

Influence of Parents Level of Education on Career Decision Self-Efficacy Among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Career decision making is crucial among people all over the world and choosing a career is challenging to those who do not have a wide life experience. Despite the high school completion rates, there is a noticeable trend in Kiambu County that majority of students find it difficult to choose a career after completion. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of parent's level of education on students' career decision self-efficacy of students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study was guided by the Social Cognitive Career theory and the Systems theory. This study used a combination of descriptive and correlational research design. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. The target population consisted of 29,682 form three students in Kiambu county. The sample size consisted of 380 form three students who were selected using stratified sampling techniques from the 285 secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The questionnaires were pilot tested with 30 students from three secondary schools. The Reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient ($r=0.79$). Content validity was tested using content validity index ($CVI=0.84$). The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which included percentages, means, and frequencies. The hypothesis was tested using t-test, Simple Regression and Analysis of Variance at 0.05 level of significance. The research found out that parents level of education ($F(4, 375) = 11.663, p = .000$) has statistically significant influence on students' career decision self-efficacy in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. Findings of this study informs the Ministry of Education, policy makers, career guidance teachers and also parents on the influence of parents level of education on the students while making career decisions. This study contributes to the body of knowledge as it provides a model for predicting students' career decision self-efficacy given the parents level education. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that parent's level of education has statistically significant influence on career decision self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study recommended that the career teachers should consider parent's level of education in career guidance as it statistically influence career decision self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools.

Keywords: *Parents Level of Education; Career Decision Self-Efficacy*

Introduction

Background to the Study

Formal education is the one of prime drivers of the development process in a nation. This is because education is not only key to human capital formation but also inculcates development-oriented values and attitudes among citizens (Republic of Kenya, 2012). This largely explains why the Constitution of Kenya, article 53 stipulates that education is a basic human right in the country. The right to education presupposes that once an individual joins the schooling system, they will not only acquire knowledge and skills but also the capacity to make the right career decision on their future occupation so as to be useful to themselves and the society.

Inability to make the right career decision is not only a waste of resources extended on an individual but has also the potential to frustrate the affected individual during his/her career life (Inkule, 2004). A good career choice as has been explained by Bernes (2007) that it enhances individual productivity in his/her working place including happiness, a feeling of fulfillment, high morale and job satisfaction.

According to Chapman (2010), precise knowledge about potential careers and skills may assist high school students make informed career choices by enabling them to develop the appropriate kind career choices. Self-efficacy is an important agent of self-development especially among children as they grow since each child is unique in the development of their career. Hormuth (2010) relates self-efficacy to self-assessment which largely represents the extent to which an individual's belief in their own characteristics may influence their career decision.

In the United States, a study regarding the professional growth of African American teenagers has attracted more attention despite the challenges that affect their goals, education, and career development (Grier-Reed & Ganuza, 2011; Parris, et.al. 2010; Rogers & Creed, 2011). Therefore, it's essential to determine whether contextual factors may potentially have an influence on students' self-efficacy in deciding on career choices.

In Malaysia, Rohany and Lee (2013) examined the relationship between career knowledge and self-efficacy among secondary school students. Students' self-efficacy and career awareness were considerably positively associated, according to the study's findings. Furthermore, the study found out that career awareness was highly correlated with students' employment preferences and was highest in those with higher levels of self-efficacy and a more optimistic outlook. However, this study did not seek to establish the how peer pressure influence students career decision self-efficacy which this study sought to establish.

Salawu and Bagudo (2016) examined the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and career choice of students in post-secondary institutions in Sokoto state, Ghana. The primary findings of the study indicated a significant, positive link between students' self-efficacy in selecting a career and their decision-making choice. However, this study only concentrated on the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and career choice but did not seek how parents level of education may influence the career decision self-efficacy among secondary school students which this study sought to establish.

Sun (2019) carried out a research on the effect of design thinking on students' professional self-efficacy in career guidance courses. According to the study, students' career decisions are impacted by their career self-efficacy in both direct and indirect ways. This affects the job search process as well. The study recommended that, it is critical for students to have an elevated sense of career self-efficacy in order to raise their chances of obtaining a satisfying job that is appropriate in finding employment. Nevertheless, the study did not seek to determine the variables affecting students' self-efficacy in

selecting careers in public secondary schools. This research gap was addressed by the current investigation.

In Migori Sub County, Kenya, secondary school students participated in a study by Owino (2017) investigating the mediation function of professional self-efficacy belief in the association between self-esteem and career choice behavior. According to the study, pupils in the Migori sub-county had high levels of self-efficacy belief, high career choice behavior, and high self-esteem. It also shown how self-esteem influences career choice behavior and how professional self-efficacy belief functions as a mediating factor in the relationship between occupation selection behavior and self-esteem. However, this study did not seek to establish the influence of parent's level of education on students' self-efficacy in selecting careers in public secondary schools.

In order to forecast students' job goals, Mwaura et al. (2019) looked at the relationship between academic achievement and academic self-efficacy in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study found a significant positive relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and achievement. The present study endeavors to bridge the gap by investigating the influence of parent's level of education on students' self-efficacy in choosing career decisions, which was not explored in previous studies.

