

Career guidance services on girl child career choices in selected schools in Mbeya City- Tanzania

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of career guide on girl child career choices in selected secondary schools in Mbeya City, Tanzania. The objectives were to find out how parents' career influence female students' future and to establish the influence of career guidance in female students' career choices after secondary school in selected secondary schools. The research employed descriptive research design with both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Data was collected from 150 girl students using a self-administered questionnaire. The findings showed that parents have much influence on children's choice of educational career as stated by 107(71.3%) respondents. 121(80.6%) respondents agreed also that higher occupational parents would want their child to be doctors, engineering etc. without considering the ability of a child. Also, 120(80.6%) respondents reveal that teachers career guidance guide influence in female students' career choices after secondary. Based on the study findings, the research concluded that parent' career influence female students' future career choice after secondary school in selected secondary schools in Mbeya City.

Keywords: career guidance, girl child, counseling services, career choice

Introduction

The choices that young people make about what to do at age 16 when compulsory fulltime education ends are of both private and public interest. Their choices affect both their own future and the supply of educated and trained labour in the economy, and it is a major goal of government education policy to increase the number of those who decide to stay in education and training with a clear career to pursue after school ^[1].

Career choice involves choosing a career which one can make maximum use of interests and capabilities in such a manner that will satisfy his or her goals. However, in doing that, one has to weigh the environmental factors likely to either enhance or inhibit achieving a maximum degree of satisfaction in one's life and work. Occupational choice is a life-long process of decision making of which an individual seeks to find the optimal fit between his career preparation of goals and the realities of the world of work ^[2]. Much as there is a wide range of existing career opportunities, females often tend to give preference to careers like nursing, secretarial, catering and clerical jobs which are perceived to be traditionally suitable for females. Males on the other hand tend to give preference to careers like engineering and medicine. Studies in the developed world reveal that under-representation of females in certain subjects and training programs has led to similar occupation under representation ^[3]. This has also been revealed by Bender ^[4], who found out that less than 10 percent of females were scientists, engineers or technologists in Canada and United States. According to American Association of University Women (AAUW) ^[5], women in the U.S constituted only about 20 percent of engineering majors and were holding only 9 percent of engineering jobs.

In most parts of the African countries, the parental expectations of boys and girls are known to be clearly

defined. Some studies have shown significant relationship between parental influence and occupational aspirations, preference and choice. In the Nigeria for instance, boys and girls often undergo different socialization experiences and they tend to learn different gender roles and behaviour patterns and hence develop different career interests.

In Tanzania, it has been allegedly said that high education students lack proper career guidance. Masembe ^[1] gives the claims by educational experts that lack of career guidance among form six students has become a snag often leading them to opt for professions not of their choice. He further argues that there is less parental influence in what students are choosing leading to students being trapped into accepting fancy and sophisticated course names without a slight knowledge of their meaning.

Parental influence has been implicated in the career choice of children. Okeke ^[6] for example, studied the relationship between parental occupations and their children's occupational preferences and he found that 60% of the children were willing to take after their fathers' occupations (medicine) while 23% were willing to follow their mothers' occupations (nursing). Gesinde ^[7] on the other hand posits that parent's career guidance and influence is much more intricate and more pervasive than is shown. Students of secondary and tertiary institutions are often not aware of these influences and may accept the choice of their parents as theirs. The situation owes its origin to early childhood when the child grabs his parent's attitude towards different vocations. A conflict therefore occurs when the child submits to his parent's choice while at the same time deeply resenting his submissions as he becomes aware of his loss of independence and finds his area of interest.

The socio-economic status of parent of a child has also been shown to influence the type of career one choose to do ^[8]. An average parent for example, does not want his son to earn a

living as a full time farmer, a watch-repairer, a plumber, a house painter, for many Nigerians, these jobs are for the poor and underprivileged. Padunny ^[9] stressed that typically the higher the occupational status of the student’s parents, the positive their attitude towards sciences.

