

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents some of the theories in occupational aspiration and choice and studies in occupational behaviour. Section 2.2 summarises the developmental theories and shows how, at different stages of development, various aspects of self concept influence adolescents and relates this to the self concept factors affecting the career aspirations of respondents in this study. Section 2.3 describes Trieman's (1977) theory of prestige determination which incorporates the principle of a world wide occupational prestige hierarchy. This principle is the basis for Trieman's Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS) which is used in this study to analyse the career prestige levels aspired for.

Section 2.4 then shows how different self concept factors are expected to influence career aspirations by taking into consideration studies previously conducted. Section 2.5 explains the main self concept factors affecting the discrepancy between career preference and career expectation, in order to show that different factors influence career preference and career expectation. Perceived work values are also expected to influence career aspiration and this is explained in Section 2.6 by taking into consideration Super's (1970) Work Value Inventory. Section 2.7 concludes this chapter with a table summarising the expected influence of the self concept and perceived work value factors on career aspiration.

## **2.2 Theories On The Developmental Process Of Occupational Aspiration And Choice**

Many theories have been developed to explain the process leading to vocational choice. These theories approach the subject of vocational choice in different ways. Some focus on the process of its development from the pre-school years of an individual to adulthood. Others focus on the factors affecting occupational choice or on the types of occupation chosen. The idea behind this study is based on a few well-known theories explaining the developmental process of occupational aspiration and choice such as Super's Self Concept Theory (Super, 1963), Ginzberg's Developmental Framework of Occupational Choice (Ginzberg et al., 1966) and Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise (Gottfredson, 1981). As career aspiration is taken to be the precursor of one's choice of occupation (Ginzberg, 1966; Super, 1963), theories and studies that explain occupational choice usually also explain occupational aspiration.

### **2.2.1 Development Stages**

Each of the above theories describe the different stages in occupational development. In Super's (1963) theory, these stages are termed as the growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline stages. The exploration stage is when individuals begin to explore vocational opportunities available to them. This stage is subdivided into the fantasy, tentative and realistic stage (Super, 1963). Ginzberg's (1966) theory has three developmental periods labelled the fantasy period (age of 6-11 years), the tentative period (age of 12-17 years) and the realistic period (age of 18 years and above). Recognition of contingencies involved in reaching occupational desires is usually during the tentative period and occupational aspirations become increasingly realistic as an individual reaches the realistic period. The stages of development in Gottfredson's (1981) theory are: a) orientation to size and power (age of 3-5 years); b) orientation to sex-roles (age of 6-8 years); c) orientation to social evaluation (age of 9-13 years); and d) orientation to the internal, unique self (age of 14 years and above). At the first stage, the youngster grasps the concept of being an adult, at the next stage the gender concept is consolidated and only at the third stage does the concept of social class and ability become important

determinants of social behaviour and expectations. At the final stage, the individual has an adequate view of all occupations and is able to make critical assessments of job-self compatibility. Although these theories have a different terminology for the different stages of development, they all basically have the same idea that is, career maturity increases and career aspirations become more realistic as an individual goes through the different stages in life. Individuals start to make critical assessment of job-self compatibility such as the criteria that are deemed important to them in an occupation, the suitability of an occupation and the accessibility of an occupation.

### **2.2.2 Self Concept**

#### **Definition**

Super (1963) and Gottfredson (1981) place importance on the aspect of self concept. Self concept is defined by Gottfredson (1981, p. 546-547) as "one's view of oneself, one's view of who one is and who one is not and, when projecting into the future, self concept also includes who one expects to be or would like to be". It is also one's view of one's abilities, interest, personality and one's place in society. Life's experiences and the influence of family and other role models develop self-awareness and self-differentiation and hence one's view of oneself and one's view of one's world becomes more differentiated and complex and also increasingly realistic at different stages of development.

#### **Self concept factors affecting career aspiration**

When projecting into the future, the complexity of one's self concept causes a number of elements such as one's view of one's abilities, personality, interest and place in society to influence who one expects to be. Hence, Gottfredson (1981) suggests the influence of factors such as gender, social class background, intelligence and vocational interest. Super (1963) deduces that aptitudes, such as a person's mental abilities, which form an individual's self concept and interest in a career's activities, as a complementary aspect of self concept, are deemed to be important determinants of career aspiration.

