

**INVESTIGATING ADOLESCENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
AND PARENTS' SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AS
ANTECEDENTS OF ADOLESCENTS' VOCATIONAL
APPRENTICESHIP IN THE HO MUNICIPAL**

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ABSTRACT.....
The study investigated adolescents' influence the adolescents' choice of educational level and their parents' apprenticeship. Again educational level of socio-economic status as factors adolescents does not influence their influencing the adolescents' choice of choice of apprenticeship. The findings of apprenticeship in Ho Municipal in the the study are discussed, conclusions Volta Region of Ghana. It was a drawn. It is recommended that career descriptive survey. Stratified random guidance should be intensified right from sampling technique was used to select the primary school so as to help the 150 adolescent apprentices consisting of student make informed apprenticeship 101 males and 49 females. Data were choice at any level he/she terminates collected using structured questionnaire his/her schooling. Also there should be a and were analysed using inferential programme to educate parents and statistics. Chi-square tests were used to guardians to supplement formal efforts test the hypotheses. The result of the made by schools in career/apprenticeship study indicated that parents' socio- guidance to their children.
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INTRODUCTION

The implementation of education policies in Ghana had led to the increase in Gross Admission Rate (GAR) of pupils into Basic schools since 1987 (Boakye, Agyemang-Duah, Osei, & Brew-Ward, 1997). Today there has been further increases in the figures, but the issue remains as to whether all these children successfully attain tertiary level education as their parents/guardians might wish. According to Ahadzie (2003), there are some adolescents who terminate their education either at the junior or senior high school levels. Ahadzie says most of these categories of adolescents, in order to earn a living, go into various vocations by way of apprenticeships. Though some of them find themselves gainfully and happily employed, many feel they have gone the wrong way with regard to their apprenticeships (Jantuah, 2004).

Statement of the problem

Some adolescents in Ghana who decide to terminate their education either at the primary, junior secondary or senior secondary school level are influenced by one factor or combination of factors, to make apprenticeship choices after which they realise that they have chosen the wrong vocation (Jantuah, 2004). This situation does not eventually make them very functional in the society. Some seldom stay on the job, and become socio-economic liabilities in their various lifestyles. Many adolescents in the Ho Municipality are no exception. It is in view of this that the study was conducted to investigate whether educational level of adolescents and their parents' socio-economic status influence the adolescents' choice of apprenticeship in the Ho Municipal.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to find out if adolescents' educational level and the socio-economic status of their parents influence the adolescents' choice of vocational apprenticeship.

Significance of the study

It is anticipated that the result of the study would enable the government come out with viable policies on apprenticeship education. Parents and other stakeholders would see the need for guiding and helping the adolescents in their participation in apprenticeship education. This form of guidance would help the adolescents realise the need to make well-informed choices when it comes to the issue of making vocational and apprenticeship decisions.

The study will be of immense help to the Ministry of Education and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who will realize which measures, structures and guidance and counselling programmes to put in place towards apprenticeship decision-making and education of the categories of adolescents in the study. Finally, the study can be replicated in other parts of the country.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

H₀₁ Parents' socio-economic status will not influence adolescents' choice of apprenticeship.

H₀₂ Adolescents' educational level will not influence their choice of apprenticeship.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Level of Education and Adolescents' Apprenticeship

Educational experience that engage and reinforce the adolescent's aptitude and capability to achieve are viewed as key in many adolescents' future apprenticeship choice, for the level of education attained may facilitate the skill acquisition process (Ferry, 2004). This is because some skills acquisition may require some level of literacy and numeracy. In this way the educational experience sometimes determines the type of apprenticeship the individual gets into, considering the present day's manpower needs and requirements.

Hanson and DeRidder (1994) contend that a drop in educational achievement means a rise in the level of apprenticeship options. This assertion is also buttressed in their findings that academically disadvantaged youth were more likely to be involved in a vocational programme and less likely to enrol in an academic preparatory curriculum. Closely related to Hanson and DeRidder's assertion is that of Arum and Shavit (1995) who say it does appear that involvement in apprenticeship is related to a reduced likelihood of attending college. What Hanson and DeRidder, Arum and Shavit imply is that it is those who stop school for one reason or another that are more likely to find their way into apprenticeships than those who are academically competent.