It is therefore true to say that families, parents and guardians in particular, play a significant role in the occupational guidance and career goal development of their children. Without parental guidance or support, students and young adults are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities. In this regard, Knowles ^[10], Mau and Bikos ^[11], and Wilson and Wilson ^[12] found out that college students and young adults cite parents’ guidance as an important influence on their choice of career.

In addition to parental influence, career guidance of a qualified personnel cannot be ignored. According to Okafor ^[13] only an effective qualified career teacher can adequately execute career guidance. In his study of career choice of Nigerian youths, Salami ^[14] found that many youths made wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers, or as a result of prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career guidance. In a similar vein, Perry ^[15] asserts that adolescent career choice is influenced by life context, personal attitudes, and educational attainment and therefore without career guidance services, they are destined to wrong career choices. The objectives of this study

therefore were to establish the demographic characteristics of respondents, to study the influence of parents’ career and guidance on female students’ career choice after secondary school and to establish the influence of career guidance services in female students’ career choices after secondary school in selected schools in Mbeya City.

Methodology

This study employed descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative methods were used to establish influence of career guidance services on girl child career choice. Quantitative method allowed the study to establish career guidance services and how they influence girl child career choices. Quantitative research therefore, involved the collection of numerical data in order to explain, predict and analyze the phenomena under study. On the other hand, qualitative research was applied in order to describe perceived and understood influences of career guidance services on girl child career choice. The study targeted form four girl students in four secondary schools namely; Iwambi, Maziwa, Stellafarm, and Nsenga, all in Mbeya City. Form four girls were considered mature enough and are able to respond to the instrument reasonably. The sample size of 150 girl students was drawn from the study population (240) as suggested by Yamane and cited by Israel ^[16].

Table 1: Study population and sample size

Schools	Student Population	Sample Size
Iwambi Secondary School	60	38
Maziwa Secondary School	58	36
Stellafarm Secondary School	64	40
Nsenga Secondary School	58	36
TOTAL	240	150

The respondents were thus randomly selected from the four secondary schools and requested to respond to the semi-structured questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). All objectives were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages because it sought to find out the influence of career guidance services on girl child career choices.

Results and Discussion

The demographic characteristics of respondents that was believed to influence the study findings was age (Table 2). The study revealed that the respondents of the age bracket 13-15 years were 53(35.3%), 16-18 years 65(43.3%), and those with 19 years and above were 32(21.3%). That means, most of the respondents were of the age brackets above 16 years hence their views dominated the study.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Scale	Frequency	Percent
Age	13-15 years	53	35.3
	16-18 years	65	43.3
	19 years and above	32	21.3

n=150

Parents’ Career Guidance and Female Students’ Future Career Choice

On parents’ career influence on female students’ future career choice after secondary school, the findings (Table 3) show that, 107(71.3%) respondents agreed that parents have much influence on children’s choice of educational career, while 114 (76.0%) respondents agreed also that most children are willing to take after their parents’ careers. The findings agree with Gesinde ^[17] who posits that parents’ career guidance and influence is much more intricate and more pervasive than is shown. Students of secondary and tertiary institutions are often not aware of these influences and may accept the choice of their parents as theirs.

Furthermore, 103 (68.6%) respondents agreed parents/guardians play a significant role in the occupational guidance and career goal development of their children, while 121 (80.6%) respondents agreed also that higher occupational parents would want their child to be doctors, engineering, etc. without considering the ability of a child. The findings are in line with Nwankwo ^[8] who states that the socio-economic status of parent of a child determines the type of career one choose to do, some parents have biased and rigid thoughts regarding the occupational choices of a child.

