child's career aspirations	2.08	1.12
I have no interest in the career my child chooses	2.24	1.56
Fathers greatly influence the career aspirations of their sons	2.52	1.42
Mothers greatly influence the career aspirations of their daughters	2.44	1.39
Average of Means & Standard Deviations	2.57	1.31

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 7 shows the roles played by parents in the career aspirations of students. The table shows that two statements recorded mean scores above 3.0 implying that the parents agreed mostly to these statements. The parents were of the view that their children will not attempt decisions without their approval (M=3.32, SD=1.43). This implies that parents were forcing their children to make decisions that they approved of. The parents also indicated that they know their children will do best in their (parents) own career areas (M=3.26, SD=1.36). These two statements show that parents had influences on the career aspirations of their children.

The statement 'I have no interest in the career my child chooses' recorded a mean of 2.24 lower than the cut-off score of 3.0 which implies that the most of the respondents were not in agreement with the statement. By implication, the parents were interested in the careers of their children. Again, the statement 'I know my child's career interest is more important than my wishes' recorded a mean of 1.80 and a standard deviation of 0.90. This means most of the parents disagreed to the statement. Thus, parents did not think the interest of their children were important than their own wishes. Therefore, it can be inferred from the results in table 7 that the parents had interest in the careers of their children and that their children will not take career decisions without the approval of the parents. As a result the parents did not consider their children's interest as being important than their own wishes.

Testing of Hypotheses

The main dependent variables used in the statistical analyses were the influence of peer pressure on career choice and the influence of interest on career aspirations. The influence of peer pressure on career choice was a self-

reported section on the questionnaire and so was computed as a single continuous variable. Thus, peer pressure was not a different variable from career aspirations. In the same vein, the influence of interest on career aspirations was a self-reported section on the questionnaire which was computed as a single continuous variable. Thus, two main dependent variables are used throughout the hypotheses testing. On the other hand, the independent variables used in the hypotheses testing include gender, age and programme of study.

Hypothesis One:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.

This hypothesis was meant to find the difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of male and female students. The hypothesis was tested by using the independent samples t-test. The independent samples t-test was suitable because there was one dependent variable (influence of peer pressure on career choice) and two independent groups (males and females). In using the independent samples t-test, the Levene's test for homogeneity of variance was done first. The results are presented in tables 8 and 9.

Table 8 – *Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances*

	F	Sig
Equal variances assumed	1.464	.228
Equal variances not assumed		

Source: Field Survey (2019)

From Table 8, it is seen clearly that the significant value of .228 is greater than .05 the significant level. This implies that equal variances can be assumed. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met.

The results of the independent samples t-test are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 – *Gender Difference in Influence of Peer Pressure on Career Aspirations*

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Male	118	16.04	4.86	194	-2.879*	.004
Female	78	17.95	3.99			

Source: Field Survey, (2019)

* Significant, $p < .05$

It is shown in Table 9 that there is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on career aspirations of male and female students ($t(194) = -2.879, p < .05$). The mean of the females was higher (17.95) than that of males (16.04). This implies that female students perceived peer pressure as having an influence on their career aspirations than male students. Based on the results in Table 9, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is a significant difference between male and female students in terms of the influence of peer pressure on their career aspirations.

Hypothesis Two:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of interest on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of interest on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.

This hypothesis was meant to find the difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of male and female students. The hypothesis was tested by using the independent samples t-test. The Levene's test for homogeneity of variance was done first. The results are presented in tables 10 and 11.

Table 10 – *Levene's Test for Equality of Variances*

	F	Sig
Equal variances assumed	.580	.447
Equal variances not assumed		

Source: Field Survey (2019)

From Table 10, it can be seen that the significant value of .447 is greater than .05 the significant level. This implies that equal variances can be assumed. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met.

The results of the independent samples t-test are shown in Table 11.

