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Educational and Occupational Aspirations: A Study of High School Seniors in Benin City, Nigeria

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EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS:
A STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
IN BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

by

Michael Sunday Onwueme

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

January

1981

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EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS:

A STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

IN BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

The dissertation investigates the educational and occupational aspirations of high school seniors in Benin City, Nigeria. Six schools participated in the study. Of the six schools, three are boys schools, two are girls schools, and the sixth school is coeducational.

Since the establishment of Western education in Nigeria in the 1840's, by Christian missionaries and later by the British colonial government, education has been viewed and variously used as an instrument for evangelization, political administration, nationalism and, very recently, as the key to upward mobility, industrialization and economic sovereignty. When Western education was established in Nigeria, certain areas of the country and social class were more receptive than others to this Western influence. This differential acceptance of Western education led to unequal geographical modernization and development and also to the restratification of the Nigerian traditional society. The social class which received Western education became the dominant class in modern Nigeria. Since one of the characteristics of a dominant group is to hold on to power and pass it to its children, this study tries to

examine mobility patterns of the different social classes by investigating the educational and occupational aspirations of the students vis-a-vis their social class backgrounds.

The data on the students are compiled through questionnaires completed by the students. Eleven variables are cross-tabulated with educational and occupational aspirations, while chi-square was used for test of significance. The chi-square was statistically significant for father's education, family size, best friend's educational aspiration and the projected grades students hoped to obtain in their final examination, but was not significant for sex, age, residence, mother's education, student's current academic performance and the quality of school attended by students.

Sex of students was related to occupational but not to educational aspiration. Both male and female students showed high educational aspiration but boys exhibited higher occupational aspiration than girls. The education and occupations of parents were not associated with the aspirations of the respondents. Regardless of socio-economic status backgrounds, students showed high educational and occupational aspirations.

The study is restricted to students in one metropolitan area. A further study which would include schools in rural areas and also parents is suggested. The inclusion of schools in rural areas and also parents will help shed more light on the aspirations of Nigerian secondary school students from different geographical areas, and the pattern of aspirations different parents have for their children.

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VITA

The author, Michael S. Onwueme, is the son of Philip M. Onwueme and Marcellina M. Onwueme of Ubulu-Uku, Bendel State, Nigeria.

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He entered Saints Peter and Paul Seminary, Ibadan, in 1962 for his undergraduate education where he majored in Philosophy and Theology. He was ordained to the Catholic priesthood in December 1968. Following his ordination he served in various capacities as a high school teacher and a chaplain in secondary schools in the diocese of Benin City, Nigeria.

In January 1974 he began his graduate studies at De Paul University, Chicago, where he received the Master of Arts degree in Sociology in June 1976. He was admitted a full-time graduate student to Loyola University in September 1976. During his studies he was a resident priest at St. Brendan parish, Chicago.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to investigate the educational and occupational aspirations of senior students in selected schools in Benin City, Nigeria. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. The present population is estimated at eighty million. Like many other developing nations, Nigeria is struggling with the problems of industrialization and modernization. In order to carry out her social and economic plans, she needs sufficiently trained and skilled manpower. Efforts to provide adequate manpower for the economy have been embarked upon by the Federal Government of Nigeria. In 1976 the Universal Primary Education program went into effect, the purpose of which is to make education at the elementary school level free and available to all Nigerian children. It is too early to assess the impact of this massive educational program. However, a few years from now thousands of students in the program will be graduating from school and will be faced with plans and decisions about future education and occupations.

Although secondary education is not free and available to all Nigerian children, there has been a great expansion of secondary education in the last ten years. Secondary education still offers a great opportunity for educational and occupational mobility.

Secondary school graduates can go on to higher education or can be trained in job-related skills. A decade ago Nigerian youths who completed secondary education got jobs and advanced to very high positions because there was a great demand for them in the work force. Today, as many students graduate from secondary schools, they are unable to obtain jobs. Because Nigerian society has begun to make great progress at the economic level, education and job-related skills have been upgraded to meet the demand of a technologically changing society. A high school diploma no longer guarantees employment as there are limited employment opportunities for high school graduates.

It has become apparent that while there is a great need to give every Nigerian child the opportunity for elementary education, there is almost an equal need for educational expansion at the secondary and tertiary levels. Very soon students of the Universal Primary Education program will need to go beyond this level of education. Moreover, if Nigeria is to develop as fast as she has indicated in the Third National Development Plan (1975-1980), she needs an adequate supply of teachers, technicians, engineers, lawyers, doctors and various para-professionals to implement social and economic programs.

While the educational expansion at every level is commendable, it is hoped that Nigerian government should give greater attention to expanding the economy in order to

provide employment to different grades of school leavers. In the early 1960's Ghana was confronted with unemployment problems when the number of school leavers outstripped employment demands. Foster has noted:

. . . it is easier to increase school outputs than it is to generate new employment opportunities for ex-pupils. Widespread unemployment and underemployment is therefore appearing among the graduates of primary or middle schools. Competition for limited job opportunities, accordingly has tended to raise rapidly the levels of educational qualifications required even for humble forms of employment.¹

Nigeria could face similar problems in the future if adequate plans are not made. A wise government tries to provide employment for its educated citizens because unemployment of this class of citizens can be a potent source of social unrest.

A purpose of this study, then, will be to help determine and identify career goals of Nigerian youths and make suggestions that will be useful for the implementation of educational and occupational programs.

The history of the development of formal education in Nigeria shows that a particular class of Nigerians were the first to benefit from Western education. At the beginning of education in Nigeria, efforts to recruit students from the traditional ruling class met with little success. Students who first benefitted from Western education

¹Philip Foster, "Secondary Schooling and Social Mobility," Sociology of Education 37 (Winter, 1963):152.

surprisingly came from the traditional lower class most of whom were slaves or servants of kings and chiefs. This lower class later became the dominant and influential class in Modern Nigeria, resulting in the restratification of the traditional society.²

One feature of a dominant group is its tendency to maintain its privileges and status and pass them on to its children. Another purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of social class position on the aspirations of students. It is believed that aspirations of students for higher education and occupations will be related to social background. However, it will also be hypothesized that social class alone cannot completely account for different levels of aspirations.

The Nigerian social class system is "fluid" and lacks certain elements of the social class systems of Western societies. For example, social distance and rigid mechanisms of social stratification which exist among different classes in Western societies are not clearly defined and practiced in Nigeria. A highly successful person, for instance, may be distinguished from his poor and illiterate relatives and friends by his wealth and education; more often than not, he shares the same residential area with his relatives and associates freely with them. This social

²James S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1963), p. 116.

identification of highly successful individuals with their low-status friends and relatives, which is often brought about by a network of extended family systems and obligations, tends to blur social class differences. One however expects a change which will not be long in coming as Imoagene observed:

As occupational classes become more consolidated and members enjoy a greater sense of security, interaction will increase between groups within the same economic bracket thus enhancing the development of a "class-for-itself" or social class properly so called.³

Moreover, residential segregation which is associated with different school systems and qualities of education in large urban centers, especially in the United States, and neighborhood and community stratification of educational opportunities available to students, as it operates in many American urban and suburban areas, do not apply to the average urban Nigerian educational situation. Because schools are run by the state government and are in centrally located areas students attend schools of their choice regardless of where they live. One aspect of education in Nigeria, although not unique to Nigeria, one should observe, is the "open door" policy on admission. Students are admitted to secondary school and higher institutions of their choice primarily on academic performance and standing

³Oshomha Imoagene, Social Mobility in Emergent Society (Canberra, Australia: The Australian National University Press, 1976), p. 297.

relative to their peers rather than on social background characteristics. It is common to have students of different social backgrounds in schools that are regarded as "elite" schools as well as in less prestigious schools. This does not mean, however, that students from high socioeconomic background are not over-represented in these schools. Such students generally have better academic preparations that enable them more easily to pass the entrance examinations to these institutions. Philip Foster's study of high school students in Ghana, for instance, showed a disproportionate representation of children of professionals in more prestigious schools.⁴ The Nigerian educational experience is similar to that of Ghana, since both are former British colonies and have the same educational system.

Since most secondary schools in Nigeria are boarding schools, it is easy for students of different social backgrounds to mix freely, make friends and form distinct groups and subcultures. Friendship patterns emerge from similarity of interests and aspirations. The atmosphere of boarding schools at this critical age of students is such that these individuals are exposed to different persons, ideas and life styles by the school environment as well as by their peers. Studies on school context and

⁴Foster, "Secondary Schooling," p. 159.

climate have shown that school social environment is related to aspirations. Wilson, for instance, found that the higher the social class context standing of a school, the greater the aspiration of students to attend college regardless of their social class.⁵ The influence of peers has also been attributed to college aspirations of students. The influence of peers as well as school quality on aspiration will be investigated in this study. The next chapter will review in more depth peer-influence and school context influence.

There is likewise a growing interest in the education of girls in Nigeria. Education of girls was not encouraged when Western education was introduced to Nigeria. The traditional belief that a woman's place was in the home was dominant. But this view has dramatically changed due to Western influences. As soon as the importance of education for girls was realized, because some female sex-related roles in the modern sectors needed to be filled, they have been encouraged to enroll in school in great numbers. The policy of the Federal Government of Nigeria to provide universal primary education can be seen as an effort both aimed at creating a balance in equality of educational opportunity among different regions of the country and also of

⁵Alan B. Wilson, "Residential Segregation of Social Classes and Aspirations of High School Boys," American Sociological Review 24 (1959):839.

ensuring equal educational opportunity for both boys and girls. One aspect of the encouragement of social mobility of women in Nigeria is that women who have attained high levels of education have been given visible positions of responsibility and authority in the public and private sectors. These women have equal remuneration with men of similar educational preparations and occupational responsibilities. Thus these women stand as models of success to an average Nigerian girl. Sewell and Shah have shown that socioeconomic status has a strong influence on the plans of girls to attend college, whereas for boys intelligence is more significant in college plans than socioeconomic status.⁶ Sex differences in educational and occupational aspirations will be investigated in this study.

The encouragement given to higher education in Nigeria should be seen as an effort to produce high level manpower for economic development. It is important that higher education that can be directly tied with national development be given priority consideration. Thus some areas of study as in the fields of science and technology should command a high place in the table of educational priorities.

The humanities had dominated Nigerian higher education

⁶William H. Sewell and Vilmal P. Shah, "Socioeconomic Status, Intelligence, and Attainment of Higher Education," Sociology of Education 40 (Winter, 1967):15-16.

in the past. During the Colonial period and for a considerable time thereafter. This type of education was necessary for a colonial administration whose interests were its own social and political expansion rather than for the economic development of its colonial dependency. One is not saying that humanities are no longer important. The suggestion is for a balance in educational programs and for stress in more pressing areas of national need.

Recently different states in Nigeria have begun to correct this imbalance in higher education by awarding scholarships to students who want to major in science and technical fields. One would suspect that this policy of awarding scholarships in these "needed fields" would likely influence students' decisions for higher education and occupation. The choice of occupations by students in this study will attempt to discover whether they are responding to the government's specified areas of national needs.

Historical Background

Historically, education has stood at the center of movements for nationalism, mercantilism, political emancipation and economic development. Nationalism was evident in the educational philosophies of the ancient Greeks and the Romans and in the Prussian educational systems of the nineteenth century. The Industrial Revolution, which began in Britain in the eighteenth century and later spread

to the New World, gave great impetus to educational expansion for needed skilled manpower. The political colonization of the African continent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries evidenced the use of education as an instrument for the political administration and enculturation of the native peoples of the continent. The people of Africa later used education for political emancipation. African leaders who received Western education from their colonial overlords rose to demand political independence. Now that independence has been attained, these African leaders believe that another struggle and perhaps more important, that of economic independence, must be fought and won. They have convinced themselves that education is the weapon for their both economic independence and national survival.

Social scientists, especially economists, have increasingly regarded education as the creator of human capital.⁷ By this they mean that education is a good investment for the man-power training of citizens of different countries. The most developed nations of the world still speak glowingly

⁷This view has been stressed by many writers, prominent among them are: Frederick Harbison and Charles A. Myers, Manpower and Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. ix; Philip Foster, "Education and Manpower Planning: a Cautionary Note(1)," Nigerian Opinion 3(1) (1967):148-149; Herbert Gintis, "Education and the Characteristics of Worker Productivity," American Economic Review 61 (May 1971a):267-279, and Herbert Gintis, "The Politics of Education: Review of Charles Silberman's Crisis in the Classroom," Monthly Review 23 (December 1971b):40-51.

of the importance of education. A Committee Report on Federal Responsibility in education illustrates this point:

Nations rely heavily on their educated citizens. Civilized and developed nations who enjoy democratic systems of government are aware that democracy can only be sustained when individuals are given the opportunity for free and intelligent expression of opinions. This expression is only possible where there operates a free and universal system of education. Moreover, the quality of any society depends largely upon the progress which education as a vital factor sets in motion.⁸

In developing nations education is regarded as the key to modernization and to social and economic development. There are hardly any policy statements made by leaders of the developing nations without reference to the significant role education is supposed to play in national development. In Africa, today, an extraordinary faith is placed in education. When thirty-nine African nations held a conference at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1961, the report of the conference solemnly declared that education is Africa's most urgent and vital need at the present.⁹ It urged African States to initiate programs for universal, compulsory, free primary education in the whole of the continent by 1980.¹⁰

⁸U.S. Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, A Study Committee Report on Federal Responsibility in the Field of Education (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1955), p.

⁹UNESCO, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African States in the Development of Education in Africa. UNESCO/ED/81 (Addis Ababa: Ethiopia, 1961), p. 5.

¹⁰Ibid., see also David B. Abernathy, The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 4.

It is almost twenty years since this declaration was made. However, many African nations for various reasons, most especially financial, have not fully implemented this recommendation. It was only three years ago that Nigeria embarked upon a full scale universal primary education for children of school age. But this does not mean that a high priority has not been given to education by African nations. In fact, an average country in black Africa allocates a sizeable portion of its budget to education. Even within states in different countries education is given great priority by state governments. For instance in Bendel State, Nigeria, where this study was conducted, the allocation to education in the 1978/79 budget reflected 25 percent of the capital expenditure. This sizeable allocation according to the government would "provide more classrooms for ever increasing enrollment of primary and post primary school children; for the expansion of College of Education at Abraka and the Auchu polytechnic."¹¹

Several years before the Addis Ababa Conference previously mentioned, universal free primary education had begun in Nigeria at the regional level. In 1955, universal free primary education was launched in Western Nigeria. Despite the short-coming of this educational venture, the program

¹¹"Tailoring Bendel Spending," West Africa, October 9, 1978, p. 1992-1993.

became a model for educational plans for the rest of the country. Twenty-one years later, the Federal government of Nigeria decided to make universal primary education a national concern and to take a greater responsibility for the program from State governments.

Educational experts have documented the phenomenal expansion of education at all levels in Africa in the 1950's and 1960's.¹² These two decades also marked a period of significant educational growth in Nigeria. The 1950's coincided with post-World War II, and the 1960's marked the period of political sovereignty for many African nations. Nigeria attained her political independence from Britain in 1960. The post-World War II period was marked by high enrollment in schools in developed and developing nations as returning war veterans wanted more education for themselves and their children. In African countries, this period was a time of political consolidation. During the War and thereafter, Nigerians in particular got the opportunity to travel abroad. Many of them had fought side by side with the Allied Forces. Their experience abroad made them aware of what their country lacked: educational and political

¹²A. Babs Fafunwa, "The Purpose of Teacher Education," A Philosophy For Nigerian Education. Report of the National Curriculum Conference, 8-12 September 1969, Adeniji Adarelegbe (ed.) (Ibadan, Nigeria: Heineman Educational Books (Nigeria) Ltd.), pp. 82-83, and Elliot Berg, "Education and Manpower in Senegal, Guinea and the Ivory Coast," Manpower and Education, Frederick Harbison and Charles Myers (eds.) (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 239.

institutions which they felt would lead to a better quality of life as witnessed in developed nations. On their return from abroad these Nigerians began to press for more and better quality of education and for participation in the colonial government.¹³

A Nigerian educationist presents imposing statistics of educational growth in Nigeria during these periods in question, and sharply contrasts enrollment during the last period of colonial government and the years after Nigerian independence. The writer's effort was directed at illustrating the importance Nigerian leaders attach to education. According to Fafunwa:

The last fifteen years witnessed phenomenal educational growth in Nigeria. The number of children in the primary schools in the whole Federation rose from less than one million in 1950 to about three million in 1966. There were less than eighty recognized secondary, commercial and technical schools with student population of 10,000 in 1950 as against more than 1200 with a student population of over 200,000 in 1966. In 1950, there was only one university college with a student population of 400 while between 1960 and 1962 four additional universities were established, and as of now, the five universities have a combined enrollment of over 9,000 students in the faculties of arts, agriculture, business administration, education, engineering, law, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary science, science, social science, etc. Indeed the people and the government of Nigeria have come to regard education as the key to the overall national development

¹³Victor C. Ferkiss, Africa's Search for Identity (New York: Meridian Books: The World Publishing Co., 1967), p. 97.

programs of Nigeria, particularly in terms of human and natural resources.¹⁴

This statement by Fafunwa, no doubt, was intended to dramatize the fact that this educational growth took place less than ten years after Nigeria attained her independence. In effect the Nigerian government was in haste for economic development, modernization and political consolidation. As soon as the government recognized the important part education was to play in her economic plans, she virtually cast all her development eggs in the educational basket. Fafunwa's statement was made over ten years ago. The educational picture of Nigeria today is even much more buoyant. There are thirteen universities now in the country and almost every State (there are nineteen states in Nigeria) in the country has a College of Education and/or polytechnic College. At national, state and local levels the expansion of education has occupied an important place in national planning. The growing importance of education has been felt throughout Nigeria but most especially in the southern part of the country. Benin City was one of those areas that gave strong commitment to education. An assessment of education in Benin City follows.

¹⁴Fafunwa, "The Purpose of Teacher Education," pp. 82-83.

Development of Western Education in Benin City

Benin City, where this study was conducted, is the largest and most heterogeneous urban area in Bendel State. The estimated population is 100,694.¹⁵ As the capital of the State, it is the seat of the government and the legislature. Different cadres of civil servants, local government officials, businessmen and self-employed workers comprise the work force of the city. In the past twenty-five years Benin City has grown from a predominantly agrarian area to a modern urban center with growing commercial houses, banks and industries. The city is renowned for its priceless works of art set in bronze and wood.

Benin City occupies an important place in the history of colonialization and education in West Africa. The Empire of Benin was one of the greatest and most powerful kingdoms in West Africa. According to Crowder "the kingdom was highly organized, backed by a large and efficient army, which gave it control of a large area of the coasts."¹⁶ Benin had its earliest contact with Europe in the fifteenth century. The history of education in many African nations,

¹⁵This figure is taken from Midwestern Nigeria Handbook, Ministry of Information, Benin City, 1970, p. 7. The last official census in Nigeria was in 1963. The 1973 census was rejected by the Nigerian government.

¹⁶Michael Crowder, A Short History of Nigeria (New York: Praeger, Inc., 1962), p. 64.

especially Nigeria, is inseparably bound with the evangelical efforts of the early Christian missionaries who came to Christianize the "Dark Continent." Benin was first visited by Portuguese traders and missionaries in 1486. As Okafor Nduka observed:

From their earliest period in the Gulf of Guinea, the Portuguese regarded these coastal regimes as promising areas for missionary work. They were attracted to the extensive kingdom of Benin by the Binis' belief in a Supreme God, which fact they thought would favorably dispose the Binis to the acceptance of Christianity. The reigning Oba of Benin showed a passing interest, but only to enable him to obtain arms, the delivery of which to the 'infidels' had been forbidden by the pope.¹⁷

The missionaries made some efforts to convert the Oba and his chiefs to Christianity and to educate their children. Several factors, including inadequate funds, hostile climate and negative response by the natives brought this missionary adventure to an end. It was not until towards the end of the nineteenth century that Benin had another but permanent European influence. At this time the British colonial expansion and imposition was spreading in West African kingdoms. The Empire of Benin fell to the British expeditionary troops in 1897. The fall of Benin marked the beginning of Westernization of Benin City and its surrounding districts. A new system of government was inaugurated and the paraphernalia of colonial administration were set up. In 1901

¹⁷Nduka Okafor, The Development of Universities in Nigeria (London: Longmans Groups Ltd., 1971), p. 6.

the first government school was opened in Benin City. This was followed in 1902 by another school and a church under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society.¹⁸ Other religious denominations including the Roman Catholic Church and Baptist Church also opened churches and schools. Benin City now has 65 primary schools, 14 secondary grammar schools, a teacher training college, a technical school, and a Headmasters Institute where primary school principals and administrators are trained.¹⁹ The only university in the State and the University Teaching Hospital are located in Benin City.

Benin City was chosen for this study for two reasons. First, it is an urban center which draws its population from different parts of the country and the State. Benin City is a metropolitan center that is significant for its geographical location. Through a network of modern highways Benin City forms the connecting link among towns and cities in Nigeria. The first highway from Benin City to Kwara State connects Bendel State with the Northern States. The second highway which goes up to the Niger Bridge forms a commercial link with the Eastern States where two important commercial cities, Onitsha and Port Harcourt are located.

¹⁸Jacob Egherevba, A Short History of Benin (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1968), p. 62.

¹⁹Bendel State School Directory 1977/78 (Benin City: Ministry of Education (Planning Division), 1977), pp. 65-104.

The third highway which leads to the seaports of Warri and Sapele facilitates the shipment of goods for large ocean-faring vessels. The last major highway leads to the Western States and to the Federal capital, Lagos. Thus these modern highways and the frequent stop-over in Benin City by travellers and traders ensure a continuous flow of ideas and commercial transactions among people from different parts of the country.²⁰ The composition of the student body in Benin City also reflects a good representation of various ethnic, urban and rural areas of the state. Parents of students either live in Benin City as workers or live in other urban or rural areas but send their children to school in Benin City.

The second reason for the choice of Benin City is because of its educational and cultural importance. The headquarters of the State Ministry of Education and the Divisional School Board are located in Benin City. In addition, Benin City houses the State Museum, the Arts theatre, the State Library and other social and cultural establishments which provide educational and recreational facilities for adults and children.

