

WORK ENVIRONMENT PREFERENCE AND WORK MOTIVATIONS AMONG JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SABON-GARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

Dahiru A. KASIM

*Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Faculty of Education,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria*

&

Salman A. ADISA PhD

*Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Faculty of Education,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.*

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between Work Environment Preference and Work Motivation among JSS3 students in Sabon-gari local government area. The objective was to find out the relationship between work environment preference and work motivations among JSS 3 students in Sabon-gari local government area, Nigeria. The sample of this study comprised of three hundred and eighty two (382) students of public secondary school. The research design used was correlational method. Work Environment Preference Scale (WEPS) (1999) and Work Motivations Scale were the research instruments used for data collection. In selecting the sample of the study, Cluster sampling technique was used to select (15) schools. The sample was drawn from the selected fifteen public secondary schools in Sabon-gari local government area of Kaduna State. Stratified sampling is also used in selecting a representative sample. The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach alpha coefficient. The data collected from respondents for this study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistic such as mean and standard deviation. While the null hypotheses were tested using inferential statistic such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was used to test the null hypotheses raised in the study. Findings of the study revealed that the main objective of the calculated P value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 and correlational index level is at 0.512 at degree of freedom of 351. This shows that work environment preference has positive correlation with work motivations in the study area, The higher the students level of work environment preference, the higher their work motivations and vice versa Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that significant positive relationship exist between work environment preference and work motivations among teachers in secondary schools in sabon-gari local government area of kaduna State. It was recommended that Educational counsellors, psychologist and measurement evaluator should organized seminars, workshops, conferences and symposium to sensitize, teachers, parents, and curriculum planners on the importance of Work environment Preference and Work Motivations among students of Secondary School.

Keywords: Environment, motivations, Preference, Work.

Introduction

motivation is concerned with why people behave in a certain way. The basic underlying question is why do people do what they do? An important objective of the study of motivation is accounting for purposiveness of behaviour. The term ‘motivation’ is derived from the Latin word ‘*movere*’ which means ‘to move’. Taken literally, motivation is the process of arousing movement but the term ordinarily applies to the arousal of one kind of movement behaviour. However, the study of motivation is not restricted to the process of evoking behaviour, but it also includes an analysis of the conditions which sustain activity and which regulate its patterning. It is also concerned with why people choose a particular course of action in preference to others, and why they continue with a chosen action, often over a long period, and in the face of difficulties and problems. Work motivation of students refers to the psychological processes that influence the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of goal-directed academic behaviors. It involves both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive students to complete their tasks, engage in learning, and persist through challenges (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Given the increasing complexity of academic life and the growing emphasis on student autonomy, understanding what motivates students to work is essential for improving educational outcomes and student well-being.

Vroom (1964) defines it as “a process governing choice made by persons among alternative forms of voluntary activity”. Campbell and Pritchard (1976) suggest that “motivation has to do with a set of independent/ dependent variable relationships that explain the direction, amplitude, and persistence of an individual’s behaviour, holding constant the effects of aptitude, skill, and understanding of the task, and the constraints operating in the environment”. Kanfer (1990) describes motivation as “a set of psychological processes involved with the arousal, direction, intensity, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal directed”.

All definitions appear to have four common denominators which may be said to characterize the phenomenon of motivation. That is, when we discuss motivation, we are primarily concerned with:

- i. **Activation of behavior;** It has to do with the drive or energy behind our actions and is demonstrated by the arousal of goal-directed behaviour.
- ii. **Direction of behavior;** It is concerned with the paths people choose toward meeting their goals and is seen by the regulation of behavior toward specific goals.
- iii. **Persistence of behavior;** It has to do with continued efforts in the achievement of goals often in the face of obstacles and is demonstrated by sustained activity over a period of time.

iv. Intensity of behaviour – It is concerned with the extent of effort put in to achieve a goal and is seen in the concentration and vigor that goes into pursuing the goal.

A definition of work motivation that covers these denominators is presented by Katzell and Thompson (1990) who defines it as a “broad construct pertaining to the conditions and processes that account for arousal, direction, magnitude, and maintenance of effort in a person’s job.

While, Work environment preference refers to an individual’s favored type of physical, social, or organizational setting in which they perform tasks or engage in professional activities. It encompasses factors such as location (remote, hybrid, on-site), physical layout (open-plan, private office), noise levels, social interaction, flexibility, and organizational culture (Beauregard et al., 2019). Mattoo (2013) is of the view that work environment preference affects students’ performance due to the fact that many students do not understand the intellectual demands needed to be met for a particular course of study that will pave away to certain career. Hellmann (2014) the problem associated with student’s career awareness, work information, school subjects choice, and requirement involve several factors amongst which are: Schools curriculum, environmental factors, interest, value, intellectual abilities of the students. Student’s decision-making on work environment preference stage is undoubtedly a critical period, because there is no clear blue print available to students and making a wrong work environment preference can make or spoil one’s happiness in life. It is therefore highly important to equip students with appropriate skills to help them make reasonable and satisfying choices.

