

Perception of students regarding the role of teachers and parents on career choice preparedness: A case of secondary schools in Meru District, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT: The study investigated the role of teachers and parents on students' career choice preparedness as perceived by secondary schools' students in Meru District, Tanzania, using survey research design. Through systematic and purposive sampling, the sample of 406 students from 10 schools filled the questionnaire. Validity was established through expert judgment and the questionnaire was subjected to pilot testing whereby Cronbach's Alpha of above 0.700 was established prior to data collection. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics, t-test and Pearson correlation. The study concluded that students are well prepared for career choice. Parents and teachers are perceived by students to have played their role very well for desired career choice. There is no significant difference in career choice preparedness by students characterized according to sex and location. Yet there is a significant positive relationship between parents and teachers' involvement in career choice guidance and students' career choice preparedness. Lastly, there is a positive relationship between teachers and parents' involvement in students' career choice preparedness. It was recommended that since students are focused with career choices of their interest, there is need for schools under investigation to provide a wide range of academic programs for students to choose appropriate subjects. Parents should continue to give career guidance, as the practice yields positive results toward students' career choice preparedness. Since students' future careers are positively influenced by teachers, teachers should guide students toward appropriate choice of career.

Keywords: Career choice, Meru, parents, preparedness, role, Tanzania, teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Career is the totality of work one does in his or her life time. It is of utmost importance to every individual as he or she prepares for the future. Career plays a very important and substantial role in the life of an individual not only because it determines the pattern of income but also because it affects the individual's personality and concept in life (Sinkombo, 2016). Career choice enables any individual to determine life goals and produce focus on finding life purpose which creates opportunity and job that gives a person from childhood to see the channel for his or her demand for future. Career choice has become a complex science with the advent of information technology, post

industrial revolution and job competition. It was a common practice in the old days to find feudalism converting it into a family affair where the son of a blacksmith was destined to become a blacksmith and a feudal was born a leader (Edwards and Quinter, 2011). In 21st century, however, the presence of job competition and technological advancement has challenged people to rethink the best ways on having their own career choices and obtain income in order to meet their needs.

Much has been researched about career choice from global to local perspective. In Europe, for instance, research conducted by Marