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**INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL FACTORS ON CHILDREN'S CAREER
DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
ISINYA SUB-COUNTY, KAJIADO**

Esther Njenga, Dr Zipporah Kaaria and Doreen Katiba



INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL FACTORS ON CHILDREN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ISINYA SUB-COUNTY, KAJIADO

^{1*}Esther Njenga

Department of Theology Religious Studies and Counselling, Kenya Methodist University

*Corresponding Author Email: essynjenga87@gmail.com

²Dr Zipporah Kaaria

Department of Theology Religious Studies and Counselling Kenya Methodist University,

³Doreen Katiba

Department of Theology Religious Studies and Counselling Kenya Methodist University,

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which some selected parental factors influence career development among form four students in Isinya Sub-County.

Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive survey. The population of the study was all the 572 form four public school students in Isinya Sub-County. The study focused on all the nine public secondary schools from Isinya Sub-County to carry out the survey while proportional random sampling technique was used to sample the students. The researcher used a sample of 114 students from the target population. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as the instruments for data collection. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyse the data. Pearson correlation was test relationships between variables and their significance

Results: Results indicate that the father's education level was significant and negatively correlated with the students career choice ($r = -.067$, $p = 0.0445$) at 0.05 significance level. Parent child relationship is of paramount importance as it reinforces positive affirmations on the students that help them excel in life. Thus, most parents / guardians of told the students that they are proud of them. Majority of the parents encouraged students to ask questions about different careers.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study recommends that parent child relationship should be embraced as it is of paramount importance in reinforcing positive affirmations on the students that help them excel in life. Parent child relationships influences students attitude positively and gives them confidence in their career choice.

Key words: *Parents' level of education, parent-child relationship, career development*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Kenya, the education process follows the 8-4-4 system of education where a student spends eight years in primary school, four years at secondary school and a minimum of four years at university. At the primary school level, a general curriculum is offered with no options. However, at the secondary school level, a student may choose to pursue either science based subjects or art based subjects. This is the first instance when a student is faced with the task of choosing a future career path. This choice is further affirmed through the performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) (Kibera, 2012).

Admission into various university degrees is dependent on the students' performance in the KCSE examinations. Those who perform exceptionally well proceed to pursue professional courses like engineering, medicine, law, architecture, finance, accounts etc. On the other hand, those who do not perform well are enrolled in non-professional general degree courses. From the foregoing, it may be concluded that a Kenyan student's future career is predetermined by the choice of subjects done at secondary school level and the level of achievement at KCSE (Ministry of Education Report, 2014).

Career development and selection is one of many important choices students will make in determining their future plans and this decision will impact them throughout their lives (Clutter, 2010).). In his case study, Clutter (2010) observed that several factors influenced career choices of high school students in Kansas and identifying these factors would give parents, educators, and industry an idea as to where students place most of their trust in the career selection process.

Parents shape the personality of their children by influencing the level of education or training that their children achieve; the knowledge they have about work and different occupations; the beliefs and attitudes they have to working; and the motivation they have to succeed. According to Roach (2010), the key parental influencers to a student's career choice include; the attitudes and behaviour the parents reward or punish, approve or disapprove of, the expectations parents have for their children's education and career, the examples they set for their children, the values they show to their family, friends and to society, the opportunities they offer their children to learn and develop themselves, and the kind of parent-child relationship they develop. According to Clutter (2010) the major parental variables which influence children's career development include; parental values and expectations, the parent-child relationship, gender socialization or gender stereotypes and the mothers influence.

1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The key purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which parental factors influence the career development of students at secondary school level in Isinya Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya The specific objectives were to; (i) To establish the influence of parents' levels of education in the career development of secondary school students in Isinya Sub-County, Kajiado County (ii) To determine the influence of parent-child relationship in the career development of secondary school students in Isinya Sub-County, Kajiado County

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Parents' Highest Education Level and Children's Career Development

In a study of the influences on adolescents' vocational development reported by Mortimer et al. (1992), the variable that had the most effect on educational plans and occupational aspirations was parental education. According to Mugenda (2010), parents with postsecondary education tend to pass along its importance to their children. Such parents are more likely to offer their children an opportunity of a better education by enrolling them in good schools and in disciplines of their own choice. Female students talented in mathematics related careers viewed their career choices as reflective of interests that stemmed from early family influence and educational opportunities (Mugenda, 2010).

Udoh and Sanni (2012) investigated the influence of parental background variables on the career choice of secondary school student in Uyo Local Government Area of Nigeria. They used a descriptive survey research methodology in their study. Their findings implied that parents' level of formal education exert a significant influence on the career choices of secondary school students (Udoh&Sanni, 2012). This finding is supported by that of Kitivo (1989) in an investigation to study of the relationship between Kenyan secondary school pupils' achievement motivation and the educational/occupational levels of their parents. Results from the study showed a significant relationship between parental level of education and achievement motivation of the students. The results further indicated that the father's occupation was insignificantly correlated with the pupils' need for achievement while that of the mothers was both positively and significantly correlated. This implies that parental level of education significantly influences their children achievement in school and consequently their future careers.