Table 11 – *Gender Difference in Influence of Interest on Career Aspirations*

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Male	118	12.22	3.17	194	-1.863	.064
Female	78	13.10	3.28			

Source: Field Survey (2019)

It is shown in Table 11 that there is no significant difference in the influence of interest on career aspirations of male and female students ($t(194) = -1.863, p > .05$). Even though the mean of the females was higher (13.10) than that of males (12.22), the statistical test reveal that the difference is not

significant. This implies that male and female students perceived the influence of interest on their career aspirations in the same way. Based on the results in Table 11, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis Three:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.

This hypothesis sought to find out the difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age. Since there were three independent groups (12-16 years, 17-19 years and 20 years and above) and one dependent variable (influence of peer pressure on career aspirations), One-Way ANOVA was used in testing the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12 - *Differences in the Influence of Peer Pressure on the Career Aspirations of Students on the basis of Age*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22.379	2	11.190	.521	.595
Within Groups	4142.861	193	21.466		
Total	4165.240	195			

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 12 shows that there is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age [F(195)=.521, $p>.05$]. The probability value (p-value) of .595 is greater than .05 significant level and as such the null hypothesis is not rejected. The results imply that there was no difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age. In simple terms, it can be inferred that age was not a factor in how peer pressure influenced the career aspirations of students.

Hypothesis Four:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.

This hypothesis sought to find out the difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age. Since there were three independent groups (12-16 years, 17-19 years and 20 years and above) and one dependent variable (influence of interest on career aspirations), One-Way ANOVA was used in testing the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13 - *Differences in the Influence of Interest on the Career Aspirations of Students on the basis of Age*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.969	2	.484	.046	.955
Within Groups	2038.883	193	10.564		
Total	2039.852	195			

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 13 shows that there is no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age [F(195)=.046, p>.05]. The probability value (p-value) of .955 is greater than .05 alpha level. Based on this, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The implication is that there was no difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age.

Hypothesis Five:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.

This hypothesis aimed at identifying the difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered. Since there were six independent groups (Science, General Arts, Home Economics, Business, Agriculture Science, and Visual Arts) and one dependent variable (influence of peer pressure on career aspirations), One-

Way ANOVA was used in testing the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14 - *Differences in the Influence of Peer Pressure on the Career Aspirations of Students on the basis of Programme Offered*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	181.306	5	45.326	2.173	.074
Within Groups	3983.934	190	20.858		
Total	4165.240	195			

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 14 shows that there is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered [$F(195)=2.173, p>.05$]. Since significant value of .074 is greater than .05 the null hypothesis is not rejected. The results imply that there was no difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered.

Hypothesis Six:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.

This hypothesis sought to find out the difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered. There were six independent groups (Science, General Arts, Home

Economics, Business, Agriculture Science, and Visual Arts) and one dependent variable (influence of interest on career aspirations). Therefore, the One-Way ANOVA was used in testing the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 15.

Table 15 - *Differences in the Influence of Interest on the Career Aspirations of Students on the basis of Programme Offered*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	59.732	5	14.933	1.440	.222
Within Groups	1980.120	190	10.367		
Total	2039.852	195			

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 15 shows that there is no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered [$F(195)=1.440, p>.05$]. From the results in the table, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Thus, by implication there was no difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered.

Discussion

Influence of Peer Pressure on Career Aspirations of Students

The results of the study showed that most of the respondents agreed that what they want to be in future is influenced by their friends, their choices of courses are influenced by their friends and that the manner in which they learn is as a result of how their friends learn. The mean of means implied that overall the respondents agreed to most of the statements showing that peer pressure had a great influence on the career aspirations of students. For most

senior high school students, the desire for peer approval and liking makes them want to be involved in whatever their peers are involved in. this desire can expand even to career aspirations. Therefore, the finding of the study that peers had a great influence on career aspirations of students is understandable.

The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of Ogutu, Odera and Maragia (2017) who revealed that peer pressure influenced career decision making among secondary school students in Busia County in Kenya. Ogutu et al. pointed out that students valued the opinions of their peers and as such took career decision that reflected the views of their peers. In a similar vein, Naz et al. (2014) revealed that even though family had an influence on career choices, the influence of peers cannot be discounted. They argued that most students value what their peers say in terms of what is the desirable career. As a result, the career aspirations of students can be greatly impacted by the influence of peers.

The influence of peers on career aspirations of students occurs through peer interactions. This has been confirmed in various studies in Uganda and Kenya (Okiror & Otabong, 2015; Walaba & Kiboss, 2013). In his study in China, Yi-Hui (2006) revealed that students' interactions with peers of diversified interests, races and backgrounds have the potential to stimulate reflection, knowledge and beliefs which may lead to new ways of thinking about the world, other peers and eventually themselves. This ultimately influences the career aspirations of students.

Kiuru (2008) conducted a study in Finland, peer group members who are closely related are likely to end up in similar educational trajectories as they are likely to accept opinions from members who are similar to

themselves. Kiuru indicated further that peer group members resembled each other, not only in their educational expectations, but also their subsequent educational trajectories. In a Nigerian study by Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015), peer relationships were revealed to be significant in helping students choose careers. The findings from these studies have confirmed that peer influence is a major factor in the career aspirations of students.

Influence of Students' Interests on Career Aspirations

The study revealed that students did not have a clear idea of what they want to be in future. Overall, the study found that the students did not view interest as having a major influence on their career aspirations. Comparing the views of the respondents regarding the influence of peer pressure and interest, it can be inferred that peer pressure influenced career aspirations of students more than interest. The students revealed however that they did not have much interest in their own career aspirations. This could be because the career aspirations of students were influenced more by their peers than their own interests. This finding is probably the result of students not being assertive enough to put their own interests above the opinions of their friends. The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) that the interest of students is the least significant factor that influences career aspirations of students. Kazi and Akhlaq compared the influence of interest, peers, teachers and parents and found interest to be the least influential factor. They explained their finding to be due to students being young and as such valuing the opinions of peers, teachers and parents more than theirs.

The findings however contradict the finding of Nyamwange (2016) that student interest is significant in determining career choice decisions for an individual's career. Suutari (2003) however reported that several studies have indicated a positive relationship between interests and career choice. This also contrasted the findings of the current study. Kerka (2000) however indicated that the interest of student influence students' career choice when considered along with personality, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and financial. The implication of the view of Kerka is that students' interest alone does not significantly influence the career aspirations of students. In other words, it can be inferred that the interests of students do not play strong roles in their career aspirations.

Roles Teachers Play in Career Aspirations of Students

In terms of the roles that teachers play in the career aspirations of students, the study found that most of the teachers did not agree with the statements and as such the teachers did not view themselves as playing significant roles in the career aspirations of their students. However, the teachers indicated that they gave special attention to students who struggled with career choice issues. This implies that even though generally the teachers did not see themselves as playing much roles in the career aspirations of students, some of the teachers gave special attention to students with career choice struggles.

In Ghanaian schools, the duties of teachers have mostly been restricted to cognition, thus, they focus only on impacting knowledge based on the curriculum. In this sense, most teachers may not see helping students in their career decisions as part of their responsibilities. This could probably explain

why the teachers did not view themselves as playing much roles in the career aspirations of students. However, when students are facing issues in deciding about their careers, teachers are more likely to provide assistance to such students. The minimal role that teachers play in career decisions of students is probably the reason why schools in Ghana are required to have guidance coordinators who will be in charge of students' career choice issues. The guidance coordinators or school counsellors can help guide students in their career aspirations and their career decisions.