### Acceptable range of occupations

In line with the self concept idea, Gottfredson (1981) theorises that at different stages of development, individuals will be oriented to careers compatible to different aspects of their self concept which are deemed important at that stage. Examples of these aspects are such as the gender aspect or the social aspect. It is also possible to predict the compatibility of occupations to the different self concepts because according to Gottfredson (1981), people have remarkably similar perceptions of the sextype (as in the suitability of an occupation for males and females), prestige and trait of an occupation. Gottfredson (1981) found that many studies on the sextype or the prestige of an occupation showed high correlation among ratings from people of different population groups. These similar perceptions are termed as occupational images. Adolescents will therefore aspire for occupations which are only within a range which they consider as acceptable alternatives. When ruling out occupations from the acceptable range, jobs that are incompatible with one's sex are first ruled out followed by jobs that are of unacceptably low prestige and are inconsistent with their social class concept.

### **2.2.3 Increasing Vocational Realism**

Ginsberg et al. (1966) does not stress on the aspect of self concept but instead focuses on the increasing vocational realism of individuals which is due to the recognition of contingencies involved in reaching occupational desires. Super (1963) attributes this increasing realism and maturity to the performance of particular tasks such as in school during academic projects and during activities in societies and clubs, at home when helping parents and working in part-time jobs. This leads to a heightened awareness of the working environment and an increasing interest in a particular career's activities.

### **2.2.4 Application Of The Career Developmental Process Theories To This Study**

This study is based on two samples, consisting of Form 5 and Form 6 students, whose ages are in the range of 16-19 years. Following Super's theory, the samples can be placed as being in the exploratory stages where adolescents have just begun to explore options available to them. All the three theories explained above term this stage as a stage of

increasing realism, where compromises are made according to societal norms and according to one's own self-assessment of one's capabilities. This leads to the conclusion that there are two kinds of career aspiration, defined as career preference which is the respondent's most ideal career and is made without much compromise and career expectation which is the career aspired for after taking into consideration the suitability and accessibility of an occupation.

In line with the self concept theory of Super (1963) and Gottfredson (1981), the sample may be found to be at the stage where the respondents are most aware of themselves and tend to distinguish themselves from others based on many factors. Hence, it is expected in this study that the factors affecting the way one perceives oneself and one's capabilities will influence one's career aspirations. These factors are such as the gender, the locality where the respondents grew up in, academic achievement and socio-economic status. As this is also the stage where the respondents are most influenced by their family, family variables such as the number of siblings, birth order and parents' socio-economic status are also taken to be important variables that shape an adolescent's self concept.

Ginzberg's (1966) theory of increasing realism also suggests that adolescents at this stage will have increasing knowledge of an occupation and increasing interest in an occupation's activities and other characteristics inherent in an occupation. The intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of an occupation can be termed as the work values of an occupation (Super, 1970) and these values are deemed as important determinants of career aspiration.

Following Gottfredson's (1981) theory, we can postulate that the sample in this study will already be oriented to their internal, unique self and therefore would have adequate view of all occupations and is able to make critical assessment on job-self compatibility. They would also be very oriented toward their sex-roles and social standing and take this into consideration when aspiring for a career. This results in them circumscribing a range of occupations that are deemed suitable to their sex as well as their social standing. This leads to our deduction in this study that when aspiring for a career, even if it is the respondent's most ideal career, respondents will only consider

options which are within their acceptable range. When ruling out occupations from an acceptable range, jobs that are incompatible with one's sex are first ruled out followed by jobs that are of unacceptably low prestige and are inconsistent with the social class concept. Hence career preference in this study, as the respondent's most ideal career is also expected to be influenced by some self concept factors.

## **2.3 Theories On Occupational Prestige Determination**

The theories of Super (1963) and Ginzberg (1966) basically explain the development of career aspiration but do not focus on any particular attribute of an occupation. However, Gottfredson (1981) mentions career prestige as an important attribute in an occupation for adolescents. The congruence of the prestige of an occupation with their own social background and other self concept factors is taken into consideration when determining occupations within the acceptable range. This study will focus on the career prestige level aspired for by an individual.

### **2.3.1 Reasons For The Use Of Trieman's Structural Theory Of Prestige Determination**

Theories which focus on the level of occupational attainment are Trieman's Structural Theory of Prestige Determination and Duncan's Socio-economic Index (Trieman, 1977). The Duncan scale is constructed using a combination of income and education of incumbents in an occupation. As this study aims to measure the occupational attainment in terms of occupational prestige, Trieman's scale will be a more accurate measure to be used and not Duncan's Socio-economic Index as prestige is also determined by factors other than income and education.

### **2.3.2 Trieman's (1977) World Wide Occupational Prestige Hierarchy**

The basic concept behind Trieman's (1977) theory is that the hierarchy of occupational prestige is invariant across all complex societies, past or present. Due to the similar configuration of occupational roles in all societies, the division of labour will develop in similar ways in all societies. The division of labour creates inherent differences in the

control of scarce resources such as skill, authority and property. This creates a differential in power which leads to a hierarchy of occupations with relations to the power exercised which is similar across societies. Power in turn results in the acquisition of special privileges. The basic similarity among complex societies in the relative power exercised by various occupations creates a corresponding similarity with respect to occupational differences in privilege. Hence, since the division of labour creates inherent differences in the power associated with various occupational roles and since these differences in turn create differences in privilege and since power and privilege are main ingredients of prestige, Trieman (1977) deduces that there should be a world wide occupational prestige hierarchy. He states that cultural differences alone across societies will not cause much variance in prestige ratings. He also adds that technological differences across societies will not cause the prestige rating of occupations to differ much as technological changes do not introduce new functions but rather new procedures for accomplishing old functions. Therefore he feels that the prestige hierarchy is invariant across time.

#### Invariant prestige ratings across subgroups

Trieman (1977) used data from 85 occupational prestige studies in 53 countries for his study. The high correlation between subgroups of respondents' occupation, ethnicity and sex show that there is no systematic variation in occupational prestige evaluation on the basis of these subgroups. Trieman (1977) also shows that there is not much variation in the ratings of students as compared to adults. The high correlation of 0.79 of prestige results across countries also validates the fact that the inter-societal agreement is high. It is also shown that prestige correlates strongly with income and education and that education and income too are invariant across subgroups as well as across countries. Hence, prestige scales can be used to measure the socio-economic status of an individual. Thus, Trieman (1977) developed the Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS) based on his theory of a world wide occupational prestige.



### **2.3.3 Application Of Occupational Prestige Determination To This Study**

Trieman's (1977) study shows that when respondents order occupations according to prestige, their hierarchy of occupations are invariant across different characteristics of the respondents such as their gender, locality, socio-economic status and ethnicity. It is also invariant among students and adults. When the respondents aspire for an occupation, their most ideal occupation would probably be the occupation that they consider to be of highest prestige. Following this line of thinking, Trieman's (1977) world wide occupational prestige hierarchy implies that the occupational preference which is considered to be the respondents' most ideal occupation, will be invariant across gender, locality, socio-economic status and ethnicity. However, Gottfredson's (1981) theory suggests that adolescents would have already circumscribed a range of occupations that are suitable to their sex, socio-economic status and capabilities. Therefore, even when choosing their most ideal occupation, an adolescent will choose within this range of occupations. Gottfredson's (1981) theory leads to the expectation in this study that variables such as gender, ethnicity, locality, socio-economic status and academic achievement will have some influence on career preference.

Another point of importance is that although this study involves students, Trieman's (1977) prestige scale is still used as it was found that the theory of a world wide hierarchy also applies to students.

### **2.4 Self Concept Factors Influencing Career Aspirations**

The deduction from the theories of occupational aspiration and prestige determination is that career aspiration is expected to be influenced by factors that influences a person's self concept, i.e. the way one perceives oneself. Hence, career aspiration in terms of prestige level of an occupation is expected to be influenced by factors such as gender, locality, ethnicity, family characteristics including number of siblings, birth order, parental interest and socio-economic status of parents and academic achievement. Career preference is expected to be only slightly influenced by these factors whereas career expectation, which is the career aspired for after making compromises, is envisaged to be greatly influenced by these variables. Career preference, as a precursor to career



expectation, is also expected to have a significant influence on career expectations (Saha, 1982)

The following is a review of studies on occupational aspiration and choice and how the different self concept factors influence occupational aspiration. They are grouped according to these factors. This will give an indication on whether the outcome of the above theories are supported by past studies. Studies of occupational choice are also taken into consideration, as factors that influence career aspiration, which is the precursor of career choice, are also expected to influence career choice.

#### **2.4.1 Gender**

A study on occupational prestige determination that agrees with Trieman (1977) that prestige ratings are invariant across gender is the study of Maxwell and Cumming (1988). However, the studies of Saha (1982) and Gottfredson (1978) find that adolescents have already developed a cognitive awareness of their gender roles and will therefore limit their range of possible occupations to fit their newly acquired gender norms. This is in agreement with the theory of Gottfredson (1981).

Hannah and Kahn (1989) find that women have low self-efficacy only when it comes to occupations that are dominated by males and therefore prefer to be in careers dominated by females. People will therefore have a higher tendency to choose the same sex dominated careers. Females will be less restricted in their choices and their preference of occupations will be centred around low or moderate prestige careers as female-dominated careers tend to cluster around the moderate end of the prestige scale. Female occupations also lack dispersion in the prestige scores and will therefore be hard to predict (Saha, 1982; Gottfredson, 1978).

The career aspirations of females are also found in many studies to be much lower compared to that of the males due to the many psychological factors which inhibit females' vocational choices such as a low self-esteem. Role conflicts too serve as barriers for women (Saha, 1982; DiSabatino, 1976; Luzzo, 1995). Hence these studies predict that females have a low self concept and this causes their career aspirations to be low.

Contrary to the above findings, some studies have found that females may no longer have a low self concept and low career aspirations. Researchers speculate that this could be due to the changing attitudes towards women's employment which results in more women aiming for high prestige careers (Marini, 1978; Luzzo, 1995). One study which shows that women are no longer restricted in their choice of careers is by Dunne et al. (1981). This study which used chi-squared analysis with sex as one dimension and three levels of educational or occupational aspirations as the other dimension, shows that women, even in rural areas have high status career aspirations.

In terms of measurement, Maxwell and Cumming (1988) feel that some caution should be exercised when interpreting the results of the prestige scale. Although the study acknowledges that there is congruence of prestige ratings of males and females in many studies, it is found that prestige is not an appropriate measure of gender differences in career aspirations. They discover that there is a male gender bias in scales such as the North-Hatt's prestige scale and Duncan's Socio-economic index. Trieman's scale too, as a modification of these scales, is found to have a male gender bias. This is because a restricted number of occupations are used to develop the scales and many of these occupations are male-dominated occupations (Maxwell and Cumming, 1988). This could cause distortion in findings as the sex of incumbents in an occupation are important determinants of prestige ratings of the gender groups. Occupations where the majority of incumbents are from a particular sex, are usually given higher ratings if the respondent is of the same sex (Maxwell and Cumming, 1988; Beyard-Tyler and Haring, 1984). Beyard-Tyler and Haring (1984) also found that that increased participation of women in an occupation lowers the prestige and desirability of that occupation. Another reason why Maxwell and Cumming (1988) feel that there is distortion in prestige scales is because of their findings of differences in work values of men and women. Women were found to prefer more intrinsic and altruistic values than men. Men in turn prefer financial security. Hence Maxwell and Cumming (1988) feel that if work values, which influence the desirability of a job, differ between men and women, then the occupational prestige preference should also differ.

### Application to this study

The conclusion is that females have lower career aspirations due to two reasons:

- i) people mainly aspire for same sex careers and careers where the incumbents are mainly females are usually rated more lowly;
- ii) females have a lower self concept which leads to lower career aspirations.

However, in this study, the influence of gender is not expected to be great as females in Malaysia are viewed to no longer feel inhibited in their opportunities due to the equal educational and occupational opportunities available in this country for both sexes. Hence, the results of this study will be expected to follow more that of Dunne et al. (1981) which shows that women are no longer restricted in their choice of careers.

Another point to note is that since Trieman's (1977) scale may not be that adequate in measuring gender differences in career prestige, some caution should be administered. If the analysis in this study shows that females have lower prestige career aspiration, differences in other attributes such as work values should be examined as well.

#### **2.4.2 Locality**

Studies on locality differences find that occupational aspirations are influenced by the place where an individual grew up in. Individuals from rural areas are strongly motivated by the perceptions of restricted opportunity. These respondents are exposed to many forces which send signals to them on the difficulties of getting ahead. These forces have strong influence mainly during the transition period of an adolescent (Cook et al., 1996; Furlong and Cartmel, 1995; Brook-Gunn et al., 1993; Rich, 1979). Examples of these negative forces are as follows:-

- a) Fewer local men are seen working in steady jobs and the respondents calibrate their expectations accordingly.

