

INFLUENCE OF HOME BACKGROUND, LIVING CONDITIONS AND FAMILY SIZE ON CAREER CHOICE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EGOR LGA OF EDO STATE

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Abstract

This study addresses the problem of how home background influences the career choices of secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, given the growing concern that students' career decisions may be shaped more by family conditions than by personal interests or abilities. The objective of the study was to examine the extent to which aspects of home background such as family living conditions and family size affect students' career choices. To achieve this, three research questions were raised and three corresponding hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. A survey research design was adopted. The population comprised all secondary school students in public schools within the study area, totaling 1,225 students across 11 schools. From this population, a sample of 100 students was selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Impact of Home Background on Career Choice of Secondary School Students Questionnaire (IHBCSQ). The instrument's reliability was established through a pilot test involving 20 students outside the study sample, yielding a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.75. Data analysis was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between home background and students' career choices, as well as a strong positive relationship between family living conditions and career choice. However, no significant relationship was found between family size and career choice. The study concludes that the quality of students' home environment plays a more critical role in shaping career choices than family size.

Keywords: Career choice, home background, family living conditions, family size, secondary school students

Introduction

Career refers to an individual's journey through learning, work, and other aspects of life that span their professional pursuits. It encompasses the sequence of employment-related experiences, achievements, and positions one undertakes over their lifetime. A career is not merely a job or a series of jobs; rather, it reflects a person's long-term progression in a chosen field or occupation. Career development involves strategic planning, skill acquisition, and adapting to evolving circumstances. In modern contexts, careers are often characterized by a series of interconnected roles, each building on the knowledge and expertise gained in previous ones. Successful careers are typically marked by continuous learning, professional growth, and the pursuit of personal and financial goals. Career represents a substantial part of an individual's identity and contributes significantly to their overall life satisfaction and fulfillment. In its essence, a career is a holistic concept that includes both objective achievements, such as promotions and titles, and subjective elements like job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and a sense of purpose (Dame 2017).

Choosing a career is one of the most important decisions in an individual's life. It affects personal fulfillment, economic stability, and social identity. For secondary school students, career choice maybe influenced not only by their interests and abilities but also by their home environment. The home provides the first social setting where values, aspirations, and attitudes toward work are developed. Home background includes parental education, income, occupation, family size, and living conditions. These factors determine the resources, motivation, and exposure a student receives. In Nigeria, many students' career choices are shaped by their parents' expectations and economic realities rather than their personal interests. Kevin (2019) stated that career choices can be influenced by educational background, interests, values, and parental influence. The concept of career has evolved beyond the traditional linear paths, with individuals increasingly exploring diverse options and embracing flexibility in their professional journeys. The evolving nature of modern work environments has transformed careers from traditional, linear paths to more flexible, nonlinear choice. Individuals may navigate through multiple careers, each offering unique challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the importance of resilience and ongoing skill development.

Career choice is a pivotal decision-making process through which individuals select a specific occupation or professional path, shaping their long-term employment and personal development (Adefulu, et al 2019). It involves a thoughtful consideration of various factors, including personal interests, skills, values, educational background, societal influences, and economic considerations. At its core, career choice reflects an individual's aspirations and preferences for work that aligns with their intrinsic motivations and aptitudes. It is a dynamic process influenced by self-reflection, exposure to diverse experiences, and an understanding of the evolving job market. Personal interests play a

significant role, as individuals often seek careers that resonate with their passions and provide a sense of purpose. Additionally, career choice may be informed by an assessment of skills and abilities, ensuring that individuals leverage their strengths for success and satisfaction in their chosen fields. Values and beliefs contribute to the ethical dimension of career decisions, aligning professions with personal principles. External factors, such as family expectations, societal norms, and economic considerations, further shape the trajectory of career choices. The process of career choice begins with an assessment of personal interests, guiding individuals toward professions that align with their intrinsic motivations and provide a sense of purpose. Understanding one's skills and competencies is equally vital, ensuring a harmonious match between professional roles and individual capabilities. Values play a pivotal role in career choice, as individuals seek occupations that align with their ethical principles and overarching life goals. External influences, such as family expectations, societal norms, and economic considerations, also impact career choices (Patrick 2019).

Home is a place in which children learn to interpret realities (Wary & Passman, 2019) parents serve as significant interpreters to children for information about the world and children ability (Hall, et al 2016). Home likely refers to the immediate family environment in which the students are raised. This include the parents or guardians, siblings, and other individuals who play a significant role in shaping the students' upbringing, values and beliefs. Home influence is an important force in preparing students for their career choices, it is essential to recognize the significant impact that the family environment and home background can have on shaping an individual's values, beliefs, interests, and aspirations. However, within each home, the level of involvement can vary positively or negatively. Home background factor associated with career choice include parental occupation (home income), level of education, parental expectation, socioeconomic status, cultural values and biogenetics factor such as physical size, gender, ability, and temperament within the home environment can all play a significant role in influencing a student's career choices (Eric et al 2020).