The findings are in line with the findings of Pummel, Harwood and Lavallee (2008) who identified some different groups who can influence career choice decisions of students. They indicated that career choice decisions are mostly influenced by parents, peers, friends, relatives, role models, and career counsellors. They argued that in schools where career counsellors are operational, teachers do not play much roles regarding students' career aspirations. The findings however contradict the study of Khan, Murtaza and Shafa (2012) who explored the role of teachers in career counselling in secondary schools in Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan. Khan et al. found that teachers have vital roles to guide students and their careers. They indicated further that teachers voluntarily acted as informal counsellors guiding students in their choices of subjects and career paths. The contradiction could be explained to be due to the fact that the teachers in the study of Khan et al. played the roles of guidance coordinators while the teachers in the current study were just limited to classroom teaching. Again, the contradiction could be due to the teachers in the study not being very equipped in terms of skills to use to help students in their career aspirations.

Teachers who serve as guidance coordinators or counsellors in their schools influence students' career choices significantly. For instance, Mghweno, Mghweno and Baguma (2014) established that Tanzanian school career guidance teachers played a key role in preparing students to successfully proceed to the next level, whether for further education or a job. Teachers who serve as career guidance coordinators therefore offer career guidance to students as part of their daily work (Ferreira, Santos, Fonseca, & Haase, 2006). The implication of the results is that teachers who are not guidance coordinators do not play much roles in the career choices of students compared to teachers who serve as guidance coordinators in schools.

Roles Parents Play in Career Aspirations of Students

The study also revealed that parents had interest in the careers of their children and that their children do not take career decisions without their approval. In Ghanaian societies, parents are influential in the lives of their children. They determine not only the schools they attend but also the subjects their children will study. Most children in Ghana therefore seek the approval of their parents in every decision they take. It is unsurprising therefore, that the study found that, students seek for the approval of their parents regarding their career choices which was unsurprising. Again, parents are interested in the career choices of their children because in Ghana, parents see the careers of their children as the crowning of their caretaking efforts. They therefore expect their children to be in lucrative careers even if the children are not interested in such careers. Parental influence is thus a major determinant of the career aspirations of students.

The findings are in line with the findings of Shumba and Naong (2012) who investigated the factors influencing career choice and aspirations among South African students. They found that the family was a significant factor that influenced the career choice and aspirations of students. Similarly, Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) examined the factors which affect the choice of career among students in two public sector universities in Lahore city. Kazi and Akhlaq found that the influence of parents influence was the most significant factor in the career aspirations of students. It has also been confirmed that students report that parents have the greatest influence on which career they choose (Kniveton, 2004). Parents therefore have a greater influence than even teachers on student's career choice.

In Hong Kong, Law and Yuen (2011) revealed that students value the opinions of their parents. This implies that parents can foster interest in certain careers in their children from childhood. A similar report was made in Canada by Bardick, Berns, Magnusson and Witko (2004) that Canadian adolescents tend to appreciate their parents' opinions more than any other source for answers to career related issues. Many parents are in the position to influence their children's career development because they have observed their children's development, know their interests and strengths and have developed a trusting relationship with them. In Singapore, it was revealed that parental involvement had a significant influence on the selection of nursing careers (Ching & Keith, 2011).

The influence of parents on career choice can be positive or negative. This is because when students are forced into careers that they are not interested in they are likely not to enjoy their careers in the future. However,

when students are encouraged by their parents into careers that they are interested in then they are more likely to enjoy their careers in the future. This view has been confirmed by Clutter (2010) who revealed that it is possible for parents to influence their children's career choices negatively.

At the end, all the studies along with the current study have shown that parental influence is a significant factor in the career aspirations and choices of students. This happens regardless of the society or community as has been shown in the different studies from different places.

Difference between Male and Female Students in terms of the Influence of Peer Pressure on their Career Aspirations

The study revealed that there was a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on career aspirations of male and female students. Specifically, female students perceived peer pressure as having an influence on their career aspirations more than male students. The implication of the results is that female students were influenced more by peer pressure compared to male students. The results could be attributed female students being more susceptible to peer pressure than male students.

The findings of the current study are in line with several previous studies. For instance, Stuart (2000) found that peers' attitudes toward gender may increase or decrease a person's confidence in pursuing a career. Adolescents are easily influenced by their peers because they rely on their friends to provide validation of the choices that they make including career decisions. The implication of the finding of Stuart is that there is difference between males and females in terms of how peers can influence their career aspirations and decisions. In a similar vein, the findings of the current study

support the findings of Garrahy (2001) that the social situations that students find themselves in reinforce gender-appropriate occupations of the students. Thus, school activities, social environment and peer influence on career decisions vary in terms of the gender of students (Bojuwoye & Mbanjwa, 2006). In his study, Spade (2001) found that gender difference in students' experiences in terms of how peers influence their careers exist throughout school. In her study in Nigeria, Denga (2004) found that sex-role stereotypes exist among boys and girls in schools as they aspire to traditional occupations. This implies that the beliefs of significant others influence children's self-perceptions of ability and consequently career choice.

All these studies have confirmed that peer pressure influences career aspirations and decisions of students differently in terms of gender. This is probably explains the finding of Hooley (2012) that whether one is male or female determines the influence that environmental factors such as peer pressure have on career choice.

Difference between Male and Female Students in terms of the Influence of Interest on their Career Aspirations

The study revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of interest on career aspirations of male and female students. This implies that male and female students perceived the influence of interest on their career aspirations in the same way. This finding supports the finding of Shumba and Naong (2012) that interest is not a major factor that influences the career choice of both male and female students. The finding of the current study contradicts the finding of Sax (1994) examined students' initial interest in science careers, factors influencing career choice during college, and how

these factors differ between men and women students. Sax found that men who abandon career aspirations appear to be driven by financial concerns while women were more concerned with the social good of their career choice. By implication Sax revealed that interest influences the career aspirations of male and female students differently. In addition, Garrahy (2001) found that interest influences males and females differently in terms of their career aspirations. The contradiction between the finding of the current study and the other studies could be because generally, in the current study, interest was not perceived to be influential in the career aspirations of students. Again, the contradiction could be because of the differences in the variables being measured. For instance, in the current study, interest was measured generally while in the study of Garrahy interest was measured in terms of desire for specific occupations.

Influence of Peer Pressure on the Career Aspirations of Students on the Basis of Age

The study revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age. The results imply that there was no difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age. In simple terms, it can be inferred that age was not a factor in how peer pressure influenced the career aspirations of students. Thus, age does not matter whether peer pressure will influence the career aspirations of students.

The findings confirm the findings of Lopez and Ann-Yi (2009) who revealed that age does not play a role in how career aspirations of students are influenced. Similarly, Schmidt, Miles and Welsh (2011) found that there was

no difference in how career choices of students were influenced by peers on the basis of age. Thus, by implication, the career choices of students of different ages can be influenced by their peers in the same manner.

Influence of Interest on the Career Aspirations of Students on the Basis of Age

The study found also that there was no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age. The implication is that there was no difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age. In essence, age does not play a role in how interest influences career aspirations of students.

The findings support the findings of Joshua, Terungwa and Saanyol (2018) who examined correlates of career choice among 210 senior secondary school students in Tarka LGA of Benue State, Nigeria. They found among other things that in terms of how interest influenced career choice, age was not a significant factor. In a similar vein, Fabunmi and Adedayo (2017) explored the issues of gender and adolescents age difference as they relate with choice of career among secondary school students in southwest Nigeria. They found that career choice was not significant as with respect to age difference. This is particular in terms of how interests influenced career choices.

Influence of Peer Pressure on the Career Aspirations of Students on the Basis of Programme Offered

It was revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered. The results imply that there was no difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of

programme offered. Thus, the kind of programme that students offer does not play any role in how peer pressure affects their career aspirations.

The finding confirms the finding of Yamin-Ali (2014) who explored subject selection in a secondary school (School S) in Trinidad. Yamin-Ali found that the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students did not differ based on the subject of study. Therefore, the career choices of students offering different programmes may be influenced by their peers in the same or similar manner.