- b) Adolescents develop their ability in relation to their peers, form perceptions of likely academic attainment and share the assumptions of class mates with similar ability. Their grades and performances are generally lower than urban respondents.
- c) Rural children face obstacles such as poor schooling facilities.
- d) They are more likely to believe that hard work in schools will not pay off for them as it will for children from more advantaged backgrounds.

These negative forces result in rural respondents having a lower self concept leading to lower career aspirations.

Life's experiences and role models influence the aspirations of individuals (Super, 1963; Gottfredson, 1981). Adolescents from rural areas have fewer role models as their fathers who have restricted post-secondary education and who hold low status jobs will not be able to teach them about the job market and what it takes to be well positioned in it. Their occupational aspirations are also limited by their knowledge of occupations as occupations found in rural areas are of limited number and of low status (Cook et al., 1996; Rich, 1979).

Furlong and Cartmel (1995), however, find that differences in job preferred and job expected of rural adolescents show class differences rather than a straightforward area effect. Their study finds little evidence of a significant effect of locality on aspirations once controlled for socio-economic effect.

#### Application to this study

It will be expected that rural respondents will have lower aspirations compared to their urban respondents. This will be due to two reasons:- i) rural respondents will have a lower self concept as they are from lower socio-economic status families, have lower grades and poorer facilities; and ii) rural respondents' knowledge of occupations are limited to low status occupations. It is expected that the rural respondents will have lower occupational aspirations mainly because they are from lower socio-economic status

families and if this is controlled, the difference between rural and urban respondents may no longer be apparent.

### **2.4.3 Ethnicity**

Ethnicity, as the social origin of an individual is seen to be an important variable in social research. Researchers have also noted that ethnic and socio-economic variables interact when influencing vocational behaviour (Slaney and Brown, 1983).

#### Application to the study

Ethnic differences in occupational aspirations are also expected in this study which consists of three main ethnic groups, whose parents work in different sectors of the economy. As there is still some segregation of work according to ethnicity in Malaysia, an interaction between ethnic and socio-economic status variables in influencing occupational aspirations will be expected, as indicated in the study by Slaney and Brown (1983).

### **2.4.4 Family Characteristics**

Most theories unanimously agree on the role of family in shaping the career aspiration of students. Studies such as Poole (1985) find that parents seem to be the main source of career guidance for adolescents.

#### Three kinds of capital provided by family

According to Entwisle and Astone (1994), in the process of growing up children need three kinds of capital to facilitate optimal development which are financial capital, human capital consisting of the non-material resources of parents such as parental education and finally social capital where parents serve as links between the children and the larger community. The deprivation of any of these resources can cause an adolescent to have low self-esteem and have little confidence in what they can achieve in the future.

## **a) Parenting Style And Parental Involvement (As Social Capital)**

### Direct influence

Marjoribanks (1994) using commonality analysis, discovers that the unique variance relating to each of the parent's involvement measures show that the perception of parents involvement is associated with large amounts of variance in educational aspirations and sons' occupational aspirations, and, a modest amount with daughters' occupational aspirations.

### Indirect influence

Other than its direct influence on occupational and educational aspirations, many studies have found parental involvement and parental resources to be an intervening variable which mediates the influence between number of siblings and birth order with adolescent's aspirations and achievement (Marjoribanks, 1995; Downey, 1995). Downey (1995) explains the negative relationship between number of siblings and children's educational performance by examining the resource dilution model. He states that parents have finite levels of resources. The resources considered are interpersonal and economic resources. By using hierarchical regression analysis, educational outcomes were regressed on 'number of siblings' first and then parental resources were added to the model. Parental resources proved to be an effective source of intervening variables as the coefficient for 'number of siblings' was greatly reduced when these variables were added. The interaction between 'number of siblings' and parental resources is also taken into consideration and it was found that children from large families benefit less from parental resources compared to those from small families. The number of parents in the home also influences the total availability of resources.

Sputa and Paulson (1995) used the method of analysis of variance which was run on the grade point average (GPA) with birth order and family size as the two factors. It was found that there was a significant difference in the GPA by birth order and family size. Last-born adolescents have lower achievement than others and those from large size families have lower achievement than small-sized or moderate sized families. To find out

whether parenting style was a mediator, analysis of covariance with birth order and family size as factors was run on GPA with adolescents' perception of parenting style used as covariates. Even after controlling for parenting style, birth order and family size differences were still found in academic achievement. Their study therefore shows that parenting styles may not function as a mediator between the relationship of birth order and family size with GPA.

