Global Journal of Guidance and Counseling in Schools: Current Perspectives

Volume 14, Issue 2, (2024) 62-77

www.gjgc.eu

A comparative analysis of career aspirations for agriculture students from rural and urban senior secondary schools

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Suggested Citation:

Tsikati, A.F. & Motsa, N. (2024). A comparative analysis of career aspirations for agriculture students from rural and urban senior secondary schools. *Global Journal of Guidance and Counseling in Schools: Current Perspectives*. *14*(2), 62-77. https://doi.org/10.18844/gjgc.v14i2.9390

Received from January 1, 2024; revised from March 20, 2024; accepted from August 5, 2024.

Selection and peer review under the responsibility of Assoc Prof. Dr. Nur Demirbas Celik, Alanya Alaadin Keykubat University, Turkey

Abstract

Existing literature has shown a disparity between the career aspirations of students from rural and urban schools. Unfortunately, no study has been conducted to investigate the differences in the career aspirations of senior secondary school students from urban and rural schools in Eswatini. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to compare the career aspirations of senior secondary school students from rural and urban schools in Eswatini. The target populations were Form 4 students, from eight schools in Eswatini: four rural and four urban schools. A total of 280 students were sampled. A questionnaire was developed and used for data collection. It was validated by three experts in the Department of Agricultural Education and Extension, one professional in the career guidance field, and one career and guidance teacher. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that the students from both rural and urban schools had their career inspiration to become medical doctors. However, the career aspirations of the students from rural schools were higher than those from urban schools in a few areas. Thus, the study recommends that career guidance and counseling officials should assist students from urban schools in careers where they have low aspirations.

Keywords: career aspirations, comparative analysis, Form 4 students, rural school, sources of aspiration, urban school

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rural or urban residence has been related to the educational and occupational aspirations of youth (Moore et al., 1964). Jyung and Miller (1990) reported no relationship between either educational or vocational aspirations between the students from rural and urban schools. Thus, MacraCken and Barcinas (1991) reported that urban students have higher educational and occupational aspirations than rural students. Similarly, Peterson (1978) found that adolescents from large urban communities thought more highly about themselves than did adolescents from rural communities.

In general, rural schools have physical and social environments that are usually more relaxed, and students pursuing science areas such as agriculture and environmental sciences can greatly benefit from rural surroundings (Thanita Lerdporukulrat, 2009). Cobb (1985) reported that there is a growing body of evidence suggesting that rural youth have love lower levels of academic and vocational aspirations.

Chenoweth and Gallihier (2004) studied factors influencing college aspirations of rural West Virginia high school students; that is students' intentions to attend college. The findings revealed that most of the students were reported to have planned to attend college. However, some studies indicate that about one-third of students will actually attend college within the first two years after high school and then drop out. Many students who enter college in rural schools may not succeed. Diab et al., (2012), and García-Marirrodriga (2024) suggested that to support rural students in their studies; academic, financial, emotional, and social stressors need to be addressed. Bajema et al., (2002) when studying the aspirations of rural youth concluded that most of the students had set educational and occupational goals and perceived that support was available to help them realize their aspirations. Careers related to health, management, and education were the most common occupational aspirations among both town and farm students in this study.

Sirini, et al. (2004) found that future aspiration was an important area of exploration, owing to the frequency and salience of structural barriers (such as neighborhood violence, discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities) in the lives of urban youth. Therefore, findings from Edwards and Quinter (2011) reported that there are several individual and structural-level influences on the formation of these aspirations among urban youth. Hence, Peterson (1978) found that adolescents from large urban communities thought more highly about themselves than did adolescents from rural communities.

McCracken and Barcinas (1991) argued that the lack of opportunity for rural students to interact with persons of varying backgrounds may be a limiting factor in their educational and sociological development. MacCkraken and Barcinas (1991) further reported that one-quarter of the students in the rural schools were enrolled in the general curriculum because they often had to leave their home school to participate in vocational education. Families were larger in rural areas which influenced the academic aspirations of the youth. The educational level of the parents was higher in urban areas than in rural areas. All of these factors are reflective of the differences in social context between rural and urban areas. Therefore, these differences in the social context of the two locations explain the differences in the aspirations of students. However, MacBrayane (1987) found that rural students registered academic aptitude scores similar to those of urban students and were strongly encouraged to attend college as urban students.

McCracken and Barcinas (1991) studied differences between rural and urban schools in terms of student characteristics and student aspirations in Ohio State in America. Findings revealed that the career aspirations of the students from urban and rural schools were not significantly different. McCracken and Barcinas also reported that students from rural schools will need to leave their communities to fulfill their occupational aspirations. This is because jobs with high socio-economic status are not available in rural areas; thus, the brain drain to urban areas. Financial constraints are an important factor influencing a student's career aspirations.

Ho and Tsai (2023) studied the effect of teacher's qualifications and expertise in determining the level of rural and urban schools in Taiwan. It was discovered that there was a higher level of not experienced teachers in rural schools and this affected their aspiration generally to achieve more. The sources of the career aspirations include intrinsic and extrinsic sources. Intrinsic sources include personal interests and professional development (Griffiths & Kaldi, 2007). Edwards and Quinter (2011) studied factors influencing student career choices among secondary school students in Kisimu Municipality, Kenya, and concluded that students' career choices are influenced by numerous factors including outcome expectancies; individual variants such as gender, personal interests, and learning experiences; environmental factors; and personal contacts.

Maharaj (2008) when investigating the factors affecting the career choice of selected healthcare students in Kwazulu Natal concluded that a majority of the students believed that cost was not an important factor when choosing their career but parents and significant others were the strongest factors influencing their career choice. MacKracken and Barcinas (1991) emphasized that parents were more likely to expect their children to advance their education beyond high school.

Onochie (2010) found that Nigerian families were impeding the aspirations of Nigerian girls for higher education through some cultural attributes and parental attitudes. Similarly, Edwards and Quinter (2011), and Tan and Fang (2023) emphasized that family members are more influential in students' career choices as compared to other groups of influential persons. Furthermore, Edwards and Quinter (2011), Chen et al., (2023), and McGarr et al., (2023) elaborated that when students interact with their peers, their advice is less important as compared to family members, teachers, and career counselors. Further analysis revealed that teachers were found to be more influential compared to career counselors.

There were no variations in the level of influence that each person had on students' career choices by gender. Also, siblings, peers, professionals, and television did not have much influence on the career aspirations of the students (Maharaj, 2008). Hadebe (2010) stated that students were motivated by seeing successful professionals in the desired field. On another note, students perceived that the environment provided by their schools was supportive of their educational and occupational aspirations (Bajema et al., 2002).

Mudlovozi et al., (2014) when studying the career aspirations of psychology students in rural-based universities in South Africa found that the participants chose their degree programs as career fields for various reasons. The popular reasons for the choice of the degree programs as career fields were academic-related, interest, altruistic, and humanitarian. Gender difference is observed as a motive for choosing a degree program as a career field (Reinhold et al., 2022). According to Mudlovozi et al., (2014)'s study, Males were driven by finance-related, security, and respect reasons while females were motivated by significant others and the need for self-enhancement.

Gatua (2012) carried out a study set to determine the impact of guidance and counseling services on students' social and emotional adjustment in public urban and rural secondary schools in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu Counties, Kenya. In the study, it was discovered that there exists an impact of guidance and counseling services on students' social and emotional adjustment in urban and rural secondary schools. Also, guidance and counseling services impacted differently on male and female students' social and emotional adjustments in urban and rural secondary schools. Gatua (2012) pointed out that there is a need for educational stakeholders to encourage male students to seek guidance and counseling services for better adjustment, growth, and development.

In Eswatini, the education attainment of urban dwellers exceeds that of rural dwellers (Marope, 2010). A study by Marope (2010) revealed that rural students' enrolment rate and competitiveness in their program of study at university have been observed to be comparably lower. Marope (2010) further noted that a vast majority of university students come from rich urban areas, and relatively very few from more remote rural areas. Furthermore, Marope (2010) pointed out that since secondary schools in remote, rural areas tend to be considerably weaker than schools in urban areas, it is difficult, even for talented children, to qualify for university enrolment. Existing literature is not comprehensive on the career aspirations of rural and urban school students in Eswatini. A similar study was on the career aspirations of senior secondary school students in Eswatini conducted by Tsikati and Mabuza (2023). Therefore, the study sought to describe the differences that exist between rural and urban school students' career aspirations in Eswatini.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to compare the career aspirations of senior secondary school agriculture students from urban and rural schools in Eswatini. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Describe respondents by demographic characteristics and background information from rural and urban schools.
2. Compare the students from rural and urban schools in terms of career aspiration fields in Eswatini.
3. Compare the career aspirations of students from rural and urban schools in Eswatini
4. Compare the sources of career aspirations between students from rural and urban schools in Eswatini
5. Determine if there is a significant difference between the career aspirations of the students from rural and urban schools in Eswatini

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study was a comparative analysis of the career aspirations of senior secondary school agriculture students from rural and urban schools in Eswatini.

2.1. Participants

The study targeted eight schools in the regions of the country: Hhohho, Lubombo, Manzini, and Shiselweni region. Two schools were sampled in each region and among these sampled schools four were rural schools and four were urban schools. In each school, 35 students were randomly sampled thus; the sample size was 280 students for the study. The Form 4 classes were used because this is the stage where the students are choosing subjects that determine their career to pursue.

2.2. Data collection tool

A self-administered questionnaire was developed from the literature and used in data collection. The questionnaire had three sections, namely: career aspirations; sources of the career aspirations; and demographic characteristics and background information. The self-administered questionnaire used a nominal rating scale to measure the career aspirations and their of both rural and urban senior secondary school agriculture students in Eswatini. The five-point nominal rating scale for the career aspirations had the following ranges: 1=Not desired (ND), 2=Slightly desired (SD), 3=Moderately desired (MD), 4=Desire(D), and 5=Highly desired (HD). Again, a five-point nominal rating scale for the sources of career aspirations had the following ranges: 1=Never supported (NS), 2=Slightly supported (SS), 3=Moderately supported (MS), 4=Supported(S) and 5=Highly supported (HS). The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement regarding these variables. In the demographic characteristics and background information section, respondents were requested to circle or fill in blank spaces. The questionnaire was validated by three experts from the Department of Agricultural Education and Extension at the University of Eswatini, one professional in the career guidance department in the Ministry of Education and Training, and one Head of the Department of Career Guidance and Counselling at Lobamba National High School in Eswatini.

2.3. Procedure

A pilot study was conducted using 30 senior secondary school students: 15 from St Christopher High [urban school] and 15 from Mvimbeko High [rural school]. These students used for the pilot study were not involved in the study. They were used to establish inter-item reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha revealed that the instrument was 76% reliable.

The researchers collected data from February to March 2017. The questionnaires were delivered personally by the researchers to the students in rural and urban schools. Letters seeking permission to conduct the study were written to the school principals and the respondents and permission was granted. Parents were asked to fill out an accented form for respondents who were underage and those who were 18 years and above to fill out the consent form. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the questionnaire was formulated such that respondents' names were concealed. Also, the data were only accessible to the researchers. Descriptive and inferential statistics in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 were used for analyzing the data.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Background information and demographic characteristics

Table 1 presents the background information and demographic characteristics of the senior secondary high school students from both rural and urban schools. There were more female students in rural schools (n=76, 54.3%) while there were more male students in urban schools (n=71, 50.7%). Generally, the home locations for the students were coming from the semi-urban areas: rural schools (n=66, 47.1%) and urban schools (n=64, 45.7%). Most of the respondents were coming from Manzini Region for both categories: rural schools (n=47, 33.6%) and urban schools (n=39, 27.9). Both students from rural and urban schools were generally young as they were in the first age brackets, 15-17 years: rural schools (n=91, 61.0%) and urban schools (n=70, 50.0%). The students had the most parents having their highest level of education up-to ordinary level certificate – school leaving certificate: rural schools [father (n=33, 23.6%); mother n=42, 30.0%)] and urban schools [father (n=40, 28.6%); mother n=51, 36.4%)].

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics and Background Information of Respondents

Demographic characteristics and background information	Rural (n=140)		Urban (n=140)	
	f	%	f	%
Sex				
Male	64	45.7	71	50.7
Female	76	54.3	69	49.3
Age				
15-17 yrs.	91	61.0	70	50.0
18-21 yrs.	40	28.6	50	35.7
21-25 yrs.	9	6.4	14	10.0
Above 25yrs.	0	0	6	4.3
Home Location				
Rural	22	15.7	53	37.9
Semi-urban	66	47.1	64	45.7
Urban	52	37.1	23	16.4
Region				
Hhohho	21	15.0	33	23.6
Manzini	47	33.6	39	27.9
Lubombo	38	27.1	35	25.0
Shiselweni	34	24.3	33	23.6
Father Qualification				
O'level	33	23.6	40	28.6
Certificate	30	21.4	21	15.0
Diploma	21	15.0	18	12.9
Bachelor's degree	18	12.9	21	15.0
Master's degree	7	5.0	18	12.9
Doctorate	9	6.4	6	4.3
Never school	22	15.7	16	11.4
Mother Qualification				
O'level	42	30.0	51	36.4
Certificate	33	23.6	14	10.0
Diploma	19	13.6	33	23.6
Bachelor's degree	8	5.7	17	12.1
Master's degree	7	5.0	8	5.7
Doctorate	8	5.7	6	4.3
Never school	23	16.4	11	7.9

3.2. Comparison between the career aspirations of students from rural and urban schools in terms of academic fields

Table 2 reveals that both students from rural and urban schools were moderately interested in artistic career fields "(rural – M=2.61, SD=1.36; urban – M=2.62, SD=1.31); educational (rural – M=3.02, SD=1.40; urban – M=2.71, SD=1.42); wildlife (rural – M=2.71, SD=1.36; urban – M=2.52, SD=1.45); scientist (rural – M=3.18, SD=1.36; urban – M=3.06, SD=1.38); entertainment (rural – M=3.16, SD=1.41; urban – M=2.90, SD=1.44); sports (rural – M=2.77, SD=1.55; urban – M=2.45, SD=1.58); law (rural – M=3.36, SD=1.52; urban – M=2.77, SD=1.54); aviation (rural – M=3.32, SD=1.44; urban – M=2.98, SD=1.50); engineering (rural – M=3.30, SD=1.40; urban – M=3.17, SD=1.45); computer specialist (rural – M=3.49, SD=1.45; urban – M=3.19, SD=1.45); and medical and health

(rural – M=3.44, SD=1.29; urban – M=3.32, SD=1.44). However, some differences existed in some of the career fields. For instance, students from rural schools also aspired to be in the following career fields: agricultural career (M=2.83, SD=1.40); news and media (M=2.90. SD=1.34), and security (M=2.74, SD=1.41). Contrary, the aspirations were slightly lower for students from the urban schools on the same careers: agricultural career (M=2.16, SD=1.23); news and media (M=2.41. SD=1.44), and security (M=2.16, SD=1.30) On".

Table 2

Comparing the career goals of pupils in Eswatini's rural and urban schools

Careers	***Rural (n=140)***		***Urban (n=140)***	
Agricultural careers	2.83	1.40	2.16	1.23
Artistic careers	2.61	1.36	2.62	1.31
Education careers	3.02	1.40	2.71	1.42
Wildlife careers	2.71	1.36	2.52	1.45
Scientists careers	3.18	1.36	3.06	1.38
News and media	2.9	1.34	2.41	1.44
Entertainment careers	3.16	1.41	2.90	1.44
Sports careers	2.77	1.55	2.45	1.58
Law careers	3.36	1.52	2.77	1.54
Pilot and aviation	3.32	1.44	2.98	1.50
Engineering careers	3.30	1.40	3.17	1.45
Computer Specialist	3.49	1.45	3.19	1.45
Medical and health	3.44	1.29	3.32	1.44
Security careers	2.74	1.41	2.16	1.30

3.3. Comparison of the "specific career aspirations between students from rural and urban schools"

Table 3 presents the comparison of the specific career aspirations between students from rural and urban schools in Eswatini. In agricultural-related careers, both students from rural and urban schools moderately aspired for "animal scientists (rural – M=3.33, SD=1.41; urban – M=2.96, SD=1.57); food scientist (rural – M=3.31, SD=1.53; urban – M=2.90, SD=1.45) and economist (rural – M=2.56, SD=1.45; rural – M=2.53, SD=1.54). Also, the students from rural schools moderately aspired to be in agricultural education (M=2.79, SD=1.31) and agricultural extension (M=2.67, SD=1.40). Regarding the artistic career, both groups desired to be computer artists (rural – M=3.38, SD=1.29; urban – M=3.10, SD=1.36) and designers (rural – M=3.31, SD=1.62; urban – M=2.88, SD=1.60). The students from rural schools were further inspired to be photographers (M=2.69, SD=1.41), drawing (M=2.54, SD=2.52), and painting (M=2.52, SD=1.42)".

Regarding educational careers both groups moderately aspired to be "career advisors (rural – M=3.37, SD=1.41; urban – M=2.99, SD=1.45); teachers (rural – M=3.28, SD=1.39; urban – M=2.76, SD=1.36); childcare worker (rural – M=2.77, SD=1.48; urban – M=2.55, SD=1.50); and librarian (rural – M=2.64, SD=1.41; urban – M=2.53, SD=1.37). The students from rural and urban schools were moderately aspiring to be wildlife biologists (rural – M=3.23, SD=1.44; urban – M=2.89, SD=1.49) and wildlife officers (rural – M=3.08, SD=1.45; urban – M=2.75, SD=1.58). The aspiring levels for students

from rural schools were higher than those from urban schools in the following scientific areas: mathematician (M=3.61, SD=1.53) and environmental scientist (M=3.52, SD=1.15). The students from urban schools were moderately aspiring for these careers: mathematician (M=3.34, SD=1.52) and environmental scientist (M=3.42, SD=1.28). Findings of the study revealed that the students from rural and urban schools moderately aspired for the following scientific fields: climate scientist (rural – M=3.46, SD=1.28; urban – M=3.17, SD=1.33); physicist (rural – M=3.34, SD=1.32; urban – M=3.21, SD=1.37); chemist (rural – M=3.14, SD=1.46; urban – M=3.19, SD=1.41); and zoologist (rural – M=2.81, SD=1.48; urban – M=2.63, SD=1.46)".

In the news and media field, both students from rural and urban schools moderately aspired to be "journalists (rural – M=3.36, SD=1.45; urban – M=3.01, SD=1.49) and reporters (rural – M=2.85, SD=1.31; urban – M=2.79, SD=1.36). The aspiring levels for students from rural schools were higher than those from urban schools in the following areas of entertainment: actor (M=3.71, SD=1.50) and musician (M=3.51, SD=1.50). The students from urban schools were moderately aspiring for these careers: actor (M=3.42, SD=1.63) and environmental musician (M=3.16, SD=1.61). Findings of the study revealed that both students from rural and urban schools moderately aspired for the following: director or producer (rural – M=3.39, SD=1.27; urban – M=3.29, SD=1.37); management (rural – M=3.36, SD=1.26); urban – M=3.23, SD=1.37); dance (rural – M=2.77, SD=1.60; urban – M=2.60, SD=1.52). The students from the rural school were also interested in being decorators (M=2.76, SD=1.32) and caterers (M=2.71, SD=1.39). Students from both rural and urban schools moderately desired to become coaches in the sports fraternity (rural – M=3.06, SD=1.55; urban - M=2.65, SD=1.62). Regarding the career in law, both groups were moderately aspiring to be a judge (rural – M=3.77, SD=1.35; urban - M=3.07, SD=1.58) and lawyer (rural – M=3.70, SD=1.43; urban - M=3.07, SD=1.67). Furthermore, students from the rural school moderately aspired to be attorneys (M=2.62, SD=1.18)".

In the pilot and aviation field, the students from rural schools were aspiring to be "pilots (M=3.84, SD=1.48) more than students from urban schools (M=3.28, SD=1.59). Otherwise, both groups were moderately aspiring to be flight attendants (rural – M=3.17, SD=1.34); urban – M=2.90, SD=1.39); and air traffic controllers (rural – M=2.96, SD=1.50); urban – M=2.77, SD=1.52). In the engineering field, again the students from rural schools were aspiring to be mechanical engineers (M=3.56, SD=1.38) more than students from urban schools (M=3.42, SD=1.52). Students from both groups were moderately aspiring to be a chemical engineer (rural – M=3.44, SD=1.44; urban - M=3.42, SD=1.44); electrical engineer (rural – M=3.37, SD=1.42; urban - M=3.18, SD=1.42); civil engineer (rural – M=3.24, SD=1.40; urban - M=3.26, SD=1.45) and industrial engineer (rural – M=2.90, SD=1.37; urban - M=2.85, SD=1.42). Students from rural schools aspired more to be computer specialists than their counterparts in the following careers: computer information – rural (M=3.60, SD=1.53); urban (M=3.36, SD=1.45) and computer software - rural (M=3.59, SD=1.34; urban (M=3.26, SD=1.32). Both groups were moderately aspiring to be web developers (rural – M=3.48, SD=1.46; urban - M=3.36, SD=1.55); and computer hardware (rural – M=3.29, SD=1.47; urban - M=2.96, SD=1.46)".

Students from both rural and urban schools aspire to be "doctors more than any of the careers in the medical and health field (rural school - M=4.16, SD=1.21; urban school - M=3.91, SD=1.42). Otherwise, both groups were moderately aspiring to be a nurse (rural – M=3.49, SD=1.35; urban - M=3.29, SD=1.47); pharmacist (rural – M=3.42, SD=1.28; urban - M=3.24, SD=1.44); therapist (rural – M=3.36, SD=1.25; urban - M=3.21, SD=1.36); psychologist (rural – M=3.31, SD=1.28; urban - M=3.26, SD=1.48); dentist (rural – M=3.26, SD=1.35; urban - M=3.19, SD=1.54); and physician (rural – M=3.09,

SD=1.32; urban - M=3.17, SD=1.38). Both groups moderately aspired to be police (rural – M=3.18, SD=1.39; urban - M=2.60, SD=1.41). It is interesting to note that the students from rural schools moderately aspired to be soldiers (M=2.74, SD=1.50) which is not the case with the students from urban schools (M=2.11, SD=1.39). Finally, students also moderately aspired to be social workers (M=2.53, SD=1.42) while the students from urban schools (M=2.49, SD=1.31) had a different view".

Table 3

Comparison of the specific career aspirations between students from rural and urban schools

	Rural (n=140)		**Urban (n=140)**	
Agricultural careers				
Animal scientist	3.33	1.41	2.96	1.57
Food scientist	3.31	1.53	2.90	1.45
Agricultural education	2.79	1.31	2.41	1.32
Agricultural extension	2.67	1.40	2.24	1.35
Economist	2.56	1.45	2.53	1.54
Horticulturist	2.29	1.26	2.19	1.38
Agronomist	2.19	1.32	2.06	1.24
Artistic careers				
Computer artist	3.38	1.29	3.10	1.36
Designer	3.31	1.62	2.88	1.60
Photographer	2.69	1.41	2.44	1.33
Drawing artist	2.54	1.54	2.17	1.43
Painting artist	2.52	1.42	2.14	1.36
Drafter	2.23	1.16	1.90	1.10
Sculpturing artist	2.19	1.16	1.81	1.10
Architect	2.04	1.26	1.85	1.20
Educational careers				
Career advisor	3.37	1.41	2.99	1.45
Teacher	3.28	1.39	2.76	1.36
Child care	2.77	1.48	2.55	1.50
Librarian	2.64	1.33	2.53	1.37
Wildlife				
Wildlife biologist	3.23	1.44	2.89	1.49
Wildlife officer	3.08	1.45	2.75	1.58
Park ranger	1.83	1.20	1.91	1.29
Scientist				
Mathematician	3.61	1.53	3.34	1.52
Environmental scientist	3.52	1.15	3.42	1.28
Climate scientist	3.46	1.28	3.17	1.33
Physicist	3.34	1.32	3.21	1.37
Chemist	3.14	1.46	3.19	1.41
Zoologist	2.81	1.48	2.63	1.46
Botanist	2.39	1.29	2.44	1.27
News and media				
Journalist	3.36	1.45	3.01	1.49
Reporter	2.85	1.31	2.79	1.36
Announcer	2.49	1.26	2.43	1.47
Entertainment				
Actor	3.71	1.50	3.42	1.63

Musician	3.51	1.50	3.16	1.61
Director/producer	3.39	1.27	3.29	1.37
Management	3.26	1.26	3.23	1.37
Dancers	2.77	1.60	2.60	1.52
Interior decorator	2.76	1.32	2.37	1.34
Caterer	2.71	1.39	2.23	1.23
Sports career				
Coach	3.06	1.55	2.65	1.62
Athlete	2.49	1.54	2.25	1.54
Law career				
Judge	3.77	1.35	3.07	1.58
Lawyer	3.70	1.43	2.86	1.67
Attorney	2.62	1.18	2.39	1.36
Pilot and aviation				
Pilot	3.84	1.48	3.28	1.59
Flight attendants	3.17	1.34	2.90	1.39
Air traffic controller	2.96	1.50	2.77	1.52
Engineering Career				
Chemical engineer	3.44	1.44	3.42	1.44
Civil engineer	3.24	1.40	3.26	1.45
Electrical engineer	3.37	1.42	3.18	1.42
Mechanical engineer	3.56	1.38	3.15	1.52
Industrial Engineer	2.90	1.37	2.85	1.42
Computer specialist career				
Computer information	3.60	1.53	3.26	1.32
Computer software developer	3.59	1.34	3.16	1.47
Web developer	3.48	1.46	3.36	1.55
Computer hardware	3.29	1.47	2.96	1.46
Medical and health career				
Doctor	4.16	1.21	3.91	1.42
Nurse	3.49	1.35	3.29	1.47
Pharmacist	3.42	1.28	3.24	1.44
Therapist	3.36	1.25	3.21	1.36
Psychologist	3.31	1.28	3.26	1.48
Dentist	3.26	1.35	3.19	1.54
Physician	3.09	1.32	3.17	1.38
Security career				
Police	3.18	1.39	2.60	1.41
Soldier	2.74	1.50	2.11	1.39
Fire-fighter	2.29	1.34	1.78	1.10
Other careers				
Social worker	2.53	1.42	2.49	1.31
Secretary/receptionist	2.41	1.04	2.01	1.02
Carpenter	2.28	1.38	1.71	1.13

3.4. Sources of the career aspirations of the students

The sources of the career aspirations of the students were presented as intrinsic and extrinsic sources. Intrinsic sources are internal while extrinsic are external to the person. Table 4 depicts that the students from both rural and urban schools were highly inspired by “the desire to achieve (rural –

M=4.50, SD=0.90; urban - M=4.60, SD=0.70). The findings of the study also revealed that the students from both groups were inspired by the following: exposure through learning (rural - M=4.40, SD=0.80; urban – M=4.30, SD=0.90); self-respect (rural – M=4.40, SD=1.00; urban - M=4.40, SD=0.90); love and belonging (rural – M=4.10, SD=1.20; urban - M=4.00, SD=1.30); income (rural – M=4.00, SD=1.20; urban - M=3.80, SD=1.30); and self-exploration (rural – M=3.90, SD=1.20; urban - M=3.90, SD=1.20). The students from rural schools were also intrinsically inspired by safety and security (M=3.90, SD=1.20); power (M=3.80, SD=1.2; and physical survival (rural – M=3.50, SD=1.40) while those from urban schools were moderately inspired by the same intrinsic sources: safety and security (M=3.40, SD=1.40); power (M=3.40, SD=1.40; and physical survival (rural – M=3.00, SD=1.30)".

Table 4 also shows that the students from both rural and urban schools were inspired by the following extrinsic sources on career aspirations: "mother (rural - M=4.30, SD=1.30; urban – M=4.40, SD=1.10); school (rural - M=4.10, SD=1.10; urban – M=3.80, SD=1.20); role models (rural - M=4.00, SD=1.10; urban – M=3.90, SD=1.30); teacher (rural – M=3.70, SD=1.40; urban - M=3.50, SD=1.40) and church members (rural – M=3.70, SD=1.30; urban - M=3.50, SD=1.40). Other extrinsic sources that inspired the students from rural schools were pastors (M=3.90, SD=1.40); siblings (M=3.80, SD=1.10); experiences (rural – M=3.80, SD=1.20); friends and peers (M=3.60, SD=1.40); career guidance (M=3.6, SD=1.2) and the father (M=3.5, SD=1.5). The findings of the study further indicate that both groups were moderately inspired by the following: media (rural – M=3.40, SD=1.30; urban - M=3.20, SD=1.50); societal values (rural – M=3.30, SD=1.30; urban - M=3.10, SD=1.40); and lecturers (rural – M=3.40, SD=1.40; urban - M=2.70, SD=1.50)".

Table 4

Comparison of sources of career aspirations of the students

Sources of career aspirations	**Rural (n=140)**		**Urban (n=140)**	
Intrinsic sources	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
Desire to archive	4.50	0.90	4.60	0.70
Exposure through learning	4.40	0.80	4.30	0.90
Self-respect	4.40	1.00	4.40	0.90
Love and belonging	4.10	1.20	4.00	1.30
Income	4.00	1.20	3.80	1.30
Self-exploration	3.90	1.20	3.90	1.20
Safety and Security	3.90	1.20	3.40	1.40
Power	3.80	1.20	3.40	1.40
Physical survival	3.50	1.40	3.00	1.30
Extrinsic sources				
Mother	4.30	1.30	4.40	1.10
School	4.10	1.10	3.80	1.20
Role models	4.0	1.10	3.90	1.30
Pastors	3.90	1.40	3.30	1.50
Siblings	3.80	1.10	3.40	1.30
Experiences	3.80	1.20	3.20	1.40
Church members	3.70	1.30	3.50	1.40
Teachers	3.70	1.40	3.50	1.40
Friends and peers	3.60	1.40	3.10	1.40
Career Guidance	3.60	1.20	3.20	1.30
Father	3.50	1.50	3.40	1.60
Media	3.40	1.30	3.20	1.50

Lecturers	3.40	1.40	2.70	1.50
Societal values	3.30	1.30	3.10	1.30

3.5. Determine if there is a significant difference between the career aspirations of rural and urban schools in Eswatini

The variations in the career goals of students from Eswatini's rural and urban schools were determined using an independent t-test. According to Table 6, there was a statistically significant difference (t=-4.631, p=.01) in the job ambitions of students attending Eswatini's rural and urban schools. Compared to students from metropolitan schools, those from rural schools showed higher career goals. Using Cohen's formula, the effect size was computed to find the practical difference (magnitude) between the male and female pupils. The practical value of the difference in career aspirations between rural and urban pupils in Eswatini increases with increasing effect size. Cohen (1988) defined a small effect size as having a d value of.49 and below, and a medium effect size (d) as being between.50 and.79, and a high effect size as having a value of d =.80 and above. The study's conclusions showed a medium impact size (d =.56). This suggests that there was a moderate variation in the job goals of pupils attending rural and urban schools.

Table 5

Determination of the significance of the difference between the career aspirations of the students from rural and urban schools in Eswatini

Gender	M	SD	t-value	p
Rural	3.04	.43	-4.631	.01
Urban	2.77	.53		

Apriori - p≤.05

4. DISCUSSION

In general, the study found that students from rural schools had higher career goals than students from urban institutions. The results don't align with the body of current research. According to Peterson's (1978) research, teenagers from big cities had a more positive self-image than teenagers from rural areas. Similar findings were made by MacraCken and Barcinas (1991), who found that urban students have greater goals for their studies and careers than rural students. Additionally, Cobb (1985) noted that an increasing amount of data points to rural youth's lower levels of academic and professional goals. McCracken and Barcinas (1991) suggested that rural students' limited opportunities to engage with people from other backgrounds might be impeding their sociological and academic growth.

The study, however, conflicts with the findings of McCracken and Barcinas (1991), who discovered that at Ohio State in America, students from rural and urban schools had similar career goals. According to MacBrayane (1987), intellectual aptitude scores for rural pupils were comparable to those of metropolitan students. Among other job goals, students from both rural and urban schools wanted to be doctors. In a similar vein, Bajema et al. (2002) discovered that young people from rural areas were interested in careers in management, education, and health.

Students from schools in rural and urban areas were intrinsically driven to succeed. Griffiths and Kaldi (2007) asserted in a similar manner that students' career aspirations are influenced by their

professional progress and personal interests. According to Edwards and Quinter's (2011) research, result expectancies, individual gender, personal interests, learning experiences, and contextual factors were the main causes of career aspirations among students from Kisimu Municipality in Kenya. The results of this study also indicated that moms are the primary source of aspirations for careers. According to Hadebe (2010), students were inspired to pursue their goals when they observed accomplished individuals in their industry. In Kwazulu Natal, Maharaj (2008) concluded that the biggest influences on employment choice were parents and close relationships. Parents' attitudes, classmates, teachers, cultural characteristics, and family members were mentioned by Onochie (2010) and Edwards and Quinter (2011). According to Gatua (2012), guidance and counseling professionals had a significant impact on students' career goals in both urban and rural secondary schools in Kenya's Uasin Gishu and Nakuru counties.

5. CONCLUSION

Female students predominated in rural schools, whereas male pupils predominated in urban ones. The following career disciplines were of interest to students in both rural and urban schools: law, aircraft, engineering, computer science, wildlife, science, entertainment, sports, and the arts. It was found that kids attending rural schools were more motivated to pursue careers in agriculture, news and media, and security than those attending urban schools. Every student in both urban and rural schools aspired to become a doctor of medicine. Therefore, it was determined that the most desired professional path for senior secondary students from both rural and urban schools was becoming a doctor.

The following careers were the same goals shared by students from rural and urban schools: Agricultural careers include those in animal science, food science, and economics; creative fields include computer art and design; Career advisors, teachers, childcare providers, and librarians are examples of educational careers; wildlife biologists and officers; scientists, physicists, chemists, and climate scientists; journalists and reporters are examples of scientific fields; entertainment directors, producers, event managers, and dancers are examples of entertainment careers; coaches in sports fraternities; judges and lawyers are examples of the legal profession; engineering - chemical, electrical, civil, and industrial engineers; pilot and aviation field - flight attendant and air traffic controller; computer specialist - web developer and computer hardware; Dental, pharmacy, therapist, psychologist, and nurse are examples of careers in medicine and health; police work in security. When it came to the following professions, students from rural schools had higher aspirations than those from urban ones: social workers, attorneys, pilots, mechanical engineers, computer information, computer software, mathematicians, environmental scientists, actors, musicians, decorators, catering, and social workers.

The study concluded that kids from both rural and urban schools were primarily inspired by their mothers and their desire to succeed. Students from both rural and urban schools shared intrinsic ambitions related to self-exploration, self-respect, love and belonging, and exposure through learning. Another finding indicated that when it came to making a professional decision, kids from rural schools were also innately motivated by factors like power, protection and security, and physical survival. Extrinsically, students in rural and urban schools were motivated to become lecturers, educators, role models, members of the church, and representatives of society's values. Pastors, siblings, experience, friends, classmates, career counsel, and fathers were among the other sources of inspiration that were

more prevalent among students from rural schools. The study concludes that pupils from rural schools had much higher job goals than students from urban institutions.

According to the study's findings, students from rural schools were more ambitious about their careers than students from urban schools. Further research is necessary to determine the reason behind the differences in career goals between pupils attending rural and urban schools. The evidence that is currently available, however, indicates that the professional goals of students from urban schools were impacted by structural hurdles such as prejudice, local violence, and unequal access to opportunities. The study's findings and conclusions also suggest that to favorably support kids' career aspirations, parents, pastors, siblings, friends, and peers, as well as career counselors, should be urged to get involved in their affairs.

6. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommended that the Career Guidance and Counselling Department of the Ministry of Education and Training and the career guidance and counseling teachers in the schools should work closely to assist students from urban schools in careers which they do not aspire such as agricultural careers, news, and media, and security. Another recommendation was that schools develop their curriculum and teach in a manner that can support most students to become doctors as that is the most aspired career among both rural and urban students. A need exists to inspire students from urban schools on the following careers: agricultural education, agricultural extension, photographers, drawing, painting, mathematician, environmental scientist, actor, musician, decorator, caterer, attorney, pilot, mechanical engineer, computer information, computer software, soldiers, and social workers as their aspirations were reported to be low.

The student's desire should always be considered when students are enrolling for any profession as it is the main intrinsic source for a career aspiration. Mothers must be advised on how best they can inspire their children as they are the main extrinsic source of career aspiration for both rural and urban students. Efforts need to be made to enhance the role that can be played by the pastors, siblings, friends and peers, career guidance, and fathers to inspire the students from urban schools on their career aspirations.

Acknowledgments: For their participation in this study, the Forma 5 pupils in Eswatini are greatly appreciated by the author. We also acknowledge the hard work of Mr. E. M. Manana, a former Ngwane College lecturer, who proofread and edited this journal article.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval: For responders who were underage, parents were requested to complete an accented form, and for those who were 18 years of age and older, a consent form. The names of the respondents were hidden in the questionnaire's formulation to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

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