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Full Length Research Paper

Investigation of the self-efficacy and occupational attitude of students of the recreation Department of Tourism and Sport Sciences Faculties of Gazi and Atatürk Universities, Turkey

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between students' attitudes towards the recreation specialty and self-efficacy of the students in the Recreation Departments of Sports Sciences and Tourism Faculty. In the study, "Occupational Attitude Scale" developed by Üstüner in 2006 and "General Self-Efficacy Scale" that was adapted to Turkish by Yildirim and İlhan and thereafter developed by Magaletta and Oliver were used. While the scope of the research comprised students studying in Recreation Department, Tourism Faculty, Gazi University and Recreation Department, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Atatürk University, the sample group consists of 79 females, 101 males, making a total of 180 students studying in these departments. It has been found that the data provide normality assumptions by looking at the Skewness-Kurtosis values. In this direction, parametric tests such as T Test and ANOVA were performed. Pearson correlation test was also performed to analyze the relationship between self-efficacy and occupational attitude. There is significant difference in terms of faculties of the participants, in terms of occupational attitude and self-efficacy students in favor of Faculty of Sport Sciences. There was also a positive relationship between occupational attitude and self-efficacy (r = 452). As a result, it can be said that they have higher occupational attitude because students of the Recreation Department at the Faculty of Sport Sciences have the opportunity to find more jobs than students of Recreation Department, Tourism Faculty. Also, the high level of self-efficacy of the students in the Faculty of Sports Sciences can be due to their sports knowledge.

Key words: Recreation, occupational attitude, self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Bandura's (1997) concept of self-efficacy in the social learning theory is defined as the belief that the individual has the capacity to organize and carry out the necessary activity in order to engage in a certain performance.

Individuals' ability to connect attitude to an object is related to their own self-efficacy. Self-efficacy levels of individuals who believe that they are skilled based on what they can do at work are also expected to be high. Individuals with high self-efficacy levels have a high chance of being successful in their work. However, occupational attitude as another important factor affecting professional success is shown. The secret of being a happy and successful individual is directly proportional to the positions of individuals' in occupational lives and occupational attitude. Self-efficacy, the belief that one has the capability to perform a particular behavior, is an important construct in social psychology. Self-efficacy perceptions have been found to influence decisions about what behaviors to undertake (Bandura et al., 1977; Betz and Hackett, 1981), the effort exerted and persistence in attempting those behaviors (Barling and Beattie, 1983; Brown and Inouye, 1978), the emotional responses (including stress and anxiety) of the individual performing the behaviors (Bandura et al., 1977; Stumpf et al., 1987), and the actual performance attainments of the individual with respect to the behavior (Barling and Beattie, 1983; Collins, 1984; Locke et al., 1984; Schunk, 1981; Wood and Bandura, 1989). These effects have been shown for a wide variety of behaviors in both clinical and managerial setting.

According to Bandura (1997), people with high self-efficacy beliefs do not run away from the experiences they meet and struggle with, and are very determined to successfully complete their actions. Individuals with low self-efficacy beliefs also experience more stress, and dissatisfaction than individuals who have strong self-efficacy beliefs during the performance of certain tasks (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy relates to the belief in these talents rather than the individual's abilities (Akkoyunlu et al., 2005). It is also possible to say that self-efficacy is fed from previous experiences, indirect experiences, positive feedbacks (Yildirim and İlhan, 2010). It is also seen that self-efficacy focuses on the selection of activities, struggling with difficulties, effort and performance (Aşkar and Umay, 2001).

Self-efficacy consists of components such as start, continue, and complete. Begin (Start) can be explained as a work, an action, a mobility, a first step, an individual's experience, or the first step of their attempt to fulfill any task they need to do. Continue (Persistence) involves continuing in an opinion or course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition. Complete (Realize) is determined as finishing a started job, finishing by doing, bringing the whole situation to a close by eliminating deficiencies. It is also known that the self-efficacy of individuals has a predeterminer role in their attitudes towards life situations. Attitudes influence both our social perception and our behavior. It is a tendency that is attributed to an individual and that regularly generates the thoughts, feelings and behavior of a psychological object

(Kağitçibaşi, 1999). Attitudes are positive or negative evaluation expressions about objects, people or events. Attitudes describe how a person feels about something (Robbins, 1994).

For an individual, the attitude object can be a matter, a group, or a profession. Occupational attitude can be defined as a consistent, tendency of strong towards accepting or rejecting an occupation, or a tendency to do or not to make that occupation (Başaran, 2008). individuals's Occupational attitudes effects that persons professional success and satisfaction. The ability of a person to perform well in his occupation depends on his / her occupational attitude (Kondalkar, 2007). Individuals' beliefs are closely related to their behavior due to play an important role in the formation of their attitudes (Bandura, 1986). Because of this relationship between attitude, belief and behavior, any change in attitude will cause a change in belief and behavioral relationship. Attitudes towards self-efficacy beliefs and the identification of behaviors brought about by these attitudes are of great importance (Morgül et al., 2016). The purpose of this study is to determine whether these self-efficacy have any influence in creating an occupational attitude of the persons by determining the self-efficacy levels of the individual.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research has been designed in accordance with relational screening and causal comparison patterns from quantitative approaches. In relational research, it is aimed at determining the relationships between two or more variables and the degree of these relationships. This is a type of research that aims to expose, compare and describe behavior as well as a situation that exists in the past and today (Karasar, 2016).

Research group

While the universe of the research is composed of students studying in Recreation Department, Tourism Faculty of Gazi University and Faculty of Sports Sciences, Atatürk University, the sample group consists of 79 females and 101 males, making a total of 180 students studying in these departments. These participants were chosen because they have differences in the entrance examinations for faculties. While Tourism Faculty students were admitted with central placement, Sports Science students are enrolled in faculties with special talent examinations.

Data collection tools

The choice of appropriate data collection tools is based on the research questions, design, sample, and the possible data sources. The tools used for data collection should gather information that will allow the research questions to be answered, take into account the characteristics of the sample, and provide information that is linked to each intended learning outcome. Therefore, "Personal Info Form", "Occupational Attitude Scale" and "General Self-Efficacy Scale" were used in the study.

Table 1. Participants' demographic characteristics.

Gender	n	%
Female	79	43.9
Male	101	56.1
Faculty	**n**	**%**
Sport	90	50.0
Tourism	90	50.0
Frequency of participation	**n**	**%**
Once or twice a month	45	25.0
Three or four times a month	44	24.4
Five or six times a month	34	18.9
Seven or more times a month	57	31.7
Total	180	100

Personal ınfo form

Personal info form is made up of questions relating to gender, faculty, and frequency of participation in activities, which are research subjects aimed at gathering information about volunteers subjects on research.

General self-efficacy scale

"General Self-Efficacy Scale" was used that was adapted to Turkish by Yildirim and İlhan (2010) after being developed by Magaletta and Oliver (1999). Scale consisting of 17 items; five-point likert type and scoring was made accordingly. The highest score that can be taken from the scale is 85. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of this scale is 0.87.