However, in a study conducted by Cete, Kayote and Konate (1998) to investigate the factors influencing the apprenticeship phenomenon among Gambian adolescents, the finding was contrary to what Hanson and DeRidder, Arum and Shavit imply. In their study, Cete, Kayote and Konate sampled 300 Gambian adolescent apprentices who had not gone beyond a high school level, and had opted for different trades. The result of the data generated at 0.05 levels of significance indicated that educational level of Gambian adolescents did not matter in their choice of apprenticeship.

In the past educational attainments had not been seen as a necessary component of an apprenticeship, but current trends, with regard to certain categories of skill acquisition, suggest that they are (Fuller & Unwin, 1998). The changes in work organisations and production expectations today are suggestive of increasing skill requirements for workers. It is appropriate therefore, to conceptualize high level of educational attainment as platforms for transfer to more complex job skill learning and attainment. This notwithstanding, "dropouts who have attained some level of education are not to be relegated to the category of failures" (White Paper. Ghana

Education Reform, 2004). There is the need for apprenticeship education for this category of adolescents.

Parents' Socio-economic Status and Adolescents' Apprenticeship Choice

In their study of the influence of family on career choice and development, Penick and Jepsen (1992) identified parents' income as parents' socio-economic status (SES). Schulenberg, Vondracek and Cronter (1994) also came out that family's SES positively correlated not only with educational attainment but also with occupational choice in youths. In a broader social context, a family's SES may influence educational achievement as well as vocational apprenticeship choice. In a related research on Family Role in Career Development, Lankard (1995) found that family income influenced the career/apprenticeship choice of youth. It is understandable, therefore, that the self efficacy of the adolescents, with respect to career opportunities, is linked to the economic support they can expect from their parents.

In linking adolescents' vocational choice with parents' socio-economic status, Reagor and Rehm (1995) say that the adolescents from lower income group may opt for a skill that is less costly to acquire for a living. This suggests that the adolescent from lower socio-economic status may be compelled to go into a less-costly apprenticeship. This view is also re-echoed in the findings of Rojewski and Yang (1997) that socio-economic status was the most significant indicator of less costly occupational aspiration of the adolescent. Madson, Brosnahan, Valdez et al's (2002) observation is therefore relevant when they said the higher the family's SES the stronger parental support will be in promoting careers that involve high financial commitment.

Regarding the influence of socio-economic variables, Crockett and Binham (2000), Mau and Bikos (2000) suggest that parents' income influence vocational and apprenticeship aspirations. On the other hand, Hossler and Stage (1997) had indicated that parents' income is not a factor. The issue of income of parents not being an influence in the adolescent's choice of apprenticeship is corroborated by Wilson and Benson (1999) when they say no matter the income level of parents adolescents will go for vocations of their choice. It therefore means that at any crucial stage adolescents will often go by their independent mind, or other variables in their choice of apprenticeship.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research was a descriptive study, using the cross sectional survey method. This was purposely chosen so that the sample used form a representation of the adolescent apprentices in the Ho Municipal.

Population and Sampling

Six towns were randomly selected for the study. The population for the study comprised 1495 adolescent apprentices from the Ho Municipal. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample size of 150 apprentices, comprising 101 males and 49 females.

The various apprenticeship shops in each town were stratified. After the stratification, simple random sampling was used in selecting the respondents who made up the sample. In each town 25 respondents were randomly selected, irrespective of number of shops and sex. This brought the respondents in the six selected towns to 150.

Instrumentation

For the collection of data for the study, structured questionnaire was used for the apprentices. The instrument was developed based on intensive literature review (see Penick & Jepsen, 1992; Schulenberg et al., 1994; Rojewski et al., 1995; Botchie & Ahadzie, 2003; Ferry, 2004). The items were scored on a 2-point Likert scale of "Not true" and "Very true".

The Cronbach's coefficient Alpha, a measure for internal consistency, was used in determining the reliability of the instrument for the main study. The Cronbach's coefficient was 0.87. Data were analysed using inferential statistics.