Influence of Interest on the Career Aspirations of Students on the Basis of Programme Offered

Finally, the study found that there was no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered. The results imply that there is no variation in how interest influenced career aspirations of students on the basis of the programme offered. The findings are in line with the findings of Barrow (2009) who examined intrinsic and extrinsic influences on the degree of certainty students felt in their career decision-making processes. Barrow revealed that programme of study and grade levels of students are not significant demographic variables in terms of how interests influence career choice of students. Based on this, it is evident that students can be doing different programmes but the influence of interests on career aspirations of students may not vary.

Chapter Summary

A sample of 196 students, 30 teachers, and 50 parents was selected from the Senior High Schools in the Berekum Municipality using the stratified

sampling approach. Data was collected using three different sets of questionnaires (one each for students, teachers and parents). Data was analysed descriptively using means and standard deviations. The study found that peer influence and parental influence were the most significant that affected the career aspirations of students. Even though teachers assisted students with career choice issues, teachers did not view themselves as playing major roles in the career aspirations of students. Students' interest did not also influence career aspirations like how peer pressure and parental influence did.

There was gender difference in terms of the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students while there was no gender difference in terms of the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students. There was also no age difference in the influence of peer pressure as well as interests on the career aspirations of students. Finally, there was no difference in the influence of peer pressure and interests on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme of study. The study's findings were in line with several previous studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations in the study. This chapter also gives implications for career counselling and suggestions for further research.

Summary of Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine factors influencing career aspirations of secondary school students in the Berekum Municipality. Specifically, the study sought to answer four research questions and six hypotheses.

Research questions

1. What is the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?
2. What is the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?
3. What role do teachers play in the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?
4. What role do parents play in the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum municipality?

Hypotheses

1. H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.
H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.
2. H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of interest on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.
H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of interest on their career aspirations of male and female students in public senior high schools in the Berekum Municipality.
3. H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.
H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.
4. H₀: There is no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.
H₁: There is a significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of age.

5. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.
- H_1 : There is a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.
6. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.
- H_a : There is a significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students in public SHS in the Berekum Municipality on the basis of programme offered.

Literature was also reviewed in the study. Specifically, Bandura's (1986) Social-Cognitive Theory (SCCT), Holland's (1975) typology theory and Super's theory were reviewed. Previous empirical studies related to the current study were reviewed. The review was done under sub-headings related to the objectives of the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 196 students, 30 teachers, and 50 parents was selected from the Senior High Schools in the Berekum Municipality using the stratified sampling approach. Data was collected using three different sets of questionnaires (one each for students, teachers and parents). Data was analysed descriptively using means and standard deviations.

Major Findings

In the first place, the respondents reported that what they wanted to be in future. But they reiterated further that their choices of courses and how they

learn were largely influenced by their friends. Overall, the students indicated that peer pressure had a great influence on the career aspirations.

Secondly, the study revealed that the students did not consider interest as having a major influence on their career aspirations. Comparatively, peer pressure had much more influence on career aspirations than interest.

Also, the study found that most of the teachers did not view themselves as playing significant roles in the career aspirations of their students. However, the teachers indicated that they gave special attention to students who struggled with career choice issues. The study revealed that parents had interest in the careers of their children and that their children would not take career decisions without their approval.

Furthermore, the study found that there was a significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on career aspirations of male and female students. Specifically, female students perceived peer pressure as having an influence on their career aspirations more than male students. The study revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of interest on career aspirations of male and female students.

The study revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age. The study found also that there was no significant difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of age.

It was revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered. Finally, the study found that there was no significant

difference in the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, some conclusions are drawn. Firstly, it is concluded that peer pressure determines to a large extent the decisions that students make concerning the careers they may want to pursue. Students value the views and opinions of their friends and as such develop interest in specific careers because of the views of their friends. In connection to the larger conversation on peer pressure, it can be inferred that the influence of peer pressure on students extends beyond academic work and behaviour and encompasses career decisions.

Secondly, it is concluded from the findings that the interest of students in Senior High Schools do not have much influence their career aspirations like peer pressure does. This contradicts popular view that people make career decisions based on their interests. However, this could be explained to be due to students in senior high schools not being assertive enough to follow their own interests.

Also, it can be concluded from the findings that teachers in senior high schools do not play major roles in the career aspirations of students. They may however offer intermittent assistance to students with career decision confusions. This situation may not be helpful in schools where there are no career guidance coordinators.

It is also concluded from the findings that parental influence is a major determinant in the career aspirations of students. It is because of this that students valued the approval of their parents in their career choices.

Peer pressure also influences the career aspirations of male and female students differently with female students being more influenced than male students. Thus, it can be inferred that the career aspirations of students can be influenced by peer pressure mostly for female students. In the context of the larger conversation on peer pressure, female students have been identified to be more susceptible. Therefore, this conclusion ties in with several previous empirical studies.

It is also concluded that interest does not influence the career aspirations of male and female students differently. This conclusion goes against most previous studies which mostly conclude that interest influences career aspirations of male and female students differently. This conclusion only supports a few previous conclusions in the literature.

It is also concluded that the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students does not vary on the basis of age. Similarly, it is concluded that the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students does not vary on the basis of age. Finally, it is concluded that the influence of peer pressure on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered did not vary. A similar conclusion is made about the influence of interest on the career aspirations of students on the basis of programme offered.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. School heads should collaborate with counselling unit in schools to organise career workshops for students about how to deal with the negative influence of peer pressure on their career aspirations. This is

important because peer pressure was found to be a major factor affecting the career aspirations of students. Thus, empowering students to be able to take their own career decisions and not following their peers when it is against their will.

2. School counsellors should encourage students during orientations and when students are preparing to leave school to pursue careers that are in line with their interests. This will help ensure that students' interests have an influence on their career aspirations.
3. School counsellors together with teachers should show interest in the career aspirations of students. They can continually assist students who may have career decision issues.
4. School counsellors should encourage parents to avoid forcing careers on their children but encourage their children to pursue careers that align with their (children) interests. This can help students more productive in their academic work.
5. School authorities should make career issues a fundamental part of the extra curricula activities in school. This can help ensure that students receive attention to deal with their career decision issues.

Implications for Career Counselling

The following implications are outlined for career counselling for the Senior High School students in Ghana:

1. Career counsellors should focus on developing assertiveness skills in students to enable them take career decisions that are in line with their own interests. This is because it was found that students were more influenced by peer pressure in their career aspirations. By developing

assertiveness, the students can be confident enough to take their own decisions in line with their interests and not necessarily settle on what their peers want.

2. Career counsellors should help students make career decisions since the study found that the students struggled in pursuing their own career interests.
3. School counsellors should emphasise making appropriate career decisions in their provision of counselling to students.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study brought to fore the specific role that interests of students play in their career aspirations. This has not been covered in most local literature even though there is the shared view that interest can affect career aspirations. Thus, this study provides empirical data to support that view.

The study also highlighted the role that teachers play in the career aspirations of students. Even though, it is a known fact that teachers help students make career decisions, the specific roles that teachers play in the career aspirations of students have been largely ignored. This study therefore helped bridge that knowledge gap.

Suggestions for further research

The following suggestions are made for future research:

1. Future research should have a larger sample size to increase the extent to which the results can be generalized.
2. Future research can investigate into the role that demographic variables play in Senior High School students' career aspirations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS**

The purpose of this research is to find out the **career aspirations of Senior High School Students in Berekum Municipality**. Your responses will help school counsellors, management and parents to assist young people to make the best career choices that will ensure that they get job satisfaction in future. Please, answer each item as frankly as you can. Your responses will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire

SECTION A: Biographical data of respondents

Sex: Male Female

Age: Please tick the age range that you fall within.

14-16 years 17-19 years 20 and above years

Programme:

What programme are you offering? Please tick.

Science (Gen.) General Arts Home Economics
Agricultural Technical Business
Visual Arts

SECTION B

Please tick the response you consider most appropriate using the rating scale provided.

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly disagree

Peer pressure influence on career aspiration of SHS students.

S/No.	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	My friends are great source of motivation for me					
2	My friends influenced me in choosing my programme in the SHS					
3	The friends I admire most motivate me to be who I am.					
4	The way I learn is as a result of how my friends learn.					
5	What I hope to be in future is influenced by my friends.					

SECTION B: Influence of SHS students' personal interest on career aspiration.

S/No	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	I have a clear idea of what I want to be in future.					
2	I am really interested in the type of work I will do in future.					
3	What I want to do or be is more important than what my parent want.					

4	I will never choose a career I have no interest in.					
5	My teacher(s) know best what career I should choose.					
6	My parents know best what career I should choose.					

APPENDIX B

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

The purpose of this research is to find out the **career aspirations of Senior High School Students in Berekum Municipality**. Your responses will help school counsellors, management and parents to assist young people to make the best career choices that will ensure that they get job satisfaction in future. Please, answer each item as frankly as you can. Your responses will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire

SECTION A: Biographical data of respondents

Sex: Male Female

Age: Please tick the age range that you fall within.

21-30 years 31- 40 years 41 and above years

Please tick the response you consider most appropriate using the rating scale provided.

1 = Strongly Agree **2** = Agree **3** = Undecided **4** = Disagree **5** = Strongly disagree

SECTION B: The role teachers play in SHS students' career aspiration.

S/No	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
	As teacher,					
1	I know best the future careers of my students.					
2	I am interested in what careers my students choose.					
3	I interact with my students to know their preferred career choice needs.					
4	I give relevant education and occupational information to my students.					
5	I give special attention to students who struggle with career choice issues.					

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

The purpose of this research is to find out the **career aspirations of Senior High School Students in Berekum Municipality**. Your responses will help school counsellors, management and parents to assist young people to make the best career choices that will ensure that they get job satisfaction in future. Please, answer each item as frankly as you can. Your responses will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire

SECTION A: Biographical data of respondents

Sex: Male Female

Age: Please tick the age range that you fall within.

30 - 41 years 41-50 years 51 and above years

Please tick the response you consider most appropriate using the rating scale provided.

1 = Strongly Agree **2** = Agree **3** = Undecided **4** = Disagree **5** = Strongly disagree

SECTION B: The role parents play in career aspiration of their wards

S/ No	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
	As a parent, when it comes to career choice:					
1	I know the best future career of my child or children.					
2	I know my child / children will do best in my own career area.					
3	I know my child's career interest is more important than my wishes.					
4	My child will never attempt to decide without my approval.					
5	I am aware that I have great influence on my child's career aspirations.					
6	I have no interest in the career my child chooses.					
7	Fathers greatly influence the career decisions of their sons.					
8	Mothers greatly influence the career decisions of their daughters.					

APPENDIX D
RELIABILITY OUTPUT

STUDENTS

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.771	13

TEACHERS

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.742	7

PARENTS

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.790	10

APPENDIX F

ETHICAL CLERANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: CES-ERB/ucc.edu/v3/19-54
Your Ref:



Date: 24th June, 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. J. A. Omotosho
jomotosho@ucc.edu.gh
0243784739

Vice-Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. K. Edjah
kedjah@ucc.edu.gh
0244742357

Secretary, CES-ERB
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
lforde@ucc.edu.gh
0244786680

The bearer, Abraham Owusu, Reg. No. ED/GCP/17/0001 is an M.Phil. / ~~Ph.D.~~ student in the Department of Guidance and Counselling in the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He / ~~She~~ wishes to undertake a research study on the topic:

Factors influencing the career aspirations of students in public Senior High Schools in the Berekum Municipality, Ghana.

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies (CES) has assessed his/~~her~~ proposal and confirm that the proposal satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval to commence his/~~her~~ study. The ERB would be grateful if you would give him/~~her~~ the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said research.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
(Secretary, CES-ERB)