

# **Social Determinants of Occupational Aspiration of Secondary School Students with Disabilities in Southwest, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

The study examined the social determinants of occupational aspiration of visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically impaired students in integrated secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study determined the relationship between social variables (family influence, availability of occupational information, availability of facilities, social support and peer influence) and occupational aspirations of students with disabilities. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used in this study. The population consisted of all 1,106 students with disabilities in integrated public secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample for this study consisted of 349 students with disabilities from 12 integrated public secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample was selected using multistage sampling procedure. An instrument tagged "Social Factors and Occupational Aspiration Questionnaire (SFOAQ)" was used to collect relevant data for the study from the respondents. The face, content and construct validity of the instruments were determined. The responses obtained were collated and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed that family influence, availability of occupational

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information, availability of facilities and social support are related to occupational aspirations of students with disabilities in integrated secondary schools. It was recommended among others that the school management should provide necessary support that will assist students with disabilities in making the right decision about occupational aspiration.

**Keywords:** Social Determinants, Occupational Aspiration, Students, Disabilities,

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## Introduction

The choice of a particular occupation is one vital decision one makes in a life time and is as important as life itself because of the enduring consequences on the individual. It has been observed that there is an increase in the number of disabled people along the road begging, and from opinion gathered from some of them, they confessed that they actually want to go to school but there was no assistance. The choice of occupation sometimes constitutes a problem for students especially those with disabilities as some confessed that they did not know what to study and they always look different from the normal children. Some students with disabilities do not also find it easy in choosing occupation as a result of stigma while some students with disabilities seem to be ignorant about the occupation to which they aspire (Osoro, 2012).

There appears to be so many different kinds and degrees of disabilities that occur in gifted and talented children, mentally retardation, speech impairment, hearing impairment, learning disability, physical impairment to mental and developmental disabilities, not excluding the various kinds of invisible disabilities, some of which are not even seen and recognized as disabilities. However, the researchers are interested in students with obvious disabilities because of their easy identification and presence in integrated secondary schools. Students with obvious disabilities like visual impairment, physical impairment and hearing impairment can be easily identified unlike other forms of disabilities.

The Disability Discrimination Act (2005) defined disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Occupational aspirations are defined as the statement of desired occupational goal given ideal conditions. Occupational aspirations represent an individual orientation towards a desired occupational goal under ideal conditions. More simply stated occupational aspirations provide information about an individual's interests (Lazarus & Ihuoma, 2011).

Research has shown that individuals with disabilities are at a disadvantage when it comes to occupational development and exploration in that they are more likely to be unemployed than those without disabilities (Ochs & Roessler, 2001). Several factors affect occupational aspirations of students with disability and this include social factors. Social factor has to do with the style of interaction or relationship with other people (Olofintoye, 2010). The social factors considered in this study are family influence, availability of facilities, availability of social support, availability of occupational information and peer influence vis-à-vis occupational aspiration of students with disabilities in Southwest, Nigeria.

It appears that family's involvement in children with disabilities schooling could go a long way to determine their success in school. Teachers believe they cannot do it alone and for effective educational processes to occur in classrooms, parental help in partnership with educators are needed. Family influence in the education of the disabled seems to affect their occupational aspiration. McLoughling (2003) noted that, when children gets the support, between home and school, they become excited and their intrinsic motivation for learning grows.

Availability of facilities appear to affect students with disabilities. It seems that accommodating students with disabilities requires careful examination of the learning areas in order to make everything accessible and safe. All these factors when not available or conducive appear to affect and discourage students with disabilities leading to their dropping out of school thus affecting their occupational decision. Students with various disabilities

could, however, respond differently to the availability of physical facilities in relation to their school or training experiences.

Social support is one of the most important factors in the process of occupational exploration. Social support is commonly defined by the characteristic of social environment, social networks, and the benefits that they provide (Schwarzer & Buchwald, 2004). When social influence is positive, it can support persistence toward an occupational goal; when negative, it can thwart an individual's exposure to new ideas and activities (Powell, 2010). A consistent conclusion of the correlation between social support and occupational intention among students with disabilities has not been reached in recent studies so there is need to investigate it in this study.

Before making occupational aspirations, students are often provided with a list of occupations from which they are supposed to make choices. However, most students with disabilities appear to lack adequate information regarding various occupations hence the choices they make are embedded in their perception of the subjects they study in secondary school. The status of occupational information appears to affect the occupational aspiration of students with disabilities.

