



INFLUENCE OF SELF-EFFICACY AND CAREER ASPIRATION ON STUDENTS' CHOICE OF COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS IN KOGI STATE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Kizito Adomu Suberu

Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education,
Kwara State University, Malete
kizitosuberu@gmail.com
08033612095

&

Prof. T. A. Umoru

Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education,
Kwara State University, Malete
titus.amodu@kwasu.edu.ng
08033519030

Corresponding Author Email: kizitosuberu@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigated the perceived influence of self-efficacy and career aspiration on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. A Descriptive survey research design was adopted on a target population of 830 (SSS 3) students offering financial accounting, commerce and economics from 73 public senior secondary schools in the Kogi State Teaching Service Commission (KSTSC) for 2020/2021 session. The entire population was used as sample for the study because the population was considered to be of manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Self-efficacy and Career aspiration Questionnaire (SECAQ)" that was administered to students after validation and tested for reliability. The analysis of the data was done using mean and standard deviation for research questions and independent t-test analysis was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Strongly Agree and Agree was collapsed into Agree while Disagree and Strongly Disagree was collapsed into Disagree. The findings from the study revealed that students have positive perception towards Self-efficacy and career aspiration on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools. Based on the findings, part of the recommendations made are that since self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments, parents and school councilors should not force any student on the choice of a particular subject. And that a strong parent-child relationship is essential in shaping the students career choice. In this regard, it is recommended also that parents should take time to discuss different career choices with their children. Whenever necessary, the parents should express satisfaction with the child's decision in order for them to realize their career aspiration.

Keywords: Academic career, Academic performance, Career aspirations, Self-efficacy, Senior secondary schools.



Introduction

Commercial subjects offered by students at the senior secondary school level remain important to national development as it is the educational basis for the attainment of skills needed for entrepreneurship, office practice, accounting and allied activities that are central to the growth and sustenance of small and medium scale enterprises. The current educational policy in Nigeria stipulates a basic education level of a 9-year basic education comprising six years in Primary Education and three years in Junior Secondary School. Commercial subjects constitute an academic basis for vocational work. Vocational training for participation in skilled craft or trade with the stated goals of the field of commercial subjects. This field of study has wide applicability, as everybody is a producer, an entrepreneur, a distributor, or a consumer of goods and services. The choice of subjects by students is very important for society at large. Students usually have to select among the cluster subjects of Arts, Science or commercial subjects with the compulsory subjects of Mathematics and English language. In making the selection, certain peculiarities of the system, the demographic profile of students and home factors can influence academic decision making (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2017). The selection of a subject is usually tied to the future aspiration of each student. In that situation, the first primary influence that may shape career selection outside the particular student is the parent (Sota & Agi, 2020). Parents have significant roles they play in shaping the decision and career aspirations of the students being the first agent of socialization.

Subjects that are expected of a commercial student in secondary schools mathematics is a subject that is not disputed by all students in secondary school. It is one of the subjects that is also useful for language in the country and other parts of the world. Marketing involves the use of the basic knowledge gotten here to handle daily marketing structure and business promotion. Accounting/Commerce is the core heart of commercial students. It involves training learners on the basic balance sheet, how to prepare balance sheets, and the columns you need on it, double column and single-entry sheet. Economics; as a commercial student, this is another subject that is expected of you to take in your secondary school. Biology or Agriculture Sciences is compulsory for students to choose at least one science subject, they are to choose between either biology or Agricultural science. Agricultural science exposes students to basic knowledge they need in handling basic agricultural practices, how to cultivate farmlands, to know the basic ways to rear animals and poultry for both commercial uses and subsistence uses.

The concept of parental influence is a potent explanatory variable in areas that have to deal with the child development (Morel, 2019). Parental involvement takes various forms such as good home parenting, the provision of a stable and secure environment, the stimulation of a child's intellect, good parent-child discussions, and inculcation of very constructive educational values, stimulating high aspirations and all round cultivation of good citizenship. Studies show that parental achievement influence child's academic performance, child's achievement in life and child's adjustment (Nunez, Suarez, Rusario, Vallejo, Valle, & Epstein 2015). Noted effects of parental involvement in students' achievement correlated with improved academic performance of students in secondary schools in Nigeria. Where parent involvement is defined as parent interface with the school alone, studies find that such engagements proved to explain some good outcomes in children's outcomes (Alsuiadi, 2016). Parental influence could provide support for a particular set of aspirations; they do this primarily through their beliefs, expectations and the treatment of their children. A clear path towards selection of a cluster of subjects is the direct suggestion by the parent to a child on the pre-offered subjects in the situation where a student has



issues with decision making. This is further strengthened by the services rendered by a professional counselor in the school. And this therefore makes in-school counseling very apt in assisting students in making wise career decisions (Reddan, 2015).

The pupils at this stage are significantly influenced by their parents which can lead to choice of subject. Parents involvement take various form such as good at home parenting, the provision of a stable and secure environment, the stimulation of a child's intellect, the inculcation of very constructive educational value, simulating high aspirations and all-round cultivation at school events and school work. According to Ademiluyi, and Ademiluyi, (2018) parental involvement correlates with parent education, socio-economic status. Also, that parental achievement influence child's academic performance, child's achievement in life and child adjustment (Nunez, Suarez, Rosario, Vallejo & Einstein, 2015) noted effects of parental involvement in student's achievement has been correlating with improved academic performance of students in secondary school in Pakistan. Chista (2017) stated that 65.33% of elevated parents have their children pass public examination at credit level. Learning theory emphasizes possible influence of parent can have an adolescent's career development. Parent can have an influence on their child career development by positively developing or punishing certain behaviors that can encourage or discourage interests or ability on choosing a particular course.

A study was conducted to investigate the influence of family background on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria. It was found that supportive parents are important for their children's career decision making and for the success of their careers (Barker, 2010; Clutter, 2010). Bollu-steve and Sanni (2013) established that Nigerian parents influenced students' performance and eventual career choices. Despite the differences in the aims of these studies, they acknowledged the importance of parental support of their children's education and career choices. The current study particularly focused on family influences on career choices.

Self-efficacy is a concept that has become popular among scholars in the field of child development studies and education. The concept which was popularized by Bandura (2006) consists of a personal judgment resting on the policy that the individual is capable of pursuing fruitfully a course of action. It is the individual's rating of the personal ability to do well in a particular situation or task. Self-efficacy is a personal belief in one's capability to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance, a key component in theories of learning. It is the perceived ability to perform to the expected levels of proficiency in a task (Reddan, 2015). The other dimension is coping self-efficacy. This refers to the perceived ability to cope with the difficulties which might be encountered in the course of engaging with a particular task or situation. Students who transit to senior secondary school may select cluster subjects based on their perceived ability to either cope with the difficulties inherent in the subjects or the belief that they can excel in the subjects. When self-efficacy is matched with task selection, it has been shown to have higher explanatory power and predictor for academic decision making (Armum & Chellappan, 2016).

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Banyard, 2002). Self-efficacy affects every area of human endeavor. By determining the beliefs a person holds regarding their power to affect situations, self-efficacy strongly influences both the power a person actually has to face challenges competently and the choices a person is most likely to make. These effects are particularly apparent, and compelling, with regard to investment behaviors such as in health (Bontis, Hardie, & Serenko, 2008), education, (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001), and agriculture (Dijkstra, & De Vries,



2000). A strong sense of self-efficacy promotes human accomplishment and personal well-being. A person with high self-efficacy views challenges as things that are supposed to be mastered rather than threats to avoid. These people are able to recover from failure faster and are more likely to attribute failure to a lack of effort. They approach threatening situations with the belief that they can control them. These things have been linked to lower levels of stress and a lower vulnerability to depression (Zamfir & Mocanu, 2020).