A Sketch of the Schools

Six high schools in Benin City were selected on the basis of the agencies under which they were founded, on the

²⁰Michael S. Onwueme, "Education and Social Change in the Mid Western State of Nigeria" (M.A. thesis, DePaul University, Chicago, 1976), p. 10.

assumed prestige ranking of the schools and on the sex of the students they serve. Three boys schools, two girls schools and one coeducational form the composition of the student body. Although it was intended to make the six schools evenly divided according to sex of students, because the third girls school could not participate in the study, the decision was made to settle for a coeducational school with an equal number of boys and girls taking part in the study.

Prior to 1973 when the Bendel State government took over the administration of all primary and post-primary schools in the State, schools were operated under the agencies of the government, the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant Churches and private citizens. On the basis of the agencies under which the schools were previously administered, two government owned schools, one for boys and the other for girls were selected. Two schools that were Catholic, one for boys and one for girls were also chosen. The fifth school which is for boys, was founded by the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) or popularly known as the Anglican Church. The sixth school, which is coeducational, was founded by a private citizen. Although more schools were contacted these six schools were the only ones that responded and were willing to take part in the study. The students appear to represent different socioeconomic backgrounds and therefore a good representation of the student population of the city.

The first school is for boys and was founded by the

government in 1937. It is the first secondary school in the state and highly regarded. Many top civil servants, professionals and businessmen were graduated from the school. As we have seen, the first primary school in Benin City was founded by the government in 1901. It is significant to note that a secondary school was not opened in Benin City until nearly forty years later.. One would have expected secondary schools to open several years after the primary schools. But this was not the case. The colonial government and the different missionary agencies which operated primary schools did not see the necessity for higher education for the natives. The education they envisioned was a low-level type which offered rudimentary knowledge in the three R's and prepared students for low-level positions of clerks, messengers and interpreters in the colonial administration, and as teachers and catechists in the church. Parents were not satisfied with this type of education as they wanted their children to be equally educated as the missionaries and colonial administrators who were often graduates of British and European universities.²¹ After years of persistent pressure from parents, the government established the first secondary school in Benin City in 1937. The government action was followed by different church

²¹See J. F. Ade Ajayi, "Development of Secondary Grammar Schools in Nigeria," Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria Vol. 2, No. 4 (December 1963):520.

agencies as they vied to offer secondary education to their members. When this school was opened in 1937, admission was highly competitive and the standard was high as the government wanted to make it an educational "show piece" for the secondary education of the elite patterned after public high schools in Britain. At the time of this study the student population was 726 students. The school has "upper six" as it is called in Nigeria. This means that there are two post-secondary school grades whose programs prepare students for direct entry to the university. In the West African Examinations Council Examination conducted in 1976 for senior high schools, this school was ranked ninth of a total of 107 schools with 74.3 percent of its students passing the examination.²²

The second school was a Catholic boys school founded in 1944 and was the first denominational secondary school in Benin City. It is also highly respected for having trained many highly successful professionals, civil servants and businessmen. It had an enrollment of 769 students at the time of this study. It also has upper forms which prepare students for direct admission to the university. In the West African Examinations mentioned above this school was ranked eighteenth with 63.2 percent of the students

²²Prepared by the Ministry of Education (June 1976) (Planning Division) Benin City. Educational Statistical Abstract. Annexure 1, p. 1.

passing the examinations.²³

The third school was founded in 1957 under the Church Missionary Society and became the first protestant school for boys. Its enrollment was 1190. The graduates of this school have also made remarkable success in their chosen fields. The school was ranked thirteenth with 67.6 percent of the students being successful in the 1976 examinations.²⁴

The fourth school which is for girls was founded by the Roman Catholic Church in 1959. As the first girls secondary school in Benin City, it has made a great impact in female education. It has high academic reputation having ranked first in the 1976 examinations with 93.5 percent of the students passing the examination. Enrollment was 634 students.

The fifth school was opened in 1973 by the State government for girls. It was patterned after the first boys government school and reflects the same educational philosophy of elite education for women. Its academic strength has not been tested as a young school. The percentage of successful candidates in the 1976 examinations was 47.5. The enrollment was 684 students.²⁵

The final school which is coeducational was opened in

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

1973 by a private agency. It is a young school compared with the others with the exception of the fifth school. In fact both were opened the same year but records show that its students did not take the examination of 1976. This was because secondary education in Nigeria is five years. Whereas the fifth school which was opened in 1973 admitted students to first and second years and thus was ready in 1976 to field in the first graduates for the examination, the other school had not reached the level for the examination. The enrollment in the sixth school was 1027 students.

The subjects of the study were in the final year of secondary school. All secondary schools in Nigeria have the same academic programs comprising of Arts and Science subjects. At the end of the fifth year students attempt the same external examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council. Successful candidates are awarded the high school diploma.

The introduction of Western education to Benin City has made a great impact on the social and economic lives of the people. Changes in the traditional social structures, in the economic system and life style are the evidence of this impact. Parents and their children are part of this new process. The next chapter will review related literature on educational and occupational aspirations in order to help determine the factors that influence students' aspirations to higher education and occupations.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Aspiration has been described as "the standard of achievement which an individual sets for himself and which he expects to attain."¹ People have different levels of aspirations; some have higher motivations than others, they want to excel in whatever they do. Some people have greater ability to bear physical and psychological strains that accompany competition in various fields of human activities. Achievement motivation is predicated upon certain factors, as Hyman observed:

Achievement in any realm is dependent upon two factors: the possession of both the necessary ability and the motivation to reach the goal. Ability is of course limited by socially imposed barriers to training and lack of channels to given types of position. However, ability may also be retarded by lack of individual striving to obtain whatever training in turn is instrumental to economic advancement.²

Social scientists stress the association between aspiration and social mobility. Educational and occupational aspirations are related to the desire to raise one's social status. Education has been viewed as a means for

¹George A. Theodorson and Achilles F. Theodorson, A Modern Dictionary of Sociology (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969), p. 17.

²Herbert H. Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes: A Social Psychological Contribution to the Analysis of Stratification," in Class, Status and Power, Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset, (eds.) (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1953), p. 429.

upward mobility for individuals who have the ability and the opportunity to acquire it. Havighurst in a comparative study of Australia, Brazil (Sao Paulo), Britain and the United States noted that social mobility and social change were interrelated in modern societies.³ Havighurst compared the mobility patterns among male adults between the ages of thirty and seventy in the four societies with those of their fathers when the fathers were in the same age range. Brazil and the United States showed high levels of mobility which were attributed to high educational opportunities at the primary and secondary levels given to students of both societies. It was noted that secondary education gave students the opportunity to advance to careers similar to those of their fathers. Secondary education offered specialization in technical fields which prepared students for employment in industries. This technical education was beneficial to the lower-class students because it enabled them to obtain jobs of middle-class status. Thus, according to Havighurst, education has become a great mechanism for upward mobility in industrial societies because technological growth enhances the rate of productivity which in turn changes the structure of the labor force to absorb different social levels.

Blau and Duncan in the study of the patterns of

³Robert Havighurst, "Education, Social Mobility and Social Change in Four Societies: A Comparative Study," Education in Comparative and International Perspectives, Kalil L. Gozi, (ed.) (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), 262.

intergenerational mobility in the United States noted a strong association between the background of parents and children's occupational mobility.⁴ Father's education and occupation, among other variables, were related to intergenerational mobility. The educational attainment and occupation of the father predicted the education and career opportunities of the son.⁵

Collins noted that education has assumed a significant role in occupational achievement in America because educational attainment is strongly associated with occupational achievement. The type of schooling affects significantly one's life-chances, as employers increasingly demand higher educational preparations from applicants for jobs.⁶ Education has assumed a new dimension because of its "technical function" which means that skills for jobs tend to increase as technological changes occur in societies. As the number of occupations which require high levels of skills increase, low-level skilled occupations diminish.⁷ Students therefore tend to stay longer in school to acquire high level education

⁴Peter Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, The American Occupational Structure (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967), p. 302.

⁵Ibid., p. 430.

⁶Randall Collins, "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification," American Sociological Review 36 (December 1971):1003.

⁷Ibid., p. 1004.

required for employment. Although Collins' main argument is that some of these required skills were not job-related but were merely imposed by the dominant social class to uphold its social positions and norms, it cannot be denied that educational attainment as seen by Collins exerts great influence in assigning people to occupational roles and social positions.

In a study of secondary education and social mobility in Ghana, Philip Foster noted that secondary education was crucial for entry into middle and high level occupations.⁸ Occupational opportunities were related to the educational attainment.⁹ It was also found that no significant difference existed in the educational and occupational aspirations between students from illiterate and rural background and students from better endowed homes. This study of Foster will be reviewed later in detail because it is important to the present investigation. It appears to suggest the basis for comparison and understanding of the differential effects of social stratification on aspiration in Western and developing African societies.

Education is correlated with occupational mobility because the individual's occupational chances are partially determined by his level of education. The importance of

⁸Foster, "Secondary Schooling and Social Mobility," p. 154.

⁹Ibid., p. 163.

education for upward mobility has been documented in both industrialized and in developing nations. Writing on social mobility in the U.S.S.R., Dobson noted that:

Occupational specialization emerges as the key determinant of social stratification in as much as remuneration for work performed is the main institutionalized mechanism whereby differential rewards are distributed. Technical expertise is prized, and the educational system serves to select and distribute individuals for various positions in the work place; consequently educational attainment is a major determinant of the individual's achieved social status.¹⁰

In pre-industrial societies ascriptive criteria of birth, age and sex served in the past as mechanisms for upward mobility. The social picture in these societies is changing as ascriptive criteria give way to universalistic criteria of individual efforts and achievement. In modern Nigeria for instance, education increasingly serves as a mechanism for social and material rewards. The nature of rewards for higher education was most pointedly noted by a Nigerian social critic. He observed:

A university degree was the philisopher's stone. It transmuted a third-class clerk on one hundred and fifty [British pounds] a year into a senior civil servant on five hundred and seventy, with car and luxuriously furnished quarters at nominal rent. And the disparity in salary and amenities did not tell even half the story. To occupy a "European post" was second only to being a European. It raised a man from the masses to the elite.¹¹

¹⁰Richard B. Dobson, "Mobility and Stratification in the Soviet Union," Annual Review of Sociology 3 (1977):299.

¹¹Chinua Achebe, No Longer at Ease (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1960), pp. 90-91.

It must be observed, however, that the importance of education for mobility is differently stressed in developed and developing nations. In developed nations such as the United States, employment in public and private sectors relies on some years of schooling and on-the-job training for recruitment and advancement. The reason for this appears to be that an advanced economy has the ability to spread employment opportunities and absorb every educational and employment level. On-the-job experience sometimes compensates for educational deficiencies. In developing countries, especially Nigeria, emphasis is placed on the acquisition of academic credentials for educational and occupational placement and promotion. There are few rewards and little recognition accorded to on-the-job training. Educational and occupational recruitment is pyramidal; there are fewer persons in professional and administrative positions, while the bulk of the population occupy the lowest occupational rung. It is this occupational structure that has created the demand for more education by the Nigerian masses.

Studies have shown that social mobility varies according to social class, and that upper class persons acquire more education than the lower class and are consequently placed in better income yielding occupations. This variation in social mobility has been attributed to several factors, among which are differential value systems, socialization patterns and opportunities. Hyman has pointed out that

opportunities which the upper class has are not available to the lower class.¹² For instance, the financial burdens which the acquisition of professional and specialized training demand of parents cannot be afforded by the lower class. Besides money, which plays an important part in formal training, individual ability also assumes an equal significance. Professional training in medicine, law and engineering for example, requires long years of strenuous intellectual preparation. To a great extent mobility largely demands individual diligence and perseverance in order to achieve one's goal. According to Porter:

Mobility strivings are not inherited, but are learned as part of the culture of a 'mobility ethos.' They are acquired through socialization in the family, and in the instrumental but also increasingly in the normative sense, through the educational system.¹³

Porter's point alludes to the differential value systems of the different classes. Studies have shown that the upper class regardless of age and sex places great value on higher education and tends to defer immediate gratification to attain its goals. Furthermore, in the choice of occupation, this class tends to look for jobs that are congenial to individual personality and interests, whereas the lower class tends to de-emphasize education and choose jobs

¹²Hyman, "The Value System of Different Classes," p. 429.

¹³John Porter, "The Future of Upward Mobility," American Sociological Review 33 (1968):12.

that offer opportunity for economic stability and security.¹⁴

There is an area of research on social mobility that has of late been receiving a growing interest. Researchers have started to cast doubts on and to challenge the popular notion that education for all would lead to social mobility and equality. Anderson's study has questioned this notion.¹⁵ Anderson was skeptical of the widely held view that upward mobility is strongly related to education in advanced societies. He argued that factors other than education were more significant in upward mobility. He examined mobility patterns in three Western societies: England, Sweden, and the United States. He took samples of fathers and sons and compared their social status and educational attainment. Anderson identified the movement of sons in different social strata in terms of social origins, final social positions and education and compared them with the social positions of their fathers. It was found that education was one of many factors that had influence on mobility.¹⁶ Anderson contended that education serves many other functions besides preparing people for occupations. According to him:

. . . ability, whether hereditary or not, and associated motivation, varying independently of schooling, plays a powerful role in generating mobility.¹⁷

¹⁴Hyman, "The Value System of Different Classes," p. 437.

¹⁵See C. A. Anderson, "A Skeptical Note on Education and Mobility," American Journal of Sociology 66 (1961):560-570.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 569.

¹⁷Ibid.

Boudon has confirmed Anderson's position with statistical evidence. Scholars are now discovering that in spite of the equality of educational opportunity accorded the lower class especially after World War II, social inequality persists with increasing magnitude in developed nations.¹⁸ Boudon noted that after World War II there was a phenomenal expansion of education at every level in Western and industrialized societies, the purpose of which was to offer equality of educational opportunity to the lower class. It was expected that equality of educational opportunity would bridge the gap in social equality between the upper and lower classes. Boudon developed a statistical model by which he compared the educational and social mobility gains of the lower class. It was found that despite the increase in educational attainment by the lower class, its social position remained unchanged, that is, social inequality persisted between the upper and the lower classes. Boudon attributed this social inequality to economic inequality, that is, ". . . educational growth can at least partially explain the persistence of economic inequality in Western societies."¹⁹ Boudon then suggested the loosening up of stratification system if some measure of social equality can be attained.²⁰

¹⁸ Raymond Boudon, Education, Opportunity and Social Inequality: Changing Prospects in Western Society (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973).

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 188.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 193.

One can be led to believe that as soon as social class consciousness in African societies assumes the pattern of Western societies, education will lose the glamor it now has as the panacea for social ills and social inequality. Moreover, since equality of educational opportunity at the higher educational levels is yet to become a reality in most African nations, one would expect to find a growing social and economic gap between the elite and the masses.

Review of Related Literature

Factors related to the educational and occupational aspirations of adolescents have increasingly become the object of study by social scientists and various educational organizations. The research efforts of these groups and individuals have resulted in a large and variegated volume of findings. A review of some of these studies presents evidence that certain social variables such as socio-economic status, sex, intelligence, peer group influence, type of school attended, community of residence among many others, are related to aspiration.²¹ It has been found that: children from high socioeconomic status families have higher educational aspirations than children from low socioeconomic status; that boys tend to have higher educational aspirations than girls and that children of

²¹William H. Sewell and Vimal P. Shah, "Social Class, Parental Encouragement, and Educational Aspirations," American Journal of Sociology 73 (March 1968):560.

parents with higher educational attainment have higher aspirations than children whose parents have low education.²² These studies and their variables will be reviewed next.

Socioeconomic Status and Aspiration

Theories have been advanced to explain social class differences on aspiration. Kahl suggested the significance of parental encouragement.²³ Wilson said that social classes have differing values which reinforce their statuses. He further pointed out that lower class individuals tend to place less importance on education while they "aspire to modest but secure occupation and income levels."²⁴ Sewell and Shah posited that high motivation of students for success is strongly influenced by the social environment in which they are reared.²⁵ According to Sewell and Shah the status of the family is related to the aspirations of children and strongly predicts the opportunities for higher education. Low intelligence students have been found to come from low socioeconomic status background, these students also possess low levels of aspiration. This relationship between educational

²²Ibid., p. 571.

²³J. A. Kahl, "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of 'Common Man' Boys," Harvard Educational Review 23 (1953):203.

²⁴Sewell and Shah, "Social Class, Parental Encouragement and Educational Aspirations," p. 570.

²⁵Ibid.

and occupational aspirations and social class may reflect the difference in intelligence.²⁶

The effects of social environment on achievement vary according to social class. This variation has been attributed to different personality and familial characteristics.

In social research, these personality characteristics have been used as intervening variables to explain the relationship between social class and achievement. For example, familial socialization of children to high motivation to excel in school and at work, parental encouragement to place high value on education, independence training, adult-child relationship in terms of whether it is warm or cold, democratic or authoritarian, come under the broad term "child-rearing practices." Child rearing practices are said to vary according to social class and do to some extent explain the social class differences in achievement.²⁷ Social psychologists have shown that middle-class parents tend to have fewer children than lower-class parents. Interaction between middle-class parents and children is warm and democratic. Middle-class parents inculcate the habits of independence, curiosity and self-reliance. These factors prepare middle-class children for competition and achievement in school

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷See Alan C. Kerckhoff, Socialization and Social Class (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972).

and later in chosen occupations.²⁸ Moreover, since middle-class values are the dominant values of the school and society, middle-class children have an advantage over their less endowed peers.

However, one of the most important factors which explain social-class differences is largely economic. Middle-class individuals have opportunities which lower-class persons lack namely, access to higher education and occupations which presuppose financial resources. When education, occupation and income of parents, which serve as indices of socioeconomic status are compared with educational aspirations of students, students who have college educated parents tend to have higher educational aspirations than students whose parents have low education.²⁹ Levine et al conducted a survey of Kansas City high school seniors and found that 64 percent of students from manual or farm families were attending college.³⁰ Furthermore, 20 percent of students with family income of less than \$3000 were in college in comparison to 87 percent of students whose family income was above \$15,000.³¹

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Daniel U. Levine, Edna S. Mitchell, and Robert J. Havighurst, "Opportunities for Higher Education in a Metropolitan Area: A Study of High School Seniors in Kansas City, 1967," a monograph prepared by the Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems in Education of the University of Missouri et al, p. 5 (xeroxed).

³⁰Ibid., p. 8

³¹Ibid.

Education, especially at the college level, is expensive and only very well-to-do parents can conveniently afford to send their children to college. Parents who send their children to college lose not only part of their own earnings but also the income which their college-attending children would have earned. This partly explains why students from low income families defer higher education in order to contribute to the family income.

These differences among social classes have prompted investigations on class differences on aspiration. Kahl found that intelligence and social class of students have strong influence on aspiration. He also noted that parental attitude about the importance of occupational success for personal advancement was crucial.³² Bordua showed that socioeconomic status has a positive influence on college plans of high school students regardless of sex and religious affiliation.³³ When the effects of sex and religion were controlled for parental encouragement, the relationship between social class and college plans was still present, although somewhat reduced.³⁴ Simpson has noted that "parental advice is a much better predictor of high ambition than is the boy's social class."³⁵ The conclusion of the study by Rehberg

³²Kahl, "Educational and Occupational Aspirations," p. 203.

³³David J. Bordua, "Educational Aspiration and Parental Stress on College," Social Forces 38 (March 1960):266.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Richard L. Simpson, "Parental Influence, Anticipatory Socialization, and Social Mobility," American Sociological Review 27 (August 1962):521.

and Westby was that through parental encouragement the education and occupation of the father have influence on educational aspirations of students, and that the larger the family size the less parental encouragement to children to continue education beyond high school.³⁶ Lack of parental encouragement need not mean lack of aspiration on the part of students. Parents who have no resources to send their children to college are less likely to encourage them to attend. Thus the reality of attending or not attending college cannot be missed by students when they state their future educational aspiration. The study of aspirations of middle-class and lower-class students is problematic. It is difficult to determine the level of aspirations for students from higher and lower classes. There is evidence that lower class students have great obstacles to overcome to attain higher education and occupation. One agrees with Porter's remark that:

It is not particularly ambitious for middle-class high school students to want college education. The desire for education can be used as a middle-class norm and as a sign of higher middle-class aspirations.³⁷

Foster's study of Ghanian secondary school students showed

³⁶Richard A. Rehberg and David L. Westby, "Parental Encouragement, Occupation, Education and Family Size: Artificial or Independent Determinants of Educational Expectations," Social Forces 45 (March 1967):373.

³⁷Porter, "The Future of Upward Mobility," p. 14.

a different result from the ones reviewed here. Educational and occupational aspirations of Ghanaian students were not significantly related to their socioeconomic status. In the study of secondary schooling and social mobility in Ghana, Foster examined the recruitment patterns to elite secondary schools. The assumption is often made that social class determines to a certain extent recruitment to elite schools and that this consequently affects students' life chances. Foster's aim was to see how this assumption applied to the case of Ghana. He examined the social background of the students as measured by the education and occupations of their fathers. He also looked at the students' place of birth, that is, whether they were from urban or rural areas, these background characteristics were compared with students' enrollment in secondary schools and their future educational and occupational plans. Although children of professionals and high-ranking government officials were highly represented in elite schools, children of farmers and fishermen, occupations associated with low education and social status were also significantly well recruited to these schools.³⁸

Ninety-six percent of all students in the sample planned to go on for higher education after secondary school. While 77 percent of students whose fathers had no formal education

³⁸Philip Foster, "Secondary Schooling and Social Mobility in Ghana," Sociology of Education 37 (Winter, 1963):164.

planned to continue their education, 90 percent of students whose fathers had at least secondary school education had similar educational plans.³⁹ It was also found that the occupational aspirations of the students irrespective of background were strikingly similar. However, more students from humble background tended to choose teaching at primary and secondary school levels than students from better backgrounds.⁴⁰ While by Western standards the difference between the educational plans of high and low status students in Foster's sample may appear significant, this is not necessarily the case by African standards, especially when the great difference in background of both groups is taken into account.⁴¹ Students from humble background have greater obstacles to overcome to attain higher education than students from better homes.