Mortime et al (2019) also reported that parents with post-secondary education tend to pass along its importance in their children a finding reported by other studies. De Piddeo (2019) however, points out that the lower level of parents' education can retard adolescents career choice. Being born to parents with limited education and income reduces the likelihood of going to college or achieving a professionally and occupational goals and essentially predetermined the child's likely career choice. When parents have lower levels of education, parents may have limited knowledge about various career opportunities, educational pathways, and the benefits of higher education. This lack of awareness and understanding may impact how they guide and support their children in making informed career choices. Lower levels of parental education may indeed impact adolescents' career choices by limiting exposure to diverse opportunities, reducing advocacy and support,

creating financial constraints, limiting networking opportunities, and leading to mismatched aspirations.

Living conditions broadly relate to the socio-economic and environmental factors in which a student is immersed. This includes income levels, access to resources, psychological well-being, and social support systems. These factors affect career decisions by shaping access to information, perceptions of opportunities, and practical constraints such as the ability to fund education or training. According to Annafa (2025), students from lower SES backgrounds face greater career decision-making difficulties compared to their higher SES peers, highlighting barriers linked to limited resources and information access.

Family size may influence student's career choice. Research indicates that parents play a pivotal role by shaping values, expectations, and access to information about career pathways (Okesina & Famolu, 2022). Larger families may dilute parental attention and educational resources per child, potentially limiting guidance and support for career exploration. Conversely, students from smaller families may receive more individualized counselling and encouragement in their career decisions. It was therefore necessary and crucial to investigate the variables that motivate student's choice of occupation with a view to find solution to the problem of occupational incompatibility of Secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. This study therefore examines how these differences in home background influence students' career choices.

In recent years, the declining standard of education in Nigeria has become a major concern for stakeholders in the education sector. This decline is reflected in students' poor academic performance and their difficulty in making informed career choices. Scholars and educational planners have linked this trend to factors such as inadequate funding, poor teaching quality, and ineffective educational policies (Federal Ministry of Education, 2017; UNESCO, 2021). However, insufficient attention has been given to the role of the home environment, which plays a crucial role in shaping students' aspirations and career decisions. The home is the primary agent of socialization where children first acquire values, attitudes, and behaviours that influence their future. According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, individuals learn through interaction with their environment, particularly through observation and social influence, which significantly affects their behaviour and decision-making processes. Furthermore, parents and family members serve as important role models whose socio-economic status, educational level, and support systems influence students' career aspirations and persistence (Eccles, 1987; Bandura, 1997). Empirical studies have shown that home background factors such as living conditions, parental education, family income, and family size significantly influence students' career choices. Students from disadvantaged home environments often lack access to adequate career guidance, resources, and encouragement, which may hinder their ability to make appropriate career decisions (Kerka, 2000; Wattles, 2009).

Despite these findings, there is still limited empirical research focusing specifically on how home background factors particularly living conditions and family size affect the career choices of secondary school students in Nigeria. Most existing studies have focused more on academic performance rather than career decision-making, thereby leaving a gap in knowledge. This gap makes it difficult for educators, guidance counselors, and policymakers to design effective strategies that will support students in making informed and realistic career choices. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the impact of home background, particularly living conditions and family size, on the career choices of secondary school students, with a view to providing empirical evidence that will enhance educational planning and career guidance practices.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the researcher in carrying out this research

1. What is the relationship between the home background and the career choice made by student?
2. What Is the relationship between living condition of the family and choice of career of student?
3. Does family size have a relationship on the choice of career of secondary school students?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between home background and the career choice made by student
2. There is no significant relationship between living condition of the family and choice of career of student.
3. There is no significant relationship between family size and the choice of career of secondary school students.

Methodology

The design for this is a descriptive survey research design. The chosen research design is considered appropriate for this study because of its nature that seeks to find out the influence of home background on secondary school students in their choice of career in Egor Local Government Area, as well as elicit information's from respondents. The population of the study comprises of eleven (11) senior secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State with one thousand two hundred and twenty-five (1225) students both male and female respectively. The sample size consists of one hundred students (100), seventeen (17) students were selected from each school. The sample selected was six out of the eleven schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State using simple random sampling. This was achieved by random selection of respondents from the entire population without the researcher's bias. Hence, every member of the population has equal chance of being selected. The eleven schools selected serve as a representative of the entire public senior secondary school in Egor East Local

Government Area of Edo State. The instrument used for this study is a structured questionnaire titled Influence of Home Background on Career Choice of Secondary School Students Questionnaire (IHBSCSQ), developed by the researcher. The instrument was designed to collect data on the influence of home background variables on students' career choices. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including age, sex, and educational level. Section B consisted of twenty-four (24) items structured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA = 4), Agree (A = 3), Disagree (D = 2), and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1). The items were grouped into three clusters based on the variables under study. Cluster 1 examined the influence of home background on career choice, including access to educational resources, family discussions, cultural values, and parental influence. Cluster 2 focused on family living conditions, such as financial status and support systems. Cluster 3 examined the influence of family size on students' career choices. The items measuring home background and career choice were developed by the researcher based on relevant literature on family influence and career development, ensuring adequate coverage of the study variables.