Psychologist Albert Bandura has defined self-efficacy as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task. One's sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges (Bontis, Hardie, & Serenko, 2008). The theory of self-efficacy lies at the center of Bandura's social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the role of observational learning and social experience in the development of personality. The main concept in social cognitive theory is that an individual's actions and reactions, including social behaviors and cognitive processes, in almost every situation are influenced by the actions that individual has observed in others. Because self-efficacy is developed from external experiences and self-perception and is influential in determining the outcome of many events, it is an important aspect of social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy represents the personal perception of external social factors (Lippke, Wiedemann, Ziegelmann, Reuter, & Schwarzer 2009; Luszczynska, Tryburcy, & Schwarzer, 2007; Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Doña, & Schwarzer, 2005; Luszczynska, Schwarzer, Lippke, Mazurkiewicz, 2011). According to Bandura's theory, people with high self-efficacy—that is, those who believe they can perform well—are more likely to view difficult tasks as something to be mastered rather than something to be avoided.

In a study on multifaceted self-efficacy beliefs as predictors of life satisfaction in late adolescence, Vecchio, Gerbino, Pastorelli, Del Bove & Caprara (2007) examined the concept of multifaceted self-efficacy with academic, Self-regulatory and social domains. They observed that in the period of adolescence, there is the need to manage biological, social and educational transitions on role. The observation mirrors transition from Junior Secondary school to senior secondary schools in the Nigerian educational system. They noted that the scientific literature on adolescent development is faced with a problem of explaining why some students transition effectively and others do not. They noted that the concept of self-efficacy has proved to have a strong explanatory power in the promotion of pro-social behaviour, academic aspirations, academic achievements, peer preference and problem solving (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino & Pastorelli, 2013). The study by Gerbino et al (2007) sought to explain domains of functions by extending the predictive power of self-efficacy.

In another study by Zamfir and Mocanu (2020) on perceived academic self-efficacy among Romanian Upper secondary education students. They examined the construct of self-efficacy in line with Bandura (1986) who described self-efficacy as the central concept in the social cognitive theory. It is described as a “belief” in the personal ability of the individual to achieve a desired results (Bandura, 1987). Most studies on self-efficacy have been concerned with the academic performance (Robbins, Lauver, Le, David, Langley 2004; Richardson, Abraham, Bond, 2012; Honicke, Broadbent, 2016). They noted that self-efficacy is important for effort, perseverance in learning and engagement. Higher levels of self-efficacy correlated in earlier studies with lower vulnerability to anxiety, worry, depression and social avoidance (Tahmassians, & Jalali Moghadan, 2011). In their review of literature, they cited that Bandura (1997) identified the four sources for Self efficacy as mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal or social persuasion and the psychological and emotional state. Hence previous experience of success increased belief



in self-efficacy. The paper by Zamfir & Mocanu (2020) thus attempted to explore factors that predict academic self-efficacy in senior secondary school students.

The descriptive survey instrument was used for the study. Parental and teacher support were operationalized as independent variables predicting self-efficacy. Their result showed 12.6% of students had failure beliefs while 35.2% showed middle level self-efficacy and 52.2% had high levels of self-efficacy. Students with support from parents as well as those who benefited from the extracurricular activities had high levels of self-efficacy beliefs (81.1%). The study showed that parental support was the strongest predictor of self-efficacy.

In a study by Reddan (2015) on enhancing the Self efficacy of students for making positive career decisions, the author attempted to determine the effects of learning activities in student's Self efficacy for making career decisions. The study was anchored on Self efficacy theory which he described as the application of social learning or social cognitive theory to vocational education career Self efficacy which can be traced to Bandura's work or Self efficacy and Taylor and Betz (1983) development of the career decision Self Efficacy Scale (CDSSES) was designed to "measure an individual's degree of belief that he or she can successfully complete tasks necessary to making career decisions" (Reddan, 2015). The author also explicated the SOAR model (Cumar, 2007) which is Self-awareness, opportunity awareness, aspiration and results. The SOAR model is implemented to allow for the development or shaping of realistic career aspiration in students. SOAR model is a source model for career Self efficacy. The career decision of Self-efficacy scale (CDSSES) consists of items based on the ability of the individual to identify resources, personal characteristics which affect career choices. The case study for the resources was Griffiths University. The research sought to evaluate learning experience in career Self efficacy. The instrument was administered in 15 students in the second year. Findings showed a significant difference in SOARS of Self-appraisal ($P < 0.05$) occupational information ($P < 0.05$), goal selection ($P < 0.05$), planning ($P < 0.05$) and problem solving before and after partaking in the programme. Most students career Self efficacy improved after the learning program (87%) as 93% of the students indicated that career plan helps in making positive career decisions.