Table 3: Parents’ career and female students’ future career choice in Mbeya city

Parents’ Career and Female Students’ Future Career Choice	SD	D	Agree	SA
Parents have much influence on children’s choice of educational career	21(14.0%)	22(14.7%)	51(34.0%)	56(37.3%)
Most children are willing to take after their parents’ careers	12(8.0%)	24(16.0%)	59(39.3%)	55(36.7%)
Status of parent of a child determines the type of career one choose to do after school	18(12.0%)	21(14.0%)	58(38.7%)	53(35.3%)
Parents/guardians play a significant role in the occupational guidance and career goal development of their children.	23(15.3%)	24(16.0%)	53(35.3%)	50(33.3%)
Higher occupational parents would want their child to be doctors, engineering etc. without considering the ability of a child.	13(8.7%)	16(10.7%)	62(41.3%)	59(39.3%)
Without parental guidance or support, students are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities.	17(11.3%)	21(14.0%)	55(36.7%)	57(38.0%)

n=150

On the other hand, from the study findings, 112(74.7%) agreed that without parental guidance or support, students are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities. The findings agree with Mau and Bikos ^[11] who states that without parental guidance or support, students and young adults are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities. He found that college students and young adults cite parents’ guidance as an important influence on their choice of career.

Career Master/Mistress and girl child career choice

Table 4 presents findings on the influence of career guidance on female students’ career choices after secondary school in selected secondary schools in Mbeya City. The findings show that, 103(68.6%) agreed that the school has a qualified career guide teacher, 113(74.7%) agreed that only an effective qualified career teacher can adequately execute career guidance. The findings are in line with Okafor ^[13] who states

that there is no technique, no method, no device, no gadget can guarantee success, but only an effective qualified career teacher can adequately execute career guidance. Thus the greatest motivating device yet discovered is the highly motivated career Master or Mistress of students who are to be involved actively in career guidance both in Primary and Secondary Schools. Moreover, 110(74.0%) agreed that many students make wrong career choices due to ignorance as a result of poor or inadequate vocational and career guidance while 106(68.6%) agreed that career choice subjects, quality of teaching and learning materials for the student impact on career choice among learners. The findings are in line with Salami ^[14] who in his study of career choice of Nigerian youths, found that many youths made wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers, or as a result of prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career guidance.

Table 4: Career Master/Mistress and Girl child Career Choice

Career Master/Mistress and Girl child Career Choice	SD	D	Agree	SA
The school has a qualified career guide teacher	23(15.3%)	24(16.0%)	53(35.3%)	50(33.3%)
Only an effective qualified career teacher can adequately execute career guidance.	16(11.3%)	21(14.0%)	55(36.7%)	58(38.0%)
Many students make wrong career choices due to ignorance as a result of poor or inadequate vocational and career guidance	19(12.0%)	21(14.0%)	57(38.7%)	53(35.3%)
Career choice subjects, quality of teaching and learning materials for the student impact on career choice among learners.	21(15.3%)	23(16.0%)	54(35.3%)	52(33.3%)
Teachers guide and encourage students to take certain subject options that are congruent with aptitudes and abilities that they identify	13(8.7%)	17(10.7%)	61(41.3%)	59(39.3%)
Teachers’ beliefs influence their children’s self-perceptions of ability and consequently career choice.	18(12.0%)	21(14.0%)	58(38.7%)	53(35.3%)

n=150

On the same note, 120(80.6%) agreed that teachers guide and encourage students to take certain subject options that are congruent with aptitudes and abilities that they identify while 111(74.0%) agreed that teachers’ beliefs influence their children’s self-perceptions of ability and consequently career choice. The findings agree with Perry ^[15] who asserts that adolescent career choice is influenced by life context, personal attitudes, and educational attainment and therefore without career guidance services, they are destined to wrong career choices.

children rather than choosing for them a career that they may not end up liking when they finally finish their school and want to get a job. The teachers and career master/mistress should guide the students on career choice in line with their interests in order for them to choose a career they will enjoy after school. The government should come up with the guidance and counseling subject in the curriculum so that it can be easy for the teachers and career master/mistress to guide the students without having to interfere with the school calendar of school activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the research concluded that parent’ career influence female students’ future career choice after secondary school in selected secondary schools in Mbeya City. The parents should guide their children to choose their future careers based on the interests of the

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