According to Samir (2013) a peer is a person who is equal to another in qualification, background, ability, age and social status. It has been observed that a group which a youth belongs to may influence his occupational aspiration. Peer pressure is an influence that a peer group exert to encourage others to change their attitudes, values or behaviours and conform to the group norms (Bobbies and Elhaney, 2005). Peer pressure from peer group appears to have a great influence on occupational aspiration of students with disabilities and reflects students' desire to fit in and be accepted by others.

The purpose of this study was to examine the social determinants of occupational aspiration of visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically impaired students in integrated secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study determined the relationship between social factors (family influence, availability of occupational information, availability of facilities, social support and peer influence) and occupational aspirations of students with disabilities in integrated secondary schools.

### Research Question

1. What are the social determinants of occupational aspirations of students with disabilities in secondary schools in South-west, Nigeria?

### Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between family influence and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities
2. There is no significant relationship between availability of facilities and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.
3. There is no significant relationship between availability of occupational information and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.
4. There is no significant relationship between social support and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.
5. There is no significant relationship between peer influence and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.

### Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was used in this study. The population consisted of all 1,106 students with disabilities in integrated public secondary

schools in Southwest, Nigeria. The states were Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti. The students with disabilities were those with visual impairment, hearing impairment and physical impairment. The sample for this study consisted of 349 students with disabilities from 12 integrated public secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample was selected via multi stage sampling procedures.

An instrument tagged "Social Factors and Occupational Aspiration Questionnaire (SFOAQ)" was used to collect relevant data for the study from the respondents. SFOAQ consisted of three sections namely section A, B and C. *Section A* of the SFOAQ sought for information on demography about the respondents which included sex, among others. *Section B* consisted of 20 items on social factors as it relates to occupational aspiration drawn from family influence, availability of facilities, availability of information, social support and peer influence. Four point Likert type rating scale was used for section B as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Section C consisted of 20 items on occupational aspiration of students drawn from science based, art/humanities based, business based and technological based. Adapted four point Likert type rating scale was used for section C as follows: Like Very Much (LVM), Like (L), Dislike (D) and Dislike Very Much (DVM). The braille version of the instrument was produced for the visually impaired students.

The validity of the instrument was ensured through face, content and construct validity. The items in the Questionnaire were presented to experts in the fields of Guidance & Counselling, and Tests, Measurement & Evaluation. To ensure face validity of the instrument, the experts helped to determine the facial value of the instrument. To ensure content validity, the experts checked the items and ascertain that they represented the variables and its adequacy to measure what it was meant for. In so doing, all irrelevances and ambiguous items were eliminated.

In ensuring the construct validity of SFOAQ, a standardized instrument, Motivation for Occupational Preference Scale (MOPS) was compared with SFOAQ. Convergent Construct Validity between MOPS and SFOAQ yielded  $r = 0.859$ . The coefficient value was gotten after analysing the data collected using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The data compared were gotten from students' response to MOPS and SFOAQ after it was administered on 40 students outside the sampled area. Based on that, the SFOAQ is capable of measuring the social factors influencing occupational aspiration.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research question was answered using frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics involving Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

### Descriptive Analysis

**Research Question 1:** What are the social determinants of occupational aspirations of students with disabilities in secondary schools in South-west, Nigeria?