The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. A pilot study was conducted by administering the instrument to a group of secondary school students outside the study area but with similar characteristics to the target population. The data collected from the pilot study were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha, and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. This value indicates that the instrument has acceptable internal consistency and is therefore reliable for use in the study. The researcher visited the selected secondary schools to meet with the appropriate authorities, notify them of the study, and obtain formal permission, thereby ensuring proper rapport and institutional approval for the administration of the research instrument. This process enhanced transparency and adherence to ethical research standards. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher after clearly explaining the purpose of the study and what participation entailed. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were duly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any form of penalty. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation. The respondents were assured of strict confidentiality and anonymity, as no identifying information was required, and all data collected were used solely for academic purposes. Upon completion, the questionnaires were collected on the same day to ensure data security and prevent loss or manipulation of information. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used in analyzing the data collected.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between the home background and the choice of career made by student.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation statistics of home and career choices made by students.

Variables	N	Pearson 'r'	Sig(2tailed)
Home background vs Career choice	100	.362	.000

Table 1 shows a Pearson 'r' value of .362 and a p-value of .000, testing at an alpha level of 0.05, since the P-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states There is no significant relationship between the home background and the choice of career made by student is rejected. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between the home background and the career choices made by student.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between living condition of the family and choice of career of student.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation statistics of the living conditions of family and choice of career of students.

Variables	N	Pearson 'r'	Sig(2tailed)
Familyliving conditions vs Career choice	100	.756	.000

Table 2 shows a Pearson 'r' value of .756 and a p-value of .000, testing at an alpha level of 0.05, since the p-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states There is no significant relationship between the living conditions of family and choice of career of students is rejected. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between the living conditions and the career choices made by students.

Hypotheses Three: There is no significant relationship between family size and the choice of career of secondary school students.

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation statistics of the family size and choice of career of secondary school students.

Variables	N	Pearson 'r'	Sig(2tailed)
Family size vs Career choices	100	0.165	0.340

Table 3 shows a Pearson 'r' value of 0.165 and a P-value of 0.340, testing at an alpha level of 0.05, since the P-value is greater than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between the family size and choice of career of students is accepted. Consequently, there is no significant relationship between family size and the choice of career of secondary school students.

Discussion of findings

Hypotheses one revealed that there is a meaningful connection between the home background and the career choices students make. The analysis shows that this relationship is statistically significant, meaning it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. As a result, the idea that the home has no influence on students' career decisions is rejected. This implies that factors within the home, such as parental guidance, socio-economic status, and family expectations, may play a crucial role in shaping students' career paths. This corroborates the findings of Udonwa et. al (2021), which examined the influence of home management practices and family environment on the career choices of secondary school students in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. They found that factors such as parental absence, domestic violence, family disharmony, and physical or mental illness significantly impacted students' career decisions.

Hypotheses two revealed that there is a strong and meaningful connection between a living conditions and the career choices students make. The results indicate that this relationship is statistically significant, meaning it is not due to chance. Consequently, the assumption that living conditions do not influence students' career decisions is rejected. This implies that factors such as financial stability, access to education, and overall family support play a crucial role in shaping the career paths students pursue. This corroborates the findings of Vautero et.al (2021), which examined the influence of family on undergraduates' career choice implementation. They found that family values, expectations, and support indirectly affect students' career decisions by shaping their perceptions and their self-efficacy. This suggests that a supportive family environment can enhance a student's confidence in making career choices, while a lack of support may hinder their career development.

Hypotheses three revealed that there is no meaningful connection between family size and the career choices of secondary school students. The results indicate that this relationship is not statistically significant, meaning any observed influence is likely coincidental rather than a genuine effect. As a result, the assumption that family size affects students' career decisions is not supported. This implies that the number of siblings or overall household size does not play a crucial role in determining the career paths students pursue, while other factors such as parental guidance, financial status, and individual interests may have a greater impact. This corroborates the findings of Xing and Jay (2018), which examined the role of various family factors in predicting the career decision-making self-efficacy of Chinese secondary vocational students. Their research found that structural aspects of the family, such as socioeconomic status and family size, did not significantly influence students' confidence in making career decisions. Instead, process-oriented factors, particularly parental general psychosocial support, played a more substantial role. This suggests that the quality of parental support and interaction is more critical in shaping students' career decision-making abilities than the family's structural characteristics.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that home background and living conditions has a significant relationship with the choice of career of secondary school students while family size does not have a significant relationship with career choice of secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. This reveals that parents and guardians play a crucial role in guiding and influencing their children's career choices and overall conditions within the home.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made to ensure that students make informed career choices irrespective of their home background:

1. Improving the home environment for better career decisions requires parents to create a positive and encouraging atmosphere that nurtures their children's career aspirations.
2. Addressing the impact of family living conditions on career choices can be achieved through scholarships and financial aid for students from low-income families to ensure financial constraints do not limit their career options.
3. Schools should offer career counselling and skills acquisition programmes to expose students to opportunities beyond their immediate living conditions.
4. Government and community stakeholders should invest in infrastructure and resources that improve the standard of living, as better living conditions contribute to broader career aspirations.

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