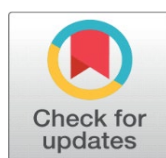
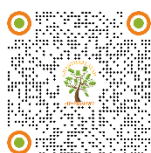


# PARENTAL BACKGROUND AS DETERMINANT OF CAREER CHOICE AMONG STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES, ACCRA, GHANA

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to examine how parental background variables (education, occupation and income) serve as determinants of career choice among the students of the University of Professional Studies, Accra. The simple random technique was used to select 200 respondents for this study. The Parental Variable and Career Choice questionnaires were used in collecting data. Descriptive statistical tests were used in analyzing data with the aid of the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software. Frequency distribution tables, pie chart and bar graph, binomial test, chi square and Mann-Whitney test were used to fulfil the objectives of the study. The results showed that both parental educational and occupational background have influence on the career choice of the students. Parental income however, did not prove to have any influence on career choice. Gender difference was also not found to influence career choice amongst target population. It was concluded that, parental educational and occupational background have an influence on students' career choice but parental income was not found to determine students' career choice. It is, therefore, recommended that parents and other stakeholders in career development of students take into consideration influence of parental education and occupation on career development of students and use them in guiding, shaping, educating, and introducing students to surge into the world of career interest exploration and career choice. Students should be encouraged to choose role models whose educational and occupational levels placed them high on good career progression to become their images of inspiration in career choice and preference.

**Keywords:** Career Choice, Parent's Income, Parent's Education, Parent's Occupation and Career Interest Exploration

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Career choice can be anxiety provoking to an individual as there are more job seekers than the available jobs. The anxiety emanates from transition from school to the world of work for those in school when young people begin to think about what they can do for themselves to earn income; this has become one of the crisis moments in the life of adolescents and even some adults. Many people find it difficult to make career choice because they do not get the guidance and counselling from either the school or the home able to excel through education/ Others too fail to embrace the chances that life presents to them and focus on other areas of their life

that are not profitable. The inability of some parents and caregivers to provide the needed guidance and information in the career development of their wards mostly leads to the unprepared and unplanned career preference and choice of children. The educational curriculum in most countries is also not geared towards the industries which make it difficult for the students to develop career through their education. This is one of the major problems for most African youth in school [UN Document \(n.d.\)](#).

The case is no different from Ghana where the culture of career guidance, preference and choice is not prominent especially among the educated elite. Career development is not something new in Ghana. The traditional educational set up allowed parents to impact values and norms of the society into their children. They also introduced their children to the available occupation within their community which became their career. Children learned farming, fishing, hunting, black smith, wood crafting and most of the skillful works at the time.

The inception of western education has instilled in the youth of the 21st Century a different view about the world of work. The youth now go through the educational system and wants to be employed into industries. Most youth are exposed to low or no career guidance and counselling in identifying their personality, values, and abilities to aid them in making career choice. They do not have much knowledge on the subjects to choose that will help them in pursuing the career they want to do. The situation is worse off when parents also do not have the knowledge and information to help their children in developing their career. The Ghanaian educational system does not incorporate effective measures to help guide the youth into the right profession [Ministry of Education \(2015\)](#). The youth's inability to select appropriate programme at the Senior High School through to the tertiary level is likely to lead them into a wrong career path. Parents and school counselling units therefore, have an important role to play in career related decisions students make in life more especially choice of programme that may lead to their preferred profession. Parents should spend quality time with their children to know and understand their interests, passions, strengths, and skills related to available careers.

Parents serve as major influence in the education, training, and provision of knowledge about career preference and choice of their children. This helps the children to build their self-concept and values towards work and life. Parental background has a lot of influence on the achievements of their children [Obiyo & Eze \(2015\)](#). Parents are the role models for their children and their interaction with children makes a career impact in their lives. These interactions also help young people to form their attitude and perceptions towards work [Timkey \(2015\)](#)

Studies have shown that educational level of parents place a lot of expectation in shaping children's occupational choices [Natalie \(2006\)](#). The educational level and knowledge of parents help in choosing schools and programmes of study for students. According to [Henrietta & Wilsoro \(2016\)](#) parental education and family income are important predictors of learning experiences and by implication career choice of children. Some studies are of the view that, higher parental educational level will impact the children with a higher expectation to also attain higher educational levels, while children whose parents did not go to school at all or dropped out of the school in an early stage may not see the necessity in going to school [Obiyo & Eze \(2015\)](#).

Parents mostly owing to their financial status decide which activity and education that they will allow their children to engage in. Parents who can afford quality education for their children do so to prepare them for the career world. They

also engage their children in extra curriculum activities to open their mind to different occupational trends and experience. Parental income level has been found out to influence the kind of school that parents do send their children to and career aspirations of their children.

In most African homes, the financial status of a family accounts for gender disparities in the home. Parental income influence who to be educated and career influence of the youth especially the girl child. [Mortiner \(1992\)](#) cited in [Lazarus et al. \(2013\)](#) found out that parents with lower economic resource prefer to educate their male children as most cultures assume that the girl child will marry and the husband will be in charge of her life.

[Pfungst \(2015\)](#) found out in her study that parents with high income background are often associated with occupational prestige acquired through their occupation, provide their children with a greater knowledge and hence choice of professional experiences, whereas children from low income families base their career planning on known experiences, often limited to family and friends. This finding has indicated that parental income level does influence the knowledge on career preference and choice of children. Often times children who have strong will do not allow themselves to be carried away by their parents' income level.

Many research works [Anna \(2016\)](#), [Tope \(2011\)](#) have been conducted on the influence of parents and culture in career choice of the youth but few research works have been done on the role of parental background in career choice. This study therefore, intends to investigate which parental background variables do influence career choice and preference among tertiary institutions with special focus on University of Professional Studies Accra (UPSA) students.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.**

The main theoretical framework chosen to support this study is Developmental Career Theory by Donald Super.

### **Developmental Career Theory**

Donald Super's Developmental Career theory emphasizes how personal experiences interact with occupational preferences in creating one's self-concept. To Super, the self-concept is simply the belief system of the individual. One of Super's greatest contributions to career development was his emphasis on the importance of developing a self-concept. Based on this assumption, Super asserted that career choice is a lifelong process that develops from infancy through one's interaction with the environment and not a one-time decision that one takes. He, therefore, proposed five stages of career development. The stages are the Growth stage, the Establishment stage, Exploration stage, Maintenance Stage and Decline stage, which starts from birth to around age 30 years. During this period, the child's life solely depends on the parents. They learn from the parents to build their self-concept. Parents also help their children to identify and develop their interest and values through their interaction with the child. Most decisions taken concerning the child's life depend mostly on the parents' educational and level of income, and occupational background. Parents who have knowledge about the interest of the talent exhibited by the child help the child to develop that talent. Where necessary, a parent may get the child the required resources that will help the child develop the interest.

The Super's Career Development theory is, therefore, relevant to the current study since it revolves around the notion that, learning and experiences one encounters during growth influence the beliefs and principles that guide the career

preference and choice of individuals. Parents are the first role models for their children and also have a greater influence on career development of their children. The role of parents in their children's career aspiration, preference, choice and practice cannot be under estimated.

## **2.1. STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS**

The following hypotheses were to be tested in the interest of the study's objectives

- Parental educational level has a significant influence on students' career choice.
- The occupation of parents has a significant influence on students' career choice.
- The income level of parents has a significant influence on students' career choice.
- A significant difference exists between males and females in terms of influence from parental background.

## **3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The survey research method was used for the study. A survey method involves the collection of data to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject matter under investigation in a social phenomenon. The Social survey can be considered as a process whereby quantitative facts are collected about the social aspects of a community's composition and its activities [Kumekpor \(2002\)](#). The choice of survey design will help in the study of the factors related to parental background as determinants of career choice among students of the University of Professional Studies, Accra.

### **3.1. TARGET POPULATION**

The population of the study was the final year students of the University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA). The final year students of the university were chosen because they were about to complete their programmes of study and getting ready for the job market. They had also gone through a two- month internship programme as part of their academic curriculum practical training and have had a feel of the working environment. It was believed that, they may be honest in providing information regarding the parental background variables that influenced their choice of programmes and invariably preferred career. The final year students were also seen as transiting from adolescence to adulthood and therefore, constitute available student population for the study which was 1,587 [UPSA Academic Affairs Unit \(2016\)](#)

### **3.2. SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

A total of 1,587 final year students composed the target population. Out of this, a sample size of 200 participants was randomly selected for the research. The simple random technique was used to select the subjects for the study.

### 3.3. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The [Udoh & Sanni \(2012\)](#) Parental Variable and Career Choice Questionnaire (PVCQ), was adapted for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to study the Parental Background Variables and the Career Choice of students. The questionnaire was in two sections. Section A sought for Personal Data on the students and their parents. This section included both open and closed ended questions. The section B is on a likert scale with 14 questions for the participants to choose from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The first five (5) questions in Section B sought the views of the respondents on how their parents' income level determines their career choice. The next four (4) questions were on parental educational level and last five (5) questions asked about how parental occupation has influenced their career choice. The 14 items on the instrument yielded a test re-test reliability coefficient for parents' income, 0.55 for parental level of formal education, and 0.87 for parents' occupation. These reliability coefficients ensured internal validity of the instrument [Udoh & Sanni \(2012\)](#)

### 3.4. DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH.

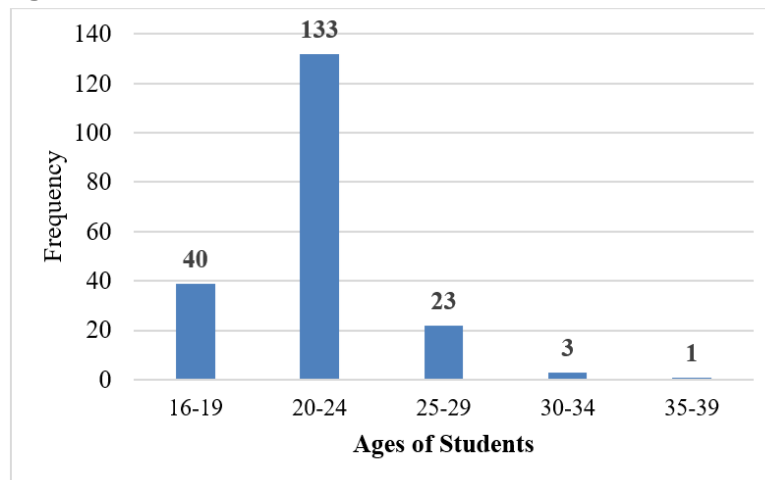
The responses on parental background variables from the students were analyzed using frequency distribution tables, pie and bar graphs, binomial, chi-square and Mann-Whitney tests.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

### Demographic Background of Students

The demographic background of the students including their age distribution, programmes being pursue, response on whether the students have arrived at a career choice or not and the career choice of students who have arrived at a career choice are represented in figures and tables.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** Age Distribution of Responded Students

[Figure 1](#) displays a bar graph of the age distribution of students' who took part in the study. It is observed that 133 students representing two-thirds of the sample aged 20-24 years. Also about 40 of the students who took part in the study aged 16-

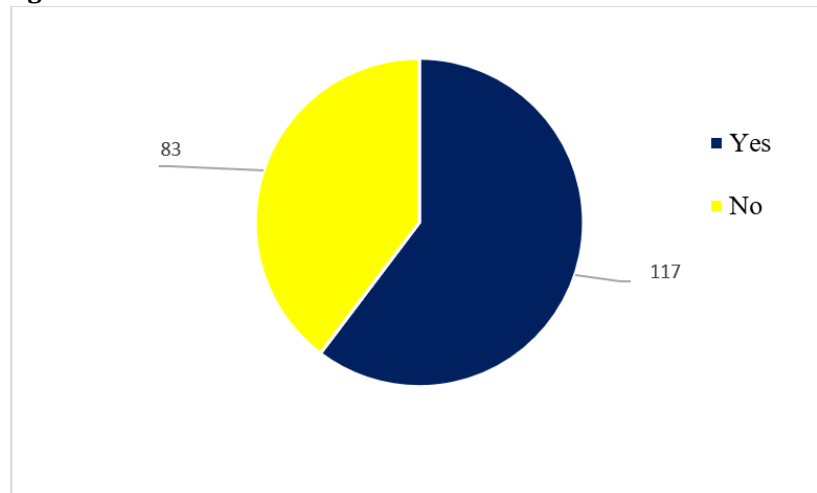
19 years. It is interesting to note that almost all the students partaking in the study were less than 30 years (98%). Only a few (2%) of the students were above 30 years. This shows that the study comprised of young adults and teenagers/adolescents who need a career for survival.