Occupational attitude scale

"Occupational Attitude Scale" used was developed by Üstüner in 2006. Scale consisting of 34 items; five-point Likert type and scoring was made accordingly. The highest score that can be taken from the scale is 170. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of this scale is 0.96.

Data collection process

This is conducted following receipt of the necessary permits from the Sports Sciences and Tourism Faculties for the application of data collection tools used in the research. It contained detailed information about the filling of the data collection tools by making necessary explanations on the purpose of the research. Faulty questionnaires were excluded from the study by checking questionnaires collected by the investigator and the valid and acceptable qualities of the data collection tools transferred to the computer for evaluation.

Data analysis

The statistical analyzes made within the scope of the research were made through SPSS V.22 statistical package program. Skewness and kurtosis values and Levene (equality of variance) tests were performed and the data showed normal distribution when the data provided the preconditions of the parametric tests (Büyüköztürk, 2008). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was also calculated to determine the reliability of the scales. According to the analyzes performed, the reliability of " self-efficacy Scale" was 0.87, while the reliability of the " Occupational Attitude Scale" was found to be 0.96. In the evaluation of the data, descriptive statistics, T-Test, ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were used.

FINDINGS

When the demographic characteristics were examined, 43.9% of the participants' genders were female and 56.1% were male; in terms of faculties, 50% were of the Sports while 50% have studied in the field of tourism. It was determined that 25% of the participants participated in activities 1-2 times, 24.4% 3-4 times a month, 18.9% 5-6 times a month, and 31.7% 7 times a month and over (Table 1). When the analysis results are examined, Begin (Start) ($p = 0.011$) from subscales of the self-efficacy showed a significant difference in favor of women when examined in terms of gender and there is no significant difference in total score of self-efficacy ($p = 0.940$) (Table 2). It was also observed that when the scores from the occupational attitude scale were examined in terms of gender, it was found that there was a significant difference in favor of women ($p = 0.001$). It can be said that in these data, the self-efficacy of women and their occupational attitudes are higher than that of men.

The independent samples T Test was applied to analyze the relationship between self-efficacy sub-dimensions and total score and occupational attitude total score according to faculty variable. Accordingly, the results of analysis in favor of Sports Science Faculty in the Continue (Persistence) subscale of self-efficacy ($p = 0.001$), in favor of Sports Science Faculty ($p = 0.016$) in Complete (Realize) subscale ($p = 0.000$), in favor of Sports Science Faculty ($p = 0.000$) in total score of self-efficacy were also found to have significant differences.

Table 2. Examination of self-efficacy and occupational attitude according to gender variable.

Variable	Gender	n	$\overline{X}$	s.s.	t	p
Begin (Start)	Female	79	4.11	0.72	2.58	**0.011***
	Male	101	3.81	0.82		
Continue (Persistence)	Female	79	3.96	0.80	0.389	0.698
	Male	101	3.92	0.80		
Complete (Realize)	Female	79	3.75	0.84	1.25	0.210
	Male	101	3.59	0.86		
Self- Efficacy Total	Female	79	3.93	0.76	0.075	0.940
	Male	101	3.92	0.66		
Occupational Attitude Total	Female	79	3.96	0.77	3.25	**0.001***
	Male	101	3.56	0.86		

*(p≤0.05).

Table 3. Examination of self- efficacy and occupational attitude according to faculty variable.

Variable	Faculty	n	$\overline{X}$	s.s.	t	p
Begin (Start)	Sport	90	3.95	0.80	0.145	0.885
	Tourism	90	3.93	0.79		
Continue (Persistence)	Sport	90	4.14	0.76	3.43	**0.001***
	Tourism	90	3.74	0.79		
Complete (Realize)	Sport	90	3.82	0.91	2.43	**0.016***
	Tourism	90	3.51	0.77		
Self- Efficacy Total	Sport	90	4.18	0.61	1.78	**0.000**
	Tourism	90	3.66	0.70		
Occupational Attitude Total	Sport	90	3.96	0.79	3.66	**0.000***
	Tourism	90	3.51	0.84		

*(p≤0.05).

Furthermore, there are significant differences in favor of Sports Science Faculty (p = 0.000) in occupational attitude total score (Table 3). It can be said that in these data, the attitudes of students of the Faculty of Sports Science of Recreation Department to their Occupational attitudes and self-efficacies are higher than those of students of Recreation Department of Tourism Faculty.

The one-way ANOVA test was applied to analyze the relationship between self-efficacy sub-dimensions and total score and occupational attitude total score according to frequency of participation. According to the results of analysis, it was concluded that students preferring to participate in leisure activities seven and more times ($\overline{X}$=4.22) within a month in the sub-dimension of Continue (Persistence) got higher points than the students preferring to participate once and twice ($\overline{X}$=3.87) or three and four times ($\overline{X}$=3.59) within a month (Table 4). It was concluded that the students preferring to participate in leisure activities five or six times ($\overline{X}$=233.44) within a month in the total score of Occupational attitude got higher points than the students preferring to participate once and twice ($\overline{X}$=3.56) or three and four times ($\overline{X}$=3.44) and seven and more times ($\overline{X}$=3.94) within a month. Pearson correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the

Table 4. Examination of self-efficacy and occupational attitude according to frequency of participation.

Variable	Frequency of Participation	n	$\bar{X}$	s.s.	p	Meaning difference
Begin (Start)	1.Once or twice a month	45	3.91	0.79		
	2.Three or four times a month	44	3.88	0.84	0.857	-
	3.Five or six times a month	34	4.03	0.79		
	4.Seven or more times a month	57	3.95	0.78		
Continue (Persistence)	1.Once or twice a month	45	3.87	0.76		
	2.Three or four times a month	44	3.59	0.84	**0.001***	**4>1, 3>2, 4>2**
	3.Five or six times a month	34	4.01	0.73		
	4.Seven or more times a month	57	4.22	0.73		
Complete (Realize)	1.Once or twice a month	45	3.58	0.96		
	2.Three or four times a month	44	3.57	0.80	0.606	-
	3.Five or six times a month	34	3.76	0.81		
	4.Seven or more times a month	57	3.74	0.84		
Self- Efficacy Total	1.Once or twice a month	45	3.84	0.64		
	2.Three or four times a month	44	3.74	0.71	0.098	-
	3.Five or six times a month	34	3.98	0.69		
	4.Seven or more times a month	57	3.99	0.66		
Occupational Attitude Total	1.Once or twice a month	45	3.56	0.93		
	2.Three or four times a month	44	3.44	0.81		
	3.Five or six times a month	34	4.02	0.75	**0.002***	**3>1, 3>4,3>2**
	4.Seven or more times a month	57	3.94	0.76		
	Total	18	3.74	0.84		

*(p≤0.05).

Table 5. Relationship between self-efficacy and occupational attitude.

Variable		Self-Efficacy Total	Occupational Attitude Total
Self-efficacy total		-	**0.452**** **0.000**
Occupational attitude total	**r** **p**	**0.452**** **0.000**	-

total score of self-efficacy and the total score of occupational attitude. According to this result, it can be said that there is a significant positive correlation between total score of self-efficacy and total score of occupational attitude (Table 5).

Conclusıon

In this study, we investigated the relationship between occupational attitude of recreation specialty and self-

efficacy of the students in the Recreation Departments of Sports Sciences and Tourism Faculties. The ındependent samples T Test was applied to analyze the relationship between self-efficacy sub-dimensions and total score and occupational attitude total score according to gender variable. When the scores from the occupational attitude scale were examined in terms of gender, it was found that there was a significant difference in favor of women (p = 0.001). It can be said that in these data, the occupational attitudes of women are higher than that of men.

Üstüner et al. (2009) self-efficacy perceptions do not significantly differ according to gender variable, sub-dimensions of scale, or the whole. In the study conducted by Çimen (2007), the burnout experiences and self-efficacy perceptions of primary school teachers were not different between the teacher views in terms of gender variable (Çimen, 2007). In a research conducted by Izgar and Dilmaç (2008), it was determined that self-efficacy perceptions of male managers were higher than those of females. These results do not match the results achieved in the present study. The occupational attitude has necessitated the conclusion that in some researches made in terms of gender variable, women have more positive attitudes towards the teaching profession than men (Çapa and Çil, 2000; Çapri and Çelikkaleli, 2008; Gürbüz and Kişoğlu, 2007; Üstüner et al., 2009). On the other hand, it is stated that men and women have similar occupational attitude (Bulut, 2009; Bulut and Doğar, 2006; Çakir et al., 2004).

The ındependent samples T Test was applied to analyze the relationship between self-efficacy sub-dimensions and total score and occupational attitude total score according to faculty variable. Accordingly, results of analysis in favor of Sports Science Faculty in the Continue (Persistence) subscale of self-efficacy (p = 0.001), in favor of Sports Science Faculty (p = 0.016) in Complete (Realize) subscale (p = 0.000), and in favor of Sports Science Faculty (p = 0.000) in total score of self-efficacy were found to have significant differences. It can be said that in these data, the occupational attitudes and self-efficacies of students of Recreation Department of Sports Science Faculty to their profession are higher than those of students of Recreation Department of Tourism Faculty. In some researches (Oral, 2004; Çakir et al., 2006) related to departmental variable, it has been determined that occupational attitude differed, whereas in some other researches (Çapri and Çelikkaleli, 2008), it did not differentiate. When Morgül et al. (2016) examined the candidates of Music and Art Teacher who attempted aptitude test on these programs, the candidates who prefer these departments in recent years mostly come from Fine Arts high schools and they see themselves as talented in their field with the influence of the education they have received, indicating that these teacher candidates are positively influencing their self-efficacy beliefs. These results may explain the application of aptitude tests in Sports Science entrance examinations and why students in this department have higher self-efficacy than other students.

Pearson correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the total score of self-efficacy and the total score of occupational attitude. According to this result, it can be said that there is a significant positive correlation between total score of self-efficacy and total score of occupational attitude.

According to Üstüner et al. (2009), there was a significant positive correlation between teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs and occupational attitude at a low level (close to middle level, r = 0.28). In some researches related to the subject, it was stated there is a positive meaningful relationship between self-efficacy and occupational attitude.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

Teacher education in China, Japan and Turkey

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The aim of this study is to analyze teacher education systems in China and Japan, and compare the findings with teacher education in Turkey, thus contribute to the developments in teacher education in Turkey. The research was based on the years 2000 to 2017. Document analysis method, which is one of the qualitative data collection methods, is used in this research. Within the scope of the document review, official sources such as education ministries of the countries, internet pages of universities and internet pages of international education organizations are used; and educational policies, entrance conditions of teacher education institutions, the structure of these institutions and teacher education programs are examined. The collected data are analyzed by content analysis. In conclusion, the continuous policy changes regarding teacher training in Turkey are found to be detrimental to teacher training and prevent the implementation of research focused teacher education programs. For practice courses, both course hours and the cooperation between faculty and practice schools are found to be insufficient. The Education Bureau in China is the institution responsible for education policy, education program, teacher education and legislation. Though teacher education programs vary in different states, generally, those who have high school diploma may enter teacher education institutions after passing and practice-based evaluation system. It is found that the teaching profession is given a great importance in Japan, and that there is no specific policy in pedagogical formation education, and therefore, pedagogical formation education needs to be reviewed and updated. Turkey, China and Japan have taken inspiration from progressive education philosophy, one of the modern education philosophies, for their teacher education systems.

Key words: Teacher education, teacher education in Turkey, teacher education in China, teacher education in Japan.

INTRODUCTION

Education aims to ensure the continuity of cultures through generations, as well as preparing individuals for developing universal systems. In this process, the most important role belongs to teachers. Teaching (Gözütok, 2004) "is a profession that determines the educational needs of students and makes various decisions on issues

such as evaluating students' performance and improving the quality of teaching". The most important aspects of teaching are loving your job and doing it sincerely. In this sense, teaching is not an easy profession that everyone can do; only the people who have a lot of love, tolerance and desire for learning and teaching are able to teach well, and since teaching requires serious academic education, it is a difficult profession. According to Ünal (2011), teacher does not only implement education program and teaching techniques, but also every mechanism that effects education system has a direct relation with teacher. The Ministry of Education law, no. 789, dated March 22, 1926, states that "the teaching is essential in education services". Akyüz (2015) stated that this law has two meanings. The first is that teaching is a profession that undertakes education and training, which is a public duty of the state, and the second is the priority and superiority of teaching in education and training services. Demirel (2012) has defined teacher as the person who works on the attitudes of students, helps students achieve predetermined learning outcomes, and ensures that students become individuals who display desired behaviors.

The purpose, structure and implementation of the education system cannot be conceived apart from the education system of the society it belongs to. In modern society, the education system has been established and developed to fulfil the expected political, economic, social, cultural and moral functions. Depending on the stages of capitalism, education system has always been reshaped in line with new social needs and is now being restructured according to global capitalism. Capitalist system has defined the economic/political aspects of education, education program, organization of educational environments, management structure, and students' entry/exit to the system, and also role of teacher in the system. Expectations from the education system also determine the identity and role of teacher, expected to play a leading role in realizing these expectations (Ünal, 2011).

In the past years, teacher was defined as the person who only relayed the information, however, in recent years, this profession gained adjectives such as education engineer, artist and expert (Güneş, 2016). These traits are brought into focus in teacher education, and thus open up new discussions. Discussions about teacher education will not lose their importance as long as it is recognized that teacher has an active role in students' success (Musset, 2010).

While all countries of the world experience problems in teacher education, developed countries have solved this problem by organizing teacher education programs in a qualified manner. However, Turkey still experience problems in qualified teacher education programs. Therefore, it is hard to say that there is an implementation of a long-term plan. It can be said that

frequent changes in teacher education programs are among the main reasons for failure. Therefore, the teacher education practices of China and Japan, two Asian countries that have international acclaim, are reviewed and compared with the practices in Turkey. In this context, the problem statement of the research is expressed as follows.

Problem statement

What are the differences and similarities between teacher education practices in Turkey, China and Japan?

METHODS

The aim of this study is to compare teacher education systems in Turkey, China and Japan. The research was based on 2000 to 2017 years. For this purpose, the documents showing the status of these countries are examined. This study was done due to the fact that there are few studies on teacher training in China and Japan. Data collected by document analysis are analyzed with content analysis. Within the scope of the document review, the data obtained from the countries' official institutions (Education Ministries, Education Institutions, Universities etc.) and international reports are used. Document review is the analysis of written materials that contain information on the topic or fact intended to be researched (Yildirim and Simsek, 2008). Document analysis includes records, correspondence, official reports and quotations (Patton, 1987).

FINDINGS

Turkey

Since the first years of Republic, the teacher education in Turkey has constantly changed. These changes are often made due to political and ideological views, rather than scientific data. Various teacher education models such as two-year education institutes, village teachers' schools, teacher colleges, as well as village institutes were used in the first teacher schools. Erdem (2015) stated that in Turkish education history, teacher education policies have constantly changed, and there were periods that in order to become a teacher, a person only needed to know how to read and write.

In Turkey, a person needs to pass the national transition to higher education exam in order to enter education faculties, the institution in Turkey responsible for teacher education. In higher education programs, the general name of the placement system, which takes into account the choice and preferences of students, is the Student Selection and Placement System. In Turkey, teacher education programs is determined by Council of Higher Education and carried out by the universities' faculties of education. The program, which was renewed in the 2006 to 2007 academic year, is still being used. A flexible regulation has been used while creating the

programs by taking into account the characteristics of each program; field and field education courses are 50 to 60%, teaching profession knowledge classes are 25 to 30%, and general culture courses are 15-20% (Council of Higher Education, 2007). Also, within the scope of practical training, the implementation of school experience and teaching practice courses are carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education.

China

The People's Republic of China, established in 1949, is governed by the communist party and its education policies are implemented accordingly. The teacher education program consists of policies that are in line with the objectives of the party. In the Chinese education system, in 1985, local governments were given rights in basic education and training by the state-created law. It was announced in 1999 that a declaration was passed by the Chinese central committee and the state council to fully support the quality of education and to increase the reform efforts in the field of education (Sezgin, 2008). In order to work as a teacher in China, a candidate must first apply to the Bureau of Education. Teacher candidates who apply to the Bureau are either individuals who completed the teacher education program or individuals who have the necessary qualifications (NCEE, 2015). Teacher candidates should have completed a teacher training program that includes compulsory specialization courses, intensive training courses and a six-month practice course. Specialized courses aim to develop teachers' professional knowledge and skills on a subject. Teacher candidates should complete 30 to 40 credit field courses and 26 credit intensive training courses to teach most subjects at school. Class teachers are not required to take field courses, but must complete 40 h of intensive courses in three or four areas, including compulsory pedagogical courses. Subject area courses and training programs of intensified training courses should be approved by both the teacher education committees in universities and the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2011).

All Chinese citizens who are interested in education, have strong ideology and morals, have officially passed the national teacher qualification examinations, have received education and evaluated with regards to their teaching skills, can be employed as a teacher in educational institutions. According to the qualifications stated in this law, citizens who do not have formal education records should take national teacher qualification exams when applying for teaching (MOE, 2011). There are two main types of teacher education programs in China: the first one is a five-year undergraduate education program, the second is a bachelor's degree and a one-year full-time (or two-year,

part-time) master's degree in education programs. Since the Chinese government does not fully define the pedagogical training process in these programs, teacher training institutions differ in this aspect. However, all teacher education programs include a supervised practice course. Sometimes these institutions support the teacher education program by providing short-term lessons for teachers who need in-service training at the request of the Bureau of Education (Leung et al., 2015). Prior to 1994, primary and high school teachers received education only in normal schools, normal colleges and regular universities. In 1994, *the teacher education law* replaced the normal education law and the teacher education policy has changed. Thus, regular colleges and regular universities are no longer the only institutions that train teachers. Education-related courses, graduate credit programs and training teachers from kindergarten to high school level have become the responsibility of all colleges and universities (Tsung et al., 2015). The Chinese Government provides teachers with the necessary training permits to improve their professional qualifications. In addition, the government works to ensure the professionalism of teachers, to develop teacher competencies and provide an experimental foundation within the framework of the common professional development (EDB, 2008).

It is observed that the structure of teacher education institutions in China has changed at certain time intervals. The Education Colleges, which had been teacher education institutions for many years, were merged in the mid-1990s and the Hong Kong Education Institute was established, providing both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Since 2004 to 2005 academic year, all teachers are required to complete a master's degree. Teacher candidates currently receive education in one of the three multi-program universities or the Hong Kong Open University (Orakçı, 2015).

Japan

In Japan, the education policies are created according to the recommendations of the Central Education Board and advisory boards of teacher training, lifelong learning, education program, higher education institutions and technology (MEXT, 2008).

In Japan, a student is admitted to the teacher education program after passing a two-stage exam. The first of these is implemented throughout the country and the second one is implemented by universities. Teacher education is provided in two ways, namely, education with diploma in universities or departments of universities, and certified education in other faculties (Semerci, 2000). In order to enter teacher education institutions, students must take the exam held by the National University Entrance Examination Center. This

exam is held once a year in different regions and is prepared for the same education program. The scores determine the teacher education program and the university that student can enter (Orakçı, 2015). A teacher certificate is required to be appointed as a teacher in Japan. In order to work in kindergartens and primary schools, a general teacher certificate is required, and in order to work in secondary schools and high schools, a certificate from a certain field is required (Erdoğan, 2015; Ginshima and Matsubara, 2015). For the competences that should be gained in the teacher education program in Japan, Hokkaido University of Education has set the following standards: teaching-learning ability, guidance skills, classroom management, educational counselling, community relationship, clinical practice and collaboration skills. Other universities have developed similar standards. Especially the PISA results raised the issue of teacher competences more (Fukumoto, 2009). Universities organize their own teacher education programs. However, the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, Culture and Technology certifies the courses and supervises the content of the courses and the course subjects at the faculty (Abazaoğlu, 2014). Teaching practice is an important element in teacher education; it was limited to 2 weeks according to the related law; however, after 2005 it is generally implemented for 3-5 weeks. Primary and secondary school teacher candidates are also required to do a one-week internship (NCEE, 2018).

DISCUSSION

The teacher education program in Turkey is determined by the central government. It can be said that continuous policy changes have a negative effect on teacher education. In China, teacher education policies are generally determined by the Education Bureau but they may vary according to the states. Japan is similar to Turkey with regards to teacher training programs. In Japan and Turkey, teacher education institutions are education faculties. Students enter these faculties through entrance exam for higher education. This exam is carried out in Japan in two stages. The first stage is implemented throughout the country and the second stage is implemented by universities. In Turkey, teacher education programs are determined by Higher Education Council and carried out by the faculties of education. The structure of teacher training institutions in Japan is similar to Turkey. However, it is seen that it gives less practical education. In China, although it differs according to the states, the requirement to be graduated from high school and to take the national exam is common; apart from that, the teacher training institutions can make their own exams. In other words, after graduating from high school and passing an application-based evaluation system, it is

possible to enter teacher education institutions. In addition, it is found that teacher education programs differ according to the state in China. Turkey and Japan, in teacher training programs include courses on general culture, field knowledge and professional knowledge. In China, teachers should complete a teacher education program that includes compulsory specialization courses, intensive training courses, and six months of practice. In addition, China, focusing on the quality in teacher education requires the teacher candidates to complete a master's degree. It is also seen that there are different teacher education institutions under the administration of local education authorities of each province.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Transforming female aspirations to real presence: The case of higher education in Cameroon

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Higher education for females is an indicator of development, democracy and gender equity, particularly necessary for a nation like Cameroon which attempts to become an emerging country by 2035. Hence, this paper is focused on ascertaining female aspirations to higher education for access and effective participation. In so doing, a study that employed a semi-structured questionnaire collected data from 977 female students about the level of schooling they aspired to attain, the underlying reasons for their choices and their prospected barriers. Simple percentages, chi-square analysis and logistic regression analysis showed that female student' aspirations for higher education were high, challenging the roles of higher education institutions. However, these high aspirations were based on the expectations that higher education participation and completion would be beneficial to the overall development of females and their integration into the world of work. Nevertheless, these aspirations were also tempered by barriers, and to this effect it is recommended that higher education school curricula be reformed to suit the needs of these female aspirers. Equally, financial constraints could be curbed through scholarships and donations from ex-student associations and university systems. Irrespective of this, constant research in this area is necessary as aspirations are complex, dynamic and contextual.

Key words: Aspirations, higher education, females, barriers, access and effective participation.

INTRODUCTION

The education of girls and women in the society is crucial for any country as it benefits the entirety of a nation and is one of the most important ways to achieve sustainable development. This explains why the education of females has been given national and international priority, expressed through research and policy initiatives, program development and advocacy. Examples of such initiatives include the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand (1990), the World Forum on Education in Dakar (2000), the Second Decade of Education for Africa: Plan of Action for 2006 to 2015 as

well as Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure "equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education including university by 2030."

Relevance of the study

Transition from high school to higher education can be very demanding as challenging decisions that can maximize one's output must be made, taking into

consideration one's opportunities in light of one's own understanding. This challenging process can therefore shape one's aspirations in different ways based on their own understanding of the underlying process. Research in aspiration is age old, however it has its origins in experimental researches that focused on level of aspirations in the early 1930s where the focus was on ascertaining the different levels of one's ability to achieve difficult task and their intended performance (Quaglia and Cobb, 1996). Nevertheless, most of these studies were carried out in the laboratory with fewer implications for the school and students but in the late 1940s, the focus was shifted to achievement motivation – viewed as an activating force or a drive to achieve good results and recognition which to some degree accounts for progress in school (Singh, 2011).

Along this line was a search for gender differences in achievement motivation suggesting inherent implications for aspirations. This has been the foundation for the comparative approaches of aspirations based on gender that has limited the understanding and specificities of higher education for females. Already, females are limited in their unique and natural roles of child bearing (which we cannot change) and the expectation of these roles can influence the decisions they make of their education. A dominant comparative approach has demanded females to be like males in access, quality of participation in terms of choice of university programs and courses, career patterns that rather raises expectation levels for these females and makes equity far reaching. This constitutes a gap and the present research attempts to fill it up by understanding the reasons why female students want to access higher education as this can help to sustain their aspirations by meeting their needs at a time when student interest is optimal in the educational system.

Historically, the education of women has been one of the most fiercely debated issues since the 19th century. This debate, along with social and political changes, has resulted generally in a significant progress and accessibility of education for girls at primary and secondary levels. However, it was only in the second half of the century that women were allowed to enter universities in the western countries. Papadópulos and Radakovich (2005) equally affirmed that, traditionally, higher education was not a space considered properly "feminine", hence it was one of the best environments to reproduce gender inequalities. In Africa, Gobina (2004) reports that generally, women at the pre-colonial time were usually relegated to roles that were associated with their female nurturing qualities whilst in the colonial period women began accessing teaching and nursing careers that was considered as an extension of their female nurturing qualities. Generally, in Africa, female access and participation in education has been historically limited with a low level of participation that was enhanced by the expectations and beliefs of the authorities at that time. This situation continued to prevail in the absence of an informed understanding of the unique needs and desires of females that is necessary for providing them with higher education.

No doubt, Africa has experienced an expansion in the number of universities and other higher education institutions but women still remain underrepresented in Cameroon. For instance, Fonkeng and Ntembe (2009) indicated that in 2000/2001, female enrolment was 23,288 (36.15%) from an overall enrolment of 40559 in Cameroon universities. In 2001/2002, amongst a total of 71,091 students found in the state universities, only 27572 were girls (Fonkeng, 2005). Equally, analysis made in the SWAp (2006) showed that girls are less educated with a parity index of 0.64, implying two female students for three male students in accessing Cameroon state universities. In the same light, it was found that only 44% of females constitute the total enrolment of students in tertiary education (UNESCO, 2010). These statistics indicates that even though females now have access to education, their progression to higher levels of education is low.

The efforts in Cameroon are dominant at the lower levels of education. Cameroon is a sub-Saharan African country, located in central Africa. The educational system of Cameroon is sub-divided into two, that is, the English and French sub-educational system. With specific reference to the English sub-educational system where this study was carried out, it is worth noting that they currently operate six (6) years of primary education and seven (7) years of secondary education (which is sub-divided into two sections, that is, secondary school – 5 years and high school – 2 years). After graduation from the high school, students can then gain entry into the tertiary level of education or higher education that constitutes of universities and other institutions of higher learning to obtain degrees or diplomas.

Over the years, the government has played a key role in forging the education of females by promoting mass education particularly at the primary level (Kritz and Gaule, 1989). Similarly, in Cameroon, the Gender Thematic Group (GTEG) also highlighted the efforts of the Ministry of National Education in 2002, some of which included, providing free public primary education, the distribution of textbooks, bursaries and other supports to female students (including scholarships for scientific and technological studies). Nonetheless, despite the fact that Cameroon as part of sub-Saharan Africa has participated in all the conferences, conventions and declarations concerning girls' education, more than half of their out-of-school population are girls and two-thirds of the illiterate population are women (FAWE, 2010).

Statement of the problem

This problem of female access and participation in

education may have persisted partly because the issue has been limited to massive enrolments in primary schools but the requirement to advance knowledge that can better sustain development in a country requires higher levels of education. Primary education is a necessary and crucial step but it is not a destination, and therefore the issue of quality and sustaining education should not be limited to only the primary level of education. No doubt, the primary level of education is not independent of the secondary and tertiary levels (Kwesiga, 2009), though we cannot afford to be redundant, we must move ahead to find out if the reforms and initiatives dominated at the primary level are precipitating access and participation at other levels. We are in a contemporary knowledge-based society and therefore higher education is as important for Africa as it is for other countries (Kwesiga, 2009). Evidences from Indabawa (2004) and Ayodele et al., (2006) indicate that women in the world constitute over 70% of the 1.3 billion world population, but their participation generally in education and particularly in higher education does not reflect the aforementioned figure.

