

Determinants of Career Aspiration of Senior High School Students: Preliminary Study in the TemaMetropolis

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the determinants of career aspiration of Senior High School Students in the Tema Metropolis. The study adopted the explanatory sequential mixed method design. Stratified random sampling techniques was used to sample 300 participants for the quantitative phase whilst purposive sampling was used to sample 12 participants from the 300 for the qualitative phase of the data collection. Questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used in data collection. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and correlation statistics. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic content approach. It emerged from the study that participants aspired for careers in accountancy, administration, artistic tasks, businessman, civil service, information communication technology, economics, engineering, factory worker, farmer, historian, medicine and the like. The interview data confirmed these as the aspired careers of participants. Career aspirations of the participants were formed during childhood and crystallised into actual specific careers over time. There was a significant negative correlation between career aspiration and academic achievement ($r = -.298^{**}$, $N = 300$, $p < 0.01$). The data also revealed that the academic performance of a student influenced the aspired career. The Tema Metropolitan Assembly, Tema Educational Directorate and the head teachers of the sampled schools should organize career guidance and outreach programmes for their students on the various career types, entry requirement/qualifications and available institutions.

KEYWORDS: Career Aspiration, Senior High School Students, Tema Metropolis, Ghana.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as the answer to socioeconomic problems of the world (Suan, Mat & Lin Im, 2012). Every nation of the world aspires toward quality of life and social status. Career aspiration and selection is one of important choices students make in determining future plans. This decision may impact on them throughout their lives. The essence of who the student is will revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work (Suan, Mat & Lin Im, 2012). The choice of career has been a serious problem among Senior High School students in Ghana. No matter the age, the choice of career or occupation is an important issue of concern to people. Adolescence is a time of rapid physical emotional and mental development, which is occasionally complicated by high school setting, increased responsibilities and the desire to become an adult. Problems of emancipation, independence and freedom from the family occupy the early stage, while problems of social role and personal development task are to integrate earlier elements into a true sense of identity (Kelichi, Olalekan & Adigun, 2013). What we observe in the high school students career development is that many factors are evolved such as environment, personality, and opportunity that parents and students need to consider in their view of career aspiration.

Lerner (2013) reported that parents socialise their sons and daughters differently. This socialisation has a strong bearing on future aspired career goals and their motives. Apart from these home conditions, some other factors influence the career aspirations of the adolescent. Intrinsic motives include personal interest and professional development (Griffiths & Kaldi 2007). Earlier researches of Chan (2004) and, Shadbolt and Bunker (2009) show that intrinsic motives were one of the major factors that influenced them to aspire about a career. Prestige, a construct of intrinsic motives, was also an important motivating factor in their career aspirations (Agarwala, 2008). According to Viet (1996), the intrinsic motivation of wanting to be useful, is still high as in previous investigations. Empirical research does not agree on gender differences in intrinsic motives for career choice. Studies by Halpern (1992), Heyman, Gomez-Mejia, Balkin and Cardy (2002) and Lai, Mitchell,

Jones and Krumboltz (2009) show that males are more intrinsically motivated than females. Males were more performance oriented and performed significantly higher than girls (Halpern, 1992; Lai et al., 2009). Males appeared to be more willing to confront a challenge, to seek to learn new things to satisfy curiosity and to solve problems independently as compared to females. According to studies by Chan (2004), Griffiths and Kaldi (2007) and Hallisey (2002) people make career choice decisions on the basis of expected incentives. Measures of extrinsic value like money, security and prestige revealed significant gender differences among students in several studies. Kordaki (2007) state that computer science boys were more concerned about financial gain and prestige of the profession. According to Duehr and Bono (2006), men who are more agentic, who believe that their appropriate role and value to their family is as breadwinner tend to place a higher value on financial gain. Girls were found to be far more interested than boys in gaining job security (Kordaki, 2007). However, Chuan and Atputhasamy (2001) note that gender difference on extrinsic motives are not significant. Lifestyle values refer to the want for "good life" like status, power, independence, opportunity for professional development and remuneration associated with the occupation (Davey & Lalande, 2004). The lifestyle values include constructs such as hours of employment and opportunity to travel. According to Shadbolt and Bunker (2009), family factor is a powerful determinant of career choice that relates to the need to consider circumstances that surround it. Recent research evidence suggests that lifestyle factors are now equally important to both men and women (Shadbolt & Bunker, 2009; Thibodeau & Usoff, 2002). In Europe, a study by Hallisey, Heppner and O'Brien (2002) with dental students shows that entrepreneurial motive was rated among the major reasons for career choice. However, gender parity on participation in entrepreneurship has not been attained. For example, studies conducted by Small and McClean (2002) with Barbadian youth and Bardasi, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, (2008). With Belgian and Philippine students show that more males than females are entrepreneurially motivated. In Africa, more women were found to be major players than men in the private sector, particularly agriculture and informal businesses (Bardasi, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 2008).

Statement of the Problem: Preparations for and implementation of, career related choices is one of the critical challenges inherent in the normative shift from adolescence to early adulthood (Mish, 2004). High school is an opportunity for individuals to crystallize educational and career aspirations; thus, decisions made during this time have profound consequences for either limiting or optimizing future endeavours. Linderman (2010) conducted a study to examine the proposition that a direct relationship exists between the career aspirations of seventh grade students and their academic achievement. A career aspirations survey was completed by and collected from 39 students from a suburban middle school of a north-eastern United States city. Results indicated that most students, regardless of GPA, aspired to careers that required considerable to extensive preparation. The students holding the top five highest GPA's out of the sample aspired to careers in these two categories giving evidence to the validity of the proposition.

Bergen (2006) examined family influences on career development and aspirations of young adults. Results support the idea that different aspects of the family influence diverse factors of career development and future aspirations. The achievement orientation of the family was predictive of career salience and extrinsic aspirations. Conflict with mothers was predictive of career salience yet support and depth in the relationship with mothers and low amounts of conflict in the relationship with fathers were predictive of career maturity. High career salience was also predictive of career maturity. The hypothesis that factors play a mediating role between the family and career development variables was not supported. Shumba and Naong (2012) conducted a study to determine factors influencing career choice and aspirations among South African students. A quantitative paradigm guided this study. A survey method in the form of a structured questionnaire was used in this study in order to identify the factors that influence career choice and aspirations among South African students. The study found that the family; the ability of the learner to identify his/her preferred career choice; and teachers were significant factors that influence the career choice and aspirations of students. These findings suggest future research should assess multiple aspects of the family and multiple facets regarding career development to more fully understand this process. From the various studies reviewed, there appears to be very little work done in ascertaining multiple facets of career determinants and the effect of academic achievement on career aspiration of students in Ghana especially in the Tema Metropolis. To fill this knowledge gap, this current study is designed to investigate the academic achievement and career aspiration of Senior High School students in the Tema Metropolis.

Hypothesis : The following hypothesis were formulated to guide the study:

H₀ There is no significant correlation between academic achievement and career aspirations of Senior High School Students in selected Senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolis.

H₁ There is a statistically significant correlation between academic achievement and career aspirations of Senior High School Students in selected Senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Aspiration : Ngwoke (2004) cited in Joseph (2009) opined that level of aspiration is a longing for what is above one, with advancement as its goal. Thus, aspiration has to do with the desire to improve or rise above one's present status. Aspiration as goal striving behaviour is an essential feature of modern competitive world. As aspirations are ego involved, success leads to satisfaction, happiness and increased self-esteem while failure brings embarrassment, remorse and feeling of personal inadequacy and inferiority (Krishan, 2014).

Career Aspiration : Career vocational aspiration is for younger or older adults to either start a new career or enter a new vocation that they have never done. Career aspirations represent an individual's orientation towards a desired vocation goal under ideal conditions. More simply stated vocational aspirations provide information about an individual's interests and hopes, unfitted by reality (Hellenga, Aber & Rhodes, 2002; Joseph, 2009). Career aspiration is a person's desired career or career aim. In other words, vocational aspiration is defined as the desire to achieve a particular vocation. People's vocational aspiration can be categorized into limited number of types (Geek, 2009). The following are five examples of vocational aspirations:

Traditional career success aspiration describes people who are motivated and inspired to advance their professional skills for achieving a progress in the organization's hierarchy level. People seek positions that have the potential to establish status responsibility, higher salary and authority. People also seek solid jobs that represent stability and predictability. This aspiration describes people who prefer to work at workplaces that offer a long term secured position over advancement. Expertise aspiration describes people who seek positions that offer technical career professional enhancement and technological interest. Such people would like to become experts in their professional area. Freedom aspiration is exhibited by people who seek individualism. Such a person wants to get autonomy for his thoughts and activities. These are people who are motivated by values such as freedom and independence. Balance aspiration also describes people who consider their career equal or lower as compared to other non-work values and interests such as family and religion but preferred jobs that respect their interests on their personal life. According to Gottfredson (1981) cited in Geek (2009), vocational aspiration is the single occupation named as one's best alternative at any given time. As perceptions of compatibility and accessibility change, so does a person's assessment of which alternative is the best, even though the social space may be stable.

Theoretical Review : The study was underpinned by the theory of Career Aspirations, Goals, Motivation, and Achievement Theory (GMAT) and Family Background and Obligations Theory (FBOT).

Theory of Career Aspirations : Super (1957) proposed five phases through which a person develops a career. According to Super (1957), during the Growth Stage (birth to 14 or 15 years), concept of self, attitudes and interests develop whilst the Exploratory stage (15- 24 years) is marked by the development of skills and the making of tentative choices. The third phase is Establishment (25-44 years) during which skills are further developed and individuals begin to stabilize as work experience is gained. According to Super, Maintenance occurs from ages 45 to 64, a period characterized by adjustments to improve work positions. It is during the Decline phase (ages 65 and above) that individuals begin to prepare for retirement according to Super's theory. Super (1957) also proposed that an individual progresses through five vocational development stages: Crystallization (14-18 years), during which individuals develop and plan tentative vocational goals, Specification (18-21 years), during which individuals develop a firmer understanding of their vocational goals, Implementation (21-24 years), during which individuals are trained for and obtain employment, Stabilization (24-35 years), during which individuals continue to work and corroborate their career choice and Consolidation (35 years and above) during which individuals get ahead in their careers. Although Super (1957) initially proposed that these stages occur sequentially, he later revised his theory to reflect the belief that individuals cycle and recycle through these stages in response to changes in self-concept and the work environment as they attempt to choose the job that allows them the most self-expression. During adolescence, interests, capacities and values develop which are all aspects of career maturity.

Goals, Motivation and Achievement Theory (GMAT) : This theory examines the relationship between goals, motivation, and school achievement. Discussing the relationship between educational goals (aspirations) and achievement, Covington (2000) advanced this theory by stressing that goals and achievements are separated by degree of motivation. According to this theory, aspirations are about achievements and achievements are about aspirations. Covington (2000) postulated that the quality of learning and the propensity to continue learning hinges on the interaction between the goals set by students and the motivating properties of such goals, such as expected reward structures or satisfaction. A student with high educational aspirations tends to generate better achievement scores, and based on current achievement, a student evaluates the likelihood of achieving a certain level of education and will define the aspired level of education. Differences and variations in aspiration levels among youth that are accounted for by differences in rewards of higher education can only be significant if there are large differences in reward structures, like wages and occupations, for the same levels of education across races, ethnicities, and youths in Ghana. However, such differences have been considered negligible. This leads to a discussion of the role of home in the formation of students' aspirations.

The implications of this theory reveal that the goals, motivation, and school achievement of a student in selected schools in Tema are related and depending on the level of the students' motivation and aspired goal. The aspired goal to achieve will determine the students' level of performance and invariably the career aspired for the future. Students' academic achievement (Mathematics, English language, Integrated Science and Social studies) will influence the students' career aspiration depending on the students' motivation.

Conceptual Framework

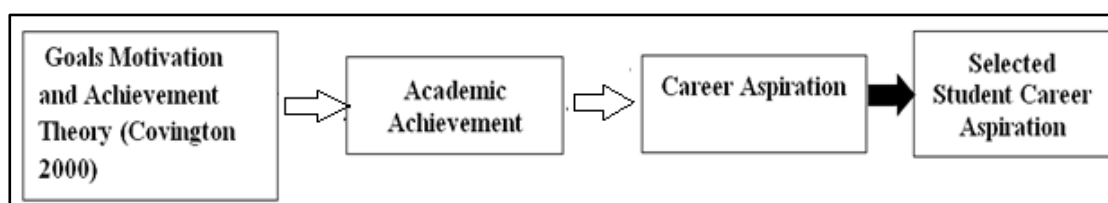


Figure 1: Determinants of Career Aspirations Based on Covington (2000) and Fuligni (1997) Theories.

It is often assumed that at some age, each student has aspirations, but broadly each student holds a specific aspiration level, when and how they arrive at that measure, and who and what influences their educational and career aspirations are questions important for understanding existing differences in educational aspirations across different youth populations documented by research (Covington, 2000). Research does not tell us how often students' aspirations change over time and whether such changes can be attributed to changes in their academic scores or trends in academic scores. Students can use their academic scores and other factors to revise their educational goals and aspirations, but the information students use to actually revise their aspirations and under what circumstances is also important in understanding the dynamics and differences in aspirations across student populations.

Family Background and Obligations Theory (FBOT) : FBOT postulates that family background factors, such as education, income, family structure, ethnicity, and culture, affect students' beliefs and behaviour. According to this theory, assimilation into the mainstream culture and the allocation of students' time are based on family beliefs and obligations to the extent that parents can influence their children (Fuligni, 1997). Fast assimilation into the mainstream culture has been emphasized by some scholars, but whether assimilation and acculturation affect aspirations of students and their socioeconomic development has been of much academic interest in recent years. To maintain high educational outcomes, parents and children often negotiate some balance in the use of family resources and their time between family obligations and educational activities (Fuligni, 1997). They choose the path and speed of assimilation into the mainstream culture that leads to better educational outcomes. It helps explain how a family mitigates social barriers to education and educational risks associated with low Socioeconomic Status (SES), reflecting to some extent the aspirations of parents, family and teachers (Fuligni, 1997).

Fuligni, (1999) classified family obligations into three categories: current assistance, respect and future assistance. By comparing different levels of these three variables and educational aspirations, they found medium values of each of these three variables to be associated with higher student aspirations. This theory underpinning this study shows the role of family characteristics in the career aspiration of the student. In Ghana, family characteristics like socioeconomic status and family background has significant influence on the career aspiration of the participant.

III. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Career Aspirations of Students : From the sociologist's point of view, socialization processes are considered a dominant factor influencing the college student's career aspirations (Weidman, 1998). Feliciano and Rumbaut (2005) examined educational aspirations of young adults in California, found the educational aspirations of males to be lower than that of females, who were more likely than males to aspire to and attain the highest status occupations even in areas that tended to be male dominated. Kao and Tienda (1998) showed that in 8th, 9th, 10th, and 12th grades, being a black female raised the probability of aspiring to obtain a college degree and that results were different for Asian and Hispanic females. Being a black male was important in forming college degree aspirations in 8th grade, but the effects of being a black male on college aspirations drastically changed in 10th and 12th grades. Tsuma (2006) on his study on girls' career preferences in Kenya found out that by the onset of adolescence, girls were already biased against technical and physical arts careers. Kibera (2003) in his study in Kiambu, Kajiado, and Machakos Districts on career aspirations and expectations of secondary school students pointed out that career aspirations and expectations are not merely outcomes of curriculum studied, rather they were a product of a variety of factors including school quality (quality of staff, equipment, workshops and school practices), gender composition of students in schools, age of the student, geographical/community environment.

Joseph (2009) conducted a study to investigate the vocational needs and aspirations of in-school and out-of-school secondary school females in Ankpa Education Zone of Kogi state, Nigeria. Findings of the study showed that in-school and out-of-school secondary school females in Ankpa Education Zone have relatively high vocational needs in areas like manipulation of tools, communication skills, artistic tasks, social work and mathematical tasks. The study found that in-school and out-of-school secondary school females aspires vocations such as law, administration, nursing, medicine and accountancy. Jones (2011) argued that parents affected the level of education or training that their children achieved, the knowledge they had about work and different occupations, the beliefs and attitudes they had about work and the job skills they learned. Some of the ways they did this was by; the attitudes and behaviour they rewarded and punished approved or disapproved of various occupation. The expectations they had for their children's education and career were important to them and they were setting example for their children. They exerted influence on who was around them the children and adults who were to become their children's significant others. They were concerned about the opportunities they offered their children to learn and develop and the kind of parent- child relationship they developed. In the researcher's opinion this was not bad but may go against the abilities and propensities of the student. Kilonzo (2010) in his study on student's career awareness found out that there was a significant relationship between father's education and educational aspirations for the children.

Raby and Walford (2011) in their study on career-related attitudes and their determinants in France revealed that home environment was the dominant source of career attitudes; parents' aspirations for their children were high. They also found out that students did not relate the world of school with future prospects. They saw the school as irrelevant to future jobs. Brembeck (2006) argued that student level of educational aspiration was positively related to peer-group membership. According to him peer group membership with a student with high career expectation influenced them to be inspired for certain careers. Jones (2012) supports the idea that peer group influence was an important factor in influencing students' career choice. Others studies by Vernez and Abrahamse (1996) and McIlveen and Wendy (2006) had similar findings. Routhen's (2006) study set out to find out the factors influencing student's career choices at secondary school level in Manga Sub County, Nyamira County. The study revealed that students made ignorant career choices due to inadequate career guidance. Majority of the teachers were not trained to handle careers neither were there adequate career guidance sessions in schools. Parental, peer and sibling influence also affected students as they made their career choice. Possible measures suggested included; students should be guided through their subjected choices to be in line with their career expectations. Parents, siblings and other members of the community should be advised on how to talk to students about their subject interest and abilities.

IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area : The study was conducted in some selected senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolis. The area map below (Figure 1) showed the study area.



Figure 2: Aerial Map of Tema Metropolis Showing the Study Area

Research Design : The study adopted the explanatory mixed method approach to facilitate the achievement of the stated objectives of the study. The explanatory mixed method is also known as the sequential explanatory (Creswell, 2012). It occurs in two distinct interactive phases. This research design starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative (numeric) data, which has the priority for addressing the study questions. This beginning stage is accompanied by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative (text) data. The second, qualitative phase of the study is designed so that it follows from the results of the first, quantitative phase (Creswell, 2012). The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis will provide a general understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Creswell, 2009). According to Denscombe (2007) researchers can improve their confidence in the accuracy of findings through the use of different methods to investigate the same subject.

The Population, Sample size, and Sampling Procedure : The population frame was 6030. This was made up of second and third year cohort of students from six (6) Senior High Schools including Tema Senior High (TEMASCO), Chemu Senior High, Methodist Day Senior High (MEDASS), Presbyterian Senior High School (TEMA PRESEC), Our Lady of Mercy Senior High (OLAMS) and Manhean Senior High Schools (MANSEC) in the Tema Metropolis in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Stratified simple random sampling technique was used to sample 50 students, from the form two and three class from each of the selected Senior High Schools. The various schools were categorised into two (2) strata from which simple random sampling was used to sample 50 students from each school totalling 300 students for the quantitative phase of the study. The random selection ensures that each student of the sample schools have an equal chance of being selected, and this is required for generalisation of the results to the target population as noted by Creswell (2009). Purposive sampling was used to sample 12 participants who formed a part of the 300 participants sampled for the study to participate in the one-on-one interview. This comprised of six females and six males students from the six selected schools for the study.

Data for the study was collected using structured questionnaire and Semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was a Likert scale questionnaire with options presented in four-point scale ranging from: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N) Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SA) respectively. Correspondingly, each of those options were rated the following: SA (4), A (3), N (0), D (2) and SA (1). The researcher also used semi-structured interview protocols for data collection. Interviews or question asking are considered the important data collection methods for this kind of research. According to Yin (1994), it is very important to consistently ask why events appear to have happened or to be happening. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews by letting the participants give answers without interrupting them. Validation of the Research Instruments : The face validity of the instruments for this study was established by giving the instruments to the researcher's colleague students, friends and supervisor to scrutinise and make constructive criticisms. The content validity of the question was determined by experts in measurement and evaluation and the supervisor of the researcher in the Department of Social Studies in the University of Education, Winneba. Evidence of construct validity of the questionnaire in this study was established by comparing the results obtained from the pre-test study and the results that was obtained in the main study. This established that the items measure of the same characteristics or tap the concept under measure. The semi structure instrument was scrutinized by colleagues of the researcher before being given to the supervisor for consideration. The instrument was

furtherpre-tested to identify potential deficiencies before using it for the actual study. Students in the Winneba Senior High School were used to pre-test the instrument because they exhibit similar characteristics with the actual population of the study. The Cronbach alpha coefficient level of the questionnaire was 0.87.

Data Collection Procedure : The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Department of Social Studies Education, in the University of Education, Winneba to facilitate the process of data collection. Permission was sought from the district educational officers and the school authorities. The consent of the participants was sort after which participants were given 40 minutes to answer the questionnaire. The continuous assessment of students in Mathematics, English and Science were used as their academic achievement for the data analysis. The researcher interviewed each of the participants for about forty-five (45) minutes. The researcher recorded the interview with the permission of the participants.

Data Analysis : The quantitative data Analysis was analysed using Pearson’s moment correlation. The Statistical Package for Service Solution version 23 was used in the analysis. The statistical test used were descriptive statistics, and Pearson’s Moment Correlation Statistics. (Ong & Puteh, 2017) The researcher used thematic analysis to establish meaning from the data collected. Morse and Field (1996) explain that, thematic analysis involves the search for and identification of common trends that extend throughout an entire interview or set of interviews. The researcher transcribed the tape-recorded interviews, then read and re-read the interviews in their entirety, reflecting on the interviews as a whole. Then, the researcher summarized the interviews; keeping in mind that more than one theme might exist in a set of interviews. Once identified, the themes that appeared to be significant and concepts linking substantial portions of the interviews were written down and entered on computer (Morse & Field, 1996). Data analysis was done thematically with the aid of Atlas.ti 7.5.18 version, a qualitative research data analysis software.

Ethical Considerations : The researcher has a moral obligation to strictly consider the rights of the participants, who are expected to provide knowledge for this investigation (Speziale, & Carpenter, The researcher requested for permission to conduct the study. A written permission was obtained from the Department of Social Studies Education, in the Faculty of Social Science in the University of Education, Winneba. Written permission (informed consent) sought from participants for the questionnaire administration and interviewing (Lo-Biondo Wood & Haber, 2002). Confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed by ensuring that data obtained were used in such a way that no one other than the researcher knows the source (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtli, 2006). In this study no actual participant names were attached to the information obtained rather, serial numbers were used. In this study, the researcher ensured that when participants described their experiences, the information was not divulged. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to (Hallow, 2005). This right was explained to them prior to engaging in the study.

V. RESULTS

Presentation of Quantitative Data

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	128	42.6
Female	172	57.4
Total	300	100.0

Age Distribution of Participants

Age Groups

13-14 years	9	3.0
15-16 years	200	66.7
17-18 years	91	30.3
Total	300	100.0

Class Distribution of Participants

Classes

Form Two	150	50.0
Form Three	150	50.0
Total	300	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2017

Presentation of Quantitative data

Testing of Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested.

H₀: There is no significant correlation between academic achievement and career aspirations of senior high student in selected Senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolis?

H₁: There is a statistically significant correlation between academic achievement and career aspirations of senior high student in selected Senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolis?

Table 3: Pearson’s product-moment correlation of academic achievement and career aspiration

	Career Aspiration	Academic Achievement
Pearson Correlation	1	-.298**
P value (2-tailed)		.000
N	300	300

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

A product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to determine whether there will be no significant correlation between career aspirations and academic achievement of Senior High Students in selected Senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolis. Table 3 shows a Pearson moment correlation analysis between career aspiration and academic achievement. Table 3 depicts a negative correlation between career aspiration and academic achievement ($r = -.298^{**}$, $N = 300$, $p < 0.01$). It can be inferred from the test that the more a student aspires for a career the lower his or her academic achievement. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant correlation between career aspirations and academic achievement of senior high students in selected Senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolis was accepted.

Presentation of Qualitative Data : Academic Achievement and Career Aspiration : The interview data revealed that there was some significant influence of academic achievement on career aspiration of students. Participants argued that, there is always a standard required for the entry into any university in Ghana. The participants claimed that, without proper preparation and hard work, though an individual could desire and aspire to enter into a specific career, the entry requirement of the university will not permit the person unless he or she meets the requirement. Some of the participants also emphasized that, sometimes, people make the required grades, yet it becomes difficult for them to get admission in the public universities in Ghana. The participants also claimed that, there is the need for students to fully prepare their cognitive faculties to enable them face squarely what is ahead of them. Some of responses of the participants to support their claims are presented below.

Participant # 8 commented that:

There is a tremendous influence of academic performance on my aspired career, even the entry qualifications say it all. I want to become a surgeon and without excellent grades, I can't make it into the medical school. It quite obvious that academic performance dictates almost everything about the future. Even after university, your academic performance will enable you to continue. I have made a promise to my parents and myself to not settle for any other programme than becoming a surgeon and that means hard work and no enjoyment, after schooling, I will chill (Form 2, male, Home Economics, June 5-9, 2017).

A participant articulated:

I will grade myself as an above average student, I mostly make some good grades. Though learning is seeming to have it easier, French is difficult. Last term, I performed in all the courses except French, which I got C6. It is a difficult course and I'm trying my best to improve on it (Participant # 12, Form 3, female, Science, June 5-9, 2017).

Another participant also added:

I believe academic performance is key in creativity and designing. Without intelligence, how do you become creative? But it is bold and clear that academic performance all over the world predicts what a person can become. In some isolated cases, things can change, but in most cases, it does influence the situation. I am presently maximising all my efforts to make a good

grade, without which I know for sure that I will have to do remedial for the November December section of the West African Examinations. It's like a passport, without it, you can't make any significant progress (Participant # 11, form 3, male, Science, June 5-9, 2017).

Another participant stated:

In Ghana, academic performance influences what you can become. We are all aware that to enter into the university means you have to pass first. If you wish to become a lawyer, your wish cannot get you there. I want to go to the law school in University, but without the requisite grades, I have no chance. I have been learning earnestly, but sometimes, even when you made the grades, it takes the intervention of God for you to enter into such disciplines (Participant # 3, form 2, male, Science, June 5-9, 2017).

From the interview data, it could be concluded that participants were of the view that there is a significant influence of academic performance and career aspirations. Participants suggested that, academic achievement is key in achieving one's career aspiration especially when it comes to tertiary education.

VI. DISCUSSION

Career Aspirations and Academic Achievement of Senior High Student in Selected Senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolis

There was a negative correlation between career aspiration and academic achievement. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant correlation between career aspirations and academic achievement of senior high student in selected Senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolis was accepted. This finding is further discussed with the Goals, Motivation, and Achievement Theory (GMAT) that examines the relationship between goals, motivation, and school achievement. Discussing the relationship between educational goals (aspirations) and achievement, Covington (2000) advanced this theory by stressing that goals and achievements are separated by degree of motivation. According to this theory, aspirations are about achievements and achievements are about aspirations. According to GMAT, differences in aspirations can arise from differences in expected rewards resulting from student-specific incentives and investments in education (Covington, 2000; Sherwood, 1989).

Literature reveals that some studies have shown that academic achievement influences education and outcomes influence career aspirations (Alwin & Otto, 1977; Kao & Tienda, 1998). These findings are contradicted by Covington (2000) who stated that although studies have agreed with the proposition that educational aspirations and academic performance are highly positively correlated, the correlation does not explain how aspiration translates into education, and as such, the mechanisms of how aspirations influence educational performance remain debatable. The interview data also suggested that majority of the participants are average and below average students. The data further revealed that, some of the participants had health related difficulties that influenced their ability to learn effectively. Participants suggested that there is a significant influence of academic performance on career aspirations. Participants suggested that, academic achievement is key in achieving one's career aspiration especially when it comes to tertiary education. Qian and Blair (1999) found that overall academic performance had some effect on educational aspirations of African Americans but a greater effect among White, Hispanic and Asian students. Some mixed results were obtained when different ethnic groups were considered. The level of past education decreased the educational aspirations of Mexicans but increased that of Cubans (Portes, MacLeod & Parker, 1978).

VII. CONCLUSIONS

There is some level of effect from the academic performance of a students on the aspired career. If students' academic achievement is improved, their career aspirations would also be influenced.

Recommendations of the Study : The study recommends that the Tema Metropolitan Assembly, Tema Educational Directorate and the head teachers of the sampled schools should make quality education a priority in the various schools to ensure students' academic improvement. The Assembly and the Educational Directorate in collaboration with the various school authorities should educate parents on the role of academic performance in the career aspiration of their wards and the urgent need to motivate and encourage their wards extrinsically and intrinsically to learn harder and diligently

Conflict of Interest : The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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