

**International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)**  
**Bahir Dar- Ethiopia**

Vol. 5(3), S/No 18, June, 2016:197-212

ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print) ISSN 2227-5452 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v5i3.17>

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**Parents' Occupation as Correlate of Students' Career  
Aspiration in Public Secondary Schools in Ekpoma Metropolis**

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the relationship between parents' occupation and students' career aspiration in public secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The correlational research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 320 students was drawn for by simple random sampling technique from a population

of 3272 senior secondary school students in the 16 public schools in the local government. A self-designed inventory titled: Students Career and Parent Occupational Inventory (SCAPOI) was designed using Holland's (1985) work on six (6) personality types namely: Realistic (R); Investigative (I); Social (S); Artistic (A); Enterprising (E); and Conventional personality type (C). The Kendall's tau-b rank correlation technique was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20). Results showed that there is a significant relationship between parents' career/occupation and students' career aspiration in public secondary schools in Ekpoma metropolis ( $r=.943$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Sequel to findings, it was recommended that parents should cautiously avoid the tendency of pushing their children into pursuing those 'wishful heights' in their careers that they were unable to attain in order to make them accomplish their 'own failings'.

**Key words:** Career, Personality type, Career Aspiration, Career Choice, Student

### Introduction

Choosing a career is one important decision every youth or individual has to make at some time of their life. It is a decision that does not only influence the subject combination of learners in secondary schools, but could also influence their course of study in higher institutions of learning. Consequently, most secondary school students (particularly those in senior classes) recognize the importance of getting adequate career information from teachers, peers, relatives, parents and even esteemed servants of God such as apostles, pastors and prophets among others.

Before the advent of formal education and civilization in the old Western Nigeria, choice of career among children was sharpened by the informal education they obtained from their parents. Then, the role played by parents in influencing a child's career choice was so significant and an out-of-school affair. Hence, it was not uncommon to see a family lineage of farmers, hunters, blacksmith, drummers, and even palm wine tappers, as children (particularly the males) naturally learn their parent's occupation by tutelage, take up the same occupation, and pass it on to their offspring. It is almost like the transfer of kingship to one's son at the demise of the crowned king. Consequently, this trans-generational practice often reflects in the Yoruba names given to children born of these 'great' families such as: 'Agbediran' (farming is our heritage), 'Odewale' (a hunter has come home), 'Akinbowale' (a brave man has come), 'Ayandiran' (drumming is our heritage), and so on.

In recent times, parents/guardians have become more active in helping their children/wards make the right career choices. This they do by ensuring that their child(ren) is(are) in either Art, Commercial or Science class in the Senior Secondary level; in line with the choice they consider most appropriate. They further try to talk their child(ren) into enrolling for some courses of their dreams in higher institutions;

neglecting their child's abilities, interest or aspirations. According to Kisilu, Kimani and Kombo (2012), occupational aspirations means the desires, dreams, career thoughts (verbalized or non-verbalized) by young individuals that influence what they intend to study and engage in the world of work. It refers to the totality of a person's desire and interest driven towards taking up a particular job as a means of livelihood in the world of work.

Studies (Obiunu and Ebonu, 2013; Kisilu *et al.*, 2012; Alike and Egbochuku, 2009) have been investigated to determine factors influencing students' career choice or aspiration. Alike and Egbochuku (2009) found that parental influence exerts a lot of influence on the educational attainment of the adolescent especially the socio-economic status of parents. Ogunsanwo (2000) and Salami (2004) revealed that the need for good salary, attractive financial package which will determine his social class, attractive working conditions and a secured future are very important factors influencing students' career choice or aspiration. Educationally, some factors like status of parents, peers, skills, experience, knowledge and lack of information and other factors that could be product of teaching and learning, influence students career choice. This is because parent's educational background may influence the students view to or not to continue his or her education (Obiunu and Ebonu, 2013).

Several theorists such as Dawis (2002, 2005), Super (1969, 1980), Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005), Holland (1985, 1996, 1997) have also tried to explain career choice and its predictors. Holland postulated that vocational interest is an expression of one's personality. He further asserted that vocational interests could be conceptualised into six (6) typologies namely: Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Social (S), Artistic (A), Enterprising (E) and Conventional (C). The Realistic personality types possess manual skills but he is aggressive and unsociable. Farming, Forestry, Engineering and Architecture are examples of careers this personality type can fit into. The Investigative personality makes extensive use of his intelligence. Thus, he is always thinking, organizing ideas and trying to understand things. Medicine, Geology, Mathematics and Physics fit very well into this occupational environment. The Social personality type who detests physical activities is endowed with skills for interpersonal relationship. He is friendly, caring and enjoys imparting knowledge to others. Environments that match this personality type are: foreign services, social welfare, lecturing and guidance and counselling.