Even more pertinent is the case of Cameroon which aims to enhance education quality by 2035 yet quantitative development of girls' school attendance has not gone beyond basic education (Traore and Fonkeng, 2011). Brookfield (2013) also reports that even though the attendance rate for primary school girls in Cameroon is 77%, there is a drastic decrease of 38% attendance rate for girls in the secondary school which reflects the probability of female attendance rate in higher education in Cameroon. These enrolments seemingly indicate that the participation of females in higher education is not very high in comparison to their population and to lower levels of education. However, it must be noted here that the issue of access should not be limited on numbers or massive enrolments but rather on the translation of these numbers to real presence in terms of participation and decision making. The issues of access must question the parameters, for example, higher education programs must be relevant to the needs of the female students particularly for African countries that still bear the bruises of imported colonial educational policies (Kwesiga, 2009).

No doubt, there are places where boys are behind but an overarching comparative approach cannot capture these realities and understanding access and participation in education from the perspectives of the individuals themselves can better help them maximize their output, otherwise massive enrolments will become non directional. Based on this premise, this paper focuses on two main issues:

i) Firstly, understanding the individual's plans with regards to access and participation in higher education programs. It is important to ascertain whether or not individual's themselves desire to access and participate in higher

education programs and institutions as well as the reason for their choices. For, if individuals must realize the benefits of higher education, then they must desire to fully participate. This desire must be weighed against different options, opportunities and barriers of the context that can spur into a decision of access and participation in higher education. In this regard, there is therefore a need for a shift from the primary focus which has dominantly been on comparing and ensuring equitable access, participation, retention and performance between males and females to understanding the needs of these individuals, their pathways and choices.

ii) Secondly and consequently, there is strong necessity for higher education institutions to be adapted to meaningfully accommodate the interest and needs of these females. To achieve this, policy issues must be adequately piloted and reforms must affect relevant changes within the system. Understanding the higher education aspirations of females therefore can inform a policy of provision in Cameroon, and this is why this paper, based on the author's own research addresses the following issues;

i) Levels of education female students aspire to attain.
ii) Reasons for female students' prospective level.
iii) Barriers to female students' participation in higher education.

METHODS

Research design

A correlation research design was adopted as the study sought to predict students' prospective level of education, reasons and the prospective barriers they think they might face in attaining these aspirations in order to ascertain the likelihood of access and effective participation.

Sample

A multistage sampling procedure that included proportionate stratified random sampling, simple random sampling and opportunity sampling was used to choose a sample of 977 female students. These students were aged between 17 - 22 years, selected from 46 high schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. The interest of selecting these level of students was because the study was more interested in concrete aspirations that are relatively stable over time as research suggests that younger students tend to have more idealistic aspirations, whereas older ones have more concrete ideas about higher education, their barriers and opportunities (Kao and Tienda, 1998). Also, results from a study conducted by Dupriez et al. (2012) confirmed that 15-year-olds have moved beyond an idealized vision of educational aspirations. As high school completion is further away, younger students can afford to be more optimistic about their future opportunities, while older teenagers are more aware of the barriers to their educational and occupational success and thus more likely to lower their aspirations to meet their expectations.

Table 1. Plan to continue education.

Parameter	Frequency	Percent
Yes	960	98.3
No	17	1.7
Total	977	100.0

Instrument

These female students responded to a semi structured questionnaire containing 27 items of both open and close ended items that specifically assessed the levels of education that female students aspire to attain, reasons for different prospective levels and their perceived barriers to access and participation in higher education. The questionnaire mostly employed the ordinal scale of measurement as most of the data needed was categorized and ranked using two to five-point questions.

Validity and reliability of the instrument

After the construction of the questionnaire, it was submitted to an expert supervisor. Corrections were effected and the questionnaire was then administered to a pilot group that included a total of thirty (30) students, with ten (10) students each from three (3) different schools that were not considered part of the original study. Through careful observation and an analysis of the results, the questionnaire was again corrected and reviewed with an expert supervisor, a statistician and a lecturer interested in female education. With this, a content validity index was computed using the following formula as seen below:

CVI = No. of judges that declared item valid / Total no. of judges

CVI = 3/3

CVI = 1

To this extent, the instrument was considered valid as its inter judge coefficient was greater than 0.7. For a reliability check, an analysis of the pilot test results indicated a need for some corrections as further shown;

Questions number/issue: Questions 26 and 27

Problem: Initially not considered but surfaced in the remarks.

Strategies: A question probing for factors that can stop students from continuing education and another on factors that can motivate students to continue education was added.

Questions number/issue: Formatting

Problem: Questionnaire perceived as too long.

Strategies: Formatting was improved and the questionnaire was brought down from 6 to 4 pages.

These different readjustments were made to the questionnaire and a reliability test was performed to assess the internal consistency of responses using Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis. The coefficient was high with a score of 0.697 indicating that the internal consistency assumption was not violated.

Procedure of data collection

An informed consent was obtained from each school to be visited and once there, approval was sought from the principals and vice principals in order to gain direct access to the students. Upon approval, the questionnaire was delivered to the students in their classrooms wherein they filled with pens and individually. Students were monitored and encouraged to answer all the questions where necessary.

Method of data analysis

The Chi-square, Spearman rho correlation test was used to compare proportions for significant differences, and logistic regression analysis was used to assess the predictive power of the variables. Data was presented using frequency tables and figures and all statistics were presented at the 95% confidence level (CL) along with an alpha coefficient of 0.05.

RESULTS

The level of education that female students aspire to attain

An analysis of students' plans to further their education beyond the present level (high school-secondary education), revealed the following as presented in Table 1.

Almost all the female students sampled planned to continue with education after Advanced Level Certificate with a proportion of 960 (98.3%) as against 17 (1.7%) for those who would not like to continue. When these findings were subjected to the logistic regression model the following was revealed as seen in Table 2.

i) Those who would not like to stop for a job immediately after Advanced Level are most likely to aspire for higher education (P<0.001).
ii) When students plan to attain higher level of schooling, there is an increased likelihood that they will aspire for higher education (P<0.001).

Specifically, an analysis of students' prospective access at specific levels of education revealed the following as indicated in Table 3.

Equally, as far as the specific level of schooling was concerned, Table 3 shows that 17 (1.7%) of the female students would like to end at the Advanced Level, 75(7.7%) at Bachelor's Degree, 421 (43.1%) at Master's Degree, 418 (42.8%) at Doctorate Degree (PhD) and 46 (4.7%) had other plans which included obtaining HNDs, Vocational Trainings and so on. Cumulatively, a very significant ($x^2 = 1005.94$; df = 1; P < 0.001) majority 839

Table 2. Logistic Regression Model depicting the likelihood of females attaining Higher Education levels.

Predictors of aspiration for higher education	Log Likelihood Ratio Score	df	Sig.
Will not stop for job immediately after A/Ls	120.840	1	0.000
Level of education one plans to attain.	39.544	1	0.000

Table 3. Plans to obtain specific qualifications.

Level of schooling female students plan to attain	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Advanced Level	17	1.7	1.7
Bachelor's Degree	75	7.7	9.4
Master's Degree	421	43.1	52.5
Doctorate Degree (PhD)	418	42.8	95.3
Others (HND, Vocational Trainings, etc.)	46	4.7	100.0
Total	977	100.0	-

(85.9%) would like to attain Masters and PhD level.

Reasons for prospective plans to access higher levels of education

Students equally highlighted reasons that stimulated their desire to further their education. They emphasized the most on the need to have a job 222 (22.7%), followed by the need to achieve self-actualization 196 (20.1%), to have a better life 173 (17.7%), to acquire more knowledge 151 (15.5%) amongst others. On the other hand, those who never wanted to further their education, revealed that this was because of lack of finance 10 (1.0%), the need to work earlier to sustain family 6 (0.6%), had to follow plans set by parents 1 (0.1%), the need to travel abroad 1 (0.1%) as seen in Table 4. These reasons are equally illustrated on Figure 1.

Further analysis into the reasons why students aspire for education at specific levels revealed the following as seen in Table 5.

The findings revealed that those students who aspired to reach only Advanced Level gave as main reason the lack of finance 11 (64.7%), while those who would like to go beyond the Advanced Level to pursue Master's 30 (40.0%), PhD 193 (45.8%) or HNDs and vocational trainings 163 (39%) gave as main reason the need to acquire knowledge that can earn them a high income job as indicated in Table 4. This indicates that the economic benefits of education is highly valued and can serve as the basis for accessing higher education.

DISCUSSION

Levels of education female students aspire to attain

The findings of the study suggested that most of the

female students in the South West Region of Cameroon plan to continue with their education beyond the Advanced Level with a majority of them desiring to attain Master's and PhD degrees. This indicates that female aspirations for higher education is very high which consequently places a higher demand for higher education as they seek to request for places in institutions of higher education. However, these findings are in contrast to that of Brookfield (2013) which showed that the education of girls in Ngaoundere, Cameroon is not highly valued even by females themselves. This difference may be as a result of cultural differences in these two areas in Cameroon as the Adamawa Region, where Ngoaundere is located is markedly Muslim, traditionally dominated by the belief that education makes a wife disobedient and arrogant, for example, hence, the education of the girl is undermined compared to the South West Region of Cameroon (where this study was carried out) with emerging and liberal beliefs about education for females, that allows the girl child to dream of a future that is dependent on education.

Reasons for female students' prospective level

Female students want to attend higher education institutions the most because they were of the view that higher education attendance will earn them a job, help them to be self-actualized, earn better life, acquire more knowledge, techniques and skills. One's expectation of a good is key to their consumption and therefore in this case, students' expectation of higher education has the potential of influencing actual access and effective participation. This indicates that if females must benefit from accessing and participating in higher education, the system must strive to meet with these expectations. These expectations have a spillover effect in these

Table 4. A code-grounded-quotation table for perceived reasons for higher education plans.

Category	Code	Code description	Grounding n	%	Quotation
	Job	To have a job	222	22.7	*'So as to obtain a job'* *'Because I want to be professionalized in order to have a well-qualified job so as to help my family and myself.'*
	Achieve	To achieve self-actualization, curbing gender role difference	196	20.1	*'In order to specialized in what I want to become in future'* *'I want to attain my goal in life which does not end only at Advanced Level'* *'If a man can be a president and women as well like in other countries why not also in Cameroon'*
	Better life	To have a better life and status	173	17.7	*'Because I want to acquire more knowledge and have a better place in the society today'* *'So that I can have a good mastery of life.'*
	Skills	To acquire more knowledge, techniques and skills	151	15.5	*'To further my education and know more before going either to teach others'*
	Certificate	To have certificates	63	6.4	*'I want to acquire a higher certificate'* *'Because Advanced Level will lose its value so I want a higher certificate'*
Yes	Family status	To improve on family status	61	6.2	*'I would like to continue because I have younger ones so going further in education will enable me to help them '*
	Education	Education is important and fulfilling	41	4.2	*'I see it as necessity because in order for me to become responsible tomorrow I need to continue with my education'*
	Development	To contribute to the development of the society	21	2.1	*'I want to be able to improve on the society'* *'I want to make Cameroon better'*
	Unsure	Not sure of what to do later	10	1.0	*'I don't know'*
	Income	To earn higher income	5	0.5	*'I want to have a well-paid job'*
	Satisfy parents	To make parents proud	5	0.5	*'To make my parents happy with me'* *'To make my parents proud'* *'…and also to repay my parents for their kindness*
	Role model	Serving as role model, to inspire other girls	4	0.4	*'Because I want to show an example of a good woman'*

Table 4. Contd.

|					
	Parent's plan	Parents' plan	3	0.3	*'parent' plan'* *'It is my parents that plan that I should continue education'*
	Marriage	To have a husband	3	0.3	*'To increase my chance to have a husband'* *'Some men love educated women'*
	Travel	Travel abroad	1	0.1	*'To travel abroad'*
	Financial difficulties	No finance to further education	20	1.0	*'My parents have no money.'* *'My parents are all dead and there is no one to sponsor.'* *'Financial difficulties.'*
No	Early family responsibilities	Need to work earlier to sustain family	6	0.6	*'I want to work first.'* *'My family depends on me so I need to work.'*
	Travel	Travel abroad	1	0.1	*'I want to go and look for a job abroad.'*
	Parents' desire	Parents' plan	1	0.1	*'My parents want me to end here so I can get married.'*
-		Total	-	-	-
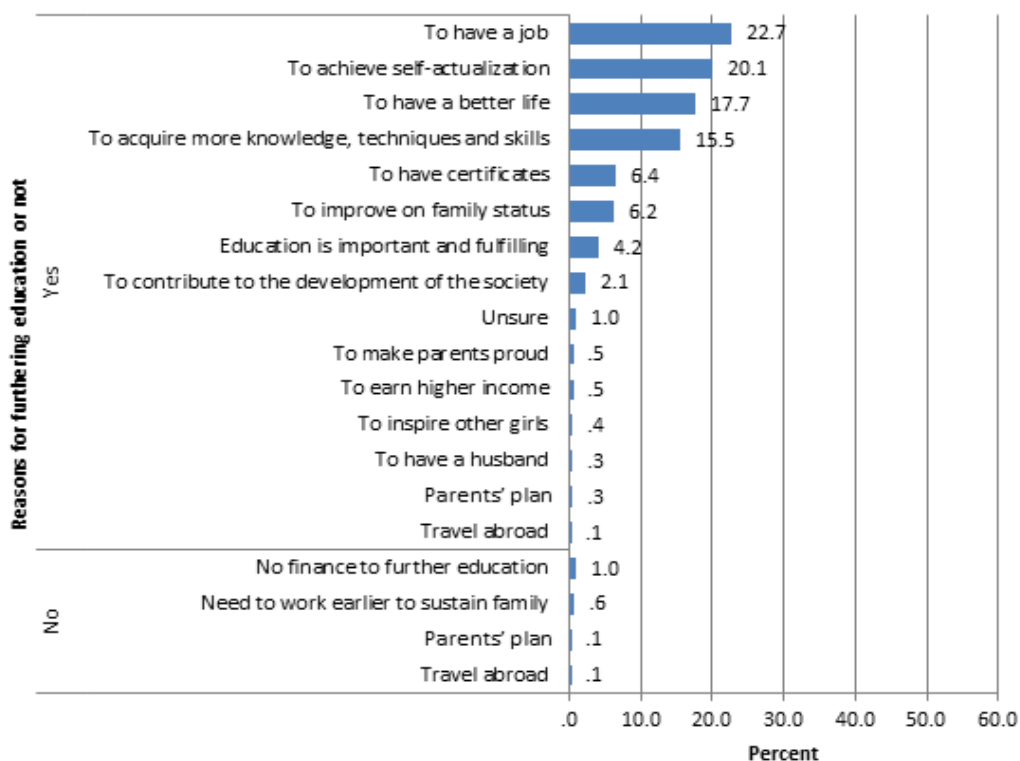
Figure 1. Reasons for prospected education plans.