Foster attributed cultural differences between Western and African societies to the result of his study. According to him:

. . . we are confronted by marked looseness in association between variables: students of illiterate, rural parentage entertain just as high hopes and expectations for their future as those from superior homes, again demonstrating a divergence from the Western pattern.⁴²

³⁹Ibid., p. 169.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

It was shown earlier in this chapter that educational and occupational aspirations of students are associated with the education and occupations of parents. Students whose parents have high education and occupations tend to have high aspirations, while lower class students have low aspirations. This assumption is not necessarily the case, especially in African societies. Aspirations of students are not necessarily determined by the education and occupations of their parents. To be sure, there are many highly successful Africans who attain high levels of education and occupation whose parents had no formal education and were therefore in low level occupations. Often highly intelligent and motivated students from humble backgrounds are awarded scholarships by government and private agencies from secondary school through graduate education. The remarkable achievements of such students serve as an encouragement for students of similar background to raise their expectations.

Peer Influence and Aspiration

It has been determined that in planning for college education, significant others, that is, parents, teachers, peers and best friends, influence to varying degrees the decisions of adolescents. Some studies show that peers have greater influence than parents on adolescents' educational aspiration, while others indicate that parents,

especially mothers, exert a greater influence on adolescents.⁴³ McDill and Coleman conducted a study to determine the effects of family background and social status of high school on college plans in the freshman and senior years of students. The data for the senior year were based on the data collected in the freshman year of the students as reported in Coleman's work, The Adolescent Society. Family background was measured by the education of the father. The quality of school referred to the socioeconomic status of the school and the social norms and values exhibited by the students, especially the elite of the schools. McDill and Coleman reanalyzed the data for six of the original ten schools involved in the Coleman study.

It was found that in the freshman year family background and status of high school were significantly related to college plans,⁴⁴ whereas in the senior year, the status of high school was more important in college plans than father's education. McDill and Coleman noted that although the education of father was important, school quality was more significant in college plans. In other words, the effects of socialization for students in schools where

⁴³See for example, J. S. Picou and T. M. Carter, "Significant Others Influence and Aspirations," Sociology of Education 49 (1976):12-22.

⁴⁴Edward L. McDill and James S. Coleman, "Family and Peer Influence on College Plans of High School Students," Sociology of Education (Winter 1965):112-126.

college attendance was stressed accounted for higher educational aspirations than in schools where there was no such stress.⁴⁵

Picou and Carter studied the mobility aspirations of Louisiana high school seniors to determine the effects of significant others on aspirations. The student's significant others were his peers, parents and teachers. Influence was categorized into "definer" and "model" influence. "Definer" meant the encouragement by peers, parents and teachers, while peer-modeling behavior indicated whether most of the friends of the students planned to attend college or not.⁴⁶ The students were divided into two groups to reflect community of residence, that is, whether they were from urban or rural communities.

Picou and Carter found that peer-modeling had more significant influence on aspiration than the encouragement of parents or teachers. They also noted that the influence of peer-modeling behavior on aspirations was greater in rural than in urban communities, whereas the opposite effect was found for parental influence, urban students had higher aspirations than rural students in terms of parental encouragement.⁴⁷ Thus for the urban students aspirations seemed

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 124.

⁴⁶Picou and Carter, "Significant Others," p. 15.

⁴⁷Ibid.

to have come from two sources of significant others influence: parental encouragement and peer modeling, whereas for the rural youth aspiration was more from peer-modeling behavior than from parental source.⁴⁸ The terms "reference group" developed by Hyman, and "frame of reference" developed by Merton and his associates have shed some light on this area of study. By "reference group" Hyman means "the group to which one compares himself with." According to Merton individuals use their perceptions of others as "a frame of reference" for subjective self-assessments, attitude formation, and behavior. These others need not exist in any primary relationships to the individual.⁴⁹

Social scientists insist that one's reference group has significant influence on a person's aspiration. For example, Kahl (1957), McClelland, et al (1953), Wilson (1959, 1960) pointed out that desire or aspiration develops in a context of social interaction. Kahl conducted a survey of Boston high school boys to assess the educational plans of the students who were exposed to different educational pressures. Twenty-four students were selected from a pool of students. These students were from low socioeconomic status background but had high I.Q.'s. While half of the twenty-four students were in college preparatory programs, the other half were not. Kahl interviewed both groups to determine the reason

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 20.

⁴⁹Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957), p. 283.

for the difference in college aspirations. Kahl found that the influence of parents was responsible.⁵⁰ Students with college plans were encouraged by the parents who were dissatisfied with their own social positions and wanted their children to attain a higher social status. In other words, these parents accepted the value system of a higher social class as a reference group and raised accordingly aspirational levels for their children.

In a related research Wilson conducted a study of eight high schools in San Francisco Bay area, the purpose of which was to determine the effect of social class context of the schools on students' college aspirations. Wilson wanted an answer to the question whether the social context of schools had effect on the educational aspirations of different social class. He asked:

Concretely, are the sons of manual workers more likely to adhere to middle-class values and have high educational aspirations if they attended a predominantly middle-class school, and conversely, are the aspirations of the sons of professionals more modest if they attend a predominantly working class school?⁵¹

The result of the study shows the answer was in the affirmative; 80 percent of the students in high socioeconomic status school, 57 percent in medium socioeconomic status

⁵⁰Kahl, "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of 'Common Man' Boys," p. 203.

⁵¹Wilson, "Residential Segregation of Social Classes and Aspiration of High School Boys," p. 837.

school and 38 percent in low socioeconomic status school had aspirations to attend college. More of this Wilson study will be reviewed shortly under school quality.

McClelland et al did a research based on achievement motivation of students. Achievement motivation is regarded as striving to attain standards of excellence. In an adaptation of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) as developed by Murray, McClelland had the students narrate stories of personal experiences that aroused images of achievement motives and success. From the stories an analysis was made of the students' levels of intelligence which were supposed to serve as indicators of achievement striving. Need for achievement was found to be associated with achievement and independence training. Independence training especially by mothers was related to motivation for excellence.⁵²

Coleman in his book, The Adolescent Society, showed the impact of the adolescent peers on attitude formation, behavior and educational performance. McDill and Coleman (1963) noted that "the values of youth which shape their aspirations develop largely as a consequence of interaction with one another."⁵³

⁵²David McClelland et al, The Achievement Motive (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1953), pp. 297-304.

⁵³Edward L. McDill and James S. Coleman, "High School Social Status, College Plans, and Interest in Academic Achievement: A Panel Analysis," American Sociological Review 28 (1963):906.

Coleman's book, The Adolescent Society, generated critical reviews from scholars who questioned his adolescent sub-culture theory. Nevertheless, it has influenced further research on the influence of peers in different areas of adolescent life. For Herriott, one of the major influences upon a person's level of aspiration is the level of his self-assessment relative to others.⁵⁴ People obtain information about themselves and others in the process of social interaction. People observe others and take cues from the behavior of those they observe, especially if the latter are significant others:

An individual will aspire to do that which he perceives others have done who are similar to himself in relevant ways. The others are his reference groups, and the basis of his perceived similarity to them constitutes dimensions of self-assessment.⁵⁵

Studies about the influence of peers on academic achievement and aspiration are many but they vary in their methodology and findings. Cooley and Lohnes attribute the often varied and contradictory findings of the studies to several methodological reasons.⁵⁶ They point out that (1) the size of the peer group used varies from one study to another. For

⁵⁴Robert E. Herriott, "Some Social Determinants of Educational Aspiration," Harvard Educational Review 33 (1966):162.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶William W. Cooley and Paul R. Lohnes, Evaluation Research in Education (New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1976), p. 166.

example Otis Duncan et al (1968) used the students' best friend, Keeves (1972) used three best friends, Hansushek (1972) applied the number of students in a given classroom as the peer group for a student in that classroom. The Coleman Study (1966) used the entire school population as the measure of peer group. Cooley and Lohnes suggest that the effect of peer group would depend on the researcher's definition of that group. (2) The cross-sectional nature of most peer-group studies presents the second methodological problem:

To find that children tend to have the same educational aspiration as their friends provides no basis for a causal inference. Are they friends because they have similar interests and abilities or did their friendship produce these similarities?⁵⁷

This problem of causal influence has not been resolved even by the most sophisticated measures. (3) The third problem noted by Cooley and Lohnes is that confusing measures have been used to characterize peer groups. The most frequently applied measures are socioeconomic status, racial and ethnic group membership. Cooley and Lohnes point out that these are only indirect measures. They suggest the use of such direct measures as sociometric devices and the interests and abilities of the group in studies of this nature.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

While the observations of Cooley and Lohnes are valid; our main concern here will be to state the findings of some of the studies rather than the methodologies used. In the study of the influence of best friends on educational and occupational aspirations, Haller and Butterworth investigated a sample of male students in a Michigan high school to test the hypotheses that educational and occupational aspirations of mutually chosen best friends should covary, that is, aspirations of students who choose each other as friends will vary according to whether they have low or high aspirations for themselves. Students who have high aspirations are likely to have friends of similar aspirations, while students with low aspirations are likely to choose as friends students of low aspirations. The overall results of the study were inconclusive, but the hypothesis was not refuted.⁵⁹ Alexander and Campbell conducted a survey of North Carolina senior high school students to determine the influence of peers on college plans. It was found that a person's plans to attend college were similar to those of his best friend and that this similarity was greater if the best friend showed similar interests for higher education.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Archibald O. Haller and G. E. Butterworth, "Peer Influences on Levels of Occupational and Educational Aspiration," Social Forces 38 (1960):295.

⁶⁰C. N. Alexander and Ernest Q. Campbell, "Peer Influences On Adolescent Educational Aspirations and Attainments," American Sociological Review 29 (1964):574.

The influence of best friend was strong if the friend realized the social and material benefits of going to college. In other words, a student and his best friend tended to have similar college plans and this similarity was stronger if both students' plans were mutually reinforced.

In a longitudinal study of a midwestern liberal arts college, Wallace found a high degree of change in graduate school aspiration among freshmen in the few months of attendance. It was found that freshmen were more likely to aspire to graduate school education the more they interacted with non-freshmen.⁶¹ Academic emulation of seniors by freshmen seemed to have been a factor on plans for higher education. Keeves used three variable indices to study the influence of peers, the father's occupational status, the expected level of educational attainment of the student, and the student's participation in mathematics and science. Keeves observed a significant influence in mathematics and science activities of three best friends on students but no significant effect of peer group was found on students' intellectual development.⁶²

Kandel and Lesser investigated the effects of parental

⁶¹W. L. Wallace, "Peer Influence and Undergraduates' Aspirations for Graduate Study," Sociology of Education 38 (1965):379.

⁶²J. P. Keeves, "Educational Environment and Student Achievement," in William W. Cooley and Paul R. Lohnes (eds.), Evaluation Research in Education (New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1976), p. 167.

and peer influence on educational plans of adolescents. The data were obtained through questionnaires from students in three high schools in eastern United States and from their mothers. The questionnaires measured the agreement or concordance on educational goals between the student and his mother and between the student and his best-school-friend.⁶³ The three schools were comprised of a large lower class urban school, a small rural school and a regional school whose students were drawn from several small neighboring communities.⁶⁴

The students and their best friends were asked to indicate the highest level of education they would like to attain. The mothers were asked to also indicate the highest level of education they would like their children to attain. Kandel and Lesser found that concordance of educational goals was significant for mother and best school friend. However, concordance with mother was higher than concordance with best friend.⁶⁵ The writers also found that girls had higher degrees of agreement with their mothers about educational goals than boys. Furthermore, they disagreed with the adolescent peer group culture theory which holds that peers exert more influence than parents in a student's educational

⁶³Denise B. Kandel and Gerald S. Lesser, "Parental and Peer Influence in Educational Plans of Adolescents," American Sociological Review 34 (1969):214.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 215.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 216.

and occupational plans. According to them, "on the issue of adolescent's future life goals, parents have a stronger influence than peers."⁶⁶

These and similar studies point to a significant fact about the life of the adolescent: at this age level when the transition to adult life and responsibility is about to take place, peers exert great influence in decisions for future educational and occupational plans. In order to retain the freindship of his peers, the adolescent has to go along with their activities and identify with their level of aspiration.

School Quality

While the effects of socioeconomic status of students are strongly associated with aspirations, the socioeconomic status of the high school which students attend has also been the interest of investigation in terms of the differential aspirations of students. Achievement of students is reflected in the quality of the school and the composition of the student body. Schools differ in institutional characteristics such as curriculum, facilities, quality of teachers and instructional methods. Boyle (1966) has shown that schools differ in the standard of expectations to which students are held by adults in the school and the community, and in the

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 222.

norms and values which the students themselves reinforce.⁶⁷ Teachers have different expectations of students and tend to treat them differently. Teachers have higher expectations of middle-class students than students from the lower class.

Most school effects research agrees that student's background characteristics and school context variables account for a large portion of the variation in school outputs. In other words, the background characteristics of students and school context play a greater part in determining educational outcomes than do expenditures and programs. The Coleman study showed that while schools were on the average equal in terms of facilities, the composition of the student body explained more of the difference in achievement between white and black students.⁶⁸

McDill et al developed an accurate measure to explain the relationship that might exist between high school type and aspiration. McDill and his associates developed a questionnaire to measure six climate variables of high school: Academic Evaluation, Student Perception of Intellectualism-Estheticism, Cohesiveness and Egalitarian Estheticism, Scientism, Humanistic Excellence, and Academically

⁶⁷Richard P. Boyle, "The Effects of the High School on Student's Aspirations," American Journal of Sociology 71 (1966):636.

⁶⁸James S. Coleman et al, Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 302.

Oriented Student Status System.⁶⁹ The impact of these six variables was tested on mathematics achievement and college plans of students, while controlling for the education of fathers, other variables were also controlled. All the variables were statistically significant, with academic emulation showing the strongest correlation.⁷⁰

In another study of school climate, Mitchell found that low status schools tended to be characterized by low achievement and that low achievement was related to college aspirations.⁷¹ In his survey of thirteen high schools in the San Francisco Bay area, Wilson showed that 93 percent of children of professionals who attended high socioeconomic status context schools had college plans, whereas 64 percent of students of professionals who attended low socioeconomic status context schools had college plans. On the other hand, 33 percent of sons of manual workers who attended low socioeconomic status context schools planned to go to college, while 59 percent of students of similar background enrolled in high socioeconomic status context schools planned to attend college.⁷²

⁶⁹Edward L. McDill et al, "Educational Climates of High Schools: Their Effects and Sources," American Journal of Sociology 74 (1969):569.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹James V. Mitchell, "Dimensionality and Differences in the Environmental Press of High Schools," American Educational Research Journal 5 (1968):519.

⁷²Wilson, "Residential Segregation of Social Classes," p. 839.

Wilson noted that ". . . the perception of the opportunity for upward mobility by lower-strata youth is facilitated by the economic and occupational heterogeneity of the community."⁷³

Following the assumption that neighborhood socioeconomic status has great effect on educational aspiration, Sewell and Armer conducted a survey of the educational goals of public high school seniors in Milwaukee metropolitan area. The socioeconomic status of neighborhoods, that is, school enrollment districts was measured by the number of males fourteen years and older who lived in the area and were employed in white collar occupations.⁷⁴ The neighborhood status for each student enrolled in a given school was measured by the percentage of white collar workers in the area. The neighborhoods were divided into three categories of high, medium, and low white collar. College plans were based on the statements of senior students as to whether or not they had definite plans to attend a degree-awarding college or university after graduating from high school. Sex, intelligence and the socioeconomic status of the students were controlled for socioeconomic status of neighborhoods on college plans.

⁷³Ibid., p. 843.

⁷⁴William H. Sewell and J. Michael Armer, "Neighborhood Context and College Plans," American Sociological Review 31 (April 1966):162.

Sewell and Armer noted that the neighborhood where the student lived had significant influence on his educational plans as well as his sex, intelligence and the socioeconomic status of the family.⁷⁵ Students of high socioeconomic status or high intelligence were three times more likely to plan for college than students of low socioeconomic status or low intelligence.⁷⁶ When intelligence was controlled, the relationship between neighborhood and college plans for boys was weak. For girls, however, the difference between neighborhood and college plans was almost eliminated between low and middle socioeconomic status students. There was a great difference observed in college plans between middle and low status neighborhoods for girls when intelligence was controlled. Accordingly, Sewell and Armer concluded that the results "suggest that neighborhood context is associated more with the educational aspirations for girls than for boys and is strongest for girls in high socioeconomic status families."⁷⁷ Sewell and Armer advanced no reasons for the findings other than to speculate that:

High status parents who place high value on college education for their daughters are likely to insist on living in high status neighborhoods while their daughters can attend superior high schools, while those

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 163.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 166.

high status parents who do not emphasize college education for their daughters are more likely to remain in low status neighborhoods.⁷⁸

Although the explanation of Sewell and Armer is speculative, one cannot but cast some doubts on the soundness of this speculation. If the pattern of residential segregation in most metropolitan areas of the United States is an index of social stratification and mobility, it must be observed that most parents, unless in the cases of those who are downwardly mobile, tend to choose residence in keeping with their social status and life styles. The education of their children is to some extent implicit in the choice of residence. Hence one would expect high status parents to live in high socioeconomic status neighborhoods regardless of their educational aspirations for their children.

In urban and large school settings the dominant groups tend to influence the values and attitudes of the minority groups. It has been shown that in the school environment, lower class students tend to choose friends from higher socioeconomic status rather than the upper-class students befriending lower-class students. Thus one would suspect that aspiration to high social status would tend to be strong for lower class students who attend upper and middle class schools because the exposure of low socioeconomic status students to the style of life of their better endowed school mates would

⁷⁸Ibid.

likely serve as incentives to strive to gain access to similar social position through education.

Sex and Aspiration

The effects of sex difference on aspiration have been another focus of study. Studies show that boys tend to have higher educational ambitions than girls. It was found that even when girls achieve better grades than boys, boys still tend to display greater confidence than girls in their ability for college work and are more likely than girls to make plans for a college education.⁷⁹ Sewell and Shah noted that although socioeconomic status of students was related to college plans, for girls socioeconomic status had a stronger relationship to their plans to attend college, whereas for boys intelligence was more significant.⁸⁰ In another study by these two writers entitled "Social Class, Parental Encouragement and Educational Aspirations," it was observed that although girls tended to receive greater encouragement from parents to attend college than their male counterparts, boys showed higher educational aspiration than girls. According to Sewell and Shah "the effects of

⁷⁹Sarane S. Boocock, An Introduction to the Sociology of Learning (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), p. 94.

⁸⁰William H. Sewell and Vimal P. Shah, "Socioeconomic Status, Intelligence, and the Attainment of Higher Education," Sociology of Education 40 (Winter 1967):13.

sex-role expectations are such that girls' educational aspirations are generally lower than those of boys and are somewhat more sensitive to socioeconomic background than to ability or parental encouragement."⁸¹ Differential sex-role expectations for boys and girls especially in the final years of high school tend to influence future educational plans. Boys at this stage tend to have long range plans for future adult roles as bread-winners and look upon education as an important means of fulfilling these roles. Girls on the other hand tend to have short range plans, (especially if they are from low socioeconomic backgrounds) which involve marriage and raising a family. One would expect changing trends in the reported sex differences in aspirations as the result of the growing militancy of women for equal rights with men. With the increasing economic independence of working women and their rising representation in the labor force, one would expect the aspirations of women to rise. There is an evidence of this as many women now return to school to upgrade their education and occupational opportunities.

In summary, this chapter has reviewed several factors that influence educational plans and aspirations of students.

⁸¹William H. Sewell and Vimal P. Shah, "Social Class, Parental Encouragement, and Educational Aspirations," American Journal of Sociology 73 (March 1968):564.

Prominent among these factors are the socioeconomic status of the students' families, sex of students, their intelligence, residential patterns and the influence of significant others. Sewell, who has been one of the pioneers in the area of educational and occupational aspirations, arguing for equality of educational opportunities at higher educational levels, noted that:

with occupational selection, training, and certification carried out mainly through the schools, and particularly in post-secondary institutions, life chances will not be equal until opportunities for advanced education are equal.⁸²

Sewell's observation was meant to highlight those factors that have influence on inequality of educational and occupational opportunities. These factors fit the framework that has been considered in this chapter. Sewell reviewed the body of literature in this area of aspirations done by himself and other colleagues. He noted that (1) socioeconomic status of parents as measured by income, education and occupation singly or combined exerts great influence, and makes significant difference in educational opportunities among various socioeconomic status levels and between the sexes.⁸³ High socioeconomic status students have more than twice as much chance as low status students of continuing in the same kind of post-secondary school education. (2) The educational

⁸²William H. Sewell, "Inequality of Opportunity for Higher Education," American Sociological Review 36 (October 1971):794.

⁸³Ibid.

chances of males are on the average uniformly higher than those of girls at every socioeconomic status level.⁸⁴ It was mentioned earlier in this chapter that significant others influence to a varying degree educational and occupational plans of students. Kandel and Lesser found the influence of parents more important than the influence of peers in college plans. Sewell confirms this finding when he observes:

. . . the influence of parents on educational and occupational aspirations and ultimately on attainment of higher education is about twice that of teachers, and the influence of friends only slightly less than that of parents . . . women are most seriously disadvantaged relative to men in levels of teachers' and parents' encouragement and in their own levels of educational aspirations.⁸⁵

Despite female's low level of educational aspiration, it has been noted that girls enjoy some advantage over their male counterparts in academic achievement in high school, girls also seem to have a slightly higher perception of their peers' plans and a somewhat higher occupational aspirations.⁸⁶ But since high occupation is associated with high education, the observation that girls have low educational aspirations but have somewhat high occupational ambitions is problematic. Hence this present study will examine this problem closely.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 795.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 800.

⁸⁶Ibid.