**Table 1**

| Table 1 Frequency Distribution of Programmes Being Pursue by Students |            |              |
|---|------------|--------------|
| Programs  | Frequency  | Percent      |
| BSc Business Administration   | 105        | 52.5         |
| BSc Accounting  | 32         | 16.0         |
| BSc Banking and Finance   | 15         | 7.5          |
| BSc Marketing   | 9          | 4.5          |
| Public Relations  | 10         | 5.0          |
| IT  | 4          | 2.0          |
| Actuarial Science   | 2          | 1.0          |
| Law   | 13         | 6.5          |
| BSc Banking   | 4          | 2.0          |
| Non response  | 6          | 3.0          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>200</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Table 1 shows frequency distribution for the programmes being pursued by the students. The table shows that a little more than half (52.5%) of the students are offering Business Administration and it was followed by Accounting with (16%). The least programme offered was Actuarial Science with (1%) respondent rate. The Actuarial Science is science biased so only a few students pursue it. Business programmes recorded the greater majority since they are the main programmes offered in the UPSA.

**Figure 2**



**Figure 2** Responses on Whether the Student has Arrived at a Career Choice or Not

Figure 2 shows a pie chart for the responses of students on whether they have arrived at a career choice. It is observed that, majority (117) of the students responded that they have arrived at a career choice.

Table 2 is the frequency distribution of the students who have arrived at a career choice. From Figure 2, we observed that 117 students said they have arrived at their career choices whilst in school.

**Table 2**

| Table 2 Career Choices of Students Who Have Arrived at a Career Choice |            |              |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Profession   | Frequency  | Percent      |
| Accounting   | 33         | 28.2         |
| Banking  | 8          | 6.8          |
| Military   | 5          | 4.3          |
| Financial Analyst  | 19         | 16.2         |
| Lawyer   | 7          | 6.0          |
| Entrepreneur   | 23         | 19.7         |
| Administrative   | 4          | 3.4          |
| Marketing  | 6          | 5.1          |
| Public Relations Officer   | 12         | 10.3         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>117</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

It is observed from Table 2 that, 28.2% of the students who have arrived at career choice chose accounting profession. This is followed by (19.7%) students who have decided to be entrepreneurs. Over (16%) said they wanted to be financial analyst. 10.3% have decided on Public Relations Officer as their future profession. The banking sector recorded (6.8%). This was followed by (6%) who have decided on law profession. (5.1%) wants to do Marketing and 4.3 have decided on military. The administrative profession recorded the least number of students chosen (3.4%).

#### 4.1. ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL BACKGROUND

To identify the parental background impact on career choice among the target population, frequency distribution tables with percentages was used to identify the most frequent educational level, occupation, and income level of parents. Table 3-Table 6 display the parents' educational level, occupation, and income level.

**Table 3**

| Table 3 Parental Educational Level or Background |                   |            |                   |              |
|--|-------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Educational level                                | Fathers Frequency | Percent    | Mothers Frequency | Percent      |
| Primary/JHS                                      | 19                | 9.5        | 44                | 22.0         |
| Secondary  | 54                | 27.0       | 65                | 32.5         |
| College Diploma                                  | 38                | 19.0       | 31                | 15.5         |
| University Degree                                | 75                | 37.5       | 40                | 20.0         |
| Others   | 10                | 5.0        | 12                | 5.5          |
| Non Response                                     | 4                 | 2.0        | 8                 | 4.5          |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>200</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>200</b>        | <b>100.0</b> |

Table 3 shows parental educational level for the students. The first two columns indicate the fathers' educational level and the last two columns indicate that of the mothers. It is observed that approximately 38% of the students' fathers have attained a university degree (at least a first degree) and was followed by the secondary level with about (27%). Other educational level recorded (5%) and it is interesting to note that approximately (10%) of parents end their educational level

at Primary/Junior High School (JHS). The case was different with the mothers' educational level; the majority of mothers had their highest education up to Secondary level (32.5%) and was followed by Primary/JHS level (22.0%). It is worth noting that approximately (20%) of mothers have attained at least first degree. This shows mothers are also aspiring higher education and therefore can influence career preference and choice of students.

**Table 4**

| <b>Table 4 Father's Occupation/Profession</b> |                  |                |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Occupation</b>                             | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
| Engineer                                      | 31               | 15.5           |
| Accountant                                    | 8                | 4.0            |
| Doctor  | 15               | 7.5            |
| Professor                                     | 4                | 2.0            |
| Teacher                                       | 18               | 9.0            |
| Lawyer  | 12               | 6.0            |
| Trader  | 13               | 6.5            |
| Farmer  | 20               | 10             |
| Police  | 16               | 8.0            |
| Businessman                                   | 9                | 4.5            |
| Pastor  | 6                | 3.0            |
| Lecturer                                      | 2                | 1.0            |
| Administrator                                 | 2                | 1.0            |
| Others  | 32               | 16.0           |
| Non response                                  | 12               | 6.0            |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>200</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |

Fathers' occupation or profession are shown in Table 4 and it is worth noting that engineering profession represent the majority of the occupation of students' fathers. The farming occupation was recorded as the second with 10.0% and followed by the teaching profession (9 %.) Lecturing and administrators' profession were observed to record the least occupation of fathers for the students. Six percent (6%) of the students were not able to indicate the occupation of their fathers.

**Table 5**

| <b>Table 5 Mother's Occupation/Profession</b> |                  |                |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Occupation</b>                             | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
| Trader  | 60               | 30.0           |
| Teacher                                       | 15               | 7.5            |
| Farmer  | 13               | 6.5            |
| Seamstress                                    | 6                | 3.0            |
| Housewife                                     | 5                | 2.5            |
| Hairdresser                                   | 51               | 25.5           |
| Doctor  | 6                | 3.0            |
| Businesswoman                                 | 4                | 2.0            |
| Nurse   | 4                | 2.0            |
| Others  | 26               | 13.0           |
| Non response                                  | 10               | 5.0            |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>200</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |



**Table 5** displays the students' mothers' occupation or profession. It is observed that those whose mothers are traders constituted the majority (30%) and it was followed by the hairdresser (25.5%). It is shown that Nurse Profession and Business constituted the least occupation of the students' mothers. Students whose mothers' occupations are rare and grouped as others constituted almost (13%). Five percent (5%) of the students were not able to indicate the occupation of their mothers.

**Table 6**

| Table 6 Parents' Income Levels in Ghana Cedis |            |            |
|---|------------|------------|
| Income level (GHS)                            | Frequency  | Percent    |
| 0-999   | 56         | 28         |
| 1000-1999                                     | 28         | 14         |
| 2000-2999                                     | 34         | 17         |
| 3000-3999                                     | 14         | 7          |
| 4000-4999                                     | 12         | 6          |
| 5000 plus                                     | 24         | 12         |
| Non Response                                  | 32         | 16         |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>200</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Table 6** displays the frequency distribution of Parent's income levels of students in UPSA at the time of the research. It is observed from the table that (28.1%) of the students' parents earn below one thousand Ghana Cedis (GHS 1,000.00) and that form the majority of students interviewed. It also shows that 14.1% of the students' parents earn between GHS 1,000.00 and GHS 2,000.00 per month whilst (17.1%) of the students' parents earned between GHS 2,000.00 and GHS 3,000.00. It is worth noting that only few of the students' parents earned beyond GHS 3,000.00 per month. Sixteen percent (16.1%) of the students were not able to release information concerning their parents' monthly income.

## 4.2. ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL BACKGROUND TO CAREER CHOICES OF STUDENTS

To investigate whether parental background determines career choices of students' binomial test was employed for the analysis as shown in **Table 8**.

**Table 7**

| Table 7 Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Career Choices Based on Parental Background |     |      |                |         |         |
|---|-----|------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Career Choice   | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
| Parent's income   | 196 | 1.99 | 0.67           | 1.00    | 4.00    |
| Parent's education  | 196 | 2.49 | 0.75           | 1.00    | 4.00    |
| Parent's occupation   | 196 | 2.29 | 0.51           | 1.00    | 3.60    |

\*Nonresponse = 4 (four students didn't answer this questions)

**Table 7** shows descriptive statistics of students' scores of their career choices with respect to the three parental background variables (Income, Education and Occupation). It could be observed that, the mean score for parental income was 1.99, parental education was 2.49 and parental occupation was 2.29. These results showed some skewedness in the career choices with respect to parental background in education and occupation.

**Table 8** shows the Binomial test results for students' career choices with respect to parental background variables. The test value used was 2, which means

that if a student’s career choice score was less than or equal to 2, then he or she belongs to the group that says their career choice was not determined by their parental background (Group 1). Also, if a student’s career choice score was greater than 2, then he or she belongs to the group that said their career choice was determined by their parental background (Group 2). If parental background did not determine students’ career choice, then we expected Group 1 to be greater than or equal to Group 2 and vice versa if parental background determined students’ career choices.

**Table 8**

| <b>Table 8 Binomial Test for Career Choices of Students Based on Parental Background</b> |                 |          |                       |                   |                              |      |
|--|-----------------|----------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------|
| <b>Career Choice</b>   | <b>Category</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Observed Prop.</b> | <b>Test Prop.</b> | <b>Exact Sig. (2-tailed)</b> |      |
| Parent's income  | Group 1         | <= 2     | 119                   | 0.61              | 0.5                          | .003 |
|  | Group 2         | > 2      | 77                    | 0.39              |                              |      |
|  | Total           |          | 196                   | 1.00              |                              |      |
| Parent's education   | Group 1         | <= 2     | 60                    | 0.31              | 0.5                          | .000 |
|  | Group 2         | > 2      | 136                   | 0.69              |                              |      |
|  | Total           |          | 196                   | 1.00              |                              |      |
| Parent's occupation  | Group 1         | <= 2     | 57                    | 0.29              | 0.5                          | .000 |
|  | Group 2         | > 2      | 139                   | 0.71              |                              |      |
|  | Total           |          | 196                   | 1.00              |                              |      |

\*Group 1: Parental background does not determined their Career choice

\*Group 2: Parental background determined their Career choice

It could be observed from **Table 8** that in the career choice for parent’s income variable, the number of students who said their career choice was not determined by parental background (Group 1) was greater than those who said their career choice was determined by parental background (Group 2). Therefore, the proportion of Group 1 (0.61) was greater than the proportion of Group 2 (0.39). The Binomial test recorded a p-value of (0.003) which was less than the significance level (0.05). We, therefore, concluded that parental income does not determine students’ career choice.

In the case of parental education and occupation, it was observed that the number of students in Group 2 was far greater than the number of students in Group 1. This was clearly seen in their observed proportions; 0.31 against 0.69 for parental education and 0.29 against 0.71 for parental occupation. The Binomial test recorded a p-value of less than 0.001 in the two cases and this means that there was a significant difference in the proportions of the two groups. From the values obtained in the Binomial test, it can, therefore, be concluded that parents’ educational and occupational backgrounds determine students’ career choice. Parental income, however, did not determine students’ career choice.

### **4.3. ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL BACKGROUND AND CAREER CHOICE**

In establishing the relationship between parental background variables and career choices of students, the chi-square test for independent or association was used. The career choice variable was categorized into four levels, where 1= strongly disagree with parental background information, 2= disagree with parental

background information, 3= agree with parental background information and 4= strongly agree with parental background information.

**Table 9**

| Table 9 Cross Tabulation of Career Choice of Students Based on Parental Background |           |                     |           |            |       |
|--|-----------|---------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Career Choice  | Frequency | Parental Background |           |            | Total |
|  |           | Income              | Education | Occupation |       |
| Not parental background  | Observed  | 122                 | 63        | 60         | 245   |
|  | Expected  | 81.7                | 81.7      | 81.7       | 245   |
| Parental background  | Observed  | 78                  | 137       | 140        | 355   |
|  | Expected  | 118.3               | 118.3     | 118.3      | 355.0 |
| Total  | Observed  | 200                 | 200       | 200        | 600   |
|  | Expected  | 200.0               | 200.0     | 200.0      | 600.0 |

The study categorized the career choice scores into two groups namely; career choice not influenced by parental background and career choice influenced by parental background as displayed in Table 9. A cross tabulation of career choices verses parental background was performed to investigate if there were no relationship between the two categorical variables. If there were no relationship between the two categorical variables, then we expected the observed frequencies to be approximately equal to the expected frequencies. It can be inferred from Table 9 that in all the cells, the observed expected frequencies were not equal and therefore the need to proceed with the chi-square test for independence.

Table 10 showed the chi-square test for independent statistics. The table recorded a Pearson chi-square value of 50.77 and p-value less than 0.001 at two degrees of freedom. This means that there was some association or relationship between parental background and students' career choices. Therefore, it can be concluded that parental background influences or impacts students' career choices.

**Table 10**

| Table 10 Chi-Square Test for Independent or Association |                 |    |                   |
|---|-----------------|----|-------------------|
| Test  | Value/Statistic | df | p-value (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square                                      | 50.770          | 2  | .000              |
| Likelihood Ratio  | 50.640          | 2  | .000              |
| Linear-by-Linear Association                            | 39.849          | 1  | .000              |
| N of Valid Cases  | 600             |    |                   |

The Chi-square test results proved that a significant relationship existed between parental background and career choice. This may prove a point that parental income alone may not determine career choice but when it is paired with other variables, parental income may determine career choice of students.

#### 4.4. ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL BACKGROUND VARIABLES AND CAREER CHOICE OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS

**Table 11**

| Table 11 Summary of Ranks for Test of Career Choices by Gender |        |     |           |              |
|--|--------|-----|-----------|--------------|
| Career Choice  | Gender | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
| Parental Income  | Male   | 100 | 105.64    | 10458.50     |

|                            |        |     |        |          |
|----------------------------|--------|-----|--------|----------|
|                            | Female | 100 | 94.42  | 9441.50  |
|                            | Total  | 200 |        |          |
| <b>Parental Education</b>  | Male   | 100 | 92.75  | 9182.50  |
|                            | Female | 100 | 107.18 | 10717.50 |
|                            | Total  | 200 |        |          |
| <b>Parental Occupation</b> | Male   | 100 | 104.46 | 10341.50 |
|                            | Female | 100 | 95.59  | 9558.50  |
|                            | Total  | 200 |        |          |

Table 11 shows summary statistics of the ranks for male and female of the three parental background variables (income, education, and occupation) considered. It could be observed that the sum of ranks of males was greater than that of the females in the parental income level whilst the sum of ranks for females was greater than that of the males in both the parental education and occupation career choice level. This showed differences in the median scores in the three category and therefore the need to proceed with the Mann-Whitney test to find out if the differences were significant or not statistically.

**Table 12**

| <b>Table 12 Nonparametric Test Statistics for Career Choice by Gender</b> |                        |                           |                            |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Tests</b>  | <b>Parental Income</b> | <b>Parental Education</b> | <b>Parental Occupation</b> |
| Mann-Whitney U  | 4391.50                | 4232.50                   | 4508.50                    |
| Wilcoxon W  | 9441.50                | 9182.50                   | 9558.50                    |
| Z   | -1.38                  | -1.78                     | -1.10                      |
| p-value (2-tailed)  | .167                   | .076                      | .272                       |

Table 12 The Mann-Whitney test produced a p-value of 0.167 in parental income category, 0.076 in the parental education category and 0.272 in the parental occupation category. These three p-values were all greater than a significance level of 0.05. It, therefore, implies that, there were no significant differences in the median scores of the career choices of males and females in the three parental background variables.

## **5. DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS.**

### **5.1. DOES PARENTAL LEVEL OF EDUCATION INFLUENCE STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICE?**

The result of the study revealed that parents' educational background determines career choice of students' of the University of Professional Studies, Accra. This implies that the educational level of parents can have either a positive influence or negative influence on career choice of students. It can, therefore, be said that parental educational level serves as a motivation for the target population either intrinsically or extrinsically.

Taking into consideration Krumboltz et al. (1996) Social Learning Theory, we can observe that students associate their parents' educational background with their own life and decide on the kind of career to choose. By associating their life to that of their parents, the students look out for whether the parents' educational background has helped them to secure a good job and are paid well. This is what Krumboltz et al. (1996) termed as instrumental learning. The students watch and learn from their parents and this is termed as vicarious learning. In effect,

Krumboltz's theory explained the fact that we learn from people who are close to us and depending on whether they get reinforced or punish from what we see in parents lives, children (students) are motivated to model their lives according to certain behaviours they learn. This finding agrees with [Pfungst \(2015\)](#) that female students' aspirations were influenced by their parents educational background especially parents who had completed their secondary school studies. These students were more likely to aspire to attend university at the completion of their secondary education. [Udoh & Sanni \(2012\)](#) also conducted a study which supported the view that parents' educational backgrounds have influenced student's career choice. A similar study by [Alphonse \(2016\)](#), found that parents' educational background has influenced career choice.

[Mbagwu & Ajaegbu \(2016\)](#) found out in his study that teenagers whose parents were from higher educational background were more consistent and do not have much difficulties in making career choice when compared with those whose parents had low educational background. This finding by [Mbagwu & Ajaegbu \(2016\)](#) proved that educational level of parents put them in a position to better know their children's interest and for that matter help the students in making informed choice on the type of career. This was emphasized in [Articlesng \(2013\)](#) that, parental educational background has an influence on career choice. These findings make it necessary for parents to note the impact of their educational background on students and therefore try to factor it into helping individuals in developing their career. It is, therefore, important for parents to take critical notice of the developmental process of their children as indicated by Donald Super in his Career Development Theory. He laid emphasis on building the self-concept of individuals through the different stages of career development for them to be equipped with knowledge and skills to make career choices.

## **5.2. DOES OCCUPATION OF PARENTS HAVE SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICE?**

The result supports the second hypothesis that parents' occupational backgrounds determine students' career choice. This finding is supported by [Udoh & Sanni \(2012\)](#) who study found out that parents' occupational background has an influence on student's career choice. Other studies by [Noshina et al. \(2014\)](#) and [Alphonse \(2016\)](#) have also supported the finding that parents occupational background has an influence on career choice so was an article on [Articlesng \(2013\)](#). [Cinamon \(2001\)](#) study on father's unemployment and career related variables on the adolescent also supports the view that the occupation of parents has a significant effect on the adolescent child. Parental occupation has a role to play in the career choice and preference of students.

## **5.3. DOES INCOME LEVEL OF PARENTS INFLUENCE STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICE?**

The results of the study rejected the third hypothesis which stated that, parental income level has a significant influence on student's career choice. Parental income variable did not determine students' career choice. This finding means that students do not allow their parents income status to build their career. They rather look up to other factors in developing career.

This finding is supported by Krumboltz's claim that people benefit from chance factors which they did not plan for. He termed this as Happenstance. These chance factors may make the person benefit or loss from career. People's lives are affected

by the economy, culture, social setting, politics, education, resources available and the unique talents of the individual. These create opportunities for the individual and depending on how the person maximizes the opportunity he or she can make the best choices and succeed in life. The happenstance theory stipulates that it is not always that people are affected by what they learn or their genetic make ups but often times some chances that comes in the way of people make them change their choices for the good or bad. [Alphonse \(2016\)](#) also confirmed this finding that income alone may not actually influence career aspirations of students unless it is link to other parental variables like parental educational background and parental occupational background in his study on parental factors influencing career choice among form four students in Nairobi County.

Parental income has been seen not to be a determinant to career choice. Students should, therefore, look into their environment and into their lives to see what they can do to better their lives rather than making finance being a stumbling block to their career development.

#### **5.4. DOES PARENTAL BACKGROUND INFLUENCE SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALES AND FEMALES CAREER CHOICE?**

The study reveals that parental background variables (parental educational background, parental occupation, and parental income) have no significant influence on gender career choice. Although males scored high in parental income than females while females also scored higher makes in parental education and occupation than the females, the Mann-Whitney test proved that the difference between the males and females score was not significant. Super makes us understand that self-concept and maturity play important role in career development. Self-concept being the belief of individuals helps them to set their goals and aspirations in relation to their values, interest, abilities and needs in terms of career. Depending on the self-concept and ability at each stage in life, people master the knowledge and skills needed to accomplish tasks associated with their developmental stage. Education and technology has helped people to build their self-concept and maturity, sometimes even more than their age. This has changed the traditional norm of stereotyping certain career as for males and others for females. Hence, the finding of the current studies that parental background does not have an influence on gender. It is therefore, concluded that parental background has no impact on gender career preference and choice.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, parental educational background and parental occupation were found to determine career choice of the students of the University of Professional Studies, Accra. Parental income was not found to determine career choice of the students. Gender too was seen not to be affected by the parental background of the University of Professional Studies, Accra.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made for parents, teachers, school counsellors, and other educational stakeholders as follow;

- 1) Parents should take keen interest in the career development of their children and students by providing the necessary facilitative environment,

resources, and opportunities to motivate them pursue a career of their choice.

- 2) Parents should attach all seriousness to the practice of their profession since their professional background impacts career choice of children and students at various stages of their life and education.
- 3) Parents are to encourage their children and students to pursue any career of their choice irrespective of their gender. Students must be counselled to understand that, gender is an inherited attribute meant for self-development in all aspects of life and should not serve as a barrier to career choice and preference.
- 4) All schools should be mandated to get the services of guidance and counselling coordinator to assist students in identifying their career preferences especially in the use of career and occupational interest inventories to identify potential career inclinations of students for appropriate programme placement of students.
- 5) The social environment with opportunities such as scholarships, career skills training, career fairs and festivals, career role models, career counselling centres, and entrepreneurship training programmes, should be created for students to take advantage of and get themselves a career.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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