The Artistic personality type is highly interested in creative activities where he can express his emotions. Thus, he prefers individual work to group work. Occupational environment where this personality can strive well are Fine Art, Music, Mass Communication and Theatre Arts. The Enterprising personality type possesses verbal skills with which he influences others and also obtains power and status. Examples of occupational environments where this personality type can thrive well are

Law, Catering, Political Science, Public Administration and Estate Management. The Conventional personality type is opposed to change. He is rule-regulated and enjoys ordered and systematic activities. Environments that match this type of personality are Accounting, banking, Library Science and Secretarial Work (Onoyase and Onoyase, 2009). Thus, this study is anchored on Holland's theory.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of unemployment in Nigeria today is not just a challenge confronting the youths but also a problem to parents. It is becoming worrisome for many parent who often try to get involved in monitoring the subject combination and course of study of their child(ren) in secondary and tertiary institutions respectively; in other to increase their likelihood of getting a job in the labour market. In Edo State, it has been observed that this concern makes many parents do all within their means to put their child(rens) in particular class divisions such as Science or Commercial classes as against; the child(ren)'s intention, friend's suggestion or school's recommendation. Several doctors, lawyers, and lecturers, encourage their children to make good credits passes in their O/A levels to study Medicine, Law or any other course in the higher institution in other for them to work in their private hospital, bar as lawyers or become an academic or teacher in a reputable institution or school respectively. Hence, the problem of this study is to determine whether parents' occupation influences students' career aspiration in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State.

### **Hypothesis**

The hypothesis formulated for the study is given below:

1. There is no significant relationship between parents' career/occupation and students' career aspiration in public secondary schools in Ekpoma metropolis

### **Review of Related Literature**

Career, according to National Career Development Association (NCDA) (2003), is the totality of work paid and unpaid – one does in his/her lifetime. Okobiah and Okorodudu (2004), defines career choice as a variety of work and non-work situations which usually span through the entire life of an individual. Thus, career embraces a sequence of positions, jobs or occupations which an individual hold during his/her life time. Discussing the factors that influence adolescents' choice of career, Osakinle and Adegoroye (2008) identified a number of factors such as: sex, location of choice maker, environment, school influence (peer and curriculum content), and religious affiliation, child rearing and family/parental values.

Furthermore, Onoyase and Onoyase (2009) examined the relationship between personality types and career choice of secondary school students in Federal

Government Colleges in Nigeria. The researchers formulated one hypothesis to guide the study. The researchers employed random sampling method to draw a sample size of six hundred and sixteen (616) Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students. The two instruments used for the study were Students' Personality Questionnaire (*SPQ*) and Students' Career Choice Questionnaire (*SCCQ*). The first instrument has a coefficient of 0.89 while the second has a coefficient of 0.81. Both had content validity and language appropriateness. Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) statistical analysis was used to analyze the data while the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that there were significant relationships between Artistic, Social, Enterprising and investigative personality types on one hand and career choice on the other. However, no significant relationships were found between the realistic and conventional personality types and career choice.

In Alika's (2010) study, he investigated parental and peer group influence as correlates of career choice in Humanities among secondary school students in Edo State, Nigeria. The relationship between the two primary factors (parental and peer group influence) and career choice was determined using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. One research question and hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. Three research instruments namely: the students' occupational clusters preference scale (OCPS), peer pressure assessment scale (PPAS) and the parental influence assessment inventory (PIA) were used in the study. The Occupational Clusters Preference Scale was designed by Obiunu (2003). The population of the study comprised of students in senior secondary school two (SS2). Result showed that there was no significant relationship between parental and peer group influence on career choice in humanities among secondary school students. Similarly, Shumba and Naong (2012) determined factors influencing career choice and aspirations among South African students. A purposive sample of 133 first and second year university students (77 females, 56 males; age range 15 to 30 years) participated in the study. Data analysed using percentages and tables showed that the family teachers and learners' preferred career choice were significant factors that influence the career choice and aspirations of students.