While the relationship between number of siblings and aspirations and achievement can be explained by the resource dilution model, the impact of birth order to these variables is due to the amount of adult socialisation relating to birth order. Last-borns are found to receive less feedback from parents (Claxton et al., 1995).

#### Measurement of parental involvement

In examining parental involvement, the perception of the adolescent and not the parent should be taken into consideration as according to Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994), individuals must experience the resources for themselves for the resources to have an influence. Parental involvement or parental style usually involves both parental control and parental warmth (Sputa and Paulson, 1995).

#### **b) Socio-economic Status (As Financial And Human Capital)**

Many researchers have found the socio-economic status of an individual to be an important determinant of career choice (Slaney and Brown, 1983; Gottfredson, 1981; Bogie, 1976; Saha, 1982). Although some studies predict that there is no structural relationship between career preferences and socio-economic status, Gottfredson (1981) assumes otherwise. Gottfredson (1981) feels that the fact that adolescents can readily distinguish between idealistic and realistic aspirations and still differ by social class in both aspects, reflects differences in preferences. Social groups differ in where they draw the line in identifying jobs that are unacceptable. Lower class individuals are more positive about lower level jobs than the higher class individual. Parents' aspirations for their children also reflect these differences in what is considered acceptable or tolerable (Gottfredson, 1981).



The influence of socio-economic status on career aspirations are found to be highly significant in many studies of career choice. This significant relationship is due to the high motivation found in high socio-economic status individuals (Idowu and Dere, 1983; Gottfretson, 1981).

Fan and Marini (1994) found a wider gender difference in the occupational aspiration of respondents from lower socio-economic background, especially in terms of their parents' educational level. Highly educated parents can adapt faster to cultural changes and are more likely than less educated parents to have egalitarian gender-role attitudes that are passed on to their children (Fan and Marini, 1994). Daughters are found to follow their mother's footsteps in aspiring and expecting occupations that are similar in prestige. Sons on the other hand tend to be influenced by their father in choosing their occupation (Shu and Marini, 1998). This is because mothers are seen as role models for their daughters and fathers are their sons' role model.

#### Measurement of socio-economic status

On the measurement of the socio-economic status of a child, Hauser (1994) suggests the traditional approach of focussing on the characteristics of the breadwinner or head of the family and to obtain the educational attainment, labour force status and occupational position of that person. He also suggests measuring the family composition, educational attainment of other adults in the household and household income. Mother's educational attainment is also an important variable which is found to have a very high correlation with father's education level (Hauser, 1994; Entwisle and Astone, 1994). Head of the household usually refers to the male or his substitute in the family. If there is no father, then the mother or her substitute is taken as the head of the household (Hauser, 1994). According to Entwisle and Astone (1994), however, substituting the mother or mother figure for a male breadwinner can be troublesome as women are concentrated in jobs of high prestige but paid less which makes the occupational prestige a less valid indicator of financial resources for women than for men. Nevertheless, when dealing with samples where individuals are mostly from two-parent families, they agreed that the best procedure is still Hauser's (1994) traditional method.

### Application to the study

In this study, where data are Malaysia based, most adolescents live with both their parents and the majority of respondents are expected to come from two parent families. Hence, the most suitable method of measurement of socio-economic status of an adolescent is to follow Hauser's (1994) approach which focuses on the characteristics of the breadwinner of the family, who is usually the father, but not forgetting the mother's education level. If there is no father, then the characteristics of the mother is taken into consideration.

Socio-economic status of parents is expected to have a strong influence on career aspirations through its influence on an individual's self concept. The number of siblings and birth order are also expected to influence occupational aspirations as explained by the resource dilution model of Downey (1995). As suggested by this model, it is expected that there may either be a direct influence of parental resources such as parental involvement and parenting style on career aspirations or a mediating influence of parental resources between the relationship of 'number of siblings' and birth order with occupational aspirations.

#### **2.4.5 Academic Related Influence**

Academic achievement and further educational plans in many studies are found to have a positive influence on an individual's self concept which leads to its positive influence on career aspirations (Gottfredson, 1981; Saha, 1982; Cook et al., 1996). This is in line with Super's (1963) self-efficacy theory. Gottfredson's (1981) explanation for this positive influence is similar to the explanation for socio-economic influence where it is expected that those with different academic capabilities will identify jobs that require similar academic capabilities and draw a line to jobs that are unacceptable. Trieman's (1977) study found that there is a high correlation between jobs of high prestige and the education level required of jobs. Hence, Gottfredson (1981) predicts that academic achievement will have a positive impact on the prestige level of career preferences and career expectations of adolescents.

