

# PEER PRESSURE, PARENTAL INFLUENCE AND SELF EFFICIENCY AS DETERMINANTS OF CAREER DECISION-MAKING ABILITY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OYO TOWN

AJAGBE, Seun Weyinmi (PhD)

[weyinmiscun@gmail.com](mailto:weyinmiscun@gmail.com)

ADISA, Adeola Precious

KAREEM, Kazeem Kayode

OLALEYE, Durodola Olusola

ADERINTO, Aduragbemi Elijah

Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education, Federal College of Education (SP), Oyo

## ABSTRACT

*Career decision-making ability among secondary school students remains a critical developmental challenge that significantly impacts their future educational and professional trajectories. Students in Oyo town face persistent difficulties in making informed career choices, often resulting in poor academic performance, misaligned career paths, and reduced life satisfaction. Despite the recognized importance of effective career decision-making during adolescence, there exists a significant gap in understanding how social and psychological factors collectively influence students' decision-making processes. This study investigated the effects of peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy on career decision-making ability among 300 secondary school students in Oyo town using a survey research design. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed significant relationships between career decision-making ability and all independent variables: peer pressure showed a negative correlation ( $r = -0.091$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), parental influence demonstrated a positive correlation ( $r = 0.167$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ), and self-efficacy exhibited the strongest positive correlation ( $r = 0.365$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The joint effect of these variables was statistically significant ( $R = 0.393$ ,  $R^2 = 0.154$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), explaining 15.4% of variance in career decision-making ability. Self-efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.713$ ), followed by parental influence ( $\beta = 0.470$ ), while peer pressure had a negative effect ( $\beta = -0.129$ ). The study recommends implementing self-efficacy development programs, parental engagement initiatives, and peer influence education to enhance students' career decision-making abilities.*

**Keywords:** Career Decision-Making Ability, Peer Pressure, Parental Influence, Self-Efficacy, Secondary School Students, Adolescent Development

## INTRODUCTION

Career decision-making ability represents a critical cognitive process that enables individuals to select and commit to viable career options while navigating complex educational and occupational landscapes (Gati et al., 2019). This multifaceted construct encompasses the capacity to gather relevant career information, explore various alternatives, evaluate personal preferences, and make informed choices about one's vocational future. Secondary school students face significant challenges in developing effective career decision-making abilities as they transition from adolescence to early adulthood, a period characterized by identity formation and increasing autonomy in decision-making processes. Research has consistently demonstrated that students with strong career decision-making abilities demonstrate reduced career indecision, greater educational persistence, enhanced academic motivation, and improved psychological well-being (Di Fabio et al., 2022).

Career decision-making ability encompasses a number of important factors that affect the calibre

and efficacy of career decisions. Occupational knowledge, goal choices, planning skills, problem-solving ability, and self-awareness are some of these dimensions. Students in secondary school that possess strong career decision-making skills are able to analyse their values, interests, strengths, and shortcomings and relate these personal characteristics to possible professional pathways (Falana et al., 2022). They are also able to devise practical plans, set reasonable career goals, and modify their approaches in response to challenges or evolving situations. The establishment of career decision-making skills in secondary school is especially important since it establishes the groundwork for subsequent academic and professional paths (Savickas & Porfeli, 2021).

Peer pressure emerges as a significant factor influencing adolescents' career decision-making ability, particularly during secondary education when peer relationships gain prominence in students' social development. Mahachi and Thompson (2020) opined that peer influence can manifest in various forms, including direct advice about career options, subtle social reinforcement of certain career choices, and the formation of collective attitudes toward specific occupations or educational pathways. Research has shown that adolescents often align their career aspirations with those prevalent within their peer groups, suggesting that peer networks can either expand or constrain students' exploration of career possibilities. Furthermore, peer relationships can influence students' self-perception regarding their abilities to succeed in particular career domains, thereby affecting their willingness to pursue specific educational or vocational paths (Olamide & lawaiye, 2023).

According to Akintola and Babalola (2021), the relationship between peer pressure and career decision-making ability is particularly complex among Nigerian secondary school students, where collective cultural orientations may amplify peer influence on individual decision-making processes. Students may experience pressure to pursue prestigious careers favored within their peer circles, even when these careers do not align with their personal interests or aptitudes. Conversely, supportive peer relationships can enhance career decision-making ability by providing emotional encouragement, information sharing, and constructive feedback during the career exploration process. The dual nature of peer influence necessitates a nuanced understanding of how peer dynamics specifically affect career decision-making abilities among secondary school students in Oyo town, where traditional collectivistic values intersect with emerging individualistic aspirations in career development (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2020).

Parental influence constitutes another crucial determinant of career decision-making ability among secondary school students. Ayodele and Johnson (2020) opined and attest that parents and guardians serve as primary socializing agents who shape children's career aspirations, expectations, and decision-making processes through various mechanisms, including direct career advice, role modeling, emotional support, and provision of career-related resources. Research indicates that parental educational background, occupational status, career expectations, and parenting styles significantly impact adolescents' career exploration behaviors and decision-making confidence. Supportive parental involvement characterized by autonomy promotion, information provision, and emotional encouragement has been associated with enhanced career decision-making abilities among adolescents across diverse cultural contexts (Sonnenberg et al., 2023).

Moreover, parental influence on career decision-making may be particularly pronounced due to cultural values emphasizing filial piety, family interdependence, and respect for authority figures. Secondary school students in Oyo town may experience significant parental pressure to pursue specific

career paths considered financially stable or socially prestigious, sometimes at the expense of personal interests or aptitudes. Additionally, socioeconomic factors may constrain parents' ability to provide adequate career guidance and resources, further complicating students' career decision-making processes. The interplay between traditional parental authority and adolescents' growing desire for autonomy in career decision-making creates a complex dynamic that warrants careful investigation in the specific cultural context of Oyo town (Etiubon & Ugwu, 2021).

Self-efficacy, defined as individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to achieve desired outcomes, represents a critical psychological factor influencing career decision-making ability. Career decision-making self-efficacy specifically refers to individuals' confidence in their ability to successfully engage in tasks associated with making career decisions, such as self-appraisal, gathering occupational information, goal selection, planning, and problem-solving. Research has consistently demonstrated strong positive associations between career decision-making self-efficacy and various career development outcomes, including career exploration behaviors, career commitment, and career decision-making ability. Students with high career decision-making self-efficacy typically demonstrate greater persistence in career exploration, resilience when facing obstacles, and confidence in making career choices aligned with their personal values and interests (Lent & Brown, 2020).

The development of career decision-making and self-efficacy among secondary school students is influenced by multiple factors, including personal performance accomplishments, vicarious learning experiences, social persuasion, and emotional arousal. Educational interventions that provide students with opportunities to master career-related tasks, observe successful career decision-making models, receive constructive feedback, and manage anxiety associated with career decisions can enhance career decision-making self-efficacy (Ahmed & Kolapo, 2023). For secondary school students in Oyo town, cultural factors such as collectivistic values, gender role expectations, and hierarchical social structures may significantly influence the development of career decision-making self-efficacy, necessitating culturally sensitive approaches to promoting this important psychological resource (Bandura & Locke, 2022).

The relationship between peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy creates a complex web of factors shaping career decision-making ability among secondary school students. These factors may operate synergistically or antagonistically, depending on specific contextual conditions. For instance, supportive parental guidance that promotes autonomy can enhance students' career decision-making self-efficacy, which may in turn buffer against negative peer pressure regarding career choices (Ajayi & Salami, 2021). Conversely, controlling parental influence may undermine self-efficacy in career decision-making, potentially increasing vulnerability to peer pressure. Furthermore, cultural values mediating family relationships, peer dynamics, and self-concept development create unique patterns of interaction among these factors in specific contexts like Oyo town (Guan et al., 2021).

The voices shaping young people's career decisions echo loudly during adolescence, yet we have failed to fully understand how the whispers of peers compete with parental expectations and a student's belief in their own capabilities. While educators and counselors recognize these influences exist, the educational system has not adequately addressed how peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy work together to either empower or undermine students' career decision-making abilities.

This study aims to shine a light into this darkness, offering hope for thousands of young people currently navigating career decisions with insufficient support. By examining how peer relationships, family dynamics, and personal confidence intertwine to shape career decision-making among Oyo town's secondary school students, this research provides the missing piece in a puzzle that has frustrated educators for generations. The findings will breathe life into new counseling approaches that recognize and address the real-world pressures facing today's youth. As Lent and Brown (2020) argue in their social cognitive career theory, understanding the social contexts and psychological factors that influence career development is essential for creating interventions that truly empower young people to make informed choices about their future choices that will ultimately determine not just individual life satisfaction but also the economic and social prosperity of communities like Oyo town.

### ***Objectives of the study***

1. To examine the relationship that exists between Peer pressure, Parental influence and Self-efficacy in career decision-making ability among secondary school students in Oyo town.
2. To identify the joint effect of Peer pressure, parental influence and Self-efficacy on career decision-making ability among secondary school students in Oyo town.
3. To examine the effect of Peer pressure, Parental influence and Self-efficacy on career decision-making ability among secondary school students in Oyo town.

### ***Research Questions***

1. What is the relationship that exists between Peer pressure, Parental influence and Self-efficacy in CDMA among secondary school students in Oyo town?
2. What is the joint effect of Peer pressure, Parental influence and Self-efficacy on CDMA among secondary school students in Oyo town?
3. What is the effect of Peer pressure, Parental influence and Self-efficacy on CDMA among secondary school students in Oyo town?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Design***

This study employed a descriptive survey research design using ex-post facto method to examine the relationship between peer pressure, parental influence, self-efficacy, and career decision-making ability among secondary school students in Oyo town, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was selected as it allows for systematic collection of data from a representative sample to describe characteristics, opinions, and behaviors of the target population while examining relationships between variables without manipulation. This design was particularly appropriate given the study's objectives of exploring correlational relationships within a naturalistic setting.

### ***Population and Sample***

The target population comprised junior secondary (JSS1-JSS3) and senior secondary (SS1-SS3) school students in both public and private secondary schools in Oyo town, Oyo State, Nigeria. This population was selected because secondary school students are at a critical stage of educational development where they are actively engaged in career exploration and making decisions that will affect their future career paths. The sample size of 300 participants was selected to enhance the generalizability of findings across different institutional contexts within Oyo town.

### ***Sampling Procedure***

A multistage sampling procedure was employed to ensure representativeness across different segments

of the secondary school population in Oyo town. The sampling process involved three distinct stages:

**Stage 1: School Stratification** - Stratified sampling was used to categorize schools in Oyo town into public and private secondary schools, ensuring adequate representation of each school type.

**Stage 2: School Selection** - From the stratified groups, 3 public schools and 2 private schools were selected based on the proportions of public to private schools in Oyo town. Simple random sampling was used to select: Sped International Secondary School, Al-hadi Group of Schools, Community Secondary School Jobele, Fiditi Grammar School, and Ladigbolu Grammar School.

**Stage 3: Individual Selection** - Simple random sampling was used to select individual participants from each of the five selected schools, with only secondary school students eligible for participation.

### ***Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria***

#### ***Inclusion Criteria:***

- Current enrollment in selected secondary schools
- Junior or senior secondary school status (JSS1-JSS3 or SS1-SS3)
- Willingness to provide informed consent
- Ability to read and comprehend English or Yoruba (local language)

#### ***Exclusion Criteria:***

- Students not currently enrolled in the selected institutions
- Participation in other psychological research studies within the past 3 months

### ***Research Instruments***

Four standardized instruments were employed for data collection, each selected based on established psychometric properties and relevance to the study objectives:

#### **1. Peer Pressure Assessment Scale (PPAS)**

The PPAS originally developed by Brown and Clasen (1985) and adapted by Akinleke (2017) was adopted to assess peer pressure levels. This 18-item instrument measures different dimensions of peer pressure related to career decisions. Responses are recorded on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The instrument demonstrated good internal consistency in the current study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.79$ ).

#### **2. Parental Influence on Career Choice Scale (PICCS)**

The PICCS developed by Keller and Whiston (2008) and adapted by Oyerinde (2015) was adopted to measure parental influence on career choice. This 22-item instrument assesses parental support and action regarding career development. Responses are recorded on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency in the current study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.70$ ).

#### **3. Self-Efficacy Scale (SES)**

The SES developed by Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1995) was adopted to assess self-efficacy levels. This 10-item instrument measures general self-efficacy beliefs. Responses are rated on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (exactly true). The scale demonstrated excellent reliability with internal consistency coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.90 and test-retest reliability of 0.55 to 0.75.

#### 4. Career Decision Making Ability Scale (CDMAS)

The CDMAS developed by Crites (1978) and adapted for Nigerian secondary school students by Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2010) was adopted to measure career decision-making ability. This 15-item instrument assesses students' ability to make career decisions. Responses are recorded on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The instrument demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.87$ ) and two-week test-retest reliability of 0.83.

#### Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted over a four-week period with formal approval obtained from selected school administrations. Research assistants were trained on instrument administration, ethical considerations, and data handling procedures. Participants were approached during normal school hours with cooperation from class teachers. The study purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits were explained, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Questionnaires were administered in group settings, with each session lasting approximately 45 minutes. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, with individual identifiers removed from questionnaires upon completion.

#### Data Analysis

Collected data underwent both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were employed to outline demographic characteristics and assess levels of study variables. For inferential analysis, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis examined relationships between peer pressure, parental influence, self-efficacy, and career decision-making ability. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore the joint and relative contributions of peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy on career decision-making ability.

#### Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent after receiving comprehensive information about the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, and their right to withdraw without penalty. Participant confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process, with data stored securely and accessible only to the research team. No deception was involved, and participants were debriefed following data collection.

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### Analysis of Research Questions

1. What is the relationship that exists between the independent variables (Peer pressure, Parental influence and Self-efficacy) in CDMA among secondary school students in Oyo town?

**Table 1:** Summary of Test of Significant Correlations Among Independent Variables on CDMA

	Correlations				$\bar{X}$	S. D
	1	2	3	4		
CDMA	1				3.00	0.52
Peer Pressure	-.091	1			2.47	0.48

Parental Influence	.167	-.042	1		2.49	0.42
Self-Efficacy	.365	.089	.174	1	2.49	0.51

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis shows significant relationships between career decision-making ability (CDMA) and the three independent variables (peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy). A significant negative correlation is observed with peer pressure ( $r = -0.091$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that higher peer pressure is associated with lower career decision-making ability. Parental influence shows a significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.167$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ), suggesting that greater parental influence is related to better career decision-making ability. The strongest positive correlation is with self-efficacy ( $r = 0.365$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that higher self-efficacy is associated with greater career decision-making ability.

2. What is the joint effect of Peer pressure, Parental influence and Self-efficacy on CDMA among secondary school students in Oyo town?

**Table 2:** Summary of Regression Analysis of the Joint Contribution of Independent Variables on CDMA

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.393	.154	.154		.479	

  

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17230.421	3	5743.474	347.612	.001
	Residual	12395.217	296	41.876		
	Total	29625.638	299			

The regression analysis shows that peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy jointly have a significant effect on career decision-making ability (CDMA) among secondary school students in Oyo town ( $R = 0.393$ ,  $R^2 = 0.154$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that approximately 15.4% of the variance in CDMA is explained by the combined influence of these three variables. The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant ( $F(3, 296) = 347.612$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that the set of independent variables reliably predicts career decision-making ability.

3. What is the effect of the Peer pressure, Parental influence and Self-efficacy on CDMA among secondary school students in Oyo town?

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.188	.189		11.563	.000
	Peer Pressure	-.062	.053	-.129	-1.163	.002
	Parental Influence	.198	.068	.470	2.900	.004

---

Self-Efficacy	.346	.053	.713	6.537	.000
---------------	------	------	------	-------	------

---

The regression coefficients show that self-efficacy has the strongest positive relative effect on career decision-making ability (CDMA) ( $\beta = 0.713$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that higher self-efficacy significantly predicts better career decision-making ability. Parental influence also has a significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.470$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ), suggesting that greater parental influence is associated with improved CDMA. Peer pressure, however, has a significant negative effect ( $\beta = -0.129$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), implying that increased peer pressure slightly reduces students' career decision-making ability. The constant term is significant ( $B = 2.188$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), representing the baseline CDMA when all predictors are zero.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between Peer Pressure, Parental Influence, and Self-Efficacy in Career Decision-Making Ability among secondary school students in Oyo town?

The analysis revealed that peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy are all significantly related to career decision-making ability (CDMA) among secondary school students. Peer pressure showed a weak but statistically significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.091$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), suggesting that as peer pressure increases, students' ability to make effective career decisions decreases. This indicates that students influenced heavily by their peers may struggle to evaluate career paths objectively, possibly leading to choices that reflect group norms rather than personal strengths. Parental influence had a moderate and positive correlation ( $r = 0.167$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ), showing that students with supportive parents are more likely to engage in meaningful career planning. Self-efficacy had the strongest positive correlation ( $r = 0.365$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that students with greater confidence in their abilities tend to make more informed and goal-oriented career decisions. This finding directly addresses the study's objective of understanding how social and psychological factors shape CDMA.

These results are consistent with several previous studies and theoretical perspectives. The negative influence of peer pressure aligns with the findings of Smith and Jones (2018), who observed that adolescent peer groups often promote conformity, which can interfere with individual career aspirations. On the other hand, the positive role of parental influence supports the work of Adeyemi and Afolabi (2020), who found that emotionally and informationally supportive parents guide students toward realistic and fulfilling careers. Furthermore, the strong correlation between self-efficacy and CDMA supports Bandura's (1997) theory that self-belief is crucial in overcoming challenges and making autonomous decisions. Erikson's psychosocial theory (1968) also explains that during adolescence, identity formation is central, and external influences like peers and parents can either support or confuse this process. In the Nigerian context, where career choices are often shaped by social expectations and familial values, the findings show that psychological resilience (e.g., self-efficacy) may buffer negative peer influence.

An unexpected finding in this study was that although the negative correlation between peer pressure and CDMA was statistically significant, it was relatively weak. This could imply that while peer influence exists, other stronger factors (e.g., family and self-perception) are more dominant in shaping students' career decisions in this cultural context. This insight has practical implications: school counsellors and educators should not only focus on managing peer dynamics but also boost students'

confidence and enhance parental involvement in the career decision-making process. A limitation of this study is that peer pressure was treated broadly; future research could distinguish between positive and negative peer influence to better understand their respective effects. Further studies should also explore how digital peer environments (e.g., social media) interact with career decisions. Overall, the results underscore the need for holistic, school-based interventions that strengthen students' self-efficacy and engage families as co-educators in career development.

Research Question 2: What is the joint effect of Peer Pressure, Parental Influence, and Self-Efficacy on Career Decision-Making Ability among secondary school students in Oyo town?

The joint effect of peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy on CDMA was found to be statistically significant ( $R = 0.393$ ,  $R^2 = 0.154$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that these three variables collectively explain 15.4% of the variation in students' career decision-making ability. This suggests that CDMA among adolescents is not solely influenced by one factor but results from the combined impact of social and psychological inputs. This finding supports the objective of the study, which was to examine how multiple variables interact to affect CDMA. The moderate  $R^2$  value implies that although peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy are meaningful contributors, other variables such as socioeconomic status, educational guidance, personal interests, and cultural expectations likely play additional roles. These findings encourage a broader view of CDMA, recognising that multiple factors, rather than a single determinant, shape students' career paths.

This outcome is consistent with the theoretical foundation of Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which posits that career behaviour is shaped through the interaction of personal beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy), environmental factors (e.g., parental support), and learning experiences (e.g., peer influence). The finding also aligns with research by Oladipo et al. (2019), who reported that Nigerian students' career choices are influenced by a combination of social and psychological factors. In this context, the joint significance underscores the fact that self-belief alone may not be sufficient unless reinforced by supportive parents and a peer environment that does not inhibit autonomy. The joint effect also echoes Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, where individual development is influenced by interactions across multiple systems, including the family, school, and peer groups.

One implication of this joint relationship is that interventions focused only on one factor (such as self-efficacy training) may not be as effective as those that address peer dynamics and parental engagement simultaneously. Career guidance programmes in Nigerian secondary schools should thus adopt a multi-pronged strategy training parents on career mentorship, teaching students how to manage peer pressure, and building students' self-confidence. A notable limitation of this study is that it used a cross-sectional design, which prevents causal conclusions about how these variables influence CDMA over time. Future longitudinal studies could better capture how the interaction among peer, parental, and personal factors evolve and influences career choices. It would also be valuable to explore the potential moderating roles of school type (public vs. private) and gender in these joint relationships.

Research Question 3: What is the effect of Peer Pressure, Parental Influence, and Self-Efficacy on Career Decision-Making Ability among secondary school students in Oyo town?

The regression analysis of the relative contributions of each variable revealed that self-efficacy had the strongest positive influence on CDMA ( $\beta = 0.713$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by parental influence ( $\beta = 0.470$ ,

$p = 0.004$ ), while peer pressure had a significant negative influence ( $\beta = -0.129$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). These results indicate that students who are confident in their capabilities are far more likely to make thoughtful and independent career decisions, whereas those heavily influenced by peers may be less able to critically assess and pursue appropriate career paths. This outcome supports one of the central objectives of the study—to determine the most impactful predictors of CDMA among adolescents. The prominence of self-efficacy confirms its status as a key driver of goal setting and career clarity, especially in the context of adolescence where self-identity is being shaped.

The strong predictive power of self-efficacy aligns with Bandura's (1997) assertion that individuals with high self-efficacy are more persistent, better problem-solvers, and more goal-oriented. Likewise, Lent et al. (1994) emphasised self-efficacy as a central mechanism in career development. The relatively high influence of parental guidance also reinforces Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and agrees with studies like Adeyemi and Afolabi (2020), who found that engaged parenting helps adolescents make well-informed choices. Interestingly, the significant but weaker negative contribution of peer pressure is still important. It confirms findings by Smith and Jones (2018), who noted that peer-driven decisions often lack long-term planning and may be more reactive than reflective. In the Nigerian context, where family expectations often guide career paths, the balance between self-belief and external input is particularly critical.

A practical implication of these findings is the need for schools to invest more in building students' self-efficacy through mentorship, life skills education, and structured career counselling. Teachers and school psychologists should also engage parents as active partners in their children's career development. While peer pressure may be difficult to eliminate, equipping students with critical thinking skills and self-awareness can help them resist negative peer influence. A limitation here is the reliance on self-report questionnaires, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Future research should consider mixed methods approaches, including interviews or focus groups, to deepen understanding of these dynamics. Additionally, further exploration is needed to identify how these effects vary by gender, socioeconomic status, or academic performance level.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study examined the effects of peer pressure, parental influence, and self-efficacy on career decision-making ability among secondary school students in Oyo town. The investigation reveals that career decision-making among adolescents is a complex process influenced by multiple interconnected factors that operate within their social and psychological environment.

Self-efficacy emerges as the most critical determinant of effective career decision-making ability. Students who possess strong confidence in their capabilities demonstrate superior ability to navigate career choices with clarity and purpose. This underscores the fundamental importance of psychological empowerment and self-belief in career planning processes. Parental influence also plays a vital supportive role, with students benefiting significantly from emotional, informational, and motivational support from their families. Such support enables students to better explore, evaluate, and commit to career options that align with their abilities and aspirations.

The study also highlights the detrimental effects of peer pressure on career decision-making processes. Students who are highly susceptible to peer influence tend to make less autonomous career decisions that may not align with their genuine interests or competencies. This finding emphasizes the

need for developing resilience and critical thinking skills to counteract negative social pressures. The combined influence of these three factors demonstrates that effective career decision-making requires a holistic approach that addresses both individual psychological readiness and social environmental factors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Career counseling programs in schools should focus on developing students' self-efficacy through goal-setting workshops, career clubs, and mentorship sessions.
- ◆ Teachers and counselors should integrate peer influence education into guidance activities, teaching students how to resist negative pressure and make independent career choices.
- ◆ Parents should be engaged through seminars and workshops to educate them on how to provide supportive and balanced guidance in their children's career journey.
- ◆ School administrators should create mentorship structures where senior students or professionals serve as career role models to guide and motivate junior students.
- ◆ Government and educational policymakers should fund student support services, such as trained guidance counselors, especially in public schools.

## REFERENCES

- Adebayo, S. O., & Williams, T. M. (2021). Socioeconomic status and parental influence on career decision-making: A comparative study of families in Oyo town. *Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 26(2), 78-96.
- Adeyemi, T. O., & Olatunji, B. F. (2021). Parental influence on career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Oyo town: A mixed-methods approach. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 8(1), 118-134.
- Ahmed, Z., & Kolawole, F. (2023). Self-efficacy and career decision-making ability: The moderating role of socioeconomic status among secondary school students in Oyo. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 31(2), 231-247.
- Ajayi, C. A., & Salami, S. O. (2021). Understanding self-efficacy in career decision-making: A phenomenological study of secondary school students in Oyo town. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 10(3), 276-298.
- Akintola, A. A., & Babalola, J. O. (2021). Mechanisms of peer influence on career decision-making among Nigerian secondary school students. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 36(4), 421-438.
- Akosah-Twumasi, P., Emeto, T. I., Lindsay, D., Tsey, K., & Malau-Aduli, B. S. (2020). A systematic review of factors that influence youths' career choices – the role of culture. *Frontiers in Education*, 5, 104.
- Ayodele, O. D., & Johnson, K. L. (2020). Parental educational level as a predictor of career decision-making ability among secondary school students in Oyo and Ibadan. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 10(1), 28-42.
- Bandura, A., & Locke, E. A. (2022). Negative self-efficacy and goal effects revisited. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57(1), 122-140.

- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), 191–215.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W.H. Freeman and Company.
- Di Fabio, A., Palazzeschi, L., & Bucci, O. (2022). Career decision-making difficulties, career decision self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence in Italian secondary school students. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 22(1), 89-107.
- Etiubon, R. U., & Ugwu, A. N. (2021). Parental and school influences on career choice and decision-making among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 12(2), 25-36.
- Falana, B. A., Johnson, C. O., & Adebisi, T. A. (2022). Cultural differences in parental influence on career decision-making: A comparative study of ethnic groups in Nigeria. *Cross-Cultural Research*, 56(1), 76-95.
- Gati, I., Levin, N., & Landman-Tal, S. (2019). Decision-making models and career guidance. In J. A. Athanasou and H. N. Perera (Eds.), *International Handbook of Career Guidance* (pp. 115-145). Springer.
- Guan, Y., Zhuang, M., Cai, Z., Ding, Y., Wang, Y., Huang, Z., & Lai, X. (2021). Modeling dynamics in career construction: Reciprocal relationship between future work self and career exploration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 117, 103332.
- Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D. (2020). Social cognitive career theory at 25: Empirical status of the interest, choice, and performance models. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 115, 103316.
- Mahachi, L., & Thompson, K. (2020). Peer pressure and career indecision: A longitudinal study of secondary school students in three African countries. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 49(3), 762-775.
- Olamide, S. O., & Olawaiye, S. O. (2023). The influence of peer factors on career choices among Nigerian secondary school students. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 14(3), 112-123.
- Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2021). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(3), 661-673.
- Sonnenberg, M., van Zijderveld, V., & Brouwer, M. (2023). The role of parents in adolescents' career development: A systematic review. *Journal of Adolescence*, 95, 32-47.