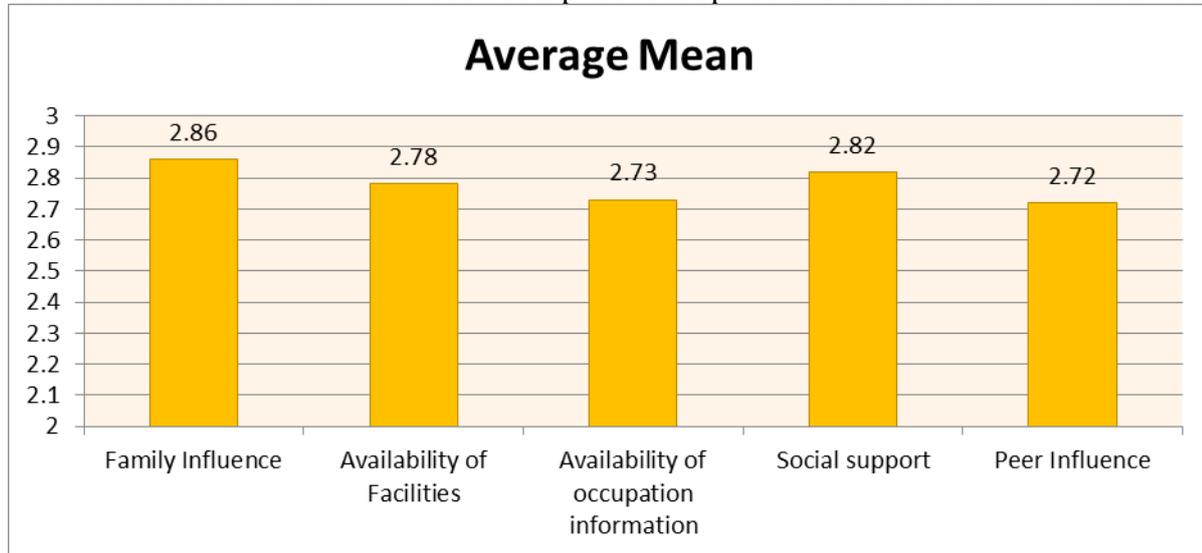
In answering this question, data on social factors were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of SFOAQ (item 1 – 20) in the questionnaire. The data were collated and analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation. In table 1, the mean cut-off mark of 2.50 was derived by finding the average of the scoring system. Mean score of items greater than mean cut-off of 2.50 were accepted while those less than 2.50 were rejected.

**Table 1: Mean Scores of social determinants of occupational aspirations of students with disabilities**

S/N	ITEMS	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)	Mean
1	Family Influence	250 (71.7)	99 (28.3)	2.86
2	Availability of Facilities	236 (67.6)	113 (32.4)	2.78
3	Availability of Career Information	236 (67.6)	113 (32.4)	2.73
4	Social Support	268 (76.9)	81 (23.1)	2.82
5	Peer Influence	265 (75.9)	84 (24.1)	2.72

**Mean Cut-off: 2.50**

Table 1 showed the social determinants of occupational aspirations of students with disabilities in secondary schools in South-west, Nigeria. Using the criterion mean score of 2.50 as cut-off to determine the affirmative of each statement, the respondents indicated that the average mean mark of family influence ( $\bar{x} = 2.86$ ), availability of facilities ( $\bar{x} = 2.78$ ), availability of occupational information ( $\bar{x} = 2.73$ ), social support ( $\bar{x} = 2.82$ ) and peer influence ( $\bar{x} = 2.72$ ). It is deduced from the above that the social determinants of occupational aspirations of students with disabilities are family influence, availability of facilities, availability of occupational information, social support and peer influence. Figure i further revealed the social determinants of occupational aspirations of students with disabilities

**Figure i:** Bar chart showing the social determinants of occupational aspirations of students with disabilities**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between family influence and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.

In testing this hypothesis, data on family influence sub-variable of social factors were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of SFOAQ (item 1 – 4) in the questionnaire. Data on occupational aspiration were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of SFOAQ (item 1 – 20) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 levels. The result is presented in table 2.

**Table 2:** Relationship between family influence and occupational aspirations

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Family Influence	349	11.42	1.40	0.411*	0.000
Occupational Aspirations	349	40.52	7.88		

\*P&lt;0.05

Table 2 showed that the r-cal value of 0.411 was significant at 0.05 level of significant because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between family influence and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities. Family influence is moderately and positively related to occupational aspirations.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between availability of facilities and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.

In testing this hypothesis, data on availability of facilities sub-variable of social factors were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of SFOAQ (item 5 – 8) in the questionnaire. Data on occupational aspiration were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of SFOAQ (item 1 – 20) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 levels. The result is presented in table 3.

**Table 3:** Relationship between availability of facilities and occupational aspirations

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Availability of Facilities	349	11.11	1.33	0.325*	0.000
Occupational Aspirations	349	40.52	7.88		

\*P&lt;0.05

Table 3 showed that the r-cal value of 0.325 was significant at 0.05 level of significant because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between availability of facilities and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities. Availability of facilities is lowly and positively related to occupational aspirations.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between availability of occupational information and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.

In testing this hypothesis, data on availability of occupational information sub-variable of social factors were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of SFOAQ (item 9 – 12) in the questionnaire. Data on occupational aspiration were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of SFOAQ (item 1 – 20) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 levels. The result is presented in table 4.

**Table 4:** Relationship between availability of occupational information and occupational aspirations

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Availability of Occupational information	349	10.94	1.88	0.616*	0.000

Occupational Aspirations	349	40.52	7.88		
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\*P<0.05

Table 4 showed that the r-cal value of 0.616 was significant at 0.05 level of significant because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between availability of occupational information and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities. Availability of occupational information is moderately and positively related to occupational aspirations.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant relationship between social support and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.