Kisilu, Kimani, and Kombo (2012) in their study covered a broader range of career predictors. In their work, they examined factors influencing occupational aspirations among girls in secondary schools in Nairobi region – Kenya. The study was focused on the premise that the occupational aspiration for girls is majorly influenced by the stereotypes in the socialization process that dictates on what are and should be. This study was carried out in two girls' secondary schools in Nairobi region- Kenya (day and boarding). Form four girls formed the study sample. Their inclusion was based on the assumption that the students were mature and had selected their examinable subjects which would eventually determine the careers they were likely to engage in. Survey design was employed as it allowed the collection of the data through a designed

questionnaire. A total of 87 female students participated in the study. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Based on result, findings revealed that the major factors influencing secondary school girls' occupational aspirations are traceable to their family settings, parenting, siblings, and other relatives. Other factors found to be significant were students' personality and self-esteem, the school environment, friends and role models.

Obiunu and Ebinu (2013) examined situational factors as correlates of secondary school adolescent students' career choice in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State. Five hypotheses were developed as guide for the study. The correlation design was used for the study. The population of this study is made up 867 SS 2 students in 24 public senior secondary schools in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State. From the 867 senior secondary school adolescent students in the 24 secondary schools, 5 secondary schools were randomly selected using the multistage sampling technique. 12 students were selected from each of the 5 schools using the same technique which gave a total sample size of 60 students. A questionnaire was developed to elicit response from the subjects for the study. The multiple regression statistics and ANOVA was used to test for significant relationship between situational factors on career choice of secondary school adolescent students at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis revealed that a significant relationship exists between environmental factors and secondary school adolescents' career choice among other factors (situational, personality, economic and educational factors).

### **Method of Study**

The correlational research design was adopted in this study to examine the relationship between parents' occupation and students' career aspiration in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The population of the study comprises of all the 3272 senior secondary school students in the 16 public secondary schools in the local government as shown in the provisional figure from the Post Primary Education Board (PPEB), Benin City, Edo State (2015 survey). A sample of 320 students was drawn for the study. The simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 students per school from each of the sixteen schools (16) in the local government.

The instrument used for the collection of data is an inventory titled: Students Career and Parent Occupational Inventory (SCAPOI). Section A focused on students' career aspiration in line with Holland's (1985) work on the six (6) personality types, while Section B addressed parents' career/occupational type as suggested by Holland (1985). Six to eight (6-8) items were listed under each of the six (6) personality types for students' career aspiration and their parents/guardian's occupational type. The personality types were rated thus: Realistic (R) -1; Investigative (I) -2; Social (S) -3; Artistic (A) -4; Enterprising (E) -5; and Conventional personality type (C) -6.

In order to ensure proper organization of parental career type and students' career aspirations, the items were classified into Science, Social Science and Arts-oriented occupations. The Science-oriented occupation which embraces the Realistic and Investigative personality types are made up of Technical and Medical related careers. The Social, Enterprising and Conventional personality types fit into Social Science-oriented occupations such as helping, persuasive and rule-regulated careers while the Arts oriented occupations have to do with Artistic career and this is where the Artistic personality type belongs. This concurs with the research procedure of Onoyase and Onoyase (2009). However, due to the limited number of examples specified under each personality/career type and the numerous career/occupation existing in the world of work today, respondents could be challenged choosing the personality type that goes with their aspirations or their parent/guardian's current occupation. Hence, a few blank spaces are provided under Section A and B to address this significant challenge that could affect the appropriateness of the data collected from the survey.

The content and construct validity of the instrument was carried out by two experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling (Ambrose Alli University). A copy of the instrument was given to them to ensure that the items are relevant and unambiguous in measuring what it is intended for. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using the split-half method. This method was used to obtain responses from a total of 20 students from selected private schools in the study area. The reliability coefficient gave an r-value of 0.71 after correlating the entries on Spearman Brown rank ( $\sigma$ ) correlation technique.

Before administering the instrument to students, the researcher sought permission from principals of the schools to notify them of the intended exercise. After due permission was granted, the instrument was administered to students and retrieved immediately. The Kendall's tau-b rank correlation technique was used to analyze the hypothesis. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 20).

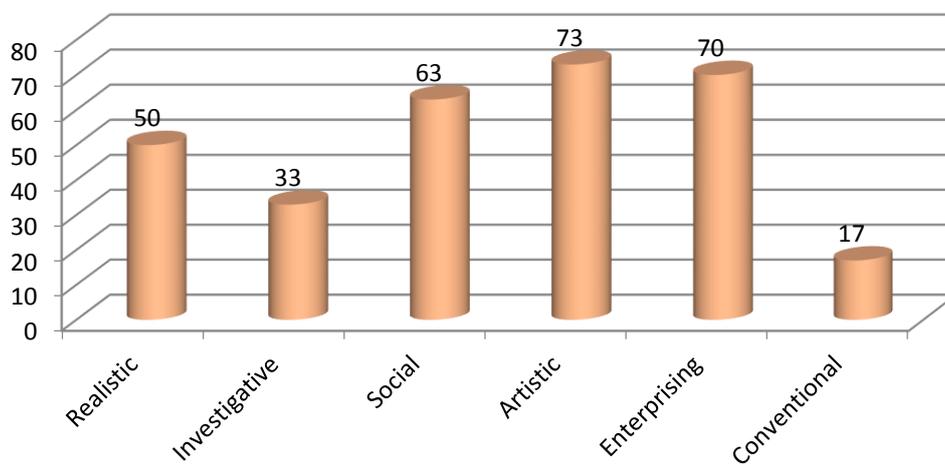
## Results

The results from the survey and test of hypothesis are presented below:

**Table 1:** Distribution of Parents’ Occupational type and Students’ Career Aspirations in Public Secondary Schools in Ekpoma Metropolis

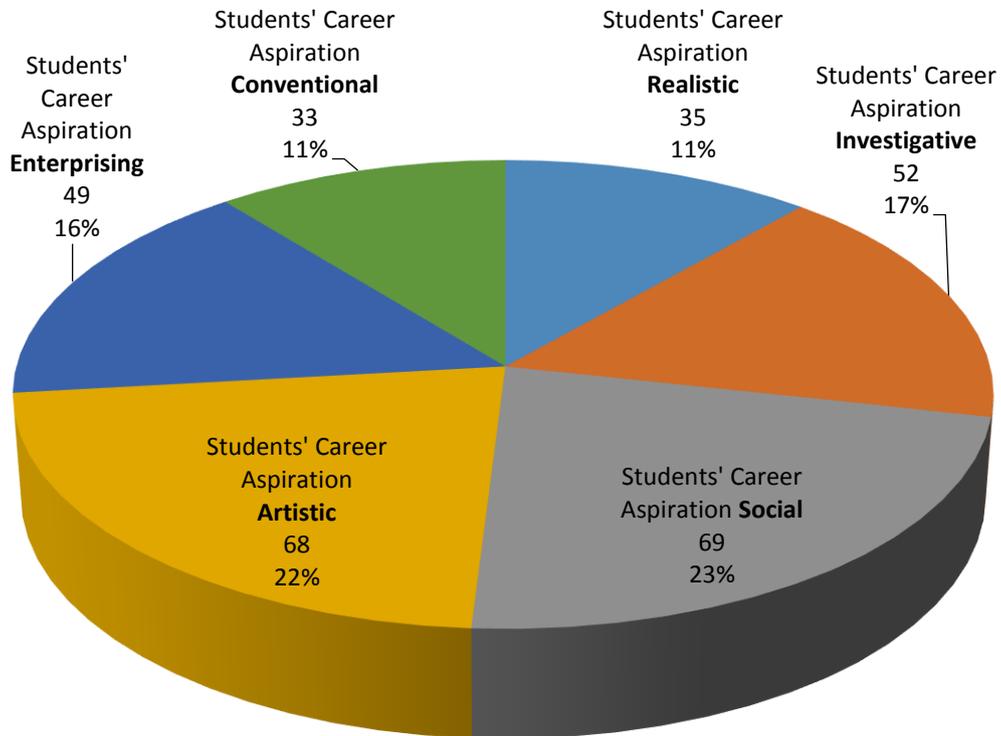
S/n	Parents’ occupation type/Student career aspiration	Parents		Students	
		No. of Parents (%)	Rating	No. of Students (%)	Rating
1	Realistic	50 (16.3)	4 <sup>th</sup>	35 (11.4)	5 <sup>th</sup>
2	Investigative	33 (10.8)	5 <sup>th</sup>	52 (17.0)	3 <sup>rd</sup>
3	Social	63 (20.6)	3 <sup>rd</sup>	69 (22.5)	1 <sup>st</sup>
4	Artistic	73 (23.9)	1 <sup>st</sup>	68 (22.2)	2 <sup>nd</sup>
5	Enterprising	70 (22.9)	2 <sup>nd</sup>	49 (16.0)	4 <sup>th</sup>
6	Conventional	17 (5.6)	6 <sup>th</sup>	33 (10.8)	6 <sup>th</sup>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>306 (100.0)</b>		<b>306 (100.0)</b>	