In a study to investigate the environmental factors that influence educational and occupational aspirations of standard eight pupils, Aswani (2012) noted that parental level of education had significant positive influence on the pupils' educational and occupational aspirations. The findings conform to that of Mugenda *et al.* (2010) whose study established that the mother's level of education contributes more to girls' aspirations for higher education than boys. From the results of a study to determine career selection self-efficacy among college students in the northeast region of the United States, Roach (2010) concluded that the parental highest level of education did not have an impact on the career selection self-efficacy of college students This implies that a high parental academic achievement did not necessarily influence the career aspirations of college students. This could be due to other factors including college career counsellors and peer influence. This could also be attributed to higher independence of college students as compared to secondary school students who still look at their parents as good role models.

From the above research studies conducted on the influence of parental education level on the career choices and development of students, there is none that has focused on the students in Isinya Sub-county. This therefore presents a research gap to conduct an empirical study on the influence of parental education level on the career development of form four students in Isinya Sub-county.

2.2 Parent-Child Relationship and Children's Career Development

Clutter (2010) observes that, while it is likely that parental values and expectations are conveyed within each household, the strength of their influence may be reliant upon the parent-child relationship. This includes parental attachment over time and daily interactions in the home. Both of these factors play a role in children's identity development and their career aspirations. Using a secure parenting style, proactive parents help children learn to be autonomous and successful in shaping their own lives. They also transmit values about work and teach important lessons in decision making, work habits, conflict resolution, and communication skills, which are the foundation of career success.

Parents' influence on career development stems from the continuous process of relationship with their children (Gathigia, 2011). Analysing career-related conversations between adolescents and their parents found a reconstruction of the relationship between the parent and the adolescent through some aspect of career exploration. Their research demonstrates how relationships and family functioning are embedded in career conversations and how the construction of career occurs in families. This finding is similar to that of Korir (2012) who noted that secure parent-child relationships are associated with progress in career decision making, affirmative career self-efficacy beliefs, and career selection in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu. Their study found that students who have secure attachments to parents engage in greater levels of environmental and self-exploratory activity enabling them to take the risks necessary in exploring new settings and roles. In a related study, Avugla (2011) reported that parenting behaviours seemed to be very important to middle school students. The study results showed that perceived parenting behaviours discriminate between adolescents with high and low career maturity and decision making self-efficacy scores.

Avugla (2011) noted that middle school students and their parents have significantly different views about family relationships and parent behaviours. Furthermore, the results revealed that students whose views about family relationships were very dissimilar from their parents' views had low levels of career decision-making self-efficacy. This implies that when the students and their parents agree on family issues, the students have more confidence in their ability to make good career decisions. Therefore, support, love, communication and honesty between young adolescents and their parents may be important for the career development of the adolescents.

2.3 Theoretical Review

The theories relevant to the study are the Social cognitive theory and Super's career development theory. The social cognitive theory will explain the theory behind origins and cognitive processes of human thought and action while the Super's career development theory will explain consumer behaviour.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive design approach. According to Orodho (2012), descriptive survey design is effective and easy to conduct and it also ensures ease in accessing information. The descriptive survey design allows the researcher to gather information summarize and interpret

data for purposes of clarification. The descriptive survey design is useful in collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or perceptions about issues under investigation (Orodho, 2012). The descriptive survey design was the most appropriate design for this study helped in collecting data on students' opinions and perceptions about how the selected parental factors influence the career development process. The target population for this study comprised of all the 572 form four candidates from public secondary schools in Isinya Sub-county. This will be taken to be the target population. Proportional random sampling technique was used to sample the respondents from the targeted population. A simple random sampling was employed to sample the teachers who participated in the interview. The sample of 3 teachers was obtained from a population of all the teachers that taught the form four students in each of the targeted schools. This section outlined the method used to collect primary data which was questionnaire and interview guide. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). A statistical model was used to examine the validity of the research and existing correlation of the independent and dependent variables.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section shows descriptive statistics of the study variables on influence of parental factors and children's career development. The study used parent's level of education and parent's children relationship as the independent variables and student's career development e as dependent variable.

4.1 Influence of parents' levels of education on career choice

The students were asked about the influence of their parent's level of education in their career choices. The responses were summarised as in table 1:

Table 1: Highest level of education

	Father		Mother		Guardian	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Primary	3	3.1	-	-	-	-
Secondary	5	5.2	2	2.4	1	1.01
College Diploma	31	32.2	34	35.4	4	4.16
University degree	39	40.6	47	48.9	8	8.3
Not applicable	18	18.75	13	13.5	83	86.4
Total	96		96		96	

Table 1 shows that majority of parents and guardians of students attending Isinya Kajiado county schools had on average, a university degree or college diploma. A high parental education level may imply the parents are likely to be engaged in professional and better paying jobs. This may imply parents in Isinya Kajiado County are likely to influence students' career choices by

enrolling them in better schools and supporting their career choices. This concurs with Mugenda (2010) that parents with postsecondary education tend to pass along its importance to their children. Such parents are more likely to offer their children an opportunity of a better education by enrolling them in good schools and in disciplines of their own choice.