Results

H₀ Parents' socio-economic status (SES) will not influence adolescents' choice of vocational apprenticeship.

Table 1: Distribution of choice of apprenticeship by parents' SES

			Responses		Total
			Not True	True	
S.E.S	Low	Count	74	69	143
		Expected Count	74.2	68.8	143
	High	Count	4	3	7
		Expected Count	3.8	3.2	7.0
Total	Count	78	72	150	
	Expected Count	78.0	72.0	150.0	

Parents' SES and responses were in two (2) categories of low and high. The data in the two by two (2 x 2) contingency Table 1 shows some differences in the actual and expected counts of the cells of the low and high income levels of parents' SES. In the "Not true" cell the actual count for the low SES was 74 but it should have been more (74.2), and in the "True" cell the actual count for the low SES is 69 instead of 68.8. For the high SES, the actual count in the "Not true" cell was 4 but it should

have been less (3.8), and in the “True” cell the actual count was 3 instead of 3.2 which should be the case.

Table 2: Chi-square test

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig (1-sided)
Pearson Chi- Square	.991 ^b	1	.320		
Continuity Correction ^a	.631	1	.427		
Likelihood Ratio	1.001	1	.317		
Fisher’s Exact Test				.432	.214
Linear-by-Linear Association	.989	1	.320		
N of Valid Cases	150				

a. Computed only for a 2 x 2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.2

To test whether these differences are statistically significant, a Chi-square test was conducted to test the hypothesis generated. The result of the Chi-square test as shown in Table 2 yielded a value of $\chi^2 = .991, df = 1, \rho = .320$. This result suggests that there is no statistically significant difference between parents’ SES and the adolescents’ choice of vocational apprenticeship. The hypothesis that parents’ SES will not influence adolescents’ choice of apprenticeship was therefore accepted at 0.05 significant levels.

Discussion

(a) Socio-economic status of parents and adolescents’ choice of vocational apprenticeship

In Donald Super’s theory of vocational development, Super, among his fourteen propositions, mentioned socio- economic level as one of the determinants of one’s career pattern (Super, 1990; cited in Kankam & Onivehu, 2000). Although this is the case, the result of the study indicates that there is no significant influence of the socio-economic status of parents on their adolescents’ choice of apprenticeship. The finding is consistent with Hossler and Stage’s (1992) assertion that parents’ income is not a factor that influences the choice of apprenticeship.

Also the finding of this present study does not agree with the assertion that adolescents from the lower socio-economic status may opt for skills that are less costly to acquire for a living (Reagor & Rehm, 1995). Again the finding disagrees that those from a higher socio-economic level may opt for apprenticeships that are costly to acquire (Madson, Brosnaham, Donohue et al. (2002). The adolescent apprentices in this present study did not choose their type of apprenticeship on the influence of their parents’ income. Although Rojewski and Yang (1997) in their findings had indicated that correlations might exist between socio-economic level and vocational aspirations and choice of apprenticeship.

According to Wilson and Benson (1999), no matter the income level of parents, adolescents' selection of apprenticeships is not dependent on their parents' income level. In effect, the socio-economic status (income level) of parents does not influence the adolescents' choice of vocational apprenticeship in Ho Municipal.

The result of the study could be explained that parents of the adolescents, no matter their income level, may be prepared to offer all financial assistance to their children in which ever apprenticeship choice they make. The result of the study, therefore, seems to suggest that the adolescents of both high and low income parents must have chosen apprenticeship education irrespective of whether these apprenticeships are costly or less costly to undergo. The implication is that most of the adolescents must have been influenced, by other factors such as peers or interest, ability, role model among others. It could even be that the adolescents' personalities were congruent with the working environments as suggested in Holland's Personality Theory of Vocational Choice (Sharf, 1997; Ireh, 2000).

H₀ Adolescents' educational level will not influence their choice of vocational apprenticeship.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents' choice of apprenticeship by educational level

			Responses		Total
			No True	True	
Educational Level	Primary	Count	8	46	54
		Expected Count	9.3	44.7	54.0
	J.S.S.	Count	12	53	65
		Expected Count	11.3	53.7	65.0
	S.S.S	Count	6	25	31
		Expected Count	5.4	25.6	31.0
Total	Count	26	124	150	
	Expected Count	26.0	124.0	150.0	

The responses of the adolescents were in two (2) categories of "Not true" and "True" in a three by two (3 x 2) contingency table. The data in Table 3 shows that there were some differences in the actual and expected counts of the cells of respondents' educational levels. In the "Not true" cell of the primary level the actual count realised was 8 but it should have been more (9.3), and the actual count in the "True" cell was 46 instead of 44.7. For the JSS level while the actual count in the "Not true" cell was 12, the expected count was 11.3, and the actual count in the "True" cell was 53 instead of 53.7. For the SSS level the actual count obtained in the "Not true" cell was 6 but the expected count was 5.4, and in the "True" cell the actual count was 25 whereas it should have been more (25.6).

Table 4: Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.541 ^a	2	.463
Likelihood Ratio	1.566	2	.457
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.350	1	.245
N of Valid Cases	150		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.37.

To verify whether these differences are statistically significant, a Chi-square test was conducted to test the hypothesis formulated. The result of the Chi-square test as shown in Table 4 indicates that the differences are statistically insignificant, thus yielding a value of $\chi^2 = 1.541$, $df = 2$, $p = .463$. Therefore the hypothesis that adolescents' educational level will not influence their choice of apprenticeship education was accepted at 0.05 significant levels.

Discussion

(b) Adolescents' educational level and choice of apprenticeship education

The result of the study indicates that educational level of the adolescents does not influence their choice of apprenticeship education. This is in agreement with Cete, Kayote and Konate (1998) who investigated into the factors influencing apprenticeship choice among Gambian students. In their study, Cete, Kayote and Konate's results showed no relationship between educational level of Gambian adolescents and the apprenticeship choices they made.

Holland's theory of vocational choice presents school as one of the variables that come into play in terms of one's choice of career (Mullis, Mullis & Gerwels, 1998). With this issue of school, it is believed that the level of education attained matters in the adolescent's choice of apprenticeship. This is implied in what Ferry (2004) says, that educational experience that engaged and reinforced the adolescent's aptitude and capability to achieve are viewed as key in future apprenticeship choice of the adolescent. This means that the adolescent may be compelled to go into a type of apprenticeship, considered commensurate with his or her educational level. This is consistent with the findings of Hanson and DeRidder (1994) that academically disadvantaged youths are more likely to be involved in vocational training programmes that are considered to be within their educational level. This is not far from Arum and Shavit's (1995) assertion that involvement in apprenticeship is closely related to a reduced likelihood of attending college (for a higher level of educational attainment). On the contrary the responses from this study and the subsequent result indicated that the adolescents who did not further their education to tertiary level did not choose their types of apprenticeships based on their levels of education attained.

Adolescents chose similar apprenticeships irrespective of their levels of educational attainment □□ primary, junior or senior secondary school. The result of the present study could be explained that no matter their level of education, adolescents who feel they have the potentiality, ability, interest, may go for apprenticeships of their choice. The implication is that the adolescents need guidance right from the primary school level for informed apprenticeship choice making. The guidance given should be a collaborative work of the school, home and the entire community in which the adolescent finds him or herself.

Conclusions

Level of the adolescents' education and parents' income status do not influence the adolescent to apprenticeship choice. Where there is practically no hope of furthering his/her education, the adolescent, if given careful guidance, will choose apprenticeship and successfully go through the type of vocation chosen, irrespective of level of education or parent's income. Besides, he/she is likely to stay on the job as a result of the guidance received.

Recommendations

- (i) Organizations should be empowered to build youth apprenticeship centres. The training needs of the participants should include both practical and theoretical aspects. This will not only give skills but also help to improve academic knowledge of the participants.
- (ii) Career guidance should be intensified right from the primary school so as to help the adolescent make informed apprenticeship choice at any level he/she terminates his/her schooling.
- (iii) There should be a programme to educate parents and guardians to supplement formal efforts made by schools in career/apprenticeship guidance to their children.

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