In testing this hypothesis, data on social support sub-variable of social factors were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of SFOAQ (item 13 – 16) in the questionnaire. Data on occupational aspiration were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of SFOAQ (item 1 – 20) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 levels. The result is presented in table 5.

**Table 5:** Relationship between social support and occupational aspirations

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Social Support	349	11.27	1.39	0.310*	0.000
Occupational Aspirations	349	40.52	7.88		

\*P<0.05

Table 5 showed that the r-cal value of 0.310 was significant at 0.05 level of significant because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between social support and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities. Social support is lowly and positively related to occupational aspirations.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is no significant relationship between peer influence and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.

In testing this hypothesis, data on peer influence sub-variable of social factors were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of SFOAQ (item 17 – 20) in the questionnaire. Data on occupational aspiration were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of SFOAQ (item 1 – 20) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 levels. The result is presented in table 6.

**Table 6:** Relationship between peer influence and occupational aspirations

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Peer Influence	349	10.88	2.09	0.021	0.701
Occupational Aspirations	349	40.52	7.88		

P>0.05

Table 6 showed that the r-cal value of 0.021 is not significant at 0.05 level of significant because the P-value (0.000) > 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between peer influence and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities.

## Discussion

The study revealed that the social determinants of occupational aspirations of students with disabilities are family influence, availability of facilities, availability of occupational information, social support and peer influence. In line with this finding, Ajuwon (2008) submitted that many complex variables impact on occupational aspirations; these include parental and family influences, interpersonal relationships, self-concept, social support, occupational information and facilities.

The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between family influence and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities. This implies that the influence of the family could determine the occupational aspiration of students with disabilities. The probable reason for this finding could be because parents had various intentions regarding the occupational development of their children. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) noted that parents are more likely to partake in their children's education if they see such participation as one of their obligations as parents. In consonance with this finding, Cunningham (2004) found that family influence at school positively correlates with appropriate occupational aspiration. This finding, however, deviated from the submission of Mutekwe (2011) who concluded that the role of family in selecting occupational aspiration remains vague.

It was revealed that there was significant relationship between availability of facilities and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities. This implies that the availability of facilities determined the occupational aspiration of students with disabilities. The probable reason for this finding could be as a result of the assertion of Eskay and Oboegbulem (2013) who stated that students with disabilities on average express concerns related to the physical barriers and lack of facilities which affects their occupational aspiration. In consonance with this finding, Osoro (2012) found a positive relationship between availability of facilities and occupational aspiration of students with disabilities.

The study further revealed that there was significant relationship between availability of occupational information and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities. This implies that the availability of occupational information influenced occupational aspiration of students with disabilities. The probable reason for this finding could be due to the importance of having accurate information in making an informed decision. The researcher inferred that most students with disabilities do not have accurate information about occupational opportunities to help them make appropriate occupational aspiration. Osoro (2012) shared the same view with the current finding as he concluded that occupational information was positively correlated with occupational aspiration.

The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between social support and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities. This implies that the social support available for students with disabilities influenced their occupational aspiration. The probable reason for this finding might be due to the benefit that social environment will provide for students with disabilities. In line with this finding, Chen, Fu, Li, Lou and Yu (2012) found that social support significantly and positively correlated with occupational development and students do not experience some problems in the same way, because there are a lot of social factors in one's life. Vietze (2011) also concluded that social support has significant influence on occupational aspiration of students with disabilities.

The study, however, revealed that there was no significant relationship between peer influence and occupational aspirations of integrated secondary school students with disabilities. This implies that peer influence among students with disabilities does not influence their occupational aspiration. Although, peer is important because it shelters and protects its members but the influence has no effect on occupational aspiration. This finding contradicted the submission of Bern (2010) who concluded that peer influence has a lot of influence on occupational aspiration of students with disabilities.

### Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of this study, it was concluded that family influence, availability of occupational information, availability of facilities and social support are related to occupational aspirations of students with disabilities in integrated secondary schools.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

- 1) The school management should provide necessary support that will assist students with disabilities in making the right decision about occupational aspiration.
- 2) The government should provide necessary facilities that will make learning easier for students with disabilities in integrated secondary schools.
- 3) The school management should create a unit that will provide career guidance and occupational information for students with disabilities

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