Table 5. Reasons for desiring specific levels of education.

Reasons	stats	Prospected level of school attainment					Total
		Advanced level	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctorate degree (PhD)	Others	
Lack of finance	n	11	5	15	0	1	32
	%	64.7	6.7	3.6	0.0	2.2	3.3
To improve on family status	n	1	0	17	16	1	35
	%	5.9	0.0	4.0	3.8	2.2	3.6
To acquire a higher certificate	n	0	1	12	16	0	29
	%	0.0	1.3	2.9	3.8	0.0	3.0
Unsure of parents' plans	n	0	2	17	8	5	32
	%	0.0	2.7	4.0	1.9	10.9	3.3
Increased opportunity in the job market	n	0	1	7	17	2	27
	%	0.0	1.3	1.7	4.1	4.3	2.8
Level parents can afford	n	0	4	10	4	2	20
	%	0.0	5.3	2.4	1.0	4.3	2.0
To be like role models	n	1	0	1	2	0	4
	%	5.9	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.4
To end education and travel abroad	n	1	1	5	0	0	7
	%	5.9	1.3	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.7
Depends on luck and chance	n	0	0	1	0	1	2
	%	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	2.2	0.2
God's will	n	0	0	0	1	1	2
	%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	2.2	0.2%
Desired level	n	0	5	19	3	0	27
	%	0.0	6.7	4.5	0.7	0.0	2.8
Knowledge to earn a high income job	n	3	30	193	163	18	407
	%	17.6	40.0	45.8	39.0	39.1	41.7
Stop to enable siblings continue	n	0	0	1	0	0	1
	%	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1

Table 5. Contd.

I am intelligent and hardworking	n	0	1	3	8	0	12
	%	0.0	1.3	0.7	1.9	0.0	1.2
Education is important	n	0	2	6	21	0	29
	%	0.0	2.7	1.4	5.0	0.0	3.0
To have a better life	n	0	4	34	51	5	94
	%	0.0	5.3	8.1	12.2	10.9	9.6
To achieve dreams	n	0	7	38	66	9	120
	%	0.0	9.3	9.0	15.8	19.6	12.3
Bookwork will become tedious and boring	n	0	0	2	0	0	2
	%	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.2
To gain respect and recognition in the society	n	0	3	23	32	1	59
	%	0.0	4.0	5.5	7.7	2.2	6.0
To have a good husband and marriage	n	0	7	8	1	0	16
	%	0.0	9.3	1.9	0.2	0.0	1.6
Its parents' dream, so I want to make them proud	n	0	2	9	9	0	20
	%	0.0	2.7	2.1	2.2	0.0	2.0
Total	n	17	75	421	418	46	977
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

females completing their studies, getting a job and their overall fit into the society. If these expectations are not understood and ways sorted to meet them, then the issue of females lagging in education will be persistent. It is not about just asking them to enroll or making sure a mass of them enroll but they should be able to be given opportunities that will meet their individual expectations.

However, the finding confirms that of Tafere (2014) assertion that students formulate aspirations regardless of prevailing constraints or what educational policy stipulates or by the available job opportunities. It equally supports that of Eloundou-Enyegue et al. (2004) which indicated that there was still an increased demand of access to higher education institutions in Cameroon despite high unemployment rates of graduates, with the hope of an economic turn-around in the future.

Barriers to access and participation in higher education

It is worth noting that Irrespective of the majority of students who desired higher education, a significant few did not want to continue with their education and they had reasons for this choice. It is equally necessary to understand these reasons that pose as barriers to higher education for females. For a dominant number of students in this group, they never wanted to continue with their education because of significant financial difficulties and other reasons such as wanting to work before thinking about

school continuation. Financial constraints made it difficult for them to pay fees, buy text books and other essential learning materials. This is further supported by the fact that parents' socio-economic status particularly their ability to afford the expenses of higher education significantly predicted higher education aspirations. This finding supports that of Hall (2001), Cammish and Brock (1994), Graham-Browne (1991) and Nejema (1993) who revealed that the constraint of cost militates against the access of girls to schools as well as the findings of Odaga and Heneveld (1995), and Brookfield (2013) which showed that financial constraints were a major barrier of female education in sub Saharan-Africa.

Conclusion

In this study, the desired level of education, the reasons for these aspirations and barriers to these aspirations of 1007 high school female students in the south West Region of Cameroon were examined. After statistical analysis, it was concluded that female students in the South West Region of Cameroon aspire for very high levels of education, particularly, they prospected earning Master's and PhD degrees in the light of high unemployment rates of graduates in the country. This consequently places high demands on the educational system, particularly to meet the expectations of these females. Though barriers still persist, it is however possible that outcome would vary over the years as aspirations are complex, dynamic and contextual. Regardless of this, the findings of this study point to the need for higher education provision that would bring about actual access and effective participation for overall development.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Programs provision must be tailored towards equipping graduates to meet their expectations, for example, to fit into the job market and or become self-reliant.
2. The interest of females to attain higher education levels must be sustained.
3. Financial barriers must be curbed to enable higher education access.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. While the school system takes the lead, parents and guardians should fuel females interest in higher education by discussing with them about their plans, how to navigate through and achieve their plans, for example, exposing them to career options, role models and other channels that illuminate the benefits of higher education to females.
2. Higher education institutions must help females meet their educational expectations by connecting them to programs wherein, they can pursue their passion through activities such as mentorship and networking with other women who are meeting their aspirations.
3. There is need for increased awareness and access to work study, paid internships, loans and grants in higher education institutions that can help curb financial problems of females desiring higher education.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. The aspirations of female students based on different social class can be investigated.
2. A follow-up study to find out if students attained their aspirations to continue their schooling at undergraduate level and post graduate levels can be carried out to ascertain if there were more barriers or not that further militated against female access to higher education institutions.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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