Result in Table 1, shows that Artistic, Enterprising and Social occupational types are the three most occupied forms of career among parents of secondary school students in Ekpoma metropolis while the fourth, fifth and least occupied career are Realistic, Investigative and Conventional career types respectively. For students, Social, Artistic and Investigative career types are the first, second and third most preferred careers in line with their aspirations respectively. Hence, the Enterprising, Realistic and Conventional occupations were their fourth, fifth and sixth most preferred careers. This information is further illustrated in Figure 1 and 2:



**Source:** Field Survey

**Figure 1:** Cylinder Chart showing Parents' Occupational Status distribution in Ekpoma metropolis in line with the Holland's six (6) personality/career types –RISAEC



**Source:** Field Survey

**Figure 2:** 3-D Pie chart showing Students' Career Aspirations in Ekpoma metropolis in line with the Holland's six (6) personality/career types -RISAEC

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between parents' career/occupation and students' career aspiration in public secondary schools in Ekpoma metropolis

**Table 2:** Summary result on bi-variate correlation between parents’ occupation and secondary school students’ career aspirations in Ekpoma metropolis

**Correlations**

		Parents. Occupation	Students'.Career. Aspiration
Kendall's tau_b	<b>Parents.</b>	Correlation Coefficient (r)	1.000
	<b>Occupation</b>	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	306
	<b>Students.Career.</b>	Correlation Coefficient (r)	.943**
	<b>Aspiration</b>	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.000
		306	306

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

Result in Table 2 shows that the correlation coefficient of .943 is statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). This has three (3) distinct interpretations that shall be interpreted in relation to the sign, size and statistical significance of the correlation coefficient. Firstly, the size or magnitude of the coefficient ( $r = .943$ ) is approximately equal to a unit (1). This shows that there is a proximate perfect relationship between parents’ occupation and their child(ren)’s career aspiration. Secondly, the sign of the coefficient is positive. This implies that the students’ career aspiration moves *in tandem* with their parents’ occupation or choice. i.e students’ aspirations or choice of future career are directly or positively related with their parents’ current occupation. Thirdly, the significance of the correlation coefficient ( $r = .943, p < 0.01$ ) shows that the relationship between the variables are not just high and positive, they are also statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between parents’ career/occupation and students’ career aspiration in public secondary schools in Ekpoma metropolis is rejected while the alternate is accepted. This implies that parents’ career/occupation has significant influence on students’ career aspiration in public secondary schools in Ekpoma metropolis.

**Discussion**

Result from the survey showed that there is a direct significant relationship between parents’ career/occupation and students’ career aspiration in public secondary schools in Ekpoma metropolis. This implies that parents’ chosen career tends to move *in tandem* with the career aspirations of their child(ren) or ward(s). Consequently, this corroborates findings from previous literature (Osakinle and Adegoye, 2008; Onoyase and Onoyase, 2009; Obiunu and Ebonu, 2013). Discussing the factors that

influence adolescents' choice of career, Osakinle and Adegoroye (2008) identified a number of predictors among which include: sex, location of choice maker, environment, school influence (peer and curriculum content), and religious affiliation, child rearing and family/parental values.

Furthermore, Onoyase and Onoyase (2009) examined the relationship between personality types and career choice of secondary school students in Federal Government Colleges in Nigeria. Using the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) statistical analysis to test the hypothesis, they found that there were significant relationships between the personality type: artistic, social, enterprising and investigative personality types on one hand and career choice of students on the other. Although, no significant relationships were found between the realistic and conventional personality types and career choice. However, they concluded that the role of parents in the career decision making process of their children cannot be over stated or emphasized. On the contrary, Alika (2010) investigated parental and peer group influence as correlates of career choice in Humanities among secondary school students in Edo State, Nigeria and found no significant relationship between parental and peer group influence on career choice in humanities among secondary school students.

Based on findings of Kisilu, Kimani and Kombo (2012) in their study on factors influencing occupational aspirations among girls in secondary schools in Nairobi region –Kenya, they concluded that the major factors influencing secondary school girls' occupational aspirations are traceable to their family settings, parenting, siblings, and other relatives. Similarly, Obiunu and Ebunu (2013) examined situational factors as correlates of secondary school adolescent students' career choice in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State. Using the multiple regression statistics and ANOVA to test for significant relationship; their result revealed that there was a significant relationship between environmental factors and secondary school adolescent career choice among other factors (situational, personality, economic and educational factors). This showed that the environment (immediate home, community and the neighborhood) of a child of school going age is directly or indirectly influences a child's dreams and aspirations.

