

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

The influences of numerous factors that influenced students at the senior high school level can change students' aspirations. These goals, however, are subject to change in light of the student's environment, experiences, and surroundings. A strong desire to accomplish challenging objectives is what is referred to as aspiration (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). It can also be described as the goals that students have for the future. Aspirations are also seen as being linked to students' plans and goals. A well-defined aspiration might boost one's chances of success, yet an unfulfilled goal can cause frustration and despair.

In the modern world, one in six people is a young adult (15–24 years old) (Mandrioli et al., 2018). By 2030, there will be 1.3 billion youth worldwide, and that number will keep growing until 2065, with Africa leading the way (Coulibaly, 2020). By 2030, 375 million young people in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are anticipated to enter the labor force (Office, 2016). Policymakers across the world, particularly in Africa, are preoccupied with the great challenge of helping millions of young people find decent work, as conveyed in Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Lorenceanu, Rim, & Savitki, 2021). The difficulty is especially great in emerging nations where lax enforcement of labor laws and informal labor markets trap many young people in low-wage, and unsatisfactory employment (Ahn et al., 2019).

The choices of young people about their occupations are reflected in the (Gottfredson, 1981) theoretical framework. In the Gottfredson theoretical framework, the theory seeks to find answers if it is possible to change people's views and aspirations, especially in light of the profound changes that the job market is undergoing now and in the future. It is possible to create effective policies if aspirations can be changed to lead to improved levels of occupational accomplishment. As confirmed by recent trends analyses, young people remain particularly disadvantaged in the labor market (Hanushek, Schwerdt, Woessmann, & Zhang, 2017). With the most recent data showing a 13.6% global youth unemployment rate, the transition from school to work is becoming more and more challenging (Organization, 2020). With a neoliberal trend toward flexible accumulation, young people's employment prospects have become a major global concern (Harvey, 2007), with sporadic employment and increasing youth unemployment (Anagnost, Arai, & Ren, 2013; Lukacs, 2015; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2016).

Youth in Ghana today are more educated than previous generations, but fewer opportunities match their skill level and the routes that young people take to find employment are shifting (Baah-Boateng, 2015; Filmer & Fox, 2014). Therefore, there is the need to have an in-depth study on the student occupational aspirational as a manpower development planning model, especially among senior high school final-year students who value the opportunity to choose an occupation.

With a rate of 6.3 percent in 2018, which is significantly higher than the sub-Saharan average of 3 percent, the issue of unemployed growth in Ghana has grown to be a major worry in light of the comparatively significant development recorded over time. Despite this expansion, there is still a high rate of precarious and vulnerable work, especially among young people. According to estimates from the Ghana Statistical Service, youth unemployment is substantially higher than the average national unemployment rate of roughly 6%. Particularly, between 15 and 25-year-olds, 59.6% of the population is employed, 12.1 % are unemployed, and the remaining 28.3 % are not in the labor force (Service, 2019). Additionally, 31.8 percent of young people work for themselves as own-account workers in the non-agricultural sector, which represents at least one in three of them (Yeboah & Jayne, 2020). Youth as a life phase is extended by secondary participation, and it frequently carries with it social prestige as well (Evans & Furlong, 2019). Additionally, young peoples have perceptions of the kind of employment they value, and their aspirations for themselves as educated individuals (Gottfredson, 1981). Young people must be ready in terms of their skill acquisition and degree of desire and aspiration if they are to benefit from the changing nature of the workplace. For young people to invest in their human capital and succeed in the job market, their aspirations are crucial (Gardiner & Goedhuys, 2020b). Success is possible when realistic aspirations connect a person's agency and confidence that they can effect change on their own through their efforts with the channels and resources that will help them to do so. It is critical to comprehend occupational aspirations to create good employment policies. Young people may continue to be failed through employment strategies that attempt to match their skills with job prospects if their occupational aspirations and life objectives are not taken into account.

Numerous studies demonstrate that students are frequently faced with difficulty while choosing an occupation (Al Rasbi, 2019; Bama & Borokonda, 2019; Bani-Khaled, 2014; Maina, 2013; Mostari & Roy, 2018; Shumba & Naong, 2012). The majority of this research focuses on how students' demographic characteristics affect their choice of career. However, none of these studies have looked at how these demographic characteristics affect participants'

preferences for the economic sectors in which they would like to work and their labor market aspirations, leaving a discrepancy between student's career aspirations and their labor market aspirations. This study makes use of the growing significant aspect of the human capital approach. The human capital theory says that individuals make occupational choices regarding the amount of schooling, type of schooling, and occupation that are optimum for themselves (Wiswall & Zafar, 2021). That is individuals are not only interested in their educational investment but also the return to their education as well as the economic sector they would like to work. The need for more precise statistics is obvious; without them, it is impossible to adequately estimate the likelihood of matching supply and demand for youth occupational aspirations, and as a result, developing strategies to address the imbalances of youth occupational aspirations can only be, at best, very rudimentary. However, this study seeks to fill the gap by offering information that shows there is a significant problem with respect to job selection, particularly in light of senior high school students' occupational aspirations as they transition from the high school level to the workforce. This suggests that economic education policies might need to be better crafted to be adaptive to the reality of the labor market and more spatially applicable and relevant to youth occupational prospects.

In the context of labor supplies, however, statistics on numbers alone only reveal a part of the picture. Information is also needed about manpower aspirations and potential employees' perceptions of alternative forms of employment in higher demand or lesser demand by the youth in the labor market. There can be little prospect of developing methods that have a fair chance of succeeding in their objectives of balancing the demand for young labor with the supply of labor if it is not known how different jobs are seen by high school students. The findings of this study offer curriculum developers on the variables shaping the youth occupational aspirations and the labor market policies that together affect how wide or limited the realistic aspiration window is for any given skill set among the youth. People may become involved in education and skill development to broaden their perspectives and create new future aspirations if there is a finite range of feasible objectives for a specific skill set.

Only a few scholarly works raise concerns about the exposure of young people's viewpoints in the job market (Anagnost et al., 2013; Batsleer & Davies, 2010; Bynner & Roberts, 1992; Gardiner & Goedhuys, 2020a; Masten, 2014; Mourshed, Farrell, & Barton, 2012). There is scant proof of the widespread tendency to silence young people's voices in academic and political debates about development issues. Despite current efforts by international organizations like the United Nations to make youth a major pillar of the post-

2015 global development agenda (Bersaglio, Enns, & Kepe, 2015; Jeffrey & Dyson, 2008). This study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on the individualized experiences, aspirations, and ideologies of young people while acknowledging their agency. Since they have a wealth of first-hand knowledge and the ability to articulate their aspirations, young people can significantly contribute to our understanding of the youth employment dilemma. As a result, they will receive the necessary support.

We contend that demand-side initiatives that produce work are essential in resolving what is referred to as the youth employment "problem" or even "crisis," despite the current dominance of supply-side measures (Hoff, Van Egdome, Napolitano, Hanna, & Rounds, 2022; O'Higgins & Stimolo, 2015). To address the objectives of SHS labor market aspirations to the economic sector they would want to work in and their occupational aspirational gap. However, the study will offer information that shows there is a significant problem with job selection, particularly in light of senior high school students' aspirations for the labor market as they transition from the high school level to the workforce. This suggests that education and employment policies might need to be better crafted to be adaptive to the reality of the labor market and more spatially applicable and relevant to youth occupational prospects. In the context of labor supplies, however, statistics on numbers alone only reveal a part of the picture. Information is also needed about manpower aspirations and potential employees' perceptions of alternative forms of employment in higher demand or lesser demand by the youth in the labor market. There can be little prospect of developing methods that have a fair chance of succeeding in their objectives of balancing the demand for young labor with the supply of labor if it is not known how different jobs are seen by high school students.

Poverty, despair, and precariousness are all widely perceived as robbing young people of important opportunities, experiences, and even freedom. Especially in light of the massive current and future changes in global labor markets, a critical question is whether it is possible to improve the beliefs and aspirations of senior high school students even those most economically marginalized in such a way that they can overcome the challenges that life throws at them. The answer is that, if it is feasible to influence their beliefs and aspirations in such a way as to lead to higher levels of labor market attainment, then appropriate policies can be developed.

A pertinent issue in this study is the attitude often displayed by some students who fail to gain admission to the academic programs of their first preferences either at the senior high school level or the tertiary level. Some of these students appear to be dissatisfied with their academic pursuits and concerned about their future occupation prospects. This study is to investigate the relationship between students' occupational aspirations to their educational choices.

Another part of the problem that can be seen in Ghana is that job opportunities in the public sector are dwindling, resulting in unemployment. As a result, in order to assist adolescents in mobilizing their aspirational strength, we must first gain a deeper understanding of their goals in life and at work. This includes how these aspirations can be aligned with their future job or occupations to the sector of the economy they wish to work. This development can be achieved through policy interventions that help assist them in developing the necessary skill set for the aspired positions and in which labor market shocks are avoided.

Investing in young people's aspirations and their use of technology is crucial since the Africa Agenda 2063 calls for several stated aspirations, but the first one is to include transformed, inclusive, and sustainable economies. It is emphasized that by 2023, technology transfer will serve as a hub for regional industrialization and connect it to global value chains and commodities exchanges (Union, 2015). This will help in several ways but mostly to end poverty, inequalities of income and opportunity, and address youth unemployment. It will also contribute to the development of Africa's human and social capital through an education and skills revolution that embraces science and technology.

Students in Ghana are obliged to select their academic programs before completing Junior High School (JHS) to be admitted to Senior High School (SHS). Observations imply that some programs (for example, Business) are more patronized by students than others. This trend seems to be persisting across all universities, including technical universities. For instance, business-related programs seem to get more applicants than any other program. The question is whether this indicates a substantial trend in the direction of students' educational aspirations. Is it possible that such attitudes are related to students' perceived instrumental variables such as gender, school type, parent education, parent occupation, residential status, age, and academic programs?

Understanding the connections between student occupational aspirations and employment reality is crucial for several reasons. This is due to the possibility of gaps between the demand for labor and the supply of human capital when the labor market undergoes significant structural changes (Hirschi, 2018). To close these gaps, researchers and

policymakers have put a lot of work into creating interventions, such as inspiring more youth. Yet to be effective, occupational aspiration interventions require a foundational understanding of the types of jobs to which youth already aspire through entrepreneurship education. For example, interventions from entrepreneurship education should focus on stimulating interest in occupational areas with growing employment demands that are under-represented in youth's occupational aspirations. It is also important to better understand how occupational aspirations differ across students.

Recent theoretical insights support the role of aspirations as another significant cause of limited social mobility (Besley, 2016; Dalton, Ghosal, & Mani, 2016; Genicot & Ray, 2020). On the one hand, aspirations serve as a source of motivation and might influence actual achievements later in life by positively affecting effort and influencing financial decisions. If aspirations are determined by young adults' socioeconomic background, individuals from less privileged backgrounds would have lower aspirations, and subsequently, display lower occupational and educational outcomes. However, when aspiration and expectation results are far away, unrealistic aspirations can result in failure or frustration (Gardiner & Goedhuys, 2020b). Yet, the empirical evidence on these arguments remains scarce and, to the best of my knowledge, no study empirically assesses them all together in a comprehensive set in the case of Ghana.

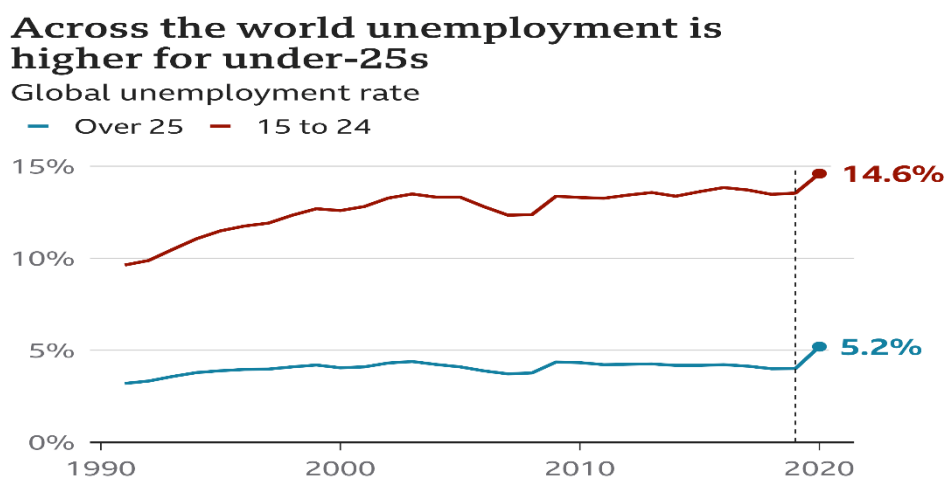
A cursory observation from extant literature shows that the majority of aspiration studies had a university-specific focus. Students in their final year of senior high school were considered for the study because they are at the end of their senior high school curriculum. Therefore, compared to the other students in the lower forms/classes, they were probably more concerned with the issue of choosing a job and the potential of continuing their education. This is to assist in creating a framework for policy about the educational options for seniors in high school.

Aspirations measurement has been viewed as a single, constant occurrence in students' lives. Most studies have a single, permanent impact on students' aspirations (Gupta & Bashir, 2017; O'Higgins & Stimolo, 2015; Pray, 2017; Sharma, 2020). It will be necessary to do person-oriented research due to the diversity of the students' occupations. This is guided by a research paradigm in which the individual is at focus. Therefore, there is a need to address issues on students' aspirations by holistically investigating senior high school students' occupational aspiration model in the context of Ghana. The study contributes to previous contributions of studies by (Gupta & Bashir, 2017; O'Higgins & Stimolo, 2015; Ocansey,

2005; Pray, 2017; Sharma, 2020) by looking at the interactions between students' occupational aspirations and entrepreneurship education framework.

All developed and developing countries are concerned about the high rate of unemployment. The rate of unemployment has been rising globally, particularly in light of the most recent global financial crisis (Shah, Amjed, & Jaboob, 2020). To answer this unemployment issue, several programs and tactics have been implemented around the world. Entrepreneurial education has been one of the most popular solutions to the unemployment issue (Omar, Aris, & Nazri, 2016) as entrepreneurship education is increasingly seen as a key driver of economic growth, innovation, and job creation. However, almost all nations find it challenging in changing the mindset of people toward entrepreneurship, especially the youth. Although it equips students with the drive, information, and abilities necessary for starting a successful enterprise, there should be that effective entrepreneurship education that would be significant predictor of senior high school students' occupational aspirations.

Given the neoliberal shift toward flexible accumulation, the employment prospects of young people have emerged as a major global issue (Harvey, 2007), irregular employment, and rising youth unemployment (Lukacs, 2015; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2016). As a result, both scholars and policymakers have given the issue of how young people are leaving school and not moving into a paid job with future livelihoods of thought. Understanding labor market dynamics is of paramount importance and a development priority for all policymakers. The study fills this gap by looking at the labor market aspirational gap between students' perceived occupations and the critical areas of labor demand by the economy.



**Figure 1.1. Youth Unemployment under the ages of 25 years**

The international agendas for all of the Sustainable Development Goals are built on the foundation of digital transformation. The 2030 Agenda specifically highlights the value of

technology in education. Given the foregoing, it has been emphasized repeatedly that information technology must be used to improve the educational system, the distribution of knowledge, the exchange of information, the quality and effectiveness of learning, and the delivery of services. Understanding the slogan ‘no one will be left behind’ the sense that there is a need for a holistic understanding of the usage of technology among the youth for economic development (Jones et al, 2017). This was achieved by looking at the perceptions students hold about information technology and its role in the future occupational aspirations of students. This will help to envision whether Ghana will brace itself to attain creativity, innovation, and a high level of quality education on the global innovation index scale.

The labor market's shifting dynamics present both possibilities and barriers to career growth (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2020; Hirschi, 2018; Lent, 2018). Due to technological advancements, there are now new jobs that call for a variety of educational backgrounds and skill sets (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016). However, because automation is displacing many professions, it poses a danger to the availability of secure employment that generates income and benefits (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Youth must be equipped for the workforce of the future to satisfy the demands of a changing economy. The degree of alignment between students' occupational aspiration and the perception students holds about information technology trends is still not well understood. This study seeks to fill that gap.

The issue in this study pertains to a high rate of unemployment in Ghana as a result of a poor level of job preparation, declining public sector employment, and IT development that has an impact on production circumstances and the labor market, which has undergone a significant shift. According to the human capital theory of education, people are interested in both their education and future incomes. In other to solve this problem, firstly it has become imperative for youth in Ghana to get effective entrepreneurship education per the demand in the labor market. Second to get an education according to their occupational aspiration. Both of these factors will be investigated simultaneously because even if there is a mismatch between skills acquired and the demand of labor markets, there could still be a disappointment for young people in Ghana if their aspirations and life goals are not taken into account.

Hoppock cited by (Ocansey, 2005) has offered some compelling points for why it is crucial to question the employment people pick. The first factor that may influence employment is a person's choice of profession. Although employment is not consistently reliable in some fields, it is far more reliable in others. If a person picks a profession with steady employment, they may be able to find work even when thousands of others are unemployed. People have different abilities and different occupations require different abilities. Second, people boost their



chances of success by choosing a job that uses their abilities and makes little use of their deficiencies. Whether a person will like or loathe their job depends on what they choose to do for a living. A person can improve their level of life happiness by making a good career choice. It is therefore imperative to study students occupational and their relevance to effective entrepreneurship education in a broader spectrum.

Moreover, when it comes to the importance of youth in Ghana getting education and training in line with the demands of the labor markets, there is a tendency that job characteristics are increasingly having more cognitive, interactive and IT-driven components. The results of a preliminary study of some high school students of Komenda Technical Senior High seem to reveal that most of them do not have basic knowledge about the use of IT. Therefore, it has become very important to explore the perceptions senior high school students hold about IT.

Another issue can be gleaned from observations of students' educational choices in Ghana, particularly concerning the choice of academic programs. There is a tendency that certain academic programs such as business to be preferred over other academic programs. The question is, first does this show a substantial trend toward students' educational choices? Second, could such attitudes be related to the perceived instrumental variables such as gender, age, school type, parental education, and school type? Third, many of the students fail to occupy their chosen academic programs, so they are worried about their future job prospects. It is therefore important to examine their future occupational aspirations with their respective educational choices. This issue can result from the status attainment model's influential theoretical viewpoint on career choice. The status attainment model focuses on decisions regarding education and employment and, in part, looks into how demographic factors may affect the basis of a decision.

Although it may be true that there are few job opportunities in Ghana, particularly in the formal sector, it seems that many times these unemployed graduates (especially those with technical or university degrees) have trouble finding employment because there are not enough jobs that appropriate for their skills or the training programs they pursued. This raises concerns about the necessity of good entrepreneurial education, forecasting, and development plans for the nation, which appears to be more based on the "social demand" model.

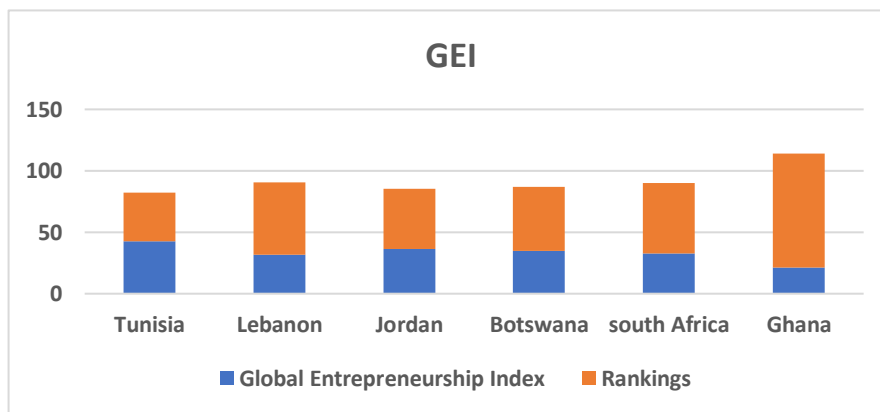
The importance of developing entrepreneurship education is critical among the youth which is being promoted by the Ministry of Employment and Labor relations is also another area of this study. Entrepreneurship activities are to develop and get an opportunity to create

social cultural and economic values that are constantly changing (Mair and Marts, 2006), also sensitive to a global event that has become a problem to be solved especially with innovative and creative ways of doing things. In developing countries, entrepreneurship is needed to create welfare and reduce unemployment among the youth (Aroma and Anyio,2016).

After Ghana entered the reformation era of democratization, Ghana has shown positive growth. On the other hand, the symptoms of educated unemployment among the youth are still high, and the number of job seekers is greater than the number of jobs created by the Ghana government as compared to other developing countries like Tunisia and Lebanon. Ghana’s level of entrepreneurship creation is below these countries. In other to deal with this situation, it is necessary to strive for entrepreneurship education among senior high school students in Ghana. A country would be called a prosperous country if at least 2 % of the total population are entrepreneurs (David McClelland 1961)

The 2018 global entrepreneurship index has shown that Tunisia is marked the 40<sup>th</sup> with south Africa and Lebanon ranked 57<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> respectively, and Ghana ranked 93<sup>th</sup> position among the 137 countries who participated in the survey.

**Global Entrepreneurship index 2018 of Some listed developing African Countries**

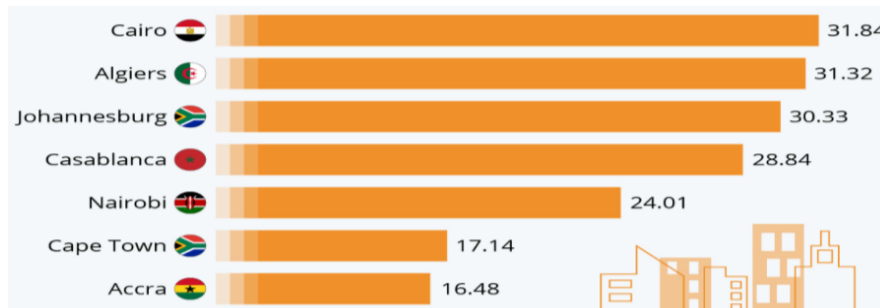


**Figure 1.2. GEI,2018**

There is still a limited number of entrepreneurs in Ghana because people lack the courage to take risk, lack motivation, and lack entrepreneurship fostering spirit from an early age. The process of changing the mindset of the youth, especially among senior high school students is very critical. More and more entrepreneurs produced will have a positive impact on economic growth as well as the reduction of other social vices.

Although the data has shown a significant increase in the number of entrepreneurs in Ghana, it has still not met the ideal standard to become a developed country according to

the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) as compared to the United States and Japan with about 10% of their population acting as entrepreneurs. The data below further depict the rating of Ghana among some selected cities in terms of entrepreneurship business in Africa.



**Figure 1.3. The rank of business cities in some selected African Countries**

**Research Gap.** Based on the research that has been conducted so far, it is a known factor that affects successful entrepreneurial skills development, to meet the changes in the social context, the form of education, perception of the individual, their orientations, and economic factors of the entrepreneur. The expected implications of entrepreneurship education include practicum, research, and development so that it can be sustainable (Icec Ajen, Alvord, Brown, and Letts, 2004). Further, the term entrepreneurship was first introduced by Bill Drayton in the 1980s, since then, entrepreneurship has been gaining attention as an important field showing how critical social problems can be addressed through innovation and persistent and sustainable results associated with entrepreneurship. Academics contribute to entrepreneurship thereby by introducing students to the concept of setting up a business plan. The results of the study of entrepreneurship education among developed countries have shown that studying entrepreneurship has brought about a transformed society and sustainable innovations as well as economic growth. So, this research is expected to come out with the key instrumental variables like their educational choice, and their perceptions on entrepreneurship education and how that can affect their occupational aspirations given their entrepreneurship intentions, experiential learning, and their theoretical learning in entrepreneurship. Therefore, the researchers find it plausible to study this topic and hope to come out with the research novelty underpinning this study.

Also based on previous research (Bashir & Kaur, 2017; Gupta & Bashir, 2017; Kumar & Phogat, 2017; Sharma, 2020) investigated the association between students' occupational aspiration and its related independent variables such as parents' education, type of school, age, and gender. There are no clear-cut studies on the association between effective entrepreneurial

education and senior high school students' occupational aspirations. This study contributes to a fine-grinded understanding by examining the causal effect of entrepreneurship education, educational choice, IT perception, and the perception students hold about the labor market on students' occupational aspirations.

**Theoretical Gap.** The study adopted the Social Learning Theory by Bandura as the grand theory as proposed in the works of (Baraldi & Corsi, 2017; Eriksson et al., 2019). The social cognitive career theory is based on the general social cognitive theory of Bandura (Lent & Brown, 2019). The SCCT is a theory of vocational psychology that has been widely applied to explain decision-making behavior about career-related difficulties. Moreover the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a social psychology concept that is based on the idea that many human activities are planned and are therefore preceded by intention (Ajzen, 2020). In contrast to other models, TPB provides a more practical framework that focuses on both social and personal factors, allowing us to comprehend and predict entrepreneurial intentions with greater accuracy (Rueda, Moriano, & Liñán, 2015). In line with previous research (Greene, 2017; Pitcher, 2015; Tyler, 1965; Van Wormer & Besthorn, 2017; Zastrow, Kirst-Ashman, & Hessenauer, 2019) the study was composited by the Human Behavior and Social Environment as middle theory. We then limit our scope to educational choices, perception of IT, perception of the Labour market, effective entrepreneurship education, and students' occupational aspirations as in the works of (Boateng & Löwe, 2018; Maiti & Bhattacharyya, n.d.; Mohammad & Tamimi, 2017; Ocansey, 2005; Pray, 2017; Roy & Kumar, 2018; Shah et al., 2020; Taherdoost, 2018; Welsh, Tullar, & Nemati, 2016) as the applied theory of the study. This theories was to explain factors affecting students' occupational aspirations.

The study also addresses a gap by investigating how effective entrepreneurship education can be developed to assist build senior high school students' occupational aspirations as well as the moderation-mediation effects of educational choice, demographic characteristics, students' perception of Information technology, and labor market outcomes on student's occupational aspirations. Understanding how the development of effective entrepreneurship education can affect students' occupation dynamics will be paramount to future research. It is well known that education has a significant influence on development. Due to the widespread acceptance of education as a strategy for alleviating poverty in developing countries, the formal education sector has benefited from significant support from national budgets. Investment in young people's human capital through skill development and education is essential in Africa. Ghana, like the rest of the world, is convinced that investing in young people's education would

pay off handsomely and help the country reduce poverty and meet the Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030.

## **1.2 Problem Identification**

A single, fixed event in students' lives was depicted as the aspiration assessment up until recently. In contrast, more recent studies have looked at aspirations as being longitudinal because expectations are always being renegotiated (DesJardins, Toutkoushian, Hossler, & Chen, 2019). Since educational and occupational ambitions frequently coevolve together, research suggests that a decline in educational expectations may be advantageous for youth. Youth, for instance, are more likely to create a "realistic strategy" that matches their school goals with their professional ambitions if they are more aware of their strengths and skills (Schneider, Kim, & Klager, 2017).

The Africa Agenda 2063 asks for variously stated ambitions, but the main one is to include transformed, inclusive, and sustainable economies, therefore investing in young people's aspirations and their use of technology is essential. It is emphasized that by 2023, technology transfer will serve as a hub for regional industrialization and connect it to global value chains and commodities exchanges (Union, 2015). In addition to other benefits, this will primarily aid in the elimination of poverty, income and opportunity disparities, and youth unemployment. It will aid in several areas, but primarily in tackling teenage unemployment, income, and opportunity disparities, and poverty.

Students in Ghana are obliged to select their academic programs before completing Junior High School (JHS) to be admitted to Senior High School (SHS). Observations imply that some programs (for example, Business) are more patronized by students than others. This trend seems to be persisting across all universities, including technical universities. For instance, business-related programs seem to get more applicants than any other program. The question is whether this indicates a substantial trend in the direction of students' educational aspirations. Is it possible that such attitudes are related to students' perceived instrumental variables such as gender, school type, parent education, parent occupation, residential status, age, and academic programs?

Another aspect of the problem which could be derived from observation is that in Ghana, jobs increasingly tend to have more cognitive, interactive, and IT-derived components. Youth who lacks IT skills may face discrimination in the future labor market. The use of IT may help free people from geographical restrictions and create more flexible job opportunities for all. Casual interaction with some secondary school students of Komenda Technical Senior

High School seems to reveal that an overwhelming proportion of them do not have basic knowledge of the use of IT. Therefore, it will be imperative to explore the perceptions SHS students' have about IT.

The attitude that some students frequently exhibit when they are denied entry to the academic programs of their first choice, whether at the senior high school level or the tertiary level, is a crucial topic in this study. Some of these students seem to be unhappy with their academic endeavors and worried about their employment prospects in the future. The purpose of this study is to look into how students' educational preferences and career goals relate to one another.

Another part of the problem that can be seen in Ghana is that job opportunities in the public sector are dwindling, resulting in unemployment. As a result, in order to assist adolescents in mobilizing their aspirational strength, we must first gain a deeper understanding of their objectives in both life and work. This covers how these goals can be compatible with their intended future occupation, profession, and economic sector. Policy actions that support individuals in acquiring the skill set required for the desired employment and which prevent labor market shocks can help achieve this development.

For several reasons, it is essential to comprehend the linkages between career aspirations and work reality. This is due to the possibility of gaps between the demand for labor and the supply of human capital when the labor market undergoes significant structural changes (Hirschi, 2018). To close these gaps, researchers and policymakers have put a lot of work into creating interventions, such as inspiring more youth. However, to be successful, occupational ambition interventions need to have a fundamental grasp of the kinds of employment that young people currently aspire to as a result of good entrepreneurship education. For instance, interventions from successful entrepreneurship education should concentrate on piquing interest in professions that are underrepresented in young people's career goals yet have expanding job demands. Additionally, it's critical to comprehend how different students' occupational aspirations are from one another.

The views of students as mentioned in the earlier paragraphs lead to the following logical question: What kinds of careers do students want to pursue when they graduate from high school before going on to postsecondary study or the workforce? What forces are at play in those youthful aspirations? The question of whether the career goals of these students align with the country's labor market outcomes is even more important.

A review of the literature that has already been published in the area of occupational aspiration on the professional aspirations of adolescent students in particular socioeconomic

and cultural situations (Gupta & Bashir, 2017; Kaneez & Medha, 2018; Tejedor, Mangas, & Sierra, 2016; Wachira, 2018). However, there is hardly any research on this crucial subject in Ghana. The research conducted by Ocansey and Tafere only directly relates to secondary school students' job goals. Besides, neither Foster's study nor any other study has examined senior high school students' occupational aspirations and their relevance to effective entrepreneurship education. To assist successful entrepreneurship education and to ensure the government has effective labor market regulations, this study is intended to gather and analyze data on this crucial topic.

Development thinkers and practitioners must be concerned about the career goals of senior high school students and their relevance to effective entrepreneurship education, as shown by the reasons given above, which may be quickly examined. The moderation-mediation effects of educational choices, perception of information technology, and perception of the labor market as they concern both the socio-economic progress of countries in general and the well-being of the person in particular. Additionally, it can be inferred from the aforementioned difficulties that ineffective occupational and entrepreneurial education is a contributing factor to the problem of unemployment and underemployment, which is a widespread issue in the modern world and Ghana is no exception. Therefore, the study sought to come out with an appropriate policy intervention

In summary, based on the research background, the researcher indicated the problems as follows.

1. Students' occupational aspirations are paramount and should not be taken for granted because the study of students' occupational aspirations helps students to know their potential such as their preparedness for the world of work as they progress from senior high school as well as providing departments responsible for youth empowerment in Ghana with useful information necessary for policy formulation.
2. Entrepreneurial education may be proved to be ineffective because of the persistently high rate of youth unemployment engulfing many countries. Even though politicians have used a variety of tactics and strategies to encourage entrepreneurship, there is still the need to look at effective entrepreneurship education as it may be motivational, knowledge and skills oriented which will be essential for launching successful ventures for the youth.
3. Young people's educational preferences are crucial to their career objectives. Understanding youth educational choices are important when developing effective employment policies. Employment regulations designed to "match" skills with

possibilities in the labor market may continue to fail young people if career aspirations and educational choices are not taken into account.

4. Examining students' perceptions of IT is important for this study since jobs are becoming more cognitive, interactive, and IT-related. Youth who lacks IT skills may face discrimination in the future labor market. Youth must be equipped for the labor market. It is therefore imperative to investigate the perception young people hold about information technology.
5. Youth's bleak employment prospects represent a huge loss of potential and a danger to societal cohesiveness. Therefore, it is crucial to understand what works to enhance labor market outcomes, and this should be a top development objective for all nations. Given Ghana's high youth unemployment rate, it is important to analyze the relationship between senior high school student's career aspirations and labor market trends.
6. Demographic characteristics (gender, types of school, age, place of birth, residential status, and academic programs) can distinguish the effect of antecedent variables on students' occupational aspirations.

### **1.3 Problem Formulation**

Based on the research background and problem identification, the researcher formulated the research problems as follows:

1. What educational aspirations do students hold in secondary school? Do educational aspirations in senior high school vary by gender, age, residential status, academic programs, school type, school setting, and parental educational levels.
2. What occupational aspirations do senior high school students want to pursue? Do their desires differ based on their demographic traits?
3. What proportions of students aspire towards the various sectors of the economy? Do students' aspirations for the various economic sectors differ according to their demographic?
4. What is the labor market aspirational gap? That is, the difference between the estimated labor required in each sector of the economy and the sector students aspire to work in the economy.
5. How Students' Occupational Aspirations are affected by Effective Entrepreneurship Education, Educational Choice, Perception of IT, and Perception students hold about the Labor Market.



6. Are Educational Choice, Perception of IT, and Student Perception about the Labor Market mediating the relationship between Effective Entrepreneurship Education and Students' Occupational Aspirations?

7. Are Demographic characteristics (gender) moderating the effect of Effective Entrepreneurship Education, Educational Choice, Perception of IT, and students' Perception of the Labor Market outcomes on Students' Occupational Aspirations?

#### **1.4 Research Purposes**

The general objective of the study is to examine students' occupational as a manpower development planning model in Ghana. Also, the study sought to test main theories and to prove whether the objective can operationally:

1. Determine the significant factors which influence students' educational aspirations and investigate whether these factors impact differently on the aspirations of students based on their demographic characteristics.

2. Determine whether any significant relationship exists between students' occupational aspirations, the occupations of their parents, and the educational aspirations of the students.

3. Determine the general direction of students' occupational aspirations with respect to occupational fields and sectors of the economy.

4. Determine the labor market aspirational gap.

5. Investigate the students' Occupational Aspirations affected by Effective Entrepreneurship Education, Educational Choice, Perception of IT, and the Labor Market outcome.

6. Investigate the mediation role of Educational Choice, Perception of IT, and students' Perception of the Labor Market in the relationship between Effective Entrepreneurship Education and Students' Occupational Aspirations.

7. Determine the moderating role of Demographic characteristics (gender) on the effect of Effective Entrepreneurship Education, Educational Choice, Perception of IT, and labor market outcomes on Students' Occupational Aspirations.

#### **1.5 Research Usability**

##### **1.5.1 Theoretical Benefits**

Academically, the benefit of the research results include:

- a. a conceptual contribution to academics in the field of economist education, especially those related to students' career aspirations and entrepreneurial issues.

- b. Become a reference for subsequent researchers who would want to study more by modifying the variables that the researchers put forward in this study.
- c. Strengthening the results of previous studies that are in line with this study for example the relationship between entrepreneurship education and educational choice, students' perception about the usage of technology, and students' perception of the labor market.
- d. The findings of this study could add to the existing literature and contribute to further research in the future. The results of this study are to examine senior high school students' aspirations and their relevance to effective entrepreneurship education, educational choice, perception of IT, and the student perception of the Labor Market in Ghana.

### **1.5.2 Practical Benefits**

Practical that can be obtained from the study include:

- a. The data gathered from this study will help determine the importance and layout of effective entrepreneurship education and its effect on both self-employability and the occupational choices of the youth.
- b. Additionally, the study provides recommendations for beneficial pedagogical practices and curriculum design for entrepreneurship educators. However, this will help curriculum planners, education support organizations, and government policymakers about the importance of and framework for effective entrepreneurship education.
- c. The study's findings may also provide the National Development Planning Commission, the Ministry of Employment, and other state agencies in Ghana responsible for manpower planning development with important data for developing policy.
- d. Youth unemployment can be addressed while also helping to alleviate poverty and income and opportunity disparities by matching the right career goals among young people. A revolution in education and skills will eventually aid in the growth of Ghana's social and human capital.
- e. The study's findings may also offer academics in general and experts in human resources development, the development of entrepreneurial education in particular, with up-to-date information and guidance in the research fields of educational choice, occupational aspiration, and development of the adolescent student.

- f. The findings of this study will show that to avoid prejudice when analyzing young people's occupational goals, policy-making must take into account the voices and diversity of opinion among youths.
- g. Since neither Foster's study nor any other study has looked at senior high school students' objectives and their significance to entrepreneurship education, educational choice, perception of IT, and the perception students hold about the labor market in Ghana. This study aims to gather and analyze information on this crucial topic to support effective entrepreneurship education and guarantee effective labor market policies in Ghana.
- h. For Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) where researchers are taking Doctoral studies, it is hoped that the results of this research can enrich the results of previous research on entrepreneurship as well as manpower development planning, especially in the economics program and be used as one of universities publication products.

## **1.6 Dissertation Systematics**

The second chapter is built around a review of previous research on the issue under investigation. It reviews relevant literature, including books from the library on the topic and other works. The third chapter discusses how to create, populate, and choose samples, tools, and techniques for gathering data or information. The instruments comprise the use of a questionnaire. Chapter four focuses on the presentation of results and discussion. Tables and path diagrams are used to display the results. The final chapter presents conclusions about the study as well as implications, recommendations, limitations of the study, and areas for future research.