Theoretical Frameworks of Student Motivation

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), posits that motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic, and is regulated by the fulfillment of three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are satisfied, students exhibit autonomous motivation, which is linked to higher academic engagement, persistence, and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Expectancy-Value Theory Expectancy-Value Theory, developed by Eccles and Wigfield (2002), explains that students’ motivation is influenced by their expectation of success and the value they place on the task. High levels of expectancy and task value predict greater effort and achievement-related behaviors. This theory is particularly useful for understanding how personal beliefs and perceptions impact motivation.

Achievement Goal Theory Achievement Goal Theory focuses on the purposes students pursue in achievement contexts. Mastery goals (focused on learning and improvement) are associated with adaptive motivational patterns, while performance goals (focused on demonstrating ability) may lead to anxiety and avoidance behaviors (Elliot & McGregor, 2001).

Types of Student Motivation

- i. **Intrinsic Motivation;** Intrinsic motivation occurs when students engage in academic activities for their inherent satisfaction, such as curiosity or enjoyment (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Research shows that intrinsically motivated students are more likely to retain knowledge and demonstrate creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
- ii. **Extrinsic Motivation;** Extrinsic motivation involves engaging in tasks for external rewards or to avoid punishment. While effective in the short term, it may not support long-term learning unless internalized through identified regulation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999).

A motivation represents a lack of intent or purpose in task engagement. It often results from repeated failure, low perceived competence, or lack of value placed on academic tasks (Vallerand et al., 1992).

Factors Influencing Work Motivation Among Students

Personal Factors Individual traits such as self-efficacy, resilience, and goal orientation significantly affect student motivation. Students with higher self-efficacy are more confident in their abilities and more motivated to persist through challenges (Bandura, 1997).

Environmental Factors Classroom climate, teacher behavior, parental support, and peer relationships play a crucial role. Autonomy-supportive teaching practices, for instance, are positively correlated with higher motivation levels (Reeve, 2006).

Technological and Societal Influences Digital learning tools, online platforms, and AI-assisted education have created new avenues for motivating students. However, overreliance on extrinsic digital incentives can lead to reduced intrinsic motivation if not well managed (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). **Impact of Work Motivation on Student Outcomes** Motivated students tend to achieve better academic results, experience lower levels of anxiety, and demonstrate stronger engagement. Autonomous motivation, in particular, is associated with deep learning strategies, greater persistence, and enhanced psychological well-being (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005).

Strategies to Enhance Student Motivation

Promoting Autonomy: Giving students choices in their learning process fosters a sense of ownership and personal relevance (Deci & Ryan, 2000). **Support Competence** Offer constructive feedback, set achievable goals, and celebrate progress to help students feel capable and effective (Schunk et al., 2008).

Foster Relatedness: Build a supportive classroom community where students feel connected to peers and teachers. Group work, mentoring, and peer support programs can enhance relatedness (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).

Use Technology: Wisely Incorporate gamified learning elements, interactive platforms, and AI tools in ways that align with educational objectives and student interests (Hamari et al., 2014).

Challenges in Sustaining Student Motivation Challenges such as academic pressure, lack of relevance in curriculum, mental health issues, and socio-economic barriers can undermine motivation. Addressing these requires systemic support, mental health services, and inclusive teaching strategies (Martin, 2008).

Dimensions of Work Environment Preferences

Physical Setting: This includes lighting, furniture ergonomics, ventilation, temperature, and spatial arrangements. Comfortable, well-designed spaces are strongly preferred, especially among students and young professionals who associate environment with productivity and well-being (Saha et al., 2024).

Work Modality (Location): Modern preferences increasingly revolve around remote, hybrid, or in-office setups. A recent study revealed that students and new graduates prefer hybrid environments that balance flexibility and social interaction (Gray, 2024; Prospects, 2024).

Psychosocial Environment: Factors such as autonomy, inclusivity, recognition, stress levels, and team dynamics play a central role. Gen Z, in particular, values a flexible, empathetic, and purpose-driven culture (Washington Post, 2025; BestColleges, 2024).

Technological Infrastructure: Especially post-pandemic, the ability to work efficiently using digital tools, stable internet, and collaborative software influences preferences significantly (EDUCAUSE, 2020).

Student Context For students, especially those transitioning into internships or employment, work environment preference reflects their values and expectations of the modern workplace. They seek environments that support work-life balance, mental health, and meaningful engagement, rather than simply traditional job security or high pay (Best Colleges, 2024; Axios, 2024). Understanding these preferences allows universities, employers, and policy-makers to design inclusive, responsive environments that enhance motivation, satisfaction, and productivity. Therefore, this study examined the relationship between Work environment Preference and Work Motivation among J.S.S 3 students in Sabon-Gari Local Government Area in Kaduna State.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to determine:

1. The relationship between Work Environment Preference and Work Motivation among J.S.S. 3 Students in Sabon-Gari local Government Area in Kaduna State

Research Question

The following research question was raised.

1. What is the relationship between Work Environment Preference and Work Motivation among J.S.S 3 Students in Sabon-Gari Local Government Area in Kaduna State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between work environment preference and work motivation among J.S.S 3 students in Sabon-Gari local government area in Kaduna State

Methodology

The design adopted for this study is a correlational design. A correlational method seeks to ascertain relationships between two or more variables. Simply put, does an increase or decrease in one variable correspond to an increase or decrease in another variable. A correlational research design investigates relationship between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them (Tan, 2014). The design is adopted due to the fact that, the study determined the 'Relationship between work environment preference and work motivation among J.S.S 3 students in sabon-gari local government area in Kaduna State, Nigeria'.

The population of this study comprised of all JSS3 Students of public secondary schools in sabon-gari local government area. in Sabon-Gari local government area has seventy nine (79) public senior secondary schools. The total population of the students in SS2 comprised of sixty one thousand five hundred and sixty five (61,565) students (Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, Sabon-Gari local government area. Ministry in Sabon-Gari local government area, 2022). The sample of this study comprised of three hundred and eighty two (382) students of public secondary school in JSS3. In selecting the sample of the study, Clister sampling technique was used to select (15) schools from which the sample were obtained. This is done, because the schools have similar characteristics. Stratified sampling was also used in selecting a representative sample, while random sampling technique was used in selecting the students.

In order to determine the sample size of the study, multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted because of the relative largeness of the study area. This is done with the belief that differences in environment will influence the students' preferences.

To determine the actual sample size of the study, Research Advisor Table (2006) for determining sample size of a given population was adopted, which stated that for the population of sixty one thousand five hundred and sixty five (61565) the appropriate sample size should be approximately three hundred and eighty two (382).

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used data collection in this research are questionnaires tagged: 'Work Motivation Scale (WMS) and Work Environment Preference Scale. (WEPS) (1999) developed by Kolo.

Work Environment Preference Scale (WEPS): This questionnaire was design to determine the magnitude of environment preference scale among JSS3 students in Niger State. Section A: consist of items tapping respondents' demographic variables such as; School, name, class, age, sex and Job preference and Marital status. Section: B consist of thirty (30) items of work

environment preference on top of the paper with four (4) Likert scale; 0- Not important, 1- Somewhat important, 2- Important and Very important.

Work Motivation Scale (WMS): This questionnaire was design to determine the magnitude of School Subject Choice Battery among JSS3 students in Sabon-Gari local government area.. Section A consists of several items tapping respondents' demographic variables, such as Name, class, age, sex and future career. Section B The following section is for students to indicate the subjects that the students are offering among the listed subjects. Also to evaluate students' general assessment of their involvement in education, and it's had thirty seven (37) items school subjects, with five (5) Likert scale: 1- No interest, 2- low interest, 3- average interest 4- high interest and 5- very high interest. While section C; Involved students choice of school subjects, certain reason or factors influenced the students decision, which had twenty nine (29) items school subjects combination influenced, with Yes or No column and five (5) Likert scale: 5- very influential, 4- influential, 3- average influential, 2- just influential and 1- not influential.

The questionnaires were designed on a Likert scale, made up of different options, ranging as follows:

- (i) Very much, Much, Averagely, Little, Very little and not at all.
- (ii) No interest, low interest, Average interest, high interest and very high interest.
- (iii) Very influential, influential, Average influential, Just influential and Not influential.

Each questionnaire was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A include the demographic data of respondents while section B will consist of Likert-type questionnaire grouped into parts

Result

Hypotheses: There is no significant relationship between work environment preference and Work Motivation among Junior Secondary School 3 Students in Sabon-Gari local Government Area of Kaduna State

Table 1:*Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) statistics on relationship between work environment preference and Work Motivation*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r	P
Work environment preference	353	38.9377	34.91827	351	0.529*	0.000
Work Motivation	353	30.7479	23.63564			

****Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level, $p < 0.05$**

Table 1 presents the calculated p value of 0.000 which is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance, and the correlation index level is at 0.529 at df 351. This shows that the work environment preference has positive correlation with the Work Motivation. The higher the

students level of Work Motivation, the higher their view on the work environment preference, and vice versa. Hence, the null hypotheses which states that There is no significant relationship between work environment preference and Work Motivation among junior secondary school students in Sabon-Gari local Government Area is rejected.

Summary of Findings

Significant positive relationship exists between work environment preference and Work Motivation among Junior Secondary School 3 Students in Sabon-Gari local Government Area of Kaduna State. The higher the students level of Work Motivation, the higher their view on the work environment preference and vice versa ($r = 0.529$ $p = 0.000$).

Discussion of Findings

The result showed that there is significant relationship between work environment preference and Work Motivation among Junior Secondary School 3 Students in Sabon-Gari local Government Area of Kaduna State. This shows that the Work Motivation has positive correlation with the work environment preference of junior Secondary School. This was in line with the findings of Sonja and Janet (2014) conducted a study on career awareness and Work Motivation in senior secondary school students: have provided insights into the range of influences on such choices. This project aims to identify the impact of school policies and practices on students as well as other influences which affect individual Work Motivation and career decisions. It. This was also in line with the findings of Boti *et al.* (2020) conducted a study on Work Motivations and occupational choices for proper career development. Therefore the paper highlighted on the nature and complexity of new school curriculum in terms of contents and organization. Challenges faced by secondary school students in choosing career, conditions and or challenges faced by guidance and counseling service in Nigerian secondary schools were equally identified. This was also in line with the findings of Parsons's (1909) the students are in work motivation best suited to their abilities they perform best, and their productivity is highest. Trait-factor counseling approaches assume that Work Motivation may be facilitated, and career outcomes optimized through a fairly straightforward process of matching a student's most relevant work-relevant characteristics abilities, interests and values with information regarding job activities, demands, rewards, and availability.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that positive significant relationship existed between work environment preference and Work Motivation among junior secondary school students in Sabon-Gari local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

- i. School teachers or school counselors, school masters and mistress should create career awareness to students through proper work environment preference in order to meet their Work Motivation
- ii. Parents and guardians should sit with their children to properly guide them on work environment preference that are congruent to student's interest, ability toward working environment preference.
- iii. The school teachers, counselors, school masteres and mistress should create awareness on different working environment and their requirement that will motivate the students.

References

- Axios. (2024). What Remote-First Gen Zers Want at Work. <https://www.axios.com/2024/02/17/gen-z-remote-work-flexibility-career-opportunities>
- Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. W.H. Freeman.
- Beauregard, T. A., Basile, K. A., & Canonico, E. (2019). Home is where the work is: A new study of homeworking in the UK. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(12), 1–25.
- BestColleges. (2024, April 19). Work-Life Balance Tops List of College Student Job Priorities in Job Search: Survey. <https://www.bestcolleges.com/research/work-life-balance-tops-students-job-search-priorities-survey/>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. Plenum.
- Deci, E. L., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. M. (1999). A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(6), 627–668.
- Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53(1), 109–132.
- EDUCAUSE. (2020). Student Technology Report: Supporting the Whole Student. <https://www.educause.edu/ecar/research-publications/student-technology-report-supporting-the-whole-student/2020/technology-use-and-environmental-preferences>
- Elliot, A. J., & McGregor, H. A. (2001). A 2×2 achievement goal framework. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80(3), 501–519.
- Gray, K. (2024, February 9). Hybrid Work Modality for Entry-Level Hires Matches Student Desires. National Association of Colleges and Employers. <https://www.nacweb.org/talent-acquisition/trends-and-predictions/hybrid-work-modality-for-entry-level-hires-matches-student-desires/>
- Mattoo, M. I. (2013). Career choices of secondary students with special reference to gender, type of stream and parental education. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*; 3(20):55-61.
- Prospects / Jisc. (2024). Graduates Prefer Hybrid Work But Feel 'Return to Office' Pressure. Institute of Student Employers. <https://insights.ise.org.uk>

- Saha, A. J., Jahin, M. A., Rafiquzzaman, M., & Mridha, M. F. (2024). Ergonomic Design of Computer Laboratory Furniture: Mismatch Analysis Utilizing Anthropometric Data of University Students. arXiv. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2403.05589>
- Tan, L. (2014). Correlational Study. In Thompson, W.F. (Ed.), *Music in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 269-271). Thousand Oaks: *SAGE Publications*.
- Washington Post. (2025, May 20). Colleges Revamp Career Services to Address Gen Z's Work-Life Expectations. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2025/05/20/college-career-services-gen-z-work-life-balance/>