### **Conclusion**

The role of parents in the socialization process of a child is not just theoretical but very substantial and tangible in Ekpoma metropolis. Its tangibility can be substantiated in the strength of relationship between parents' choice of occupation and their child(ren)'s career choice or aspiration. This shows that the role of parents as the first agent of socialization and career/life model goes a long way.

### **Recommendations**

Arising from findings are the following recommendations:

- 1) Parents should cautiously avoid the tendency of pushing their children into pursuing those 'wishful heights' in their careers that they were unable to attain in a bid to accomplish their 'own failings'.
- 2) Parents should employ the assistance of professional career counsellors in helping their children to make intelligent career decisions in line with their aptitude and abilities.
- 3) The place of guidance counsellors in schools should not just be theoretically recognized by the Federal Government of Nigeria, but should also be practically implemented in schools by ensuring that every Nigerian child in secondary school has access to the services of guidance counsellors for adequate career guidance. This can be achieved by establishing guidance and career centres in every local government; ensuring every school has one guidance and counselling unit with at least one qualified guidance counsellor and trainee assistants in secondary schools.
- 4) Students should be sensitized on the need to acquire adequate vocational information and discuss same freely with the school guidance counsellors so that they may be able to make well informed decisions about their future careers.

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### Appendix

This checklist is designed for secondary school students only. **The table in Section A and B contain the same items.** You are required to tick from Tables (A and B), the career type that matches your career aspiration (what you are passionate about becoming in future) and the current career/occupation of your parents/guardian.

**NOTE:** Your parent/guardian represents your sponsor (father, mother, guardian, or any other person that is financially responsible for providing your educational needs at school)

**Instruction:**

- You are expected to tick ONLY ONE of the 6 career types/options written in the table in Section A and B.
- The examples are written to guide you. However, IF YOU CANNOT FIND THE CAREER TYPE THAT MATCHES YOUR INTENDED CAREER OR YOUR PARENTS’ CURRENT CAREER/OCCUPATION. Please, it is recommended you fill it in the spaces provided below the table(s).
- **If your parent is involved in more than one job, please, ensure you tick the one you know earns him/her more income or the one he/she is more occupied with**

**Section A: Students’ Career Aspiration**

S/n	Career Category	Career Type	Examples	Tick here
1	Sciences	<b>Realistic</b>	Farming, Mining, Forestry, Engineering, Building, Architecture	
2	Sciences	<b>Investigative</b>	Medicine & Surgery, Nursing, Geology, Chemistry, Micro-Biology, Physics	

3	Social Science	<b>Social</b>	Transporter, Foreign services (ambassadorial career) Social welfare (humanitarian services), Pastoring, teaching/lecturing, Counselling, Consulting
4	Art	<b>Artistic</b>	Fine Art, Music, Sculpture, Fashion Designing, Pageantry/modeling, Painting, Journalism/ broadcasting, Theatre Arts
5	Social Science	<b>Enterprising</b>	Law, Catering, Political Science, Trader & Commerce (buying and selling), Public Administration, Estate management, Hotel Management, Restaurant Management,
6	Social Science	<b>Conventional</b>	Economics, Politics, Accounting, Banking, Library Sciences, Secretarial Work

Please specify below, if you are not sure of the career category/type:

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**Section B: Parents' Career/Occupational Type**

S/n	Career Category	Career Type	Examples	Tick here
1	Sciences	<b>Realistic</b>	Farming, Mining, Forestry, Engineering, Building, Architecture	
2	Sciences	<b>Investigative</b>	Medicine & Surgery, Nursing, Geology, Chemistry, Micro-Biology, Physics	
3	Social Science	<b>Social</b>	Transporter, Foreign services (ambassadorial career) Social welfare (humanitarian services), Pastoring, teaching/lecturing, Counselling, Consulting	
4	Art	<b>Artistic</b>	Fine Art, Music, Sculpture, Fashion Designing, Pageantry/modeling,	

			Painting, Journalism/ broadcasting, Theatre Arts	
5	Social Science	<b>Enterprising</b>	Law, Catering, Political Science, Trader & Commerce (buying and selling), Public Administration, Estate management, Hotel Management, Restaurant Management,	
6	Social Science	<b>Conventional</b>	Economics, Politics, Accounting, Banking, Library Sciences, Secretarial Work	

Please specify below, if you are not sure of the career category/type: