
**PREDICTORS OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS AMONG
UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS
IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study investigated predictors of career aspirations among Undergraduate Social Studies students in South-west Nigeria. The study therefore centred on undergraduates' preference to study Social Studies, parental support and undergraduates' career aspirations in South-west, Nigeria. This study employed mixed method approach with descriptive design of correlation type and phenomenological approach. The sample comprised of 536 respondents from six public universities that offer Social Studies in South-west, Nigeria. A questionnaire and one-on-one unstructured interview were also employed as instruments. Research questions were answered through percentage and hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant. Linear regression and Independent T-test were employed for quantitative data analysis while thematic content analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data. Findings show that 319 (69.3%) of the respondents did not prefer Social Studies during admission. 306 (61.4%) of the parents of undergraduates in Social Studies did not support their children to study Social Studies. There is a significant relationship between the predictors and undergraduates'

Social Studies career aspirations ($F_{0.139} = 0.139; P > 0.05$). The study recommended among others that Social Studies should be introduced into senior secondary schools while more universities should offer it at undergraduate level to enhance students' interest and parental support.

Keywords: Social Studies Preference, Parental support, Career Aspiration.

Introduction

The university is the highest level of education and the main objective of university education is to impart in students both academic knowledge and professional training that will equip them with the attributes needed to take up employment. Therefore, the primary purpose of undergraduates' programmes in universities is to build individuals for careers where they later earn their living and function effectively in the development of their immediate environment. Social Studies is one of the academic programmes of study approved for faculty of education by the Nigerian University Commission (NUC).

The NUC approved Social Studies curriculum is planned to train undergraduates who will later teach Social Studies and related subjects in schools and be part of the functional labour force in all human endeavours. Social Studies course contents in Nigerian universities are designed to provide learners with opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills, values, and right attitudes that will help to prepare students for both internal and external examinations in secondary schools' Social Studies, Civic Education and Security Education (Odia, 2014).

Social Studies is a societal problem solving subject that is designed for the purpose of addressing the societal and global problems through value orientation and citizenship education infused into its learners at all educational levels. Social Studies as a discipline, also prepares students to grow up as active, responsible, and reflective members of society. The knowledge of Social Studies helps to fight against social vices and address societal and global

problems. Social Studies as a course of study, has the capacity of grooming undergraduates to grow up as prospective personnel in teaching industries. Its focus is based on human relationships, integration, and socio-economic development as well as inculcating the right societal values in the individual (Okunloye & Ogunlade, 2012).

With the remarkable achievement of Social Studies in the environment, Edinyang and Ubi (2013) emphasized that Social Studies enables human beings to use reflective thinking to proffer solutions to the problems discovered in the environment. Through Social Studies, human beings are so conversant with the situations of their environment, act as key agents of change to make the environment habitable for themselves (Akinfenwa, 2014).

In a related development, Essien, Gimba and Ekpoto (2014) defined Social Studies as a lifelong course of study, which involves human interactions with his physical and social environment. The contents of Social Studies capture all human endeavors through the integrated study of Social Sciences and humanities to promote civic competency through the practical applications of knowledge and skill. Therefore, Social Studies is a vital instrument that develops individual to be patriotic and maintain national security within their immediate environment. Moreover, through the knowledge of Social Studies, students developed positive thinking and national consciousness towards the country and this has helped individual to develop spirit of patriotism, honesty and hard work (Ojedokun, Adesina & Adeyemi, 2014).

Despite the good intention of introducing Social Studies into primary and secondary school curricula, many youths are not ready to build their career aspirations on Social Studies. The main objective of university education is to equip graduates with the attributes needed to take up employment and to achieve their career aspirations. According to Hick (2013), career aspiration is individual's desire for future employment that can be achieved, if it is well planned with great determination to achieve it.

Students' career preference is the choice of course which a student wants to do. Students' choice of the course plays an important role in undergraduates' attitudes in university, it

determines students' zeal and comportsment towards achieving an educational goal. Career or course preference lays a good foundation for individual career aspirations in life. Therefore, a career is synonymous with a profession and there are many professions in society today in which an individual can earn a living. The teaching profession is a career and Social Studies is one of the area of specialization in teaching professions (Muraguri, 2011).

It is not altogether surprising that many undergraduates do not have the passion to become Social Studies teachers and this factor has led to a reduction in the number of qualified teachers who were keenly interested in teaching Social Studies after graduation. Majority of people see Social Studies as a profession that are not worthwhile to study because of the subject was not fully introduced to educational level. In addition, only few universities offer the course at undergraduate level in Nigerian universities.

It is also reflected in the attitude of some undergraduates' Social Studies parents, that Social Studies was the last resort for their children. Furthermore, some undergraduates in Social Studies do not enjoy the support of their parents because of the different perceptions they are holding towards Social Studies as a course of study in Nigerian universities (Ogunjinmi, 2012). It is worth to note that parents establish a significant platform for their children career aspirations in line with their intention. Olaosebikan (2014) affirmed that without a parental support and approval students may not achieve career aspirations. Similarly, Parental support of their children enhances good student disposition to their studies and encourages the actualisation of career aspirations.

Despite the Social Studies curriculum that is planned to groom individual towards labour market, some undergraduates are not satisfied with the course of studies during and after the programme, which has made individual career aspirations and hope to be dazed. Based on this background, this study is proposed to investigate undergraduates' Social Studies preference, parental support as predictors of career aspirations in South-west, Nigeria.

It is now becoming worrisome for many undergraduates in Social Studies to think about what to do after the completion of

their studies. Also, many undergraduates are in the department after different attempts failed to gain admission and to change their course of study to their course of choice within and outside the Faculty of Education (Toluwanimi, 2011; Tony, 2012; Salami, 2013). It is however worthy of note that prior studies have ignored the link that exist between the predictors and career aspirations. Therefore, this study was carried out to fill part of the gap left by previous researchers. Therefore, the concern of this research was to investigate the predictors of career aspirations in South-west Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the predictors of undergraduate Social Studies students' career aspirations in South-west, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

- i. investigated course preference of undergraduate Social Studies students in South-west Nigeria,
- ii. examine pattern of parental support of undergraduate Social Studies students' career aspirations in the South-west, Nigeria,
- iii. examine the influence of gender on undergraduate Social Studies students' career aspirations; and
- iv. examine the relationship between parental support of undergraduates in Social Studies and their career aspirations.

Research Questions

In order to give focus to the study, the following questions were raised:

- i. What are the initial course preferences of undergraduate Social Studies students in South-west, Nigeria?
- ii. What are the pattern of parental support for undergraduate Social Studies students career aspirations in South-west, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

To further guide the study, these hypotheses were tested:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between parental support of undergraduate Social Studies students and their career aspirations.

Ho2: There is no significant mean difference between gender of undergraduate Social Studies students' influence and career aspirations in South-west, Nigeria.

Methods

This study employed mixed method approach with descriptive design of correlation type and phenomenological approach. The sample for this study consisted of 536 respondents selected from undergraduate Social Studies students in universities in South-west, Nigeria. The sampling procedures for this study were in stages. In the first stage, Purposive sampling technique was used to select public universities (the Federal and State), while Simple random technique was employed to select the respondents in South-west, Nigeria. The data instruments for this study were researcher designed questionnaire and unstructured one-on-one interview guide. The data collected were analysed using percentage, Linear Regression, and Independent T-test at 0.05 level of significance. The one-on-one unstructured interview data were analysed using thematic content analysis procedure.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents base on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	290	58.2
Male	208	41.8
Percentage	498	100

Table 1 shows that out of 498 respondents for this study 290 (58.2%) were female, while 208 (41.8%) were male undergraduates. This indicated that Social Studies female undergraduates

were more than their male counterparts among the respondents for this study in South-west, Nigeria.

Table 2: Analysis of Quantitative Research on initial Course Preferences of Social Studies Undergraduate students in South-West, Nigeria

Social Studies Preference	Frequency	Percentage
Chosen Social Studies	179	36
None Chosen of Social Studies	319	64
Percentage	498	100

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of initial course preferences of Social Studies undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria. Out of the 498 respondents that participated in this study, 179 (36%) undergraduates chose Social Studies during admission and 319 (64%) did not choose Social Studies. This indicated that majority of the undergraduates in Social Studies did not choose Social Studies in Nigerian universities during admission.

Table 3: Analysis of the one-on-one unstructured interview conducted on Course Preference of undergraduate Social Studies students in South-West, Nigeria

Social Studies Preference	Frequency	Percentage
Chosen Social Studies	06	25
None Chosen of Social Studies	18	75
Percentage	24	100

Table 3 shows frequency and percentage of undergraduate Social Studies students that preferred Social Studies during admission in South-west, Nigeria. Out of the 24 respondents that participated in the study, 6 (25%) undergraduates chose Social Studies during admission and 18 (75%) did not choose Social Studies. This implied that majority of the undergraduates in Social Studies did not choose Social Studies initially during admission and did not like to build their career aspirations on Social Studies.

Table 4: The general pattern of parental support of undergraduate Social Studies students' career aspirations

Pattern of Parental support	Frequency	Percentage
Parental support	194	38.9
None parental support	304	61.1
Total	480	100

Table 4 shows the frequency, and percentage of the pattern of parental support for undergraduates' career aspirations in South-west, Nigeria. This table also revealed that out of 498 respondents that participated in the study, only 194 (38.9%) enjoyed the support of their parents to build their career aspirations in Social Studies, while 304 (61.1%) undergraduates who were respondents did not enjoy the support of their parents to build their career aspirations on Social Studies.

Table 5: Analysis of the one-on-one unstructured interview conducted on parental support of undergraduate Social Studies students' career aspirations

Pattern of Parental support	Frequency	Percentage
Parental support	10	41.7
None parental support	14	58.3
Total	24	100

Table 5 shows the frequency, and percentage of the pattern of parental support for undergraduates' career aspirations. This table also revealed that out of 24 respondents that participated in the one-on-one interview conducted, only 10 (41.7%) enjoyed the support of their parents to build their career aspirations in Social Studies, while 14(58.3%) undergraduates who are respondents did not enjoy the support of their parents to build their career aspirations on Social Studies.

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between undergraduate Social Studies students' parental support and career aspirations?

Table 6: Summary of coefficient of regression relationship between parental support of Social Studies undergraduates and career aspirations

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Beta	T	Sig
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.392	.072		5.47	.00
	Parental support	.770	.027	.783	28.0	.00

a. Dependent variable; Career aspiration

Table 6 shows the regression coefficients which represent the mean change in the response variable, for one unit change in predictor variables. The std. β value (.783) indicates the correlation between career aspiration and parental support which is found not to be significant ($p = .00$). This indicated that parental support score would increase by .08 for every unit decrease in career aspiration (i.e. one unit increase in parental support will lead to a .08 decrease in career aspiration). Furthermore, the standardized coefficient $\hat{\alpha}$ value indicated that parental support is not making a significant and unique contribution towards predicting career aspiration outcome variable, ($p = .00$, less than 0.05).

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant mean difference in gender of undergraduate Social Studies students that preferred to study Social Studies and career aspirations in South-west, Nigeria.

Table 7: Summary table of the Independent Samples Test of the mean difference in gender of undergraduate social studies students that preferred Social Studies and their career aspirations

		Leven's Test for equality of Variance	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	t-test for quality of means Std. Error
		f	Sig t		Mean diff. diff.
Career aspiration	Equal variances Assumed	8.91 .003 2.29	496	.023	.268 .117
	Equal variances not Assumed	2.31	459.8	.021	.268 .116

Table 7 showed the mean difference in gender of undergraduate Social Studies students' career aspirations in South-west, Nigeria. The p-value is 0.03, so equal variance assumed. The value of the t-statistic is 2.29, and the p-value is less than 0.05 and the mean difference is the same therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted which means there is no significant difference in gender of undergraduate Social Studies students level of career aspirations.

Discussions

The result showed that Social Studies preference and parental support are predictors of career aspirations among undergraduate Social Studies students in South-west, Nigeria. The result of the findings in both quantitative and qualitative research revealed that the majority of undergraduates in Social Studies did not prefer Social Studies as a course of study at the initial stage. This was in

agreement with the findings of Julius and Jacob (2016) who revealed in a study, that student's preference for a particular course of study has been found to be influenced by a number of factors such as Educational background, parental socioeconomic factors, and choice of subjects in secondary school.

In another development, it can be deduced that a higher percentage of undergraduates in Social Studies did not enjoy the parental support in choosing Social Studies as a course of study and career aspiration. This finding is in agreement with the findings obtained by Mary and Okoye (2013), who observed that parents' aspiration has a great influence on the children's career aspirations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study in both quantitative and qualitative data, a conclusion was drawn that Social Studies preference, parental support, are strong predictors of undergraduate Social Studies students' career aspirations. Therefore, the predictors have a strong relationship with career aspirations, and as predictors can predict career aspirations so as career aspirations can also predict the predictors.

Recommendations

It is therefore to recommend that the parents, teachers, school counselors, university admission units need to encourage prospective undergraduate Social Studies students during admission and graduates of Social Studies should be treated equally with other graduates from the medical profession, nursing, engineering, banking industries among others. Social Studies should be introduced into senior secondary schools while more universities should offer it at the undergraduate level to enhance students' interest and parental support.

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