Parents greatly impact their children's ability to make decisions. Roach (2010) reported on the effects of students' perceived parental influences on their career self-efficacy. However, the author also observed that students' job choice was not influenced by this parental personal feature in terms of schooling. This suggests that students' career goals were not always influenced by their sense of self-efficacy. Peer pressure and career counselors in schools could be other causes of this. The study also pointed that young people's job prospects may be hampered by parents' lesser educational attainment. The study indicated that having parents with low or no income and education lowers a child's chances of attending college or reaching a professional occupational goal, so virtually predetermining the child's likely career. The study sought to establish effects of students' perceived parental influences on their career self-efficacy. The current study aimed to determine whether parents' educational attainment influences public secondary school student's career decision self-efficacy in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Ajayi et al. (2022) conducted research on Grade 12 students' career decision-making and parental education level in South Africa. The study found that learners' decisions about their careers and their parents' educational attainment were significantly correlated. Comparatively, students whose parents had a university education scored considerably higher on the professional decision-making mean score than those students whose parents just completed secondary and primary school. This study was carried out in South Africa while the current study was done in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study by Ajayi et al (2022) sought to establish the influence of parental educational level on Grade 12 student's career decision making. The current study however sought to determine whether parents' educational level influences public secondary school student's career decision self-efficacy in Kiambu County, Kenya.

College students' development may also be influenced by the educational status of their parents. By comparing the experiences of first-generation and non-generational students, Hahs-Vaughn (2004) investigated the impact of parents' educational attainment on college students. Regarding anticipated highest level of education, entrance exam score, nonacademic experiences, and educational aspirations, there were notable differences between the two groups (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004). In other words, parental education appears to have an effect on the academic and social development of students. The study sought to establish the influence of parental education status on college student's academic and social development. The current study however sought to establish whether parents' educational level influences public secondary school student's career decision self-efficacy in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Njenga *et al.* (2018) investigated the extent to which some selected parental factors influence career development among form four students in Isinya Sub-County, Kenya. The study's findings showed

that the father's education level was significant and that it negatively correlated with the students' career choice. While the study investigated the parental factors influence on career development among form four students, the current study sought to establish whether parents' educational attainment has any influence on students' self-efficacy in making career decisions in public secondary schools. Further, the study was carried out in Isinya Sub County while the current study was carried out in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Under the recently implemented National Education Management Information System (Nemis), Kiambu County recorded the greatest number of learners enrolled in public secondary schools, with 447,664; Nairobi recorded 447,370 (Daily Nation, April, 2018). Despite the high enrolment in Kiambu County's secondary school, there has been a discernible trend that most of these students find it challenging to choose a career after high school (Gitonga, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Education is widely valued across the world as a central factor in economic, political and social development of any nation. Career decision making is crucial among people all over the world and choosing a career is challenging to those who do not have a wide life experience. The self-efficacy of students in selecting their careers has a significant impact on successful career outcomes. As a result, students who have a high degree of self-efficacy in their capacity to choose a career can make informed choices that lead to a fulfilling career. Despite registering the highest number of students in public secondary schools and the high school completion rates, there is a noticeable trend in Kiambu County that majority of students find it difficult to choose a career after completion. Many parties involved in education have always expressed concern about students' lack of decisiveness while making decisions for their careers. Cognizant of this, the government intervened by establishing career guidance in Kenyan secondary schools which has been on-going for over two decades. All this is meant to help students in their career journey. Despite all these initiatives, students continue to get admitted into universities to study subjects they are uninterested in because they are unsure of the careers they want to follow. Previous studies have sought to establish the influence of career knowledge, self-esteem, academic achievement, vocational knowledge on career decision self-efficacy but none of these studies sought to establish how parents level of education influence career decision self-efficacy of public secondary students. This research sought to bridge this knowledge gap.

Objective of the Study

The study sought to establish how parents level of education influence career decision self-efficacy of students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Methodology

The study was guided by the Social Cognitive Career theory and the Systems theory. This study used a combination of descriptive and correlational research design. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. The target population consisted of 29,682 form three students in Kiambu county. The sample size consisted of 380 form three students who were selected using stratified sampling techniques from the 285 secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The questionnaires were pilot tested with 30 students from three secondary schools. The Reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient ($r=0.79$). Content validity was tested using content validity index ($CVI=0.84$). The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which included percentages, means, and frequencies. The hypothesis was tested using t-test, Simple Regression and Analysis of Variance at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine whether parent's level of education has any influence on career decision self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. To achieve the objective, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H₀₁: Parents' level of education has no statistically significant difference on career decision self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

The hypothesis presumed that the parents' level of education has no influence on the on-career decision self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. To test this hypothesis, ANOVA test was carried out. The results of the analysis are as presented in the table below

ANOVA test of Parents' level of education reached and career decision self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

ANOVA					
Career Decision Scale Totals					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3432.462	4	858.115	11.663	.000
Within Groups	27589.970	375	73.573		
Total	31022.432	379			

Source: (Field data, 2023)

From Table above the F value was found to be significant ($F(4, 375) = 11.663, p = .000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) that parents' level of education has no statistically significant difference on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya was rejected at .05 level of significance. It means that Parents' level of education has statistically significant difference on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. Thus Parents' level of education influences career decision self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

The study's conclusions are in agreement with those of Ajayi et al. (2022), who found a substantial correlation between learners' self-efficacy in making profession decisions and their parents' educational attainment. The learners who had parents with university educations scored significantly higher on the professional decision-making mean score than the learners whose parents had just secondary and primary educations.

Additionally, the study contradicts the findings of Njenga et al. (2018), who looked into how certain parental characteristics affect form four students' career development in the Isinya Sub-County. The study's findings showed a substantial negative correlation between the father's educational attainment and the student's profession choice.

Conclusion

The objective of the study was to establish whether parent's level of education has any influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study concluded that parent's level of education had a strong and positive correlation with student's career efficacy. It was also concluded that parent's level of education has a statistically significant influence on students' career decision self-efficacy in Kiambu county public secondary schools in Kenya.

Recommendations

The study recommends that students should be well guided on what to take or let go from their parents when it comes to parent's level of education influence in making the right career choices.

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