Vechio et al (2007) operationalized self-efficacy as regulatory studying and learning, peer relationship and ability to resist peer pressure. Reed et al (2012) operationalized self-efficacy as domain specific in decision making hence decision making self-efficacy is operationalized as ability to make effective decisions. Cheng et al (2015) operationalized self-efficacy as domain specific academic SE which neglects belief that the individual can do well in academics, social efficacy which reflects belief in maintain social bounds career self-efficacy which refers to ability to perform behaviour that relates to career development adjustment and choice. Ogulu et al (2017) operationalized self-efficacy in line with cheng et al (2015) and Reed et al (2012) in career domain.

These studies reviewed showed a significant relationship between self-efficacy and outcomes. The outcomes and the self-efficacy factor are domain specific. Specific domain is academic achievement (Vechio et al, 2007; Cheng et al, 2015). Decision making (Reed et al, 2012). Career decision making (Ogulu et al, 2017; Reddan, 2015) what has been demonstrated is that the operationalization of self-efficacy must be domain specific. In this research, the area of interest is choice of commercial subject which has already been operationalized as decision making. Hence the decision-making self-efficacy is explored further and adapted for this research study. Decision making self-efficacy answers the question posed by decision making theorist. A belief in the ability to make decision should be used as a predictor variable. In the study by Reed et al (2012) Decision



making self-efficacy was measured along domains. In each domain subjects selected confidence in their ability to select the best option in a 7-point scale.

- 1 - Not at all confident
- 2 - Not confident
- 3- A little bit confident
- 4 – Moderately confident
- 5 – Confident
- 6 – Very confident
- 7 – Extremely confident

This aspect of the instrument was used to gauge decision making self-efficacy in a wide range of domains of consumption. This study will adapt Reed et al (2012) to subject offered in Senior Secondary Schools.

Career aspiration is a futuristic term. It implies the individual has a career goal and as a result begins to selectively align with skill set that may help fulfill the career goals. Career aspiration is what an individual wishes to become in life considering the age, sex, culture and gender. The girl child will hardly prefer career such as mechanical engineering as she will for law, mass communication, nursing, teaching or banking. Culture or religion affects the career choice, for example some religion will not encourage career in music, theatre arts and the likes. It can also be defined as a long-term plan or dream that is far away in the future, setting goals in your career is important. A lot of people want to become part of a management team, a big step up because it invests you with more power and greater responsibility (Bandura, 2006). Career aspiration also enhances the professional skills in order to advance in any organization, find stable job security, gain more autonomy at work, better balance your home and work life and educate yourself more. The career aspiration of students may be gender based. That is, the gender of the students may play a role in career choice and aspiration.

This conception of career aspiration is futuristic it is a projection into the future about what the individuals hopes to be. The notion of a projection about the possible self, allowed the researcher to explore the theories of career developmental theory. The trait and factor theory is one of the earliest perspectives on career. It relies on the assumption that people differ in traits. The trait thus becomes a unique foot print that allows for specific careers. The need personality theory draws some assumptions from the trait and factor theory but posit that needs serve as a motivator, some scholars in this field hold the opinion that interests, personality and lifestyle shape career aspirations. The social learning approaches draw from psychology, Economics, Sociology, guidance and education to posit that sociological factors influence careers choices. The context is therefore important hence, people who study career aspiration inquire the facts of an individual's experience, genetic endowment as well as environment in the type of aspirations children would likely project underlying this approach is the ability to learn. The core assumption of these theorists is the focus on different levels of maturation of the individual and the decision making as tied to the level of maturity. What is evident is that these theories have particular assumptions about the nature of the human being that is influential in the projection and actual choices of career.

Career aspiration is construed by Ilojeme (2004) as a reflection of the individual's possible self and this conception is rooted in career development theory, trait and factor theory, need personality theory, society learning approaches. Career aspiration is thus conceived as a reflection either of innate factors or changing contexts. Abdulkadir et al (2011) conceive career aspiration as individual ambitions as it relates to occupations. This description is limited to the world of work.



They used occupational descriptors as Accounting, Entrepreneurship, Non business occupation and no aspiration. Razali, Talib, Abd Manaf, & Hassan (2018) probed a link between attitude and career aspiration. Career aspiration is hypothesized as a dependent variable. The linkage is anchored on social cognitive theory. The study by Ali et al (2020) introduced two notions into career aspiration; prestige and appropriate career aspiration. Prestige is a notion of valued occupational categories while appropriate career aspiration is a notion of what is beneficial to the society.

What these conceptions here is the multi-dimensional nature of career aspirations. Firstly, that career is rooted in individual development (Ilojeme, 2004). It can reflect innate or changing contexts. It is occupation specific (Abdul Kadir et al, 2011) it can be linked to attitude (Razali et al, 2018) and it is a sociological phenomenon as it reflects society values (Ali et al, 2020).

Gender is defined as the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex (Brogan, 2006). The effect of gender role socialization has a far reaching significant consequence; as such young people may only perceive a narrow gender based range of future options, particularly in relation to education and career opportunities. For instance, a mother may advise her daughter that it is important to establish her career before she raises a family. Such a message focus on a person's ability due to her gender, it may also increase or decrease a child's perception of his/her own skills or aptitude in certain areas (Mitchall & Krumbultz, 2006). Students may be counseled on the choice of some commercial subjects based on their gender. There are some career opportunities that may require more energy from the student(s) and as such, males are often counseled to choose such career path.

Regarding career aspirations, McMachon and Patton (2006) found that male adolescents aspire to higher level careers than female adolescents. This difference may be related to young women's continuing the perception that a job is an interim activity between school, marriage and motherhood. Although women's career choices have increased dramatically since the 1960's and 1970's (Abdullahi et al, 2009), women still find their occupational choices limited in comparison to men (Heggen, 2010).

Similarly, Santrock (2011) postulated that various occupations are still dominated by male. The United State Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008) information on occupations held by sex of respondent shows that: landscapes (8.6% female) and Auto-mechanics (10.6% female) the remaining percentages are filled by male. In contrast, child care services (95.3% female) and Nursing care facilities (87% female) are dominated by female workers. Boys were found to be especially critical of other boys who were working in stereotypical female jobs e.g. a male cook or male nurse. Luft and Summons (2008) proposed that, recently young females are being influenced to choose traditionally male jobs like doctors, detective and even super heroes due to pushes to decrease gender stereotyping in lectures, books and by media, but the career stereotypes still exist for males. In another development, a study conducted by Abele and Spurk (2009) revealed that, despite the efforts to attain gender equality, Africa still has discrimination in certain professions which tend to prevent students from choosing certain careers. In view of these results or findings by researchers, this study sought to find out the moderating role of gender in career choice among secondary school students in Kogi State.

Statement of the Problem

The quest for skills acquisition for entrepreneurial activities and consequent growth of the Nigerian economy when such skills are applied rests on the choices made by students at the secondary school level. Within the economic and educational context, students have to choose the



cluster subject at the point of entry into senior secondary school. The choices they make at this level turns out to be important to future endeavors. Choices are not uniform across all students as many opt for the arts, the sciences and others go for commercial subjects.

Choosing a career is often considered a major turning point in a young adult's life. This decision has the potential to open the door for success or close the door of opportunity (Jungen, 2018). While often perceived to be an individual choice, research suggests that a variety of influences are likely to manipulate one's ultimate career decision. Among these factors, students report that self-efficacy and career aspirations have the greatest influence on the career they choose (Kibera, 2012).