In terms of the cultural difference between Western and African societies, it was mentioned earlier that African societies lack certain structural elements of Western societies. Social class structures in African societies are still "fluid" as social class differences are not well defined. Thus one suspects that educational aspirations will not exhibit the same type of differential patterns as found in Western societies. Moreover, with the encouragement given to girls to attend college in recent years by the Nigerian government, it would be expected that aspirations of girls will compare favorably with those of boys. These are the results that one would be expected to find when this study treats chapter four which deals with the analysis of data. The methodology for the study will now be treated.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Collection of Data

The data for this study were collected from questionnaires administered to the students between July and September 1978. The students were randomly selected from a pool of final year students from six secondary schools in Benin City, Nigeria. The six schools from which the sample population was drawn were selected to ensure a fairly good representation of the variety of secondary schools in Benin City. The schools were selected in terms of social prestige ranking, the years they were founded and the agencies under which they operated prior to the Bendel State government take-over of all primary and post-primary schools in 1973. In terms of social prestige of the schools, three could be regarded as high in ranking, two as medium, and one as low ranking. Social prestige ranking of the schools was based on three criteria: the year the schools were founded, the agencies under which they operated in the past, and academic reputation. Those schools that were older, that is, established earlier than the rest, have greater public recognition and have trained prominent Nigerians. Such schools are high in public esteem and because of this, the schools were ranked high in prestige in this study. Medium ranked schools were not as

old as the first group. These schools, however, attract students from high socioeconomic status and the lower class, especially high socioeconomic status students who are unable to gain admission to more prestigious schools. Lower ranked schools were established more recently and as such have not been well-known.

The second criterion of the ranking of the schools was the agencies that administered the schools prior to 1973 when all schools came under the jurisdiction of the state government. The order of prestige ranking of the agencies was: the government, Catholic Mission, Protestant denominations, local government and private group agencies. Schools run by the government and the Catholic Church were high ranking because they offered high quality educational programs as evidenced by the high academic performance of their students. Medium ranked schools were those operated by different protestant churches and local government agencies. The low ranked schools were those administered by private citizens groups. These last schools were known for poor quality education.

The third criterion of ranking was the academic achievement records of the schools. The high ranked schools have long standing academic reputations, medium ranked schools have an average academic record, while the low ranked schools are so young that they have not yet established a pattern of academic standards.

When the writer arrived in Nigeria in July 1978 to conduct the survey, schools had closed for the summer vacation so that the schools that were willing to participate in the study could not be contacted. While waiting for the schools to reopen in September, the Ministry of Education, Benin City was contacted and its assistance was requested. The educational directory which contained the list of all primary and post-primary schools in the state was obtained from the Ministry. From this directory the schools were selected. In order to obtain the consent of school authorities to administer questionnaires to the students, the writer was informed by an official of the Ministry of Education that permission was required from the Military Administrator's Office. There was a standing rule that any kind of research involving students throughout the state must receive the approval of the Permanent Secretary to the Military Administrator. A formal letter of request to be allowed to conduct the study was made. The permission was duly granted and the principals of the participating schools were written and advised to cooperate in the study. (See Appendix for letters of correspondence.)

When the schools opened in early September, the plan was to mail the questionnaires with the accompanying letters of introduction to the principals of the schools. Time was an important factor that changed this plan. The writer was informed that it would take approximately two weeks for

students to settle down to normal school routine and be available to take part in the survey. Moreover, because of the slow condition of mail delivery in the country, it was decided that the questionnaires be delivered by hand to the schools to save time.

The six schools were visited personally by the writer in September 1978. After an interview with each of the principals of the schools, a sampling procedure was adopted by which a random selection of the students was made. Because of the number of students in the senior classes, it was not possible to include every student in the study. In each school a list of the enrollment for the senior class was obtained. Out of the lists students were selected in this way: for small classes of seniors where enrollment was sixty or below, the odd numbers were selected, that is, one out of every two students. In large classes of over sixty students, one out of every three numbers on the list was selected. The students were given prepared questionnaires to complete. Each principal appointed a teacher to supervise the completion of the questionnaires. The writer, however, was on hand to answer and clarify questions that were asked by the students while completing the questionnaires. Two hundred questionnaires were given out. Ten students did not return their questionnaires, seven questionnaires were incomplete and therefore deemed unusable for the study. The total number

of completed questionnaires returned was 183, which represented 91.5 percent of the respondents.

TABLE 1
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS

Characteristics	Percentage N=183
Sex	
Male	54.1
Female	45.9
Age	
14 years or under--15 years	47.5
16--17 years	45.3
18 years or over	7.2
Years in School	
11-12 years	94.0
13-14 years	4.4
15 years or more	1.6
Residence (where parents live)	
In City	85.8
In Town	9.8
In Village	4.4
Number of Siblings (Brothers and Sisters)	
No Siblings	2.2
One-Two Siblings	7.1
More Than Two Siblings	90.7
Position in the Family	
First Child	26.2
Second Child	20.2
Third Child	17.5
Last Child	11.0
Other (unspecified)	25.1
Present School of Students	
Boys School: boys	45.9
Girls School: girls	37.7
Coeducational: boys	8.2
Coeducational: girls	8.2
Father's Education	
No Education	8.3
Primary School	8.9
Secondary/Teacher Training/H.S.C.	22.8
N.C.E./University	50.0
Other (Unspecified)	10.0

Characteristics	Percentage N=183
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Mother's Education	
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No Education	17.0
Primary School	13.7
Secondary/Teacher Training/H.S.C.	39.0
N.C.E./University	20.3
Other (unspecified)	10.0

Father's Occupation	
---------------------	--

Managerial/Professional	45.1
Skilled, semi-skilled, manual	54.9

Mother's Occupation	
---------------------	--

Managerial/Professional	9.6
Skilled, Semi-skilled, Manual	90.4

Sex

In terms of sex of students, the above table shows that 54 percent of the students were boys and 46 percent were girls. This sex ratio can be considered as a fairly good representation of the student population in Benin City. When this study was conducted, there were 7,306 boys and 4,540 girls enrolled in secondary schools in Benin City, this figure shows a ratio of 62 percent boys to 38 percent girls in secondary schools in Benin City.

Age

Forty-eight percent of the students were fifteen years or under, 45 percent were between the ages of sixteen and seventeen, while 7 percent were eighteen or older. Normally, most high school seniors fall within the age of seventeen since the official age for high school freshmen is twelve. From the table, students younger than seventeen

were over-represented as opposed to students eighteen years or older.

Residence

Eighty-six percent of the students came from urban backgrounds, 10 percent were from towns and a mere 4 percent were from villages. The sample was skewed in favor of urban students. This sample is somewhat unique since the Nigerian population is still predominantly rural. However, since Benin City is a metropolitan area catering to different populations of workers, this sample was not surprising.

Number of Siblings

A little over 90 percent (90.7 percent) of the students had more than two siblings. This sample represents large family patterns. Although no national figure for average family was available, one can safely assume that judging from an average Nigerian's love for a large family, the present sample seemed to reflect the characteristic of the general population. Seven percent of the students had one sibling, while 2.2 percent had no siblings.

Father's Education

Fifty percent of the students had fathers with university degrees or National Certificate of Education. Again one can say that this figure was remarkably high. No national or state figures on university educated persons were available. However, if one takes into consideration that three out of ten primary school graduates go to secondary

school,¹ the present sample was very high indeed. On the national level, 13 percent of 15-19 age group were in secondary schools.² Eight percent of the fathers of students had no formal education. This figure should be considered low nationally if one takes into account that 17 percent of 5-14 age group, that is, children of elementary school age, were in schools in 1973.³

Mother's Education

Twenty percent of the mothers of the students had university education or had the National Certificate of Education. Although this figure appeared low compared with that of the fathers of students, it could be considered high by national standard. This study did not have relevant data about the ratio of women to men in higher education, studies conducted earlier by others gave a picture of the under-representation of women in university education. Beckett and O'Connell noted that:

In terms of sex, male students are very greatly over-represented; only about 12 percent of the A.B.U. [Ahmadu Bello University] and 17 percent

¹Mid-western State of Nigeria, Midwestern State Programme 1975-80 of the Third National Development Plan 1975-80 Ministry of Economic Development, Benin City (Benin City: Mid-West Mass Communication Corporation, May 1975), p. 54.

²Africa Economic Growth Trends. Statistics and Report Division: Office of Financial Management Bureau for Program and Management Services (Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, August 1973), p. 12.

³Ibid.

of the Nsukka Sample were women. Van den Berghe and Nuttney show that over the period 1948-1966 female students accounted for 11 percent of all students at Ibadan. . . . There was a gradual increase at Ibadan from less than five percent in the early 1950's to slightly more than 20 percent in 1966, but enrollment statistics for 1973-74 at Ibadan indicate the proportion of women has dropped; in that year only a⁴ little under 17 percent of the students were female.

Thirty-nine percent of the mothers had secondary school education. This figure was higher than that of the fathers. The reason for this appeared to be that a high proportion of the mothers were teachers, having attended teacher training institutions. Teaching is a career where women are highly represented in Nigeria. Seventeen percent of the mothers had no formal education. No current data on the national average of illiterate adult women were available; however, one suspects that the figure given here about the mothers in this sample should be considered low, nationally.

Father's Occupation

Forty-five percent of the fathers of students were in professional and managerial occupations, 55 percent were in skilled, semi-skilled and manual occupations. This percentage of fathers in professional and managerial occupations was very high compared with the national average of 2.3 percent computed for adults in similar occupations. However, the source from where the data were obtained cautioned that the figures are unreliable, ". . . since only 639 establishments reported and the figures did not include working

⁴Beckett and O'Connell, Education and Power in Nigeria, p. 25.

proprietors, unpaid apprentices and unpaid family workers."⁵
The figure in this sample again was a reflection on the education of the fathers.

Mother's Occupation

Ten percent of the mothers were in professional and managerial occupations, while 90 percent were in skilled, semi-skilled and manual occupations. The low percentage of mothers in professional and managerial category seemed to reflect the under-representation of women in higher education and consequently in high positions in the Nigerian occupational structure.

Analysis of the Data

For the analysis of the data a simple level of analysis and interpretation was employed. The main instruments of analysis are two and three variable cross-tabulation and the use of chi-square statistics to determine the effects of the independent variables on aspirations. The variables of age, sex, socioeconomic status, residence of parents, family size, academic achievement, peer influence, and school quality served as the independent variables. The dependent variables were educational and occupational aspirations.

⁵Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos, Nigeria, Digest of Statistics Vol. 21, No. 4 (October 1969), p. 7.

Hypotheses to be Tested

1. Age. Younger students will have higher educational and occupational aspirations than older students.
2. Sex. Male students will have higher educational and occupational aspirations than female students.
3. Father's Education. Students whose fathers have higher educational attainment will have higher educational aspirations than students whose fathers have low educational attainment.
4. Father's Occupation. Students whose fathers have high occupations will have higher occupational aspirations than students with fathers in low occupations.
5. Mother's Education. Students whose mothers have high educational attainment will have higher educational aspirations than students whose mothers have low education.
6. Mother's Occupation. Students of high maternal occupations will have high occupational aspirations while students whose mothers have low occupations will have low occupational aspirations.
7. Residence. Students who have parents living in cities will have higher educational and occupational aspirations than students whose parents live in towns and villages.
8. Family Size. Students who have fewer siblings will have higher educational and occupational aspirations than students with many siblings.

9. Best Friend (Peer). The educational and occupational aspirations of best friends will be directly related to the student's educational and occupational aspirations.

10. Academic Achievement. Student's academic achievement will be related to educational and occupational aspirations.

11. School Quality. The quality of school attended by students will be related to educational and occupational aspirations.

Operationalization of Constructs

Age of Students. Secondary school age in Nigeria ranges from twelve to eighteen years. By the time students begin secondary school some students are several years older than the normal age of twelve, while some are also younger than that age. Some schools, especially the most prestigious ones in screening prospective students insist not only on high scholastic achievements but tend to prefer younger students. Thus students who are rejected in one school on account of age seek admission in other schools where age does not constitute a great obstacle for admission.

It has been shown that students from high socioeconomic status background tend to be younger than students from low socioeconomic background, and that the older the student the less chances he has of entering a prestigious secondary school. This factor consequently affects the student's

future educational plans.⁶ Remi Clignet has pointed out that "although a majority of youngsters are able to enter post-primary structures, students must be both young and bright to enjoy the most rewarding educational fate-- especially to join a lycee."⁷ It is hypothesized that the younger a student the higher are his chances of going on to higher education. Since students enter secondary schools at the age of twelve and have to spend five years to complete their education, it is proposed that a student who was seventeen years or younger would be considered "young," any student above seventeen would be regarded as "old."

Sex of Students. Sex of students was dichotomized into male and female to assist in determining if sex differences would be related to aspirations.

Socioeconomic Status. Socioeconomic status of students was measured by the educational levels attained by parents and also by parents' occupations. In industrialized societies a person's occupation is highly related to his level of education. Studies on social stratification and aspiration have used education and occupation as indices of

⁶See for example Paul Beckett and James O'Connell, Education and Power in Nigeria (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1977), pp. 24-25 and Remi Clignet, Liberty and Equality in the Educational Process (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), p. 232.

⁷Clignet, Liberty and Equality in the Educational Process, p. 232.

socioeconomic status.⁸ Persons who have attained high education tend to have high occupation and income, while low educated persons tend to have low skilled jobs and low income. Nigerian society adopts the same pattern of measuring socioeconomic status as the industrialized societies. In Nigeria, the higher one's education, the better his occupation and income. This point has been mentioned earlier in this study. Nigerians who have a university education are in high occupations and earn incomes far in excess of the incomes of persons who have no university education. Thus university education puts a person in an upper-middle class category in Nigeria. Holders of National Certificates of Education are regarded as professional but non-graduate teachers. These individuals attain three years of professional preparation beyond high school to teach in secondary schools and teacher training colleges. The incomes of these teachers compare favorably with those of university graduates. Hence this study regards those persons who have successfully attained university education or the National Certificate of Education as high in educational attainment.

Higher School Certificate, that is, a two year program beyond high school, prepares students for direct entry to

⁸Ronald M. Pavalko and David R. Bishop, "Socioeconomic Status and College Plans: A Study of Canadian High School Students," Sociology of Education 39 (Summer 1966):293. See also the suggestion of Joseph A. Kahl and James A. Davis, "A Comparison of Indexes of Socio-Economic Status," American Sociological Review 20 (June 1955):321.

the University. Students who successfully complete this program but are unable to go for higher education are employed in the public and private sectors in medium level occupations such as high school teachers and executive officers. Secondary school education prepares a person for medium level jobs in the civil service and private sectors of the labor force. On completion of high school, students are employed as primary school teachers and clerical officers in government and private sectors. Persons who have primary school education have very low skills. They are employed in semi-skilled jobs such as messengers, unskilled laborers, security guards. It is difficult at this point in Nigeria for persons without formal education to find jobs. Most persons in this category are usually self-employed farmers and farm hands. This study ranks persons with primary school education or no formal education as low in education and semi-skilled and unskilled and manual workers in the labor force.

Academic Achievement. The writer had no access to the academic records of students. In order to obtain information on students' academic standing, questions were developed which were meant to serve as indicators of students' academic standing. The first indicator was the final grade the students obtained in the Primary School Leaving Certificate examination. The grades were broken down into A for excellent, B for ordinary pass and F for fail, as is the standard grading system in Nigeria. Secondly, each student answered the

question whether he or she has repeated any grade in secondary school. Those who answered "yes" were asked to identify the classes repeated. It was believed that repeating a class could be an indication of poor academic achievement. Thirdly, students were asked, considering their present academic performance, to indicate the grades they hoped to make at the School Certificate examination which all senior students take to graduate from high school. The grades were broken down into five categories according to the grading system of the West African Examinations Council, the body that conducts the examinations: Grade I for excellent, Grade II for good, Grade III for Pass, General Certificate of Education (G. C. E.) for weak pass and F for fail.

Peer Influence. The best friend of the student served as his peer. Each student was asked to identify who his/her best friend was, his/her class (grade level) in school and the best friend's parents educational levels and occupations. Furthermore, each student was also asked what the educational and occupational aspirations of the best friend were. These questions were meant to shed some light on similarity or difference in aspirations between a given student and his best friend. Background similarity or difference of student and his best friend measured by the education and occupation of parents will be compared.

School Quality. The schools under study were selected

on account of different characteristics which they exhibit. The year the schools were founded was one such characteristic. Some schools are older than others and as such have better established academic traditions than the younger schools. Another factor considered was the agencies under which the schools were initially established. Before the 1973 government take-over of all schools in Bendel State, there were various school agencies: the government, the Roman Catholic Church, different Protestant churches, local government agencies and private citizens. This study traced back the previous agencies of these schools because in the past they offered varying quality of education to students. Ranked in order of social prestige and the quality of their programs were the government schools, the Roman Catholic Schools, protestant schools, local government schools and private schools operated by individual citizens and groups. Even though all schools are now under the aegis of the government, the schools still retain the prestige and quality of the programs they had in the past. Thus admission to more prestigious schools is very competitive. In fact, about the top ten percent of students who pass the Common Entrance examination to secondary school are offered places in these schools. Students who fail to gain admission to prestigious schools, especially because of low scores, settle for less prestigious schools. Although all secondary schools in Nigeria

have the same programs and prepare students for the same external examinations for graduation from high school, the quality of the teaching staff and facilities vary from school to school. Most schools in urban areas have better qualified and experienced staff than some schools in rural areas. Some teachers prefer to teach in urban centers and resent being sent to rural areas where amenities and extra-curricular activities are minimal. Young teachers dislike the monotony of rural life, and for the ambitious teachers, urban centers offer opportunities for social and economic contacts they need to move ahead. Government fringe benefits and allowance aimed at encouraging teachers to work in rural areas have not been very successful. There is a great turnover of the teaching staff in rural schools every year. Although the schools under study are all in the city, we suspect that some are better staffed and equipped than others, and this difference will affect the quality of the students.

Family Size. Family size refers to the number of children in the family. The average Nigerian family is large, that is, with more than two children. There is yet no standard measurement of family size accepted in Nigeria because the traditional value attached to having many children still persists along with the modern value of limiting family size. However, the importance of having few children cannot now be overlooked since parents realize

the necessity of giving their children the best education. With the increasing cost of education one would suspect that the fewer the children the better the chances of their obtaining a good education. Moreover, if birth order in a large family is taken into consideration, it would appear that the first child has a better chance than the other siblings in getting higher education. It is not uncommon in Nigeria for parents to educate the first child on the understanding that he or she would also help to train the other children.

Residence. Residence is defined as the geographical location where the parents of the students live. Residence falls into three categories: village, town and city. The students were asked to give the names of the places where the parents live. Most of the places named were known to the writer, other places not familiar were checked out on the map of Nigeria. Some factors were taken into consideration in categorizing the places into village, town and city. One main factor was the size of the population. Urbanologists have consistently mentioned population as a distinguishing factor between urban and rural areas. Mabogunje has noted that "the proportion of the population increases with the size of the city."⁹ Quinn has also observed that

⁹Akin L. Mabogunje, Urbanization in Nigeria (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1968), p. 149.

"the size of the population distinguishes cities from rural communities."¹⁰

In terms of population, some places regarded as urban areas in Nigeria are less than 50,000. Fifty thousand, though arbitrary, has been suggested here as the base population of a city. For practical purposes in this study, a place was ranked as a city if it was up to 20,000 in population, a place with 10,000 inhabitants was regarded as a town, while other areas with less than 10,000 inhabitants were ranked as villages. The population of the places named by the students was checked from the Nigerian census data of 1963. The data are the ones in use since the 1973 census was not accepted by the Nigerian government.

Another factor considered in distinguishing village, town and city was the level of diversification of occupation. Writers have noted that urban areas tend to have high levels of diversity of occupation in contrast to low levels of diversification of labor in rural areas. According to Quinn, "the population size of urban as contrasted with rural communities depends, in part, on different space requirements for non-agricultural and agricultural occupations."¹¹ Mabogunje made the same observation: "the true urban centers are those where people are employed largely

¹⁰James A. Quinn, Urban Sociology (New York: American Book Company, 1955), p. 18.

¹¹Ibid.

in non-agricultural activities."¹²

Furthermore, places were categorized according to the nature of social services and amenities available to them. Social services such as hospitals, electricity, pipe-borne water, fire services, good highways were considered.¹³ These services were available to political and administrative areas during the colonial government. These areas drew large populations from rural areas and later assumed urban status.

It is hypothesized that students who live in urban areas with parents are more likely to be exposed to a variety of opportunities for future career and educational goals than their counterparts in rural areas. Thus we would expect students who live in urban areas to have higher aspirations than students who come from rural backgrounds. Since an urban area usually serves the function as a center of information, as a source of social and economic contacts and activities for various groups, it is likely to be vital in terms of educational and occupational information and guidance for students. Moreover, students in urban centers have more access to industries for work study programs than students in rural areas. But again because the students in our study attended urban schools, it is suspected that residence of parents of students will have

¹²Wabogunje, Urbanization in Nigeria, p. 149.

¹³Ibid., p. 114.

an effect. Students from rural areas are less likely to have good contact in the city as they usually return to the rural areas when schools are not in session, whereas students whose parents live in the urban areas have unbroken chain of contact with educational and employment institutions.

Measure of Aspirations

The dependent variables for the study were educational and occupational aspirations. The level of educational aspiration was determined by whether the student aspired to university education or below it. Thus a student who planned to have a university education or more than that ten years from now would be regarded as having high educational aspiration. A student who aspired to less than university education for the same time span would be considered as low in aspiration.

Occupational aspiration measures were developed from the answers of the students as to what occupations they would like to be in ten years from now. We assumed that barring financial and other obstacles, an above-average student would have attained his university degree and settled down to a permanent job ten years after high school. The responses to this question about occupation were assigned actual or interpolated Treiman's occupational

prestige values.¹⁴ Students who aspired to occupation equal to or higher than high school teacher were considered as having high occupational aspiration; those students who chose occupations lower than high school teaching were considered low in occupational aspiration.

Since education is a good index of a person's occupational status, the study for convenience, broke down occupational status into three categories, namely:

(1) Upper-middle class category--one who has college education and above that, especially one who is a professional for example a doctor, a lawyer, top level civil servant, and a business executive in any large corporation.

(2) Middle-class category--one who has a college degree but in a teaching and/or administrative position, one with Higher School Certificate and/or high school certificate in government or private sector, medium level businessman, nurse and related para-professional.

(3) Working-class category--one with grade school education or some years of grade school or no formal education. Under this category would be a skilled or semi-skilled worker in public and private sector, for example, foreman, messenger, farmers, fishermen, etc.