The study also sought to find out the relationship between parents' highest level of education and the career choice of the students. This was achieved by carrying out a correlation between students career choice and parents educational level. Results of this correlation were as presented in table 2:

Table 2: Relationship between student career choice and parents highest educational level

		Parents highest level of education
Student career choice	Pearson Correlation	0.67
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**0.04
	N	96

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The parents education level is significant and positively correlated with the students career choice ($r = 0.67$, $p = 0.04$). Parental education level significantly influences student's career choice. The more educated the parents are the more the student are likely to get good career development.

This finding is consistent with that of Aswani (2012) who noted that parental level of education had significant influence on pupils' educational and occupational aspirations. Kitivo (1989) also found out that a high parental level of education significantly influenced their children's achievement in school and consequently their future careers. Hence, parents significantly influence the students' career choice. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept alternative which which means parent's education level significantly influences their children's' career choice. One of the respondents shared;

In our set up you mostly see parents who are more educated taking their children to better schools and ensuring that they get the best as opposed to parents with lower level of education. These parents with lower level of education mostly don't mind about the type of education their children get

4.2 Influence of parent-child relationship on career development

The students were asked about the significance of their parent-child relationship in relation to career choices. The responses were as summarised in table 3:

Table 3: Influence of parent-child relationship on career choices

Statements	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
My parents tells me he or she is proud of me	64.6	13.5	-	21.9	-
My parents encourage me to ask questions about different careers.	32.3	30.2	21.9	15.6	-
My parents have encouraged me to be involved in extracurricular activities	16.7	83.3	-	-	-
My parents express interest in various school issues that are important to me	69.8	8.3	21.9	-	-
My parents encourage me to make my own decisions	69.8	30.2	-	8.3	-
My parents encourage me to try new things	69.8	21.9	-	-	-
My parents encourage me to choose whatever career I want	45.8	54.2	-	-	-
My parents support me when I tell them that I am interested in a specific career	-	54.2	-	29.2	16.7
My parents help me feel better when I tell him or her I am worried or concerned about choosing a career	37.5	8.3	21.9	32.3	-
My parents tell me about the steps involved in making difficult decisions	29.2	30.2	-	40.6	-
My parents understand my thoughts, feelings, and opinions about various topics	-	69.8	-	30.2	-
My parents encourage me to talk to him or her about my career plans	30.2	29.2	-	40.6	-

From table 3, majority 64.6% of students agreed that their parents tell them that they are proud of them. Majority 62.5% of students agreed - strongly/agreed that parents encourage them to ask questions about different careers while 83.3% of students agreed that parents encourage them to be involved in extracurricular activities. This concurs with Clutter (2010) who observed that, while it is likely that parental values and expectations are conveyed within each household, the strength of their influence may be reliant upon the parent-child relationship.

Moreover, 69.8% of students strongly agreed that parents express interest in various school issues that are important to them while 69.8% of parents encourage the children to make their own decisions. Majority 54.2% students agreed that most of the parents gave students freedom to choose the careers they want while 54.2% supported students in any careers they wanted.

Most students 59.4% strongly/agreed agreed that parents supported them in making difficult decisions. Concerning thought and feelings most students 69.8% agreed that parents understood

their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about various topics. On the other hand, parents encourage students to talk to them about their career plans.

Table 4. shows the results of hypothesis test of Relationship between Parent child relationship and student career choice

Table 4: Relationship between Parent child relationship and student career choice

		Parent child relationship
Students career choice	Pearson Correlation	0.785
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**0.00
	N	96

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on the findings; parent student relationship and the student career choice are strongly positively correlated with a 0.00 level of significance. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that states there is a significant relationship between parent-child relationship and student's career choice. Therefore parent-child relationship is crucial in determining students' career choice.

Speaking as parent i would wish to say that the relationship between parents and children using affect their career choices. Sometimes parents wants their children to talk a career path that they know they would be comfortable with. Also parents understands their children strengths and weaknesses. So they would shape them to take careers that suits them.

This concurs with Korir (2012) who noted that secure parent-child relationships are associated with progress in career decision making, affirmative career self-efficacy beliefs, and career selection.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

This section gives the summary of the results on the influence of parental factors on the career choice of form four students. Parents of students attending Isinya Kajiado county schools have on average, a university degree or college diploma. Additionally, results indicate that the father's education level was significant and negatively correlated with the students career choice ($r = -.067$, $p = 0.0445$) at 0.05 significance level. Parent child relationship is of paramount importance as it reinforces positive affirmations on the students that help them excel in life. Thus, most parents / guardians of told the students that they are proud of them. Majority of the parents encouraged students to ask questions about different careers. Moreover, most parents expressed interest in various school issues that are important to students

5.2 Conclusion

It was established that parental factors influence the career choice of form four students.

The study realized that parental factors influenced the career choice of students in Isinya, Kajiado County. The guardian education had a positive correlation with student career choice. Therefore, the higher the father's education the less the impact it had on student's career choice hence the educated fathers should be concerned of their children education. Also it was found that parent child relationship was of paramount importance as it reinforces positive affirmations on the students that help them excel in life. Parent child relationships influences students attitude positively and gives them confidence in their career choice.

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