It is therefore important to explore the issues regarding adolescent career choice and the role that self-efficacy and career aspirations play in this decision. This study is important because parents and in-school counseling may not realize the major impact their norms, values and gender roles have on career choice, and yet self-efficacy and career aspirations influence on students' career selection may present opportunities or obstacles for students during the career exploration process. It is against this background that this study will be conducted to determine the perceived influence of self-efficacy and career aspirations of students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the perceived influence of self-efficacy and career aspiration, on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools. Specifically, this study will determine the:

1. perceived influence of self-efficacy on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools
2. perceived influence of career aspiration on students' choice of commercial subjects at the senior secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study.

1. What is the perceived influence of self-efficacy on choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools?
2. What is the perceived influence of career aspiration on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary school?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on the influence of self-efficacy on students' choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of respondents from public and private school on the influence of career aspirations on students' choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools. .



Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

Research Question 1: What is the perceived influence of self-efficacy on students’ choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary school?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses of the perceived influence of self-efficacy on choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools

S/N	Item Statements	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Self-efficacy makes me to believe in my capability to succeed in commercial subjects.	3.12	0.71	Agreed
2.	Self-efficacy affects my choice of commercial subjects.	2.70	0.76	Agreed
3.	Self-efficacy strongly influences my power to face challenges competently in the choice of commercial subjects.	2.83	0.67	Agreed
4.	A strong sense of self-efficacy promotes my accomplishment in commercial subjects.	2.99	0.61	Agreed
5.	My high Self-efficacy enables me view challenges in commercial subjects as things to master rather than threats to avoid.	2.98	0.68	Agreed
6.	High self-efficacy encourages me to approach threatening situations in commercial subjects with the belief that I can control them.	2.90	0.75	Agreed
7.	Self-efficacy plays a major role in how I approaches goals, tasks, and challenges in commercial subjects.	3.04	0.80	Agreed
8.	I developed self-efficacy from external experiences and self-perception to move on with commercial subjects.	2.91	0.75	Agreed
9.	Self-efficacy represents my personal perception of external social factors in the choice of commercial subjects.	2.84	0.78	Agreed
10.	Experience of success increased my belief in self-efficacy	2.97	0.74	Agreed
11.	Self-efficacy is a predictive variable in my career decision making	2.76	0.73	Agreed
12.	Self-efficacy enables me to resist peer pressure against the choice of commercial subjects.	2.97	0.68	Agreed
13.	Self-efficacy enables me to believe that I can successfully complete tasks necessary to making career in commercial subjects.	2.74	0.79	Agreed
Weighted average		2.90	0.73	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data in Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of responses regarding the perceived influence of self-efficacy on choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools. The table reveals that the respondents agreed that self-efficacy makes them to believe in their capability to succeed in commercial subjects, affects their choice of commercial subjects and strongly influences their power to face challenges competently in the choice of commercial subjects. These were supported by mean scores of 3.12, 2.70, and 2.83. The respondents also agreed that a strong sense of self-efficacy promotes their accomplishment in commercial subjects,



and their high Self-efficacy enables them view challenges in commercial subjects as things to master rather than threats to avoid as well as encourages them to approach threatening situations in commercial subjects with the belief that they can control them. These were also supported by mean scores of 2.99, 2.98 and 2.90. In addition, the respondents agreed that self-efficacy plays a major role in how they approach goals, tasks, and challenges in commercial subjects, same way they agreed that they developed self-efficacy from external experiences and self-perception to move on which also represents their personal perception of external social factors in the choice of commercial subjects, and experience of success increased their belief in self-efficacy. These were also supported by mean scores of 3.04, 2.91, 2.84 and 2.97. In addition, the respondents also agreed that self-efficacy is a predictive variable in their career decision making, enables them to resist peer pressure against the choice of commercial subjects and believe that they can successfully complete tasks necessary to making career in commercial subjects. Mean scores of 2.76, 2.97, and 2.74 supported these. All the thirteen item constructs have standard deviation ranging from 0.61 to 0.80. This means that the responses of the respondents are not widely spread as they are close to their respective mean scores. The table has a calculated weighted average mean and standard deviation score of 2.90 and 0.73 respectively. This implied that students perceived that self-efficacy positively influence the choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools. (Mean = 2.90, SD = 0.73).