¹⁴Donald J. Treiman, Occupational Prestige in Comparative Perspectives (New York: Academic Press, 1977).

An effort was made to stay as close as possible to the standard measures of occupational prestige in Western societies, while borrowing from measures which have been developed for Nigerian and Ghanaian societies. Several sources have provided occupational prestige rankings for Western and non-Western societies. The most recent source is Treiman's Occupational Prestige in Comparative Perspectives which dealt with perceived prestige rankings and ratings in Western and non-Western cultures. Treiman suggested that "since the countries for which prestige data are available are reasonably representative of the world's nations, the conclusions of this analysis can be viewed as a valid description of the world pattern-- provided of course that the quality of the data can be shown to be adequate."¹⁵ The occupational prestige scale developed by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in the 1940's has been a useful source of reference.¹⁶ However, writers who have conducted studies of occupational prestige in Africa have observed high correlations of occupational prestige ranking in non-industrial and modern industrial societies. Armer, for instance, studied the perceived prestige of occupations among teenage boys in

¹⁵Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁶National Opinion Research Center, "Jobs and Occupations: A Popular Evaluation," Opinion News 9(September 1947):3-13.

Kano, Nigeria. Armer noted that the respondents had high prestige scores which were in agreement with prestige rating or NORC.¹⁷ In emphasizing this similarity in prestige rating Armer observed:

Occupational prestige evaluations of Kano sub-samples differing in educational status and subjective modernity are found to correlate highly with each other and with NORC evaluations. This was found despite the tradition-oriented character of Hausa society and the lack of close comparability in occupational titles. The evidence suggests that previously reported high correlations between industrial society prestige structures and prestige evaluations of samples in traditional non-industrial societies cannot be attributed to sampling bias favoring students or "Westernized" segments of the population. These findings further weaken the claim that a distinctive and uniform occupational prestige structure is associated with the industrial system or modernization in general.¹⁸

Hodge et al have also noted that a common occupational prestige ranking obtains in the same degree in different societies whether they are industrialized or non-industrialized.¹⁹ In another African study, Foster observed the marked similarity in ranking of occupations by Ghanaian students and occupational prestige ranking in

¹⁷J. Michael Armer, "Intersociety and Intrasociety Correlations of Occupational Prestige," American Journal of Sociology 74(July 1968):35.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Robert W. Hodge, Donald J. Treiman, and Peter H. Rossi, "A Comparative Study of Occupational Prestige," Class, Status and Power, 2nd ed., Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.) (New York: Free Press, 1966), pp. 309-321.

Western societies.²⁰ However, there is a great similarity in prestige ranking in both societies and this would make possible a meaningful analysis and interpretation of the data which follow in the next section.

²⁰ Philip Foster, Education and Social Change in Ghana (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 272-273.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The major purpose of this study was to determine whether there were significant relationships between certain social characteristics of students and educational and occupational aspirations. Social characteristics were determined through demographic data compiled on the students. Educational and occupational aspirations were measured through the answers of the students about levels of education and occupations they would like to have attained ten years from now, that is, after graduating from high school. The levels of education and occupational aspirations were coded Educational Aspiration ONE and Occupational Aspiration ONE, the purpose of which was to distinguish between ideal and realistic aspirations. For ideal expectations, the students were asked, barring any problem whatever, to state what educational and occupational levels they would like to have attained ten years from now. Another level of occupation was coded Occupational Aspiration TWO to determine realistically what the students' aspirations were. In other words, the respondents were asked: "Assuming you are unable to go beyond your present level of education, what occupations would you like to enter after high school?"

Occupations listed in the variable Occupational Aspiration ONE comprised of high level professional, managerial and civil service jobs which university graduates normally hold; and medium-level occupations such as teaching in secondary and primary school, civil service jobs of executive and administrative grades, and clerical positions in the public and private sectors of the work force. These latter positions are usually held by high school graduates with and without years of experience. However, some teachers and administrative personnel in secondary schools are normally university trained.

It was expected that if there were no obstacles, a student who works hard should be able to attain a university degree ten years after high school and settle down to a permanent job. Occupational Aspiration TWO listed jobs which high school graduates usually get, such as clerical office jobs, primary school teaching, secondary school teaching for some brilliant students, nursing and sales in private business enterprises.

Important variables reflecting students' backgrounds were tested to determine their relationships with educational and occupational aspirations. The variables were mostly demographic. The hypotheses, as indicated in the last chapter, were tested by the use of two variable cross-tabulations. The presentation of the tables and results now follows.

Educational Aspiration

Sex: It was hypothesized that there will be a relationship between sex of students and educational plans; that is, that boys will have higher educational aspiration than girls. There was no significant difference in educational aspiration between boys and girls in the study ($X^2=4.04$, $df=4$, $P=NS$). While 53.5 percent of the boys aspired to university education, 43 percent of the girls had similar educational plans. However, 53.6 percent of the girls desired post-graduate education, whereas 45.5 percent of the boys had ambition for the same level of education. The number of boys and girls who said they wanted less than university education was small, although more girls than boys were in this category, that is, 3.6 percent and one percent, respectively.

This similarity in aspiration between boys and girls in the sample, though not expected, was not surprising. One can say, judging from this result, that ideally both boys and girls have almost equal aspirations for higher education. In reality the picture might be different. Studies have shown that girls are under-represented in higher education in Nigeria.¹ One suspects that a growing interest in higher education by girls can be attributed to

¹Beckett and O'Connell, Education and Power in Nigeria, p. 25.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION OF RESPONDENTS BY SEX

Educational Aspiration	Sex of Respondents		Total
	Male	Female	
Post-graduate education	45.5(45)	53.6(45)	49.2(90)
University	53.5(53)	42.8(36)	48.6(89)
HSC	1.0(1)	1.2(1)	1.2(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	1.2(1)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	1.2(1)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(99)	100.0(84)	100.0(183)
	$X^2=4.04$, $df=4$, $P=NS$, $C=0.15$		

the encouragement given to female education in recent years by different state governments of Nigeria and to the growing importance many parents now attach to the education of their children regardless of sex. In the past, parents tended to give preference to the education of their male children to that of their daughters. Imoagene has noted a positive trend in which parents, especially professionals, want nothing less than university education for their sons and daughters.² Later in the analysis, the relationships between parents' education and occupations and the educational aspiration of the students will be examined. An important point that must be made at this stage of the analysis of the data concerns post-graduate education. To be sure, post-graduate education involves a long-range plan and consideration. At the high school level very few students can be said to think seriously about post-graduate education. Those students that do so, it seems to this writer, can be regarded as merely fantasizing about such education. The immediate plans of high school seniors should be about university education. For this reason aspiration to university education has been the main focus of the analysis of educational aspiration, while aspiration to post-graduate education was not given a close scrutiny.

²Imoagene, Social Mobility in Emergent Society, p. 282.

Age: It was hypothesized that there will be an association between age and educational aspiration. It was expected that "younger" students will have higher educational aspiration than "older" students. Students who were seventeen years and under were considered "young," while students who were eighteen or above eighteen were regarded as "old." The criterion for this categorization was based on the fact that the official age for entry into secondary school is twelve. Since secondary education takes five years, it was decided that students seventeen years or under were within the official high school age, while students more than seventeen were regarded as graduating late from high school. Students who indicated they wanted no less than university education ten years after high school were regarded as having high educational aspiration. Students who stated that they hoped to have less than university education were considered low in educational aspiration.

Table 3 shows that the hypothesis was not supported. There was no significant difference between age of students and educational aspiration ($X^2=19.07$, $df=16$, $P=NS$). Regardless of age, the majority of the students entertained high educational ambitions. 49.7 percent of the students had desire for post-graduate studies, while 48.1 percent wanted no less than university education. Less than 3 percent of the students aspired to education below

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Educational Aspiration	Age of Respondents					Total
	14 Years and Under	15 Years	16 Years	17 Years	18 Years and Over	
Post-graduate education	44.1(15)	59.6(31)	50.0(25)	37.5(12)	53.8(7)	49.7(90)
University	55.9(19)	40.4(21)	48.0(24)	56.3(18)	38.5(5)	48.1(87)
HSC	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.1(1)	7.7(1)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.1(1)	0.0(0)	0.55(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.55(1)
Total	100.0(34)	100.0(52)	100.0(50)	100.0(32)	100.0(13)	100.0(181)
$\chi^2=19.07$, $df=16$, $P=NS$, $C=0.31$						

university. There was no consistent pattern in aspiration among the different age categories. While 56 percent of the students fourteen years and under desired university education, 40 percent of 15 year olds and 48 percent of 16 year olds aspired to the same education. Also, 56 percent of seventeen year old students and 38.5 percent of the students eighteen years and over wanted university education. However, it was only among older students that respondents aspired to less than university education, but the percentage was too small for statistical significance. Three percent of 17 year old students wanted Higher School Certificate, another three percent indicated they would not go beyond secondary education. Eight percent of the students 18 years and over aspired to Higher School Certificate.

This lack of difference between age and educational aspiration is supported by Beckett and O'Connell who have shown that many Nigerian students obtain university education at advanced age because most of them, for financial reasons, interrupt their studies several times.³ Moreover, opportunities for higher education accorded to all students regardless of age appears to be another factor. Besides, there were very few students (N=13) who were eighteen years or over.

³Beckett and O'Connell, Education and Power in Nigeria, p. 24.

Father's Education: One of the indices of socio-economic status in this study was father's educational level which was hypothesized to be associated with educational aspiration of students. It was predicted that students whose fathers have high education, that is, at least university education will have high educational aspiration. The chi-square analysis was statistically significant, although the relationship between father's education and student's educational aspiration was weak. ($\chi^2=48.4$, $df=28$, $P<.05$). A little more than 42 percent of the fathers of students in the sample had university education. Forty-eight percent of the students that have university educated fathers aspired to the same level of education. Sixty-nine percent of the students whose fathers had National Certificates of Education, an educational qualification next to a university degree, expressed hopes to obtain university education. 41.7 percent of students with fathers who possessed Higher School Certificates had university ambition, while 43.8 percent of students whose fathers had primary school education expressed similar interests in university education. Significantly, 46.7 percent of the students of illiterate fathers said they would like to have obtained university education ten years after graduating from high school. Thus, there was no consistent differential pattern in educational aspiration between students of well-educated and poorly-educated

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT' EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY FATHER'S EDUCATION

Educational Aspiration	Uni- versity	NCE	HSC	Father's Education					Total
				Secondary School	Other	Primary School	No edu- cation	No answer	
Post-graduate education	51.9(40)	30.8(4)	41.7(5)	51.7(15)	44.4(8)	56.3(9)	46.7(7)	66.7(2)	49.2(90)
University	48.1(37)	69.2(9)	41.7(5)	44.8(13)	55.6(10)	43.8(7)	46.7(7)	33.3(1)	48.6(89)
HSC	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	16.7(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.7(1)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.4(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(77)	100.0(13)	100.1(12)	99.9(29)	100.0(18)	100.1(16)	100.1(15)	100.0(3)	100.0(183)

$\chi^2=48.41$, $df=28$, $P=0.00$, $C=0.46$

fathers. This finding confirms Foster's observation in his Ghanaian study where he noted that children of illiterate parents had the same level of educational aspiration as children of professionals and high ranking officials.⁴

The same pattern of educational ambition shown by students regardless of fathers' educational attainment was also observed when mother's education was compared with students' educational aspiration. Sixty-one percent of the students whose mothers had university education aspired to the same education, while 57.1 percent with mothers who obtained National Certificate of Education declared interest in university education. Students whose mothers had medium level education, that is, attended secondary school and/or teacher training showed a fairly high educational ambition. 53.2 percent of the students in this category planned to obtain university education. Again, students with poorly educated and illiterate mothers showed comparably high educational aspiration. While 56 percent of the students whose mothers had primary school education planned to attend university, 45.2 percent of the students of illiterate mothers had similar plans. This result tends to support further the claims of no relationship between parents' education and children's educational aspiration among African students of different social

⁴Foster, "Secondary School and Social Mobility in Ghana," p. 169.

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY MOTHER'S EDUCATION

Educational Aspiration	Uni- versity	NCE	HSC	Mother's Education					Total
				Secondary School	Other	Primary School	No edu- cation	No answer	
Post-graduate education	39.1(9)	42.9(6)	66.7(6)	43.5(27)	77.8(14)	44.0(11)	51.6(16)	100.0(1)	49.2(90)
University	60.9(14)	57.1(8)	22.2(2)	53.2(33)	22.2(4)	56.0(14)	45.2(14)	0.0(0)	48.6(89)
HSC	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.2(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Secondary School	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.2(1)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	11.1(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(23)	100.0(14)	100.0(9)	99.9(62)	100.0(18)	100.0(25)	100.0(31)	100.0(1)	100.0(18)
$\chi^2=39.27$, $df=28$, $P=NS$, $C=0.42$									

backgrounds. Foster attributed this lack of relationship between socioeconomic status and aspiration to the "fluidity" of the social system of African societies.⁵ It appears that, ideally, most students wanted higher education regardless of family background and resources.

Father's Occupation: Another measure used for the socioeconomic status of the student was the occupations of parents. It was predicted that students whose parents had high status occupations, that is, professional and top managerial occupations, will have higher educational ambitions than children of parents in low occupations. Low occupations were measured by whether parents were employed in semi-skilled, manual and unskilled occupations.

The result in Table 6 showed no relationship between father's occupation and student's educational plans. The chi-square ($X^2=38.73$, $df=28$, $P=NS$) was not statistically significant. No consistent pattern was observed. 56.8 percent of children of professional and business executives, and 31 percent of children of fathers in managerial occupations planned to obtain university education. 59.2 percent of respondents whose fathers were secondary school teachers also aspired to university education. Significantly, children of fathers in low occupations showed high educational aspiration. While 70 percent of children of

⁵Foster, Ibid.

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY FATHER'S OCCUPATION

Educational Aspiration	Father's Occupation								Total
	Professional/ Business Executive	Business Manager	Secondary School Teacher	Primary School Teacher	Sales/ Clerical	Domestic Worker	Farmer/ Carpenter	No Answer	
Post-graduate education	43.2(16)	66.7(28)	38.8(19)	66.7(12)	66.7(2)	30.0(3)	50.0(8)	25.0(2)	49.2(90)
University	56.8(21)	31.0(13)	59.2(29)	33.3(6)	33.3(1)	70.0(7)	43.8(7)	62.5(5)	48.6(89)
HSC	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	12.5(1)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.3(1)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	2.4(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(37)	100.1(42)	100.0(49)	100.0(18)	100.0(3)	100.0(10)	100.1(16)	100.0(8)	100.0(183)
$\chi^2=38.73$, $df=28$, $P=NS$, $C=0.42$									

domestic workers such as cooks, gardeners, and drivers had plans for university, 43.8 percent of children of farmers and carpenters expressed similar aspiration.

One would have expected children of professionals to show a much substantial higher aspiration than children of fathers in lower professions, for example, children of secondary school teachers. Although the aspiration of children of professionals was high, the aspiration of children of secondary school teachers was also high and even a little higher. Children whose fathers were professionals accounted for 20 percent of the total sample, while children of secondary school teachers represented 26.8 percent of the sample. Perhaps this difference between the aspiration of children of professionals and secondary school teachers might be due to the difference in the sample of both occupational categories. Moreover, the aspiration of children of secondary school teachers might not be surprising. A good number of secondary school teachers have university education. Thus one suspects that children of these teachers might have been exposed to a good academic environment and encouraged by their fathers to obtain higher education as children of professionals.

Mother's Occupation. The same pattern of scores as in the case of fathers was observed when students' educational aspiration was compared with their mothers' education. However, few mothers (1.1 percent) were in

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY MOTHER'S OCCUPATION

Educational Aspiration	Mother's Occupation								Total
	Professional/ Business Executive	Business Manager	Secondary School Teacher	Primary School Teacher	Sales/ Clerical	Domestic Worker	Farmer/ Carpenter	No Answer	
Post-graduate education	50.0(1)	66.7(10)	48.5(33)	38.2(13)	100.0(3)	44.4(12)	46.4(13)	83.3(5)	49.2(90)
University	50.0(1)	33.3(5)	50.0(34)	58.8(20)	0.0(0)	55.6(15)	50.0(14)	0.0(0)	48.6(89)
SC	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.9(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.6(1)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.5(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(2)	100.0(15)	100.0(68)	99.9(34)	100.0(3)	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(6)	100 (183)
$\chi^2=34.23$, $df=28$, $P=NS$, $C=0.40$									

professional and executive occupations and 8.2 percent in managerial occupations. The great bulk of mothers of students were in teaching professions in secondary and primary schools. Fifty percent of students with mothers teaching in secondary school, and 58.8 percent of the students whose mothers were primary school teachers planned to have university education. Children whose mothers were in domestic work and farming occupations expressed high educational ambitions. 56.6 percent of students with mothers in domestic work (full-time housewives, waitresses, cooks, etc.) have ambition for university education, whereas 50 percent of students whose mothers were farmers wanted university education. It is obvious from the results that most of the students, regardless of the occupations of parents, wanted nothing less than university education. One can surmise that this high level of educational aspiration is indicative of the awareness of the students of the benefits of university education in contemporary Nigerian society. For students whose parents have high education and occupations, education was a means to maintain the family social status, whereas for students of low educated parents in low occupations, education appeared as a means for upward mobility.

Residence: It was hypothesized that residence of students will be related to educational aspiration. It was predicted that students from cities will have greater

TABLE 8

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION
OF RESPONDENTS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Educational Aspiration	City	Town	Village	Total
Post-graduate education	49.0(77)	44.4(8)	62.5(5)	49.2(90)
University	49.0(77)	55.6(10)	25.0(2)	48.6(89)
HSC	1.3(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	12.5(1)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.6(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	99.9(157)	100.0(18)	100.0(8)	100.0(183)
	$\chi^2=23.84$, $df=8$, $P=0.002$, $C=0.34$			

educational ambition than their counterparts from towns and villages. The chi-square was statistically significant ($X^2=23.8$, $df=8$, $P=.00$). However, students of city background were disproportionately over-represented. This group accounted for 85.8 percent of the respondents. Residence did not significantly affect students' educational plans. Forty-nine percent of respondents from urban areas expressed desire for university education, whereas 56 percent of students from towns and 25 percent of students of village background had university plans. An explanation for this lack of difference in educational plans between students from urban backgrounds and students from rural areas seemed to be that the students in the sample were all attending urban secondary schools. Exposure to an urban environment and the opportunities accorded well-educated persons cannot be discounted as sources of educational inspiration for the students. An inclusion of schools in rural areas might help shed more light on the influence of residence on educational plans of adolescents.

Family size: Studies have shown that size of family is related to educational and occupational attainment. Small size families with small numbers of children tend to achieve higher occupational status than large size families.⁶ It was therefore predicted in this study that

⁶Blau and Duncan, The American Occupational Structure, p. 298.

students with fewer siblings will have higher educational aspiration than those with many siblings. Students with two or less than two siblings were regarded as coming from small families, while students who had more than two siblings were regarded as having large families. The table shows (Table 9) that the greatest proportion of the sample came from families of more than two siblings. Thus educational aspiration for this category of the respondents was high. 51.9 percent of these students planned for university education, whereas 42.9 percent of students with one sibling and 25 percent of students with no siblings had similar educational plans. Since the study allowed the students to fantasize as to the level of education they would like to attain without serious consideration to the reality of the cost of such education, the result reported here perhaps might not be surprising. In other words, ideally, the students, regardless of the number of brothers and sisters in the family, wanted university education. However, if attending university is translated into reality in terms of financial costs, it is doubtful that actual attendance among students from large families would be as high as expressed intentions. A follow-up study of the students some years from now will help to determine in reality students from small and large size families who will actually enroll in university.

The hypothesis that students from small size families

TABLE 9

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY NUMBER OF SIBLINGS

Educational Aspiration	No Siblings	One Sibling	Two Siblings	More Than Two Siblings	Total
Post-graduate education	50.0(2)	57.1(4)	83.3(5)	47.9(79)	49.5(90)
University	25.0(1)	42.9(3)	0.0(0)	50.9(84)	48.4(88)
HSC	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.2(2)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	25.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(4)	100.0(7)	100.0(6)	100.0(165)	100.0(182)
$\chi^2=79.21, df=12, P=0.000, C=0.55$					

will have higher educational aspiration than students from large size families was not supported. The contrary appeared to be the case. Students from large families expressed higher aspiration than students from small size families. Perhaps this finding was due to the fact that students from large families were over-represented in the sample so that their sheer number might have affected the result. However, aspirations of students from small size families were high relative to their number.

Best-friend's educational aspiration: Influence of peers has been shown to affect student's educational plans. Students were asked in this study to identify their best friends and to indicate their best-friend's educational plans; that is, the level of education the friends would like to attain ten years after high school. Best friends' educational plans were then compared with those of the students. The relationship between best-friend's educational aspiration and that of the student was significant ($\chi^2=88.36$, $df=16$, $P=0.000$). In spite of the high educational aspiration of best-friends, a good number (42 percent) of the students were unsure (don't know) of the educational plans of their friends. In fact, nine respondents had no answer for this question. However, students who planned to have university education reported 20 percent of their friends had similar educational plans, while 74.2 percent planned to have post-graduate education. Less than 3 percent

TABLE 10

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION
BY BEST FRIEND'S EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION

Educational Aspiration	Best Friend's Educational Aspiration					Total
	Post-graduate	Uni- versity	HSC	Secondary School	Other (unspecified)	
Post-graduate education	22.5(20)	80.0(4)	33.3(1)	66.7(2)	82.4(61)	50.6(88)
University	74.2(66)	20.0(1)	33.3(1)	33.3(1)	17.6(13)	47.1(82)
HSC	1.1(1)	0.0(0)	33.3(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	1.1(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.6(1)
Other (unspecified)	1.1(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.6(1)
Total	100.0(89)	100.0(5)	99.9(3)	100.0(3)	100.0(74)	100.0(174)
$\chi^2=88.36, df=16, P=0.000, C=0.58$						

of best friends aspired to anything below university education. An interpretation of this result would be that the students either exaggerated the educational plans of their best-friends or used their own educational plans to evaluate those of their friends. When students were asked the question: "Do you consider your best-friend an excellent student, a good student, an average student, a poor student?", 26 percent of best-friends were rated as excellent students, 43 percent were rated as good students, while 27 percent and a half percent (.05 percent) were rated average and poor students respectively. 3.3 percent of the students gave no answer.

From this answer of the students, it would seem that educational aspiration of best-friends was rated higher than their perceived academic abilities, assuming that for a student to benefit from university and post-graduate education he must have to be a good student academically. While 74.2 percent of best friends aspired to post-graduate education, 20 percent had ambition for university education, whereas in terms of ability 43 percent were rated as good students and 26 percent were rated excellent.

The hypothesis that the educational aspiration of students will be the same as that of their best friends was supported. The educational aspiration of the students and best friends was similar. The students expressed high educational aspiration as their best friends. However, one suspects that aspiration of students and best friends might

not be due to perceived ability, but rather to perceived benefits that accrue to having a good education.

Academic achievement: Three indices were used to assess students' academic standing. First, students were asked the grade they obtained in the Primary School Leaving Certificate examination. This examination is usually taken by all students graduating from primary school. Grade A is regarded as excellent performance, grade B as good, and grade F as fail. Fifteen of the respondents did not answer this question, while only one student stated that he failed the examination. In fact it does happen that some students who fail the final examination for graduating from grade school do pass the entrance examinations to high school. In such cases these students are admitted to high schools without grade school diploma. Also, some highly intelligent students do skip the final year of grade school if they pass the entrance examinations to high school in lower grades. Thus the use of this measure for academic standing is indeed problematic because students who did not answer this question might have entered high school not taking the examination, although the possibility cannot be ruled out that some might have failed the examination and refused to answer the question.

In examining the relationship between grade obtained in grade school and educational aspiration, 48.6 percent of the total sample of the students had plans for university education. Of this number, 51.3 percent of the students who had grade A in primary school leaving certificate wanted

TABLE 11

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY GRADE RECEIVED IN PRIMARY SCHOOL
LEAVING CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

Educational Aspiration	Grade Received in Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination				Total
	Grade A	Grade B	Fail	No Answer	
Post-Graduate education	46.9(53)	55.6(30)	100.0(1)	40.0(6)	49.2(90)
University	51.3(58)	40.7(22)	0.0(0)	60.0(9)	48.6(89)
HSC	1.8(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	1.9(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	1.9(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(113)	100.1(54)	100.0(1)	100.0(15)	100.0(180)
$\chi^2=9.11, df=12, P=NS, C=0.22$					

university education, 41 percent of students who made B grades had the same university plans. The only student who reported failing the examination had aspiration for post-graduate education. This could mean that either this student's academic record had improved significantly in high school for him to aspire this high or the expectation he was setting for himself was unrealistically high.

Another measure of students' academic standing was whether they had repeated any class (grade) in high school. It was assumed that repeating a class in high school for whatever reason was somehow a sign of academic weakness and/or problems. Another problem encountered in the use of this measure was that some students might have dropped out of school for financial or health reasons before re-entry to the classes they dropped. Therefore conclusions drawn from their responses cannot but be tentative. However, the study was interested in finding out what effect repeating a class would have on students' plans for higher education. In other words, will the aspirations of those who had repeated some grades in high school be the same as the aspirations of the students who did not repeat any grade? There was no relationship between repeating a grade and the aspiration of the students for higher education ($X^2=7.23$, $df=8$, $P=NS$). 48.6 percent of the total sample had plans for university education. Of this number, 49.6 percent who did not repeat any grade, and 44.9 percent of students who

TABLE 12

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY EVER REPEATED A CLASS (GRADE)
IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Educational Aspiration	Ever Repeated a Class (Grade)			Total
	No	Yes	No Answer	
Post-graduate education	49.6(66)	49.0(24)	0.0(0)	49.2(90)
University	49.6(66)	44.9(22)	100.0(1)	48.6(89)
HSC	0.8(1)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(133)	99.9(49)	100.0(1)	100.0(183)
	$\chi^2=7.23$, $df=8$, $P=NS$, $C=0.19$			

repeated at least a grade in high school planned to go to university. Almost the same percentage points (49.6 and 49 percent) were recorded for non-repeaters and repeaters respectively who planned to have post-graduate education.

The third measure of academic performance was obtained from the students' answers to the projected grades they hoped to make in the West African School Certificate examination. This examination is conducted by an external education board for all high school seniors in West Africa. Passing scores are ranked Division I for excellent, Division II for good, Division III for average. Students were asked, considering their current academic performance in high school, to indicate the grades they hoped to obtain in this examination. The possibility cannot be ruled out that many students might have over-stated their abilities. To be sure, the record of the schools' performance in the West African School Certificate examination conducted in 1976 was examined. The number of students entered by the schools, the number of successful candidates and the grades obtained were computed in Table 14. The figures were then compared with the expected grades the students hoped to obtain in the final examination. As can be seen from the tables, 60 students (10.9 percent) passed in Division I, 112 (20.4 percent) in Division II, 220 students (40 percent) in Division III, 158 students (28.7 percent) failed the examination. In this study however, (See Table 15) 89

TABLE 13

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY STUDENTS' EXPECTED GRADES IN WEST
AFRICAN SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

Educational Aspiration	Division I	Division II	Division III	Don't Know	No Answer	Total
Post-graduate education	52.8(47)	42.0(21)	0.0(0)	52.4(22)	0.0(0)	49.2(90)
University	46.1(41)	54.0(27)	0.0(0)	47.6(20)	100.0(1)	48.6(89)
HSC	0.0(0)	4.0(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	1.1(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	100.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(89)	100.0(50)	100.0(1)	100.0(42)	100.0(1)	100.0(183)
$\chi^2=191.66, df=16, P=0.0, C=0.51$						

TABLE 14
 RESULT OF WEST AFRICAN SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
 EXAMINATION (1976) BY SCHOOL
 (IN PERCENTAGE)

Grades in West African School Certificate, 1976					
Schools	Division I	Division II	Division III	Fail	Total
School 1	38.3(23)	18.7(21)	25.9(57)	22.2(35)	24.7(132)
School 2	18.3(11)	16.1(18)	17.3(39)	24.7(39)	19.3(106)
School 3	8.3(5)	23.2(26)	28.6(63)	28.5(45)	25.3(139)
School 4	35.0(21)	37.5(42)	17.3(38)	4.4(7)	19.6(108)
School 5	. . . .	4.5(5)	10.9(24)	20.3(32)	11.1(61)
School 6*	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .
Total	99.9(60)	100.0(112)	100.0(220)	100.1(158)	100.0(550)

NOTE: Computed from Education Statistical Abstract, Ministry of Education (Planning Division) Benin City, Nigeria (June 1976) annexure 1, p. 1.

*School 6 did not present students for the examination.

TABLE 15

EXPECTED GRADES STUDENTS HOPE TO OBTAIN IN WEST
AFRICAN SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
BY SCHOOL (IN PERCENTAGE)

Students' Expected Grades in West African School Certificate Examination					
Schools	Division I	Division II	Division III	Don't Know	Total
School 1	14.6(13)	16.0(8)	. . . .	13.9(6)	14.8(27)
School 2	16.8(15)	22.0(11)	. . . .	11.6(5)	16.9(31)
School 3	16.8(15)	16.0(8)	. . . .	7.1(3)	14.2(26)
School 4	23.6(21)	12.0(6)	. . . .	30.2(13)	21.9(40)
School 5	10.1(9)	16.0(8)	. . . .	27.9(12)	15.8(29)
School 6	18.1(16)	18.0(9)	100.0(1)	9.3(4)	16.4(30)
Total	100.0(89)	100.0(50)	100.0(1)	100.0(43)	100.0(183)

students (48.6 percent) hoped to pass in Division I, 50 (27.3 percent) in Division II and only a student (0.5 percent) in Division III. No student indicated he or she would fail the examination. However, a sizeable number of the students (43), that is, 23.5 percent of the total sample were unsure of the grades they would make. One conclusion that can be derived from the present sample is that either the respondents over-estimated the grades they hoped to obtain or they set unrealistic expectations for themselves.

Returning to the analysis of students' expected grades and educational plans, there was no consistent pattern between expected grades and educational aspirations. Forty-six percent of the students who expected to pass in Division I planned to have university education, 54 percent of students who expected to pass in Division II had the same plans for university education, while 47.6 percent of the students unsure of what division they would make also had ambition for university education.

Since passing the examination is not only very important for entry into higher education but also obtaining a good grade, that is, at least a pass in Division II, one suspects that an awareness of this academic requirement on the part of the students might have influenced the answers of the students about expected grades and educational aspiration.

Schools of students: Earlier in this study it was noted that the quality of the schools attended by the students varied. It was predicted therefore that better quality schools will have students with high educational aspiration, while students in low-quality schools will have low aspirations. The schools were ranked in terms of prestige and quality by such measures as academic reputation, age of the schools, and the agencies that operated them. School 1, School 2 and School 4 were ranked high in prestige and quality because they rated high in the criteria mentioned above, School 3 and School 5 were ranked medium in quality while School 6 was rated low. It was hypothesized that students in high status schools will have high educational aspiration than students in medium and low status schools. The result as shown in Table 16 did not support the hypothesis. 48.6 percent of the total sample of the schools planned for university education. Of this number, 55.6 percent were from School 1, 35.5 percent were from School 2, and 47.5 percent were from School 4 these were the high-status schools. In the medium ranked schools, 65.4 percent of the students in School 3, and 31 percent of the students in School 5 also desired university education. Sixty percent of the students in School 6, which was ranked low in prestige and quality had plans for university education. This result indicated that schools attended by the students made no substantial difference

TABLE 16

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY SCHOOL OF STUDENTS

Educational Aspiration	School of Students						Total
	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6	
Post-graduate education	40.7(11)	64.5(20)	34.6(9)	47.5(19)	69.0(20)	36.7(11)	49.2(90)
University	55.6(15)	35.5(11)	65.4(17)	47.5(19)	31.0(9)	60.0(18)	48.6(85)
HSC	3.7(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.3(1)	1.1(2)
Secondary school	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.5(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Other (unspecified)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.5(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
Total	100.0(27)	100.0(31)	100.0(26)	100.0(40)	100.0(29)	100.0(30)	100.0(183)

$$\chi^2=23.39, df=20, P=NS, C=0.37$$

in the students' plans for higher education.

The lack of substantial difference between school and educational aspiration might be due to the overall high educational ambitions of the students. It has been shown that almost all the students set high educational goals for themselves. Thus the high aspiration each student has for himself might have been reflected in the general aspiration of the student body.

Summary of Educational Aspiration

Cross-tabulations of the educational aspiration of the respondents with the variables sex, age, parents' education and occupations, residence, family size, best-friends' educational aspirations, students' academic achievement and schools of students were analyzed. A comparison of each variable was made with educational aspiration. Some variables were lopsided, showing over-representation of the respondents. For instance, age of students showed that 15 and 16 year olds accounted for a combined total of 55 percent of the whole sample. The sample was also skewed in terms of residence and family size. A great bulk (85.8 percent) of the students were from cities while the rest were from rural background. Also, more than ninety percent (90.2) were from families of more than two siblings which were considered large families. Because of this skewness a meaningful interpretation of the data was difficult.

A close analysis of the data showed little or no difference between the different variables and educational plans of the respondents. There was no difference between sex of students and educational plans. Boys and girls showed the same level of aspiration for higher education. While more boys than girls desired university education, more girls than boys had plans for post-graduate education. If post-graduate aspiration were left out in the survey, one suspects that there would have been the same level of aspiration for university education between the two sexes.

Age of students showed no consistent pattern in educational aspiration. It was predicted that "young" students, that is, those seventeen years and under, will show higher levels of aspiration than "old" students, students eighteen years and over. Since students eighteen years and over were 13 (7 percent) of the total sample, there was no meaningful association between age and educational plans. "Young" and "old" students exhibited the same aspiration for higher education except that educational plans lower than university attendance were chosen more by "old" students.

Perhaps the more important observation was in terms of the education and occupations of parents. Educational attainment and occupations of parents were indices of students' socioeconomic status which was predicted to be associated with educational plans. The result showed that

regardless of the education and occupations of parents, students had plans for higher education. Students whose parents were highly educated and were in professional and managerial occupations did not have higher scores in educational plans than their counterparts whose parents were poorly educated or illiterate and in low-status occupations. This result is confirmed by other studies, especially Foster's which showed that low-socioeconomic status students showed the same amount of aspiration for high status occupations and higher education as students from better endowed backgrounds. In Nigeria, where academic credentials are regarded as passports to high occupations, social status and economic rewards, one suspects that the students were influenced in their responses by the increasing rewards that accrue to higher education. In other words, ideally, most students regardless of social class tend to aspire to go to college. However, when students confront the reality of financial costs and intellectual demands for college education, there are likely to be fewer lower class than upper class students who will enroll in college. Thus in realistic terms, aspirations will vary according to social class, even though the contrary is the case in this study.

Occupational Aspiration

The second part of the analysis dealt with occupational aspiration of the respondents. The effects of the variables considered in the first part of this chapter on occupational aspiration were examined.

Occupational aspiration by sex: Students were asked to indicate what occupations they would like to have attained ten years after high school. It was assumed that, barring obstacles, an above average student ten years after graduating from high school would have finished college and settled down to a permanent job. Barring obstacles, especially of financial nature; was stressed here because in Nigeria many students sometimes work for several years to earn money in order to finance their university education. It was predicted that boys will have higher occupational aspiration than girls. Men have always played active roles in the workforce and have always dominated it. They had been looked upon as bread winners, while women were expected to assume passive roles and work in the home. One of the reasons of this study was to determine the degree to which the occupational aspirations of boys and girls are similar or dissimilar and therefore changing the traditional ethos of a woman's place being in the home.

The occupational aspiration of the students according to sex was statistically significant ($X^2=11.06$, $df=4$, $P=.025$). There was a difference between sex and occupational aspiration. Although the occupational aspiration of both boys and girls was high, more boys (92.9 percent) than girls (76.2 percent) aspired to professional and top level business occupations. While 17.9 percent of female respondents wanted managerial jobs, 6.1 percent of

TABLE 17

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION I BY SEX

Occupational Aspiration I	Sex of Students		Total
	Male	Female	
Professional/ Business Executive	92.9(92)	76.2(64)	85.2(156)
Business Manager	6.1(6)	17.8(15)	11.5(21)
Secondary School Teacher/ Nurse/Executive Officer	1.0(1)	2.4(2)	1.6(3)
Primary School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.0(0)	1.2(1)	0.5(1)
No answer	0.0(0)	2.4(2)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(99)	100.0(84)	99.9(183)

$$X^2=11.06, df=4, P=.025, C=.24$$

males chose similar managerial positions. More girls than boys also chose occupations in medium level category such as secondary and primary school teaching, nursing and clerical fields, with 25 percent of girls choosing nursing.

Professional occupations chosen by the students were broken down according to sex. (See appendix, Table 31). While 17.5 percent of male students chose the medical profession, 14.7 percent of female students were interested in this profession. More girls (13.7 percent) than boys (12 percent) chose the legal profession. In the field of engineering boys were more represented than girls, with 9.3 percent of boys choosing this profession, while a half percent (.05) of girls chose engineering. 6.5 percent of male students chose teaching in university as opposed to 3.3 percent of female students who were interested in university teaching. A wide range of professions which were categorized as "other professions" were mentioned often by the students. The professions were agriculture, agronomy, accounting, architecture, bio-chemistry, linguistics, pharmacy, psychology and sociology. Girls tended to choose those professions that are allied to medicine--pharmacy, bio-chemistry, psychology. Also linguistics was mentioned more often by girls than boys. Boys chose those professions that are regarded as male occupations: architecture, agriculture, agronomy, business management and banking.

Occupational Aspiration II: Occupational aspiration of the students was probed further. In order to find out realistically the occupational aspiration of the students, that is, wishful thinking aside, the students were asked assuming they were unable to go beyond their present level of education, what type of occupation they would desire to obtain. Occupations in this category were of medium level which persons of the students' educational level (high school graduates) normally enter. For instance, a high school graduate must have obtained a very good grade to be qualified to teach in secondary school. Also, to become an executive officer the student must have competently held a given job for several years. The responses of the students are in Table 18. 38.4 percent of boys chose teaching in secondary school/nursing/executive positions compared to 58.4 percent of girls who desired jobs in this category. While 54.5 percent of male students were interested in teaching at primary school and in clerical positions, 38.1 percent of female students wanted such jobs. A mere 1.2 percent of girls desired jobs in secretarial and sales category. A further breakdown of occupational aspiration II according to sex (see appendix, Table 32) shows 10.9 percent of boys interested in teaching in secondary school, while 2.7 percent of girls chose this occupation. There were more girls than boys choosing teaching in primary school, (9.8 percent) compared to 6 percent of boys. A sizeable

TABLE 18

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION II BY SEX

Occupational Aspiration II	Sex of Students		Total
	Male	Female	
Secondary School Teacher/ Nurse/Executive Officer	38.4(38)	58.3(49)	47.5(87)
Primary School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	54.5(54)	38.1(32)	47.0(86)
Sales/Secretary/Typist	0.0(0)	1.2(1)	0.5(1)
No answer	7.1(7)	2.4(2)	4.9(9)
Total	100.0(99)	100.0(84)	99.9(183)
$\chi^2=9.63, df=3, P=.025, C=.22$			

number of girls (25.1 percent) chose nursing, while 4.9 percent of boys also desired nursing as a career. Boys however chose clerical jobs more often than girls. Twenty-nine percent of boys and 8.2 percent of girls respectively were interested in clerical jobs. Choice of occupations here appeared sex-related with more girls choosing nursing and teaching in primary school, while more boys chose teaching in secondary school and clerical jobs. Nursing is a medium level occupation and requires some years of training after high school. Nursing appeared to have attracted a sizeable percentage of the female students, not only because it is a female dominated occupation but also the material rewards accorded to nurses have risen very high compared with other occupations of similar educational and technical preparations. Moreover, the great majority of teachers in secondary schools in Nigeria are male, this explains why more boys than girls chose teaching in secondary school as a career.

Age: It was predicted that age of respondents will be related to occupational aspiration. It was expected that "young" students will have higher occupational ambitions than "old" students because "young" students were likely to go further for higher education, while "old" students were likely to terminate their education after high school and enter the work force. Beckett and O'Connell⁷ have shown that younger students tend to come from high

⁷Beckett and O'Connell, Education and Power in Nigeria, p. 35.

socioeconomic families. It was expected that more students in this age category would choose high-status occupations than students who were older and likely to have low status parents. The hypothesis was not sustained. There was no consistent pattern of occupational aspiration according to the age of respondents. Although students eighteen years and over were under-represented in the sample, all but one of them aspired to nothing less than professional and executive positions. The other age categories exhibited the same high level of aspiration. 79.4 percent of students 14 years and under were interested in professional occupations, 90.4 percent of 15 year old students desired the same professional occupations, while 86 percent of students 16 years old and 78.1 percent of 17 year old students had the same occupational aspiration of entering into professional careers. At the managerial occupational levels, 20.6 percent of 14 year olds were interested in managerial positions, 5.8 percent of 15 year olds showed similar aspiration while 12 percent of 16 year olds and 15.6 percent of 17 year olds also wanted managerial occupations. Again, age appeared to make no difference in occupational choice of the students and in fact there was no consistent pattern according to age in the occupational preference of the students. The result shown here is consistent with the result of no difference between age and educational aspiration. This consistency appears to indicate that students were aware of the relationship

TABLE 19

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION (I) BY AGE

Occupational Aspiration (I)	Age of Students					Total
	14 Years and Under	15 Years	16 Years	17 Years	18 Years and Over	
Professional/ Business Executive	79.4(27)	90.4(47)	86.0(43)	78.1(25)	92.3(12)	85.1(154)
Business Manager	20.6(7)	5.8(3)	12.0(6)	15.6(5)	0.0(0)	11.6(21)
Secondary School Teacher/Nurse/ Exec. Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.3(2)	7.7(1)	1.7(3)
Primary School Teacher/Cler- ical Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No answer	0.0(0)	3.8(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(34)	100.0(52)	100.0(50)	100.0(32)	100.0(13)	100.0(181)
	$\chi^2=23.18, df=16, P=NS, C=.18$					

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between education and occupation and were determined to attain both regardless of age.

Father's education: The choice of occupation by the students was predicted will be influenced by their socio-economic status. It was expected that students whose fathers had high education and were in high-status occupations will have high occupational ambitions, while students with low-educated fathers in low status jobs will have low career aspirations. Table 20 shows the breakdown of occupational aspiration by father's education. The chi-square ($X^2=27.49$, $df=28$, $P=NS$) was not significant. Father's education made no difference in occupational aspiration among the students. However, there were patterns of aspiration that merited close examination. A good number (42 percent) of the respondents have university educated fathers. 83.1 percent of the respondents with university educated fathers aspired to professional occupations, while 14.3 percent of them aspired to managerial careers. Significantly, students whose fathers had poor education and no education at all also showed high occupational ambitions. While all the students ($N=16$) whose fathers obtained primary school education wanted professional careers, 80 percent of students with illiterate fathers had similar occupational aspirations of becoming professionals.

Comparing father's occupation with student's occupation, a similar pattern of no difference between occupation

TABLE 20

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION (I)
BY FATHER'S EDUCATION (IN PERCENTAGE)

Occupational Aspiration	Father's Education								Total
	Uni- versity	NCE	HSC	Secondary School	Other	Primary School	No Edu- cation	No Answer	
Professional/ Business Exec.	83.1(64)	84.6(11)	83.3(10)	82.8(24)	94.4(17)	100.0(16)	80.0(12)	66.7(2)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	14.3(11)	15.4(2)	16.7(2)	10.3(3)	5.6(1)	0.0(0)	6.7(1)	33.3(1)	11.5(21)
Secondary School Teacher/Nurse/ Exec. Officer	1.3(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	13.3(2)	0.0(0)	1.6(3)
Primary School Teacher/Cler- ical Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.4(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	1.3(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.4(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(77)	100.0(13)	100.0(12)	99.9(29)	100.0(18)	100.0(16)	100.0(15)	100.0(3)	99.9(183)
$\chi^2=27.49$, $df=28$, $P=NS$, $C=.19$									

of father and student's aspiration emerged. Occupational aspirations of students whose fathers had low occupations were as high as the occupational aspirations of students with fathers in high status positions. For instance, while 83.8 percent of the students with fathers in professional careers expressed aspiration for the same career, 87.5 percent of the students whose fathers were farmers planned to attain professional careers. Surprisingly, students from equally low status background such as students whose fathers were farmers desired professional occupations. All students whose fathers were petty traders (N=3) and domestic servants (N=10) hoped to attain professional careers. Thus, the social background of students was not a crucial factor in occupational aspiration. This finding is not surprising especially in a society as fluid as Nigeria where many of the present rulers and high ranking officials were from humble homes. The fact that these successful men made it to the top by dint of hard work rather than by family connections appeared to have some influence on the respondents from low-status backgrounds.

Mother's education: It has been said that mothers influence to varying degrees the aspirations of their children. Educated mothers are shown to exert great influence on educational plans of their children and ultimately in the children's occupational attainment. In this study it was expected that students with well

TABLE 21

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION (I) BY FATHER'S OCCUPATION

Occupational Aspiration (I)	Father's Occupation								Total
	Profes- sional/ Business Exec.	Business Manager	Sec. Sch. Teacher/ Ex. Officer	Pri. Sch. Teach./Cl. Officer	Sales/ Petty Trader	Domestic Worker	Farmer/ Carpenter	No Answer	
Professional/ Business Ex.	83.8(31)	78.6(33)	85.7(42)	94.4(17)	100.0(3)	100.0(10)	87.5(14)	75.0(6)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	13.5(5)	16.6(7)	12.2(6)	5.6(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.3(1)	12.5(1)	11.5(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	2.7(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.3(1)	12.5(1)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.0(0)	2.4(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	0.0(0)	2.4(1)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(37)	100.0(42)	99.9(49)	100.0(18)	100.0(3)	100.0(10)	100.0(16)	100.0(8)	99.9(183)
$\chi^2=19.91, df=28, P=NS, C=.31$									

educated mothers will show high occupational aspirations than students whose mothers were poorly educated or illiterate. The result (Table 22) showed no relationship between education of mother and student's occupational aspiration ($\chi^2=49.71$, $df=28$, $P=NS$). While 65.2 percent of students whose mothers had university education planned to enter professional careers, 87.1 percent of the students whose mothers had no formal education, and all students ($N=25$) with poorly educated mothers (primary school education) also aspired to professional careers. Students (83.9 percent) with mothers who attained medium level education (secondary school) showed higher occupational aspiration than students whose mothers were university trained. Education of mothers made no difference in occupational aspiration of the students. In this result however, students with low-educated mothers apparently showed higher occupational ambitions than students with highly educated mothers.

Mother's occupation: Another measure of the socio-economic status of the students was the occupations of mothers. Mothers' occupations were compared with those of the students, expecting to determine the relationship between mothers' occupational levels and students' occupational aspiration. The result of the data (Table 23) indicated no difference in career choice of the students and the occupations of mothers. Regardless of the occupations

TABLE 22
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION (I)
BY MOTHER'S EDUCATION (IN PERCENTAGE)

Occupational Aspiration	Uni- versity	Mother's Education							Total
		NCE	HSC	Secondary School	Others	Primary School	No Edu- cation	No Answer	
Professional/ Bus. Exec.	65.2(15)	92.9(13)	66.7(6)	83.9(52)	94.4(17)	100.0(25)	87.1(27)	100.0(1)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	30.4(7)	0.0(0)	22.2(2)	14.5(9)	5.6(1)	0.0(0)	6.5(2)	0.0(0)	11.5(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	4.3(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.5(2)	0.0(0)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	11.1(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	0.0(0)	7.1(1)	0.0(0)	1.6(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Total	99.9(23)	100.0(14)	100.0(9)	100.0(62)	100.0(18)	100.0(25)	100.0(31)	100.0(1)	99.9(183)
$\chi^2=49.71, df=28, P=.01, C=.46$									

TABLE 23

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION (I) BY MOTHER'S OCCUPATION

Occupational Aspiration (I)	Mother's Occupation								Total
	Profes- sional/ Business Exec.	Business Manager	Sec. Sch. Teacher/ Ex. Officer	Pri. Sch. Teach./Cl. Officer	Sales/ Petty Trader	Domestic Worker	Farmer/ Carpenter	No Answer	
Professional/ Business Ex.	100.0(2)	73.3(11)	77.9(53)	91.2(31)	100.0(3)	96.3(26)	89.3(25)	83.3(5)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	0.0(0)	26.7(4)	16.2(11)	8.8(3)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	7.1(2)	16.7(1)	11.5(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.5(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.7(1)	3.6(1)	0.0(0)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.5(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.9(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(2)	100.0(15)	100.0(68)	100.0(34)	100.0(3)	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(6)	99.9(183)
$\chi^2=17.60, df=28, P=NS, C=.30$									

of mothers, students exhibited high career ambitions. There were only two respondents whose mothers were professionals, the two respondents also chose professional occupations as their mothers. 73.3 percent of the students with mothers in managerial positions wanted professional careers, while 77.9 percent of the students whose mothers were either secondary school teachers or executive officers planned to enter professional careers. Students with mothers in medium level jobs such as primary school teaching and clerical jobs were also high in aspiration. 91.2 percent of the students indicated they would like to enter professional occupations. Significantly, students whose mothers were in low occupations--petty trading, domestic work and farming also aspired to professional occupations. Only three respondents had mothers who were petty traders and all three students chose professional careers. While 96.3 percent of the students with mothers in domestic jobs aspired to professional occupations, 89.3 percent of the students whose mothers were farmers had the same aspiration for professional jobs. On the whole, aspiration to professional careers was high across socioeconomic background. When mother's occupation was paired with that to which the student hoped to attain, no consistent pattern of association emerged between mother's occupation and student's occupational aspiration. Rather, students of low status mothers showed a little higher occupational

ambition than students whose mothers had high-status occupations.

From the analysis, the education and occupation of both parents were not a good predictor of the students' occupational plans. This finding appears to contradict so many studies conducted in Western societies which showed that the education and occupation of parents were highly related to students' aspirations. However, the result here is consistent with the findings of studies within the African context. Foster, for example, showed that the occupational aspiration of Ghanaian secondary school students were similar regardless of father's occupation.⁸ Sanda also showed a little influence between the occupational aspirations of Nigerian university students and their fathers' education.⁹

Residence: It was hypothesized that students from urban areas (city) will have higher occupational aspiration than students from rural areas (town and village). The result (Table 26) showed no relationship between residence and occupational aspiration. ($X^2=7.68$, $df=8$, $P=NS$). Although a great majority of respondents came from urban areas, there

⁸Foster, "Secondary Schooling," p. 169.

⁹A. O. Sanda, "Predicting Probable Supply of Labor: An Analysis of Career Aspirations of Some Nigerian Youths," paper presented to N.I.S.E.R., Conference on Economic Development and Employment Generation in Nigeria, Ibadan, Nigeria, University of Ibadan (November 1975), p. 27.

TABLE 24

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION
BY RESIDENCE (IN PERCENTAGE)

Occupational Aspiration	Residence of Students			Total
	City	Town	Village	
Professional/ Business Ex.	84.7(133)	88.9(16)	87.5(7)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	12.1(19)	11.1(2)	0.0(0)	11.5(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	1.3(2)	0.0(0)	12.5(1)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.6(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	1.3(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(157)	100.0(18)	100.0(8)	99.9(183)
	$\chi^2=7.68, df=8, P=NS, C=.20$			

was no difference between the aspiration of the students according to residence. Instead, students from towns and villages showed a little higher aspiration than urban students. 84.7 percent of the students from urban areas expressed ambition for professional careers, while 88.9 percent of town students and 87.5 percent of students from village had the same aspiration for professional occupations. Only students of city and town backgrounds wanted managerial jobs, 12 percent and 11 percent respectively. Regardless of the residential background of the students, nearly all students showed high occupational ambitions.

Family size: Blau and Duncan, as indicated early in this chapter, have shown the impact of family size on occupational attainment. Blau and Duncan observed that men from small families, that is, who have few siblings, achieve higher occupational status than men from large families with many siblings. It was hypothesized in this study that students from small families will have higher occupational ambitions than students from large families. The chi-square was significant ($X^2=54.24$, $df=12$, $P=.00$) but the result was not in the direction predicted. A majority of the respondents came from large families, this high representation of students from large families no doubt affected the result. Eighty-six percent of students from large (that is, with more than two siblings) hoped to enter professional occupations and top level business

TABLE 25

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION (I)
BY FAMILY SIZE (IN PERCENTAGE)

Occupational Aspiration	Family Size				Total
	No Siblings	One Sibling	Two Siblings	More Than Two Siblings	
Professional/ Business Ex.	75.0(3)	85.7(6)	66.6(4)	86.1(142)	85.2(155)
Business Mgr.	0.0(0)	14.3(1)	16.7(1)	11.5(19)	11.5(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	1.2(2)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	25.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.2(2)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(4)	100.0(7)	100.0(6)	100.0(165)	99.9(182)
$\chi^2 = 54.24, df = 12, P = .000, C = .48$					

careers, 66.7 percent of students who have two siblings expressed similar occupational interests, while 85.7 percent and 75 percent of students with one sibling and no siblings respectively hoped to become professionals. In managerial category, 14.3 percent of students with one sibling and 16.7 percent of students with two siblings aspired to managerial level jobs, whereas 11.5 percent of students from more than two sibling families entertained hopes for this level of occupation. Aspirations in lower occupational categories were too small and scattered for any meaningful relationship. Thus regardless of family size, students' occupational aspirations were very high. Both the educational and occupational aspirations of the students were consistently high no matter the number of brothers and sisters they had.

Occupational aspiration of best-friend: As in the case of educational plans, it was assumed that best friends do exert great influence on the choice of occupation by peers. It was decided to compare the occupations which best friends hoped to attain with those of the respondents. It was expected that when best friends aspire to high occupational status, the respondents will show similar ambition and vice versa. The chi-square ($\chi^2=48.98$, $df=20$, $P=0.00$) was significant. A majority of best-friends (87.8 percent) wanted professional occupations while 85.2 percent of the respondents desired to enter similar

TABLE 26

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION (I)
BY BEST FRIEND'S OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION (I)

Occupational Aspiration	Best Friend's Occupational Aspiration						Total
	Profes- sional/ Business Exec.	Business Manager	Sec. Sch. Teacher/ Ex. Officer	Pri. Sch. Teach./Cl. Officer	Don't Know	No Answer	
Professional/ Business Ex.	87.8(122)	75.0(12)	100.0(8)	100.0(4)	33.3(2)	80.0(8)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	10.8(15)	18.7(3)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	33.3(2)	10.0(1)	11.5(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	1.4(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	0.0(0)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.0(0)	6.3(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	10.0(1)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(139)	100.0(16)	100.0(8)	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	99.9(183)
$\chi^2=48.98, df=20, P=.000, C=.46$							

careers. While 18.8 percent of best friends wanted managerial level careers, 11.5 percent of the students had plans for managerial positions. There was a similarity in occupational ambition between the students and their best friends. Respondents appeared to have decided on high status occupations for themselves and their best friends. However, about 9 percent of the students did not know the occupational interests of their best friends or simply had no answer for the question.

Academic achievement: The three measures used for determining the students' academic achievements were: grades obtained in primary school leaving certificate examination, whether students ever repeated any class (grade) in secondary school and the perceived grades they hoped to obtain in the final year of high school. These measures of academic achievement were compared with the occupational aspirations of the respondents.

Grades obtained in primary school leaving certificate examination had no influence on choice of careers by the students. While eighty-five percent of the students who obtained grade A in the examination, hoped to become professionals and business executives, 85.2 percent of students who had grade B expressed the same career ambitions. Even 8 percent (N=15) of respondents gave no answer as to the grades they obtained. It was presumed that this group either failed the examination or did not take it. However, 87

TABLE 27

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION
BY GRADE OBTAINED IN PRIMARY SCHOOL
LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

Occupational Aspiration	Grade Obtained in Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination				Total
	Grade A	Grade B	Fail	No Answer	
Professional/ Business Ex.	85.0(96)	85.2(46)	100.0(1)	86.6(13)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	13.2(15)	9.3(5)	0.0(0)	6.7(1)	11.5(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	0.9(1)	3.7(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.0(0)	1.8(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	0.9(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.7(1)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(113)	100.0(54)	100.0(1)	100.0(15)	99.9(183)
	$\chi^2=10.35$, $df=12$, $P=NS$, $C=.023$				

percent of the students who did not respond to the question had ambition for high-status careers.

The second measure of academic achievement was whether the student ever repeated a grade (class) in high school. It was predicted that a student who has repeated a class will have lower educational attainment and therefore lower occupational aspiration than the student who never repeated a class (grade). Students who reportedly had not repeated a class accounted for 72.7 percent of the total sample. 88.7 percent of these students showed high occupational aspiration, whereas 75.7 percent of the students who had repeated a class had ambitions to become professionals. Furthermore, 9.8 percent of students who never repeated a class and 16.3 percent of those who had repeated had aspiration for managerial jobs.

The third criterion used for academic achievement was the expected grades (Divisions) the respondents hoped to obtain in the West African School Certificate Examination which was compared with students' expressed occupational aspirations. It was predicted that students who obtain high grades will also have aspiration for high level occupations. As for perceived grades, 23 percent of the students were unsure of what grades they would obtain, but then 83.3 percent of these students who were unsure of their grades planned to enter high level occupations. Students

TABLE 28

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION BY EVER REPEATED A
CLASS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Occupational Aspiration	Ever Repeated a Class in Secondary School			Total
	No	Yes	No Answer	
Professional/ Business Ex.	88.7(118)	75.5(37)	100.0(1)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	9.7(13)	16.3(8)	0.0(0)	11.2(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	0.8(1)	4.1(2)	0.0(0)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.0(0)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	0.8(1)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(133)	99.9(49)	100.0(1)	99.9(183)
$\chi^2=7.92$, $df=8$, $P=NS$, $C=.20$				

TABLE 29

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION BY
EXPECTED GRADES IN WEST AFRICAN SCHOOL
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (IN PERCENTAGE)

Occupational Aspiration	Students' Expected Grades in West African School Certificate Examination					Total
	Division I	Division II	Division III	Don't Know	No Answer	
Professional/ Business Ex.	87.6(78)	84.0(42)	0.0(0)	83.3(35)	100.0(1)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	10.1(9)	12.0(6)	0.0(0)	14.3(6)	0.0(0)	11.5(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	2.2(2)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	100.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	0.0(0)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	2.4(1)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Total	99.9(89)	100.0(50)	100.0(1)	100.0(42)	100.0(1)	99.9(183)
$\chi^2=186.6, df=16, P=0.0, C=.50$						

who hoped to pass in Division I expressed high occupational ambitions--87.6 percent of them desired professional careers, 10.1 percent aspired to managerial level positions. Only 2.2 percent of them were interested in teaching in secondary schools, nursing and executive positions in the work force. Of the students who reported they would pass in Division II, 84 percent of them chose professional careers while 11 percent chose managerial jobs, 2 percent aspired for careers as secondary school teachers, nurses or medium level executive officers in the labor force. Reported grades did not reflect substantial difference in the choice of careers. The result here appears to show that the respondents attach great importance to high-status occupations. Even though 23 percent of the students were unsure of the grades they would make, they were nevertheless confident that they will make it to the top of the occupational hierarchy. Thus one suspects that the respondents might have exaggerated their academic strength as well as their occupational interests. Perhaps this exaggeration was not surprising. People tend to over-rate their perceived social positions when asked to rank themselves. Maybe a more realistic picture of career aspirations would emerge if respondents were confronted with the academic and economic obstacles they would have to overcome to attain their ambitions.

Schools of students: A comparison was made between the schools attended by the respondents and career plans. It was noted earlier that the quality of schools attended by students tend to influence their occupational plans and ultimately their occupational achievement. It was expected that students in high ranked schools will have higher occupational ambitions than students in medium and low ranked schools. (See chapter 3 for the criteria on which ranking was based.) The chi-square ($X^2=48.26$, $df=20$, $P=.000$) was significant. However, an examination of the table (Table 30) showed no consistent pattern of association between school and occupational aspiration. With the exception of School 1 and School 2 (ranked high in prestige) which showed high aspiration scores in the direction predicted, the scores among the remaining schools were not in the direction predicted. All students in School 1 aspired to professional careers, while 93.5 percent of students in School 2 desired the same professional careers. School 6, which was ranked lowest, showed a high score of 90 percent of the students intended to enter professional careers. Eighty-five percent of students in School 4 (ranked high in prestige) aspired to enter professional occupations, while 88.5 percent of students in School 3 (ranked medium in prestige) had similar plans. School 5 (medium ranked school) had the lowest aspiration in professional category. Fifty-five percent of the students hoped to enter professional

TABLE 30

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION (I) BY SCHOOL

Occupational Aspiration	School of Students						Total
	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6	
Professional/ Business Ex.	100.0(27)	93.5(29)	88.5(23)	85.0(34)	55.2(16)	90.0(27)	85.2(156)
Business Mgr.	0.0(0)	6.5(2)	11.5(3)	10.0(4)	37.9(11)	3.3(1)	11.5(21)
Sec. School Teacher/ Nurse/Ex. Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.5(1)	0.0(0)	6.7(2)	1.6(3)
Pri. School Teacher/ Clerical Officer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.5(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.5(1)
No Answer	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.9(2)	0.0(0)	1.1(2)
Total	100.0(27)	100.0(31)	100.0(26)	100.0(40)	100.0(29)	100.0(30)	99.9(183)
$\chi^2=48.26, df=20, P=.000, C=.46$							

occupations, while 37.9 percent planned for managerial level careers. It must be observed that girls' schools showed lower occupational expectations than boys' schools. Schools 4 and 5 were girls' schools while School 6 was coeducational. The rest were boys' schools. One suspects that the high occupational expectations in School 6 might have been influenced by the responses of male students. The result here appears to confirm the early finding that sex of students had effect on occupational aspiration. Girls showed lower occupational expectations than boys. The sex difference in career plans seemed to have been carried over to effect aspirations on schools attended by boys and girls.

An explanation of this sex difference might be that in the Nigerian labor force, women are still very much under-represented in top level professional and managerial positions. For instance, only two mothers of respondents in this study were in professional occupations. Although educational aspiration of girls in the sample was as high as the aspiration of boys, it seemed that girls, while interested in acquiring higher education overlooked the connection that higher education would open up for them opportunities for high status positions in the labor force. The responses of the girls regarding occupational plans could be attributed to their awareness of the prevailing ethos of male-dominance in top level occupations and positions

in the government and private sectors of the economy rather than to lack of confidence in their ability to prepare for these positions.

Summary of Occupational Aspiration

An analysis of the occupational aspiration of the students was done through cross-tabulation of eleven variables that were involved in the analysis of educational aspiration. Three of the eleven variables, sex, occupational aspiration of best-friend and schools of students, were related to occupational aspiration. More boys than girls chose high level occupations in the professional and managerial categories. Also students in boys' schools tended to choose more high level occupations than students in girls' schools. The explanation advanced for the sex difference in occupational plans was that men still dominate in top level positions in government and business.

Occupational aspiration of best friend was related, although not strongly, to the occupational aspiration of the students. The students expressed similar occupational ambitions for high-status careers as their best friends. It seemed to the writer that the students and their best friends reinforce one another in terms of future career plans.

The other variables, age, residence, educational attainment and occupations of parents, number of siblings, were not related to occupational aspiration. Regardless

of age, most of the students entertained hopes of achieving high status careers. Socioeconomic status of the students whose indices were education and occupations of parents was not related to aspiration. Students of highly educated parents in high status occupations had the same levels of aspiration as students of poorly educated and illiterate parents. Contrary to series of studies in Western societies which show that socioeconomic status of students is highly related to aspirations, the finding in the present study of no difference between socioeconomic status and aspiration is supported by some studies conducted within African societies. This phenomenon has been attributed to flexible social mobility mechanisms in developing societies by which in the past and to some extent in the present many persons from humble backgrounds have risen through education to positions of power in society. The incentive among students of poor parents to success is generated by the fact that many of the people in power today were similarly situated but were able to make it to the top by a combination of luck and hard work. It must be observed however, that the odds against students from humble backgrounds obtaining higher education and ultimately top level jobs are greater than what they were twenty years ago. Competitions for available scholarships and financial aids are tougher than they were in the past because demands have outstripped resources. Moreover, scholarships in the past,

especially during the colonial administration, were awarded solely on academic achievement and merit, but now social, political, ethnic and regional loyalties have assumed great significance in awarding of scholarships.

Residence of students was another variable which was not associated with occupational aspiration. Although the majority of the respondents reported residing in urban areas, the small number of students whose background was rural exhibited the same high level of ambition for high status careers as students from urban areas. The lack of difference in aspiration between urban and rural students might be due to the fact that all students in the sample attended urban schools and might have been equally exposed to urban environment and opportunities. This is a mere conjecture since on the average as has been shown every student appeared to have set a high occupational aspiration for himself.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This research was concerned with the educational and occupational aspirations of high school seniors in Benin City, Nigeria. Six secondary schools participated in the survey. Several variables, mostly demographic in nature, were examined to determine their influence on the aspirations of the respondents. Nigeria is on the threshold of full industrialization. The road to industrialization requires highly skilled manpower and a diversified economy. This study attempted to examine and assess the educational and career goals of secondary school students who in a few years would play a significant role in implementing the government's social and economic programs.

The survey found a high level of aspiration among the students. Their aspirations are perhaps an indication of the optimism and self-confidence they have for the roles they hope to play as future leaders. The expectations of the students appeared unduly high. This might be due to the fact that in studies of this nature where people are allowed the freedom to rank themselves, they tend to rank their perceived future statuses higher than they will be. For instance, studies show that when people are asked to

rank themselves according to perceived social status, they tend to rank themselves higher in social status than they actually are when compared with their economic positions. Hyman showed that in terms of economic status, "the low class tends to raise its social class more than one step higher whereas the lower middle people tend to raise themselves only one step to the middle class level."¹

Although the students in this study were asked to indicate their educational and career goals, it must be conceded that educational and career choices are indirectly related to perceived future social status. Thus high educational and occupational ambitions would mean aspirations to high social status. Following Hyman's finding, it is safe to suspect that the students might have over-rated their future educational and career goals.

In a study of 9th and 12th grade students in four large Kansas City high schools, Bennett and Gist have shown a high level of "fantasy" in educational and occupational aspirations among urban students. Bennett and Gist noted that the aspirations of students appeared unrealistically high.² According to the writers, whereas

¹Herbert H. Hyman, "The Relation of the Reference Group to Judgements of Status," Class, Status and Power, Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.) (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1953), p. 269.

²William S. Bennett, Jr. and Noel P. Gist, "Class and Family Influences on Student Aspiration," Social Forces 43 (December 1964), p. 169.

the national average for college enrollment among urban students was 47 percent, about 71 percent of the students in the sample had intentions to attend college after high school.³ In the present study, 49 percent of the students aspired to attend university. The current enrollment figures in university in Nigeria are not available. However, if one takes into consideration that about three out of ten students who finish primary school go on to high school, it is safe to assume that enrollment in high school should reflect university attendance. Hence, one suspects that the overall educational and occupational aspirations of the students were unrealistically high.

Implications of the Study

The high levels of aspirations found in this study among students from high and low socioeconomic backgrounds seem to indicate that many students, especially students from low socioeconomic families, will take opportunities for higher education if offered to them. Recent government encouragement to students to acquire higher education, evidenced by scholarships and financial aids, appears to be having an effect on high educational aspirations for students who otherwise would not have the resources.

The same levels of high aspirations were found among

³Ibid., p. 170.

male and female respondents in the sample. For some years now female students have been encouraged to acquire higher education. In the 1975-80 Development Plan, the Bendel State government embarked upon a special program for higher education for girls by making scholarships and loans available to female undergraduates. According to the government "the special female award is designed to increase the number of female graduate teachers in secondary schools and teacher training colleges."⁴ This state government plan was aimed at supplying secondary schools with teachers. It is important that this government program continue and be expanded to enable more female students to attain higher education. The encouragement of the government for higher education for girls will assume great significance in the 1980's as many qualified teachers will be needed for secondary schools when students of the present Universal Primary Education program would be entering secondary schools. Furthermore, this study found that a high percentage of female students did not choose teaching as a career, many female students instead aspired to careers in medical and legal professions. One suspects that this low aspiration for teaching is due to the fact that teaching has not been made very attractive

⁴Midwestern State Programme 1975-80 of the Third National Development Plan 1975-80, Ministry of Economic Development, Benin City, Nigeria: Midwest Mass Communication Corporation, (May 15, 1975), p. 60.

in Nigeria as evidenced by the low status of teachers and the low remunerations given to them compared to their counterparts in other occupations with the same level of academic preparation. It is important that the academic preparations for teachers in both primary and secondary schools be upgraded to make it possible for teachers at both levels to earn university degrees.

Since many girls expressed desires for medical and legal careers, it is necessary also that girls be encouraged to train as doctors and lawyers; especially as women are under-represented in these two professions in Nigeria. Good quality of health care delivery system and legal services for a developing society need to be encouraged.

The result of this study of students in urban schools has implication for educators both in urban and rural areas. Regardless of socioeconomic background, the students appeared to be serious about their future education and occupations. These youngsters need guidance and counseling so that they can channel their ambitions to areas of ability and national needs. The lack of educational and vocational counseling programs in secondary schools in Nigeria poses a great problem for adolescents and parents. From the responses of the students about their career aspirations, there was an evidence of a high level of sophistication in the choice of several occupations that have not assumed great prominence in the Nigerian occupational

scene. Apart from the prestigeful occupations such as law, medicine and engineering, students chose with high frequency fields such as agronomy, aeronautics, agricultural mechanics, industrial art and designing. Perhaps these occupational areas are indicative of the social and economic exposure which the students have attained. These are areas of national needs in developing economies. Students need to be guided to understand the intellectual skills, discipline and preparations that are required to enter these occupations. Thus educational and vocational guidance and counseling should be established in all high schools, rural and urban to help students channel their abilities to realizable educational and occupational goals.

The Federal government program on mass education shown in the Universal Primary Education program is in the right direction for reducing illiteracy, encouraging national unity and economic progress. However, the expansion of primary education should be followed by a similar growth of secondary and tertiary institutions throughout the country in order to absorb thousands of students who will finish primary schooling. Moreover, the government should work towards a diversification of educational programs and the economy to absorb every level of school graduates of different skills and qualifications. As can be seen, this study indicates that very few students

want low-level jobs in the skilled, unskilled and manual occupations. It is a common knowledge that very few school leavers in Nigeria want manual jobs, especially farming, because most farmers have low status and earning power. Unless the government encourages farmers and modernizes the present system of farming, it will continue to be a less desirable occupation among Nigerian youths. Agriculture has been the mainstay of Nigerian economy. It is important that farming be made attractive for Nigerian youths. This can be achieved if the government can institute scientific and mechanized systems of agriculture and incorporate them into the programs of universities and schools of technology.

The tendency for developing nations to place great faith in education and to regard it as the panacea for social ills has been pointed out. Education for economic development and better quality of life has been the consistent aim of these nations. For instance, the government of Nigeria in its white paper on education, solemnly declared:

The five main national objectives of Nigeria as stated in the Second National Development Plan, and endorsed as the Policy on Education, are the building of: (1) a free and democratic society; (2) a just and egalitarian society; (3) a united, strong and self-reliant nation; (4) a great and dynamic economy; (5) a land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens.⁵

⁵Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education. Lagos, Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division, 1977, p. 4.

Undoubtedly, education is important for national development in that it helps to solve the problem of manpower needs. However, education cannot be assumed to have the solution to all areas of national concern. There is a tendency among education planners to overlook some side effects of education, namely, the creation of an educated and elite class whose life styles are different from the styles of life of their counterpart who did not go to school, and the emergence of social and economic inequality. The social and economic rewards that accrue to education in Nigeria are very high. It is not surprising that every Nigerian youth regards education as the way to these rewards. Students who are unable to obtain higher education either through lack of ability and motivation or through lack of financial resources will constitute a social class vis-a-vis students who go on to higher education. Although the government has assumed the responsibility for the education of all children at the primary level, secondary and university education which is crucial for upward mobility is at present left to parents, while the government occasionally offers financial assistance to some deserving students. Admittedly, there is a limit to which a developing nation can stretch its resources to educate its citizens because other social programs require equal attention. If the greater burden of financing higher education is borne by parents, it

means that only wealthy and well placed parents can afford higher education for their children. This situation will defeat the idea of equality of educational opportunity. It will in fact establish a privileged class who will pass on its social position to its children.

Social scientists have pointed out the fallacy of the notion that education is the way to upward mobility. Anderson's study, which was reviewed in chapter two, noted that education was but one factor in social mobility. He observed that an increase in educational opportunity does not necessarily mean a decrease in social inequality.⁶ Boudon has also shown that equality of educational opportunity does not reduce inequality of social opportunity.⁷ At the end of World War II, Western and industrialized societies embarked upon massive educational programs aimed at providing educational opportunities for the lower class. It was hoped that educational opportunity would lead to social equality between the lower and the upper classes. Boudon noted that despite the educational gains of the lower class, social inequality did not decrease. He attributed this phenomenon to economic inequality which persisted between the lower class and

⁶Anderson, "A Skeptical Note on Educational Mobility," p. 569.

⁷Boudon, Education, Opportunity and Social Inequality," p. 193.

the upper class.⁸ In other words, education was not able to improve the social status of the lower class as long as the upper class held on to its economic power and privilege.

Modern Nigeria seems to pursue the social pattern which Western societies followed after World War II; that is, the government of Nigeria has begun a massive educational program the purpose of which is to provide equality of educational opportunity and bridge the gap between the developed and the less developed parts of the country. At this time, the success of the government plan is difficult to predict but it does point out the awareness of the educational and social inequity in the country.

It was pointed out that the Nigerian social system is fluid and lacks certain elements of Western societies. Many Nigerians have been trained in Western institutions of higher learning and have begun to adopt the life styles of Western societies. There is a growing social consciousness among the elite as they look upon themselves as privileged. The elite, one assumes, would want to retain their privileges and pass them on to their children. The best way to pass on the privileges is to ensure that their children receive a good education. Children of the elite have better opportunity of obtaining higher education than children of poor parents. The elite can afford to

⁸Ibid., p. 195.

educate their children. These children also have better chances of completing their education when they start because parents help them with their school work and often engage private tutors for them. Thus, in common entrance examinations to high school and university, these students do better than children of poor parents, and are over-represented in high schools and universities. Hence it is safe to predict that the noted fluidity of the social system is likely to solidify in the near future, creating inequality of opportunity. The government should make equality of opportunity at higher educational levels a reality by financing the education of students from poor homes who have the ability to benefit from university education.

Sewell and Shah have noted the influence of social class in college attendance. These writers showed that high socioeconomic status parents are more likely than low socioeconomic status parents to have college plans for their children.⁹ The impact of parental encouragement on college plans has also been noted by Kahl. According to Kahl students who were encouraged by parents to attend college, had plans to enroll in college, while students of similar ability who were not encouraged by parents had no college plans.¹⁰ The present study showed no significant difference in

⁹Sewell and Shah, "Social Class, Parental Encouragement, and Educational Aspirations," p. 564.

¹⁰Kahl, "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of 'Common Man' Boys," p. 203.

educational aspiration among the students whose parents were educated and students of poorly educated and illiterate parents, both showed the same aspiration to obtain university education. It must be observed, however, that aspiration is one thing and actual plans are another.

Hence, one suspects that although there was no difference in educational aspiration, there might be differences in actual plans for university education among the students.

Several factors account for actual plans and attendance at the university level. Parents, for instance, who are well educated are likely to encourage their children to have a university education. Even if poorly educated parents do encourage their children to obtain a university education, there might be a difference in the type of encouragement by both parents. Well educated parents may value university education as a means to maintain the family social status, while poorly educated parents may view a university education for their children as a means to rise from their low social status. While well educated parents are more likely to bring their encouragement to actuality, financial strictures are likely to prevent children of poor parents from realizing their ambitions.

Apart from the financial aspect of higher education, ability and motivation are equally important in university education. Since abilities are usually unequal among

students, there are students who do not have the intellectual ability to benefit from university education. Such students should not consider themselves a failure but should be encouraged to apply themselves to other creative avenues. This means that the government should open up other avenues of mobility so that students who cannot obtain university education can have on-the-job training and experience to move up in the occupational structure. The reason education has been regarded as the only source of social mobility among Nigerian students is because government and private employment agencies place great importance on academic credentials. One believes that if less emphasis is given to credentials and more stress on the acquisition of job related skills, many students will adjust their educational and career ambitions according to ability, interest and needs.

Direction for Future Research

Since only students participated in this study, it would be necessary for future studies to include parents in order to compare the levels of aspirations students have for themselves with the aspirations parents have for them. A recent study has shown that parents ideally have high educational aspirations for their children.¹¹ The parents surveyed in the study wanted nothing less than

¹¹Imoagene, Social Mobility in Emergent Society, p. 282.

secondary school education for their first sons and/or daughters. Also, every respondent, especially among those in high-status categories, wanted university education for his sons and daughters. According to the author, the response of the subjects "reflects the belief now widespread that education holds the key to social mobility."¹² Because the study just mentioned consisted of a sampled elite and did not include non-elites, as well as children, a future study in this area should have a broader sample of parents of different socioeconomic status and their children. Such a sample will give a better and more accurate picture of aspirations and make comparison possible.

The present study does not claim that its result reflects the total picture of aspirations among Nigerian youth. The present study represented secondary schools in one urban center of Bendel State, Nigeria. The findings are limited in scope and therefore make generalization difficult. However, they do to some extent point to the general trend among secondary school students, in the state and in other parts of the country, to regard themselves as future elites of the country. Since students of this age group share the same educational experience and normally face similar occupational decisions after secondary schooling, one may safely assume that the results do reflect a general trend in students aspiring to high social

¹²Ibid.

status through education.

In order to understand more fully the influence of the variables examined in this study and to attempt some generalization, future studies need to be longitudinal in nature so that aspirations expressed now by the students will be compared with actual achievements ten years later. Longitudinal studies will help to determine whether goals expressed now are passing fancies or are actually pursued and attained.

It should be noted, moreover, that this study has opened opportunities for further investigations in this important area of educational and occupational aspirations in an industrializing society.

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APPENDIX A

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PROFESSIONAL
OCCUPATIONS ASPIRATION
NUMBER 1 BY SEX

TABLE 31

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL
(PROFESSIONS) ASPIRATION
NUMBER I BY SEX

Profession	Sex of Student		Total
	Male	Female	
Medical Doctor	17.5(32)	14.7(27)	32.6(59)
Lawyer	12.0(22)	13.7(25)	26.0(47)
Engineer	9.3(17)	0.5(1)	9.9(18)
Business Executive	1.6(3)	2.2(4)	3.9(7)
College Professor	6.5(12)	3.3(6)	9.9(18)
Other Professions*	7.1(13)	10.4(19)	17.7(32)
Total	54.0(99)	44.8(82)	100.0(181)

*Accountant, agriculturist, aeronaut, architect, biochemist, linguist, psychologist, and sociologist.

APPENDIX B

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION NUMBER II BY SEX

TABLE 32

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION NUMBER II BY SEX

Profession	Sex of Student		Total
	Male	Female	
Secondary School Teacher	10.9(20)	2.7(5)	14.1(25)
Primary School Teacher	6.0(11)	9.8(18)	16.4(29)
Nursing	4.9(9)	25.1(46)	31.1(55)
Clerical Officer	29.0(53)	8.2(15)	38.4(68)
Total	50.8(93)	45.8(84)	100.0(177)

APPENDIX C

COPY OF THE LETTER WRITTEN TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY,
MILITARY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE SEEKING
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENIN CITY

St. Charles Catholic Church
Ubulu-Uku
Bendel State, Nigeria
August 21, 1978

Permanent Secretary
Military Administrator's Office
(Public Service Matters Department)
P.M.B. 1081
Benin City
Bendel State of Nigeria

Application for Permission to Enter Selected
Secondary Schools in Benin City for Purpose
of Research

Sir:

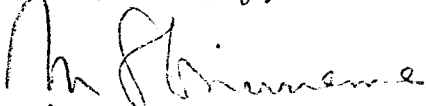
I am a Nigerian priest from Bendel State and a graduate student in Loyola University of Chicago, U.S.A. I am conducting a research for a doctoral dissertation on "The Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Final Year Students in Selected Secondary Schools in Benin City."

I wish to apply through your office for permission to enter the following secondary schools in Benin City for the purpose of giving out the questionnaires for the research project:

1. Edo College, Benin City
2. Bishop Kelly College, Benin City
3. Eghosa Grammar School, Benin City
4. Iden College, Benin City
5. Idia College, Benin City
6. Edokpolor Grammar School, Benin City

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

I remain,
yours faithfully,


(Rev.) Michael S. Onwueme

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS OF THE SCHOOLS BY THE
PERMANENT SECRETARY ASKING FOR THEIR
COOPERATION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



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MILITARY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE
(PUBLIC SERVICE MATTERS DEPARTMENT)
P.M.B. 1081
BENIN CITY
BENDEL STATE OF NIGERIA

Ref

Ref: No. CSM. 151/81.

.....|..... September, 1978.

The Principals,

Edo College, Benin City.

Idia College, Benin City.

Iden College, Benin City.

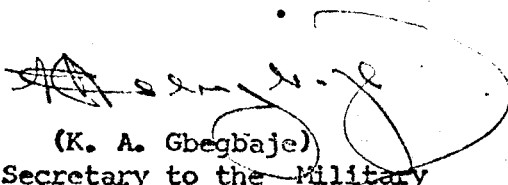
Bishop Kelly College, Benin City.

* Edokpolor Grammar School, Benin City.

Eghosa Grammar School, Benin City.

Rev. Michael Onwueme
Loyola University, Chicago

I am writing to inform you that it has been approved that the above-named may approach you for every assistance in connection with his research project.


(K. A. Gbegbaje)
for Secretary to the Military
Government and Head of Service.

*Edokpolor Grammar School could not take part in the study. Instead, Obakhavbaye Grammar School was contacted and it readily accepted to participate.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES
USED IN THE STUDY

I am Rev. Michael Onwueme, a graduate student in Loyola University of Chicago, U.S.A. I am conducting a study on "The Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Secondary School Seniors in Benin City, Nigeria," for a doctoral dissertation. I would like to know what your aspirations are after you finish your secondary education.

Please answer the following questions as truthfully and accurately as possible. In the multiple choice questions, check the most appropriate answer by a tick in front of the answer (like this ✓). In the open-ended questions write your answers boldly in your own words. Do not write your names on the papers. This study is confidential, your identity will be protected. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

1. Name of School _____
2. What is your sex? Male _____ Female _____
3. Your age at last birthday
 1. 14 years or under _____
 2. 15 years _____
 3. 16 years _____
 4. 17 years _____
 5. 18 years or older _____
4. Place of birth _____
5. Do your parents live in
 1. A village _____
 2. A town _____
 3. A city _____

6. What is the name of the place? _____
7. Number of years in school (include primary and secondary schools)
1. 11 years _____
 2. 12 years _____
 3. 13 years _____
 4. 14 years _____
 5. 15 years or more _____
8. What was your grade in the Primary School Leaving Certificate examination?
1. _____ A
 2. _____ B
 3. _____ Fail
9. Since you started your secondary school education, have you ever repeated a class?
1. _____ Yes
 2. _____ No
10. If "yes" to question 9, what class was that? _____
11. Considering your present school performance, what grade do you think you would make in the School Certificate examination?
1. _____ Division I
 2. _____ Division II
 3. _____ Division III
 4. _____ G.C.E. Pass
 5. _____ Don't know

12. What level of education would you like to have attained ten years from now?

1. _____ Completed secondary school
2. _____ Higher School Certificate (HSC)
3. _____ University education
4. _____ Post-graduate education
5. _____ Other

13. What occupation would you like to enter in ten years from now, if you are entirely free to choose?
(e.g. Primary school teacher, university professor, medical doctor, lawyer, etc.)

14. What occupation would you expect to get assuming you are unable to continue with your studies beyond your present level? (e.g. primary school teacher, secondary school teacher, office clerk, nurse, etc.)

15. What factor influenced your choice of occupation?

1. _____ Security
2. _____ Prestige
3. _____ Good condition of service
4. _____ Salary
5. _____ Opportunity for promotion
6. _____ Other
7. _____ Don't know

16. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

1. _____ No brothers and sisters
2. _____ One brother, no sisters
3. _____ One sister, no brothers
4. _____ One brother, one sister
5. _____ Two or more brothers and/or sisters

17. What position are you in the family?

1. _____ First child
2. _____ Second child
3. _____ Third child
4. _____ Last child
5. _____ Other

18. What is your father's educational attainment?

1. _____ Primary School
2. _____ Secondary School / teacher training
3. _____ Higher School Certificate (HSC)
4. _____ National Certificate of Education (NCE)
5. _____ University
6. _____ No education
7. _____ Other

19. What is your mother's educational attainment?

1. _____ Primary school
2. _____ Secondary School / teacher training
3. _____ Higher School Certificate
4. _____ National Certificate of Education (NCE)
5. _____ University
6. _____ No education
7. _____ Other

20. What secondary school / teachers training did your father attend?

1. _____ Roman Catholic School
2. _____ Protestant School
3. _____ Government School
4. _____ Local Government School
5. _____ Other

21. What secondary school / teachers training did your mother attend?

1. _____ Roman Catholic School
2. _____ Protestant School
3. _____ Government School
4. _____ Local Government School
5. _____ Other

22. What type of post-primary school did your father attend?

1. _____ Secondary grammar school
2. _____ Teacher training college
3. _____ Technical/Trade school
4. _____ Other
5. _____ None

23. What type of post-primary school did your mother attend?

1. _____ Secondary grammar school
2. _____ Teacher training college
3. _____ Technical/trade school
4. _____ Other
5. _____ None

24. What is your father's occupation? _____
25. What is your mother's occupation? _____
26. Give the name of your best friend. _____
27. In what class is he/she in school? _____
28. Would you consider him/her academically
1. _____ An excellent student
 2. _____ A good student
 3. _____ An average student
 4. _____ Below average
 5. _____ A poor student
29. What educational level would he/she like to have attained ten years from now?
1. _____ Completed secondary school
 2. _____ Higher School Certificate (HSC)
 3. _____ University education
 4. _____ Post-graduate education
 5. _____ Other
30. What occupation would he/she like to enter ten years from now if he/she is entirely free to choose? (e.g. primary school teacher, university professor or medical doctor, lawyer, etc.) _____
31. What occupation would he/she expect to get assuming he/she us unable to continue with his/her studies beyond his/her present educational level? (e.g. primary school teacher, secondary school teacher, office clerk, nurse, etc.)

32. What is his/her father's educational attainment?
1. _____ Primary school
 2. _____ Secondary school / teacher training
 3. _____ Higher School Certificate (H.S.C.)
 4. _____ National Certificate of Education (N.C.E.)
 5. _____ University
 6. _____ No education
 7. _____ Other
33. What is his/her mother's educational attainment?
1. _____ Primary school
 2. _____ Secondary school teacher training
 3. _____ Higher School Certificate (H.S.C.)
 4. _____ National Certificate of Education (N.C.E.)
 5. _____ University education
 6. _____ No education
 7. _____ Other

34. What factor influenced your friend's choice of occupation?

1. _____ Security
2. _____ Prestige
3. _____ Good conditions of service
4. _____ Salary
5. _____ Opportunity for promotion
6. _____ Other
7. _____ Don't Know

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Michael S. Onwueme
has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Steven I. Miller, Director
Associate Professor, Foundations, Loyola

Dr. John Wozniak
Professor, Foundations, Loyola

Dr. Rosemary V. Donatelli
Associate Professor, Foundations, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of
the dissertation and the signature which appears below
verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been
incorporated and that the dissertation is now given
final approval by the Committee with reference to content
and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

August 27, 1980
Date

Steven I. Miller
Director's Signature