### Application to the study

In this study too it is expected that high academic achievement will boost self-confidence and increase career aspirations. Additional educational variables that may be of interest are the stream of study and the intention to further one's studies. The stream of study determines the type of courses to be taken by a student when furthering one's studies and this in turn will influence the type of occupation desired. The intention to further one's studies is also a very strong indicator of high occupational aspirations as jobs of high prestige are usually those which require a high level of education as shown by Trieman (1977).

## **2.5 Discrepancy Between Career Preference And Career Expectation**

Ginzberg et al.'s (1966) theory of increasing realism states that as adolescents become increasingly realistic, they start making compromises in which their interest, values and opportunities are taken into consideration. According to Gottfredson (1981), there are two principles governing compromise :-

- explorations of job options end up in the implementation of the satisfactory choice not necessarily the optimal potential choice; and
- some self concepts are more central and may take priority when compromising occupational goals;

From this, we can conclude that compromise will consequently lead to a discrepancy between the career preferences and career expectations of individuals. The measure of career discrepancy is taken to be the level of expectation minus the level of preference (DiSabatino, 1976; Saha, 1982). People usually consider a broad range of occupations as their career preferences but have a narrower range of expectations (Furlong and Cartmel, 1995).

The factors that have an influence on the self concepts that take priority when making compromises are the factors that are expected to cause this discrepancy. These factors are the socio-economic status of an individual followed by their academic

achievement where those of high socio-economic status and those with a high academic ability do not portray a very high discrepancy level (DiSabatino, 1976; Bogie and Bogie, 1976). Dillard and Perrin (1980) also ascertained this by using stepwise regression to find that socio-economic status was the first additional variables to be entered into a model with just the sex and ethnicity variables. This is followed by academic achievement. Discrepancies too are found to occur less frequently for males compared to females (Bogie and Bogie, 1976).

Although discrepancies in career aspirations occur, it is however found in Gottfredson's (1981) theory that when people have to compromise, they more readily sacrifice the field of the work compared to sextype and prestige level of the job. So, much discrepancy in career aspiration is not expected if the prestige of an occupation is taken into consideration. This could be the reason why Saha's (1982) study which used regression analysis where the discrepancy in career aspiration is taken as the dependent variable, found no systematic explanation for the variance in career discrepancies.

### **2.5.1 Application Of Discrepancy In Career Aspirations To This Study**

As the respondents in this study are assumed to be at a stage of increasing realism (see the first section on Ginzberg's (1966) theory of increasing realism), compromises are expected to be made. This study will expect a discrepancy in career aspiration but since the measurement is on career prestige aspired for, it will be expected that the discrepancy may not be that great. This study will examine the factors that influence career preference and career expectations and it will be expected that there will be some difference in the factors influencing them. Career expectation will be expected to be influenced more by two variables that is socio-economic status and academic achievement whereas career preference is expected to be influenced less by these variables and may be more influenced by variables relating to interest in a career and factors generating this interest.

## **2.6 Perceived Work Values**

Work values as defined by Super (1970) are the attributes people desire and seek in a job. Super (1970) views that they are central in the job selection process of an individual. Other than prestige, there are many other values affecting the motivation to work.

The study of Lee and Nagaraj (1988) found that employers require different attributes in a person for jobs of different prestige levels. For low level occupations, employers reward employees for their extent of job knowledge and efficiency when performing a particular job. For those in high prestige careers, more emphasis is placed on leadership skills such as ability to work independently, initiative and communication skills. This implies that jobs of different prestige levels have different attributes that are dominant and that is why different attributes too are required in a person performing the job. Therefore, it will be interesting to note whether people aspiring for jobs of different prestige levels also look for different attributes in a job. For instance, whether those wanting high prestige careers look for jobs which offer independence, leadership skills and high income and whether those settling for low prestige careers look for attributes such as interesting work and ability to use skills learnt in school.

Super (1970) has classified work values into fifteen different categories which cover extrinsic as well as intrinsic values. These values are outlined in Appendix 2.

### **2.6.1 Application Of Perceived Work Values To This Study**

All the three theories on the development of occupational aspiration and choice indicate that at this stage the respondents in this study would have already developed adequate knowledge of a career's activities and increasing interest in it. This implies that they would probably consider the attributes of a career that appeals to them when making career decisions. This study will attempt to group the numerous attributes of occupations into smaller groups to detect attributes that are most valued by respondents aspiring for jobs of different prestige levels. When grouping these attributes, Super's (1970) Work Value Inventory will be considered (see Appendix 2).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This study is based mainly on the following developmental theories: i) Super's Self Concept Theory (Super, 1963); ii) Ginzberg's Developmental Framework of Occupational Choice (Ginzberg et al., 1966); and iii) Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise (Gottfredson, 1981).

It also incorporates Trieman's (1977) Structural Determination Theory which includes the use of the Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS). All the theories and studies show that self concept factors have a great influence on career aspirations of adolescents. These factors are gender, locality, ethnicity, family characteristics including socio-economic status and academic related influence. Super's (1970) Work Value Inventory helps to have a better understanding of work values which are also expected to have some influence on career aspirations. The main factors that are expected to cause career discrepancy are socio-economic status and academic achievement as these factors are deemed to have a very strong influence on the self concept of an adolescent.

The application of the self concept factors and work values to this study is explained at the end of each section of this chapter. This is also summarised in Table 2.1. Details on career aspiration is summarised in Table 2.2.

Correlates / Independent Variables Of Career Aspirations	Expected Influence on Career Aspiration	Theories / Studies
1) Self Concept Variables Gender	Being female is expected to have a negative influence on career aspiration but this influence is expected to be only slight	Super, (1963); Gottfredson, 1981; Marini (1978) Luzzo (1995) Dunne (1981)
	Interaction with socio-economic status – negative effect is expected to be more pronounced for low socio-economic status	Fan and Marini (1994) Super (1963) Gottfredson (1981)
	Interaction with location – negative effect is expected to be more pronounced in rural areas	Shu and Marini (1998)
Locality	Being from a rural area as compared to an urban area is expected to have a negative influence on career aspiration	Super (1963); Gottfredson (1981); Cook et al (1996) Furlong and Cartmel (1995); Brook-Gunn et al. (1993); Rich (1979)
Ethnicity	May not expect to find any significant influence once controlled for socio-economic status	Furlong and Cartmel (1995)
	Interaction with location	Super (1963); Gottfredson, (1981); Slaney and Brown (1983)
Number of siblings	May not expect to find any significant influence once controlled for socio-economic status	Furlong and Cartmel (1995)
	Negative influence on career aspirations	Super (1963); Gottfredson (1981); Downey (1995); Marjoribanks (1994); Marjoribanks (1995); Spota and Paulson (1995); Claxton McIntyre and Wheatley (1995)
Birth order	Negative influence on career aspirations	Super (1963) Gottfredson (1981); Downey (1995); Marjoribanks (1994); Marjoribanks (1995); Spota and Paulson (1995); Claxton, McIntyre and Wheatley (1995)
Parental involvement and parental control	Either a direct positive influence or a mediating influence between number of siblings and birth order with career aspirations	Super (1963) Gottfredson (1981); Downey (1995); Marjoribanks (1994); Marjoribanks (1995); Spota and Paulson (1995); Claxton, McIntyre and Wheatley (1995)
Academic achievement	High academic achievement is expected to have a positive influence on career aspiration	Super (1963); Gottfredson (1981); Saha (1982); Cook et al. (1996); Trieman (1977)
School Leaving Plans	Intentions to further one's studies is expected to have a positive influence on career aspirations as compared to other career plans because most high prestige careers require a high educational level	Trieman (1977)
2) Work Values	Is expected to have some influence on career aspiration due to the fact that careers of different prestige levels focus on different attributes in its employees	Super (1970); Shyamala and Lee (1991)



Table 2.2: Review On Career Aspirations

Career Aspirations	Theories / Studies
<b>Career preference</b> Most ideal career Expected to be slightly influenced by self concept variables	Super (1963); Gottfredson (1981); Trieman (1977)
<b>Career Expectation</b> Career expectation is obtained after compromise Expected to be greatly influenced by self concept variables Career expectation is expected to be lower than career preference Career expectation is expected to be influenced by career preference because career preference is a precursor to career expectation	Super (1963); Gottfredson (1981) Gottfredson (1981) Saha (1982)