Research Question 2: What is the perceived influence of career aspiration on students’ choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary school?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses of the perceived influence of career aspiration on choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools

S/N	Item Statements	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Career aspiration is an expectation which is held in my mind for the choice of commercial subjects.	3.05	0.71	Agreed
2.	I strongly believe that the programme I am pursuing is relevant to my career path.	3.13	0.66	Agreed
3.	Career aspiration is a strong desire for me to reach something high or great on a job or occupation.	3.08	0.64	Agreed
4.	It is my desire to get a job after this programme.	3.23	0.58	Agreed
5.	I want to develop as an expert in my career field.	3.21	0.63	Agreed
6.	I would like to pursue graduate training in my occupational area of interest.	3.26	0.71	Agreed
7.	I am certain there is a connection between what I am studying and my career aspirations.	3.21	0.70	Agreed
8.	Attaining a leadership position in my career is an important reason for pursuing this programme.	3.26	0.75	Agreed
9.	It is my desire to excel and advance in my chosen career.	3.02	0.80	Agreed
10.	My aim for being on the programme is to aspire for promotion in my job	3.14	0.80	Agreed
11.	Career aspirations is a projection into the future about what I hope to be.	3.10	0.67	Agreed
Weighted average		3.15	0.70	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2023



The data in Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of responses regarding the perceived influence of career aspiration on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary school. The table reveals that the respondents agreed that career aspiration is an expectation which is held in their mind for the choice of commercial subjects, likewise they strongly believe that the programme they are pursuing is relevant to their career path and career aspiration is a strong desire for them to reach something high or great on a job or occupation. These were supported by mean scores of 3.05, 3.13, and 3.08. The respondents also agreed that it is their desire to get a job after the programme as they wish to develop as an expert in their career field and would like to pursue graduate training in their occupational area of interest. These were also supported by mean scores of 3.23, 3.21 and 3.26. In addition, the respondents agreed that they are certain there is a connection between what they are studying and their career aspirations, as such, attaining a leadership position in their career is an important reason for pursuing this programme and it is their desire to excel and advance in chosen career. These were also supported by mean scores of 3.21, 3.26, and 3.02. In addition, the respondents also agreed that their aim for being on the programme is to aspire for promotion in their job because career aspirations is a projection into the future about what they hope to be. Mean scores of 3.14, and 3.10 supported these. All the eleven item constructs have standard deviation ranging from 0.58 to 0.80. This means that the responses of the respondents are not widely spread as they are close to their respective mean scores. The table has a calculated weighted average mean and standard deviation score of 3.15 and 0.70 respectively. This implied that students perceived that career aspiration positively influence the choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools. (Mean = 3.15, SD = 0.70).

Test of Hypotheses

The two null hypotheses of the study were tested using Independent Sample t-test. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The summary of the test of hypotheses are presented in Tables 3 to 4 as follows:

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on the influence of self-efficacy on students' choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools.

Table 3: Summary of t-test of the difference in the mean ratings of male and female students regarding the influence of self-efficacy on students' choice of commercial subjects

Table with 8 columns: Group, N, Mean, SD, t-cal, Df, p-value, Decision. Rows for Male and Female.

Source: Field survey, 2023

P<0.05

The data in Table 3 reveals that there are 183 male students and 229 female students. The responses of male and female students indicated that male students had higher mean score (x̄ = 3.47; SD = 0.43) than female students (x̄ = 2.45; SD = 0.48). Their responses are close to the



mean as the standard deviations are very low. The table revealed that there was significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students regarding the influence of self-efficacy on students' choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools. ($t_{410} = 22.160$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the influence of self-efficacy on students' choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools was rejected. This implied that male and female students differ in their responses regarding the influence of self-efficacy on students' choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of respondents from public and private schools on the influence of career aspirations on students' choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools.

Table 4: Summary of t-test of the difference in the mean ratings of public and private schools regarding the influence of career aspirations on students' choice of commercial subjects

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Public	149	3.85	0.25				
				28.098	410	0.000	H ₀₁ Rejected
Private	263	2.76	0.44				

Source: Field survey, 2023

$P < 0.05$

The data in Table 4 reveals that there are 149 respondents from private schools and 263 respondents from public schools. The respondents from private schools had higher mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.85$; $SD = 0.25$) than respondents from public schools ($\bar{x} = 2.76$; $SD = 0.44$). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The table revealed that there was significant difference between the mean ratings of public and private schools regarding the influence of career aspirations on students' choice of commercial subjects ($t_{410} = 28.098$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of respondents from public and private schools regarding the influence of career aspirations on students' choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools was rejected. This implied that students from public and private schools differ in their responses regarding the influence of career aspirations on students' choice of commercial subjects.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the survey regarding the influence of self-efficacy on choice of commercial subjects at senior secondary schools reveals that the respondents belief in self-efficacy affects their choice of commercial subjects and strongly influences their power to face challenges competently in the choice of commercial subjects. This is in tune with the claim of Banyard (2002) who maintained that self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. The respondents also agreed that a strong sense of self-efficacy promotes their accomplishment in commercial subjects, and their high Self-efficacy enables them view challenges in commercial subjects as things to master rather than threats to avoid as well as encourages them to approach threatening situations in commercial



subjects with the belief that they can control them. After all, a person with high self-efficacy views challenges as things that are supposed to be mastered rather than threats to avoid. It was further discovered from the respondents that self-efficacy plays a major role in how they approach goals, tasks, and challenges in commercial subjects, same way they agreed that they developed self-efficacy from external experiences and self-perception to move on which also represents their personal perception of external social factors in the choice of commercial subjects, and experience of success increased their belief in self-efficacy. According to Albert Bandura self-efficacy as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task. One's sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges. Also, it can be deduced that self-efficacy which is a predictive variable in their career decision making, enables them to resist peer pressure against the choice of commercial subjects and believe that they can successfully complete tasks necessary to making career in commercial subjects. This implied that students perceived that self-efficacy positively influence the choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools.

The findings on in-school counseling and self-efficacy on the choice of commercial subjects are in consonance with the study carried out by Zamfir & Mocanu (2020) with the purpose of investigating the relationships that exist among school counselor self-efficacy, perceptions of the professional school counselor's role held by counselors, and actual practice were collected from 192 professional school counselors that attended a statewide counselor conference. A Multiple Regression Analysis was used to ascertain what relationships existed between school counselors self-efficacy, school counselor perceived role, and actual practice. Results indicated that there was a positive relationship between school counselors' experiencing higher self-efficacy and the actual practice in their perceived school counselor roles. As self-efficacy increased, their performance in various roles increased as well.

Furthermore, survey regarding the influence of career aspiration on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary school reveals that the respondents agreed that career aspiration is an expectation which is held in their mind for the choice of commercial subjects, likewise they strongly believe that the programme they are pursuing is relevant to their career path and career aspiration is a strong desire for them to reach something high or great on a job or occupation. This is in line with the claim of Abdulkadir et al (2011) who conceived that career aspiration as individual ambitions as it relates to occupations. The respondents were also of the believe that that their desire to get a job after the programme would be fulfilled through the choice of Commercial subjects. With the believe that there is a connection between what they are studying and their career aspirations, which may lead them to leadership position in their career is an important reason for pursuing this programme and it is their desire to excel and advance in chosen career. In summary, students perceived that career aspiration positively influence the choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools.

Conclusion

The study has established the influence of self-efficacy and career aspiration, on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. Data have been analyzed by applying both descriptive and inferential. Not only was it agreed that the students have positive perception towards the influence of career aspiration, they also agreed that positively self-efficacy influence the choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools.



From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that self-efficacy and career aspiration played a great role on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Finally, it can also be concluded that self-efficacy and career aspiration played a significant role on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

It has been established that self-efficacy and career aspiration, played a great role on students' choice of commercial subjects in senior secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. It is hereby recommended that:

- i) Teachers should motivate the students to achieve their utmost potential since the parents support any career aspirations of their children.
- ii) Since self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments, parents and school councilors should not fit any student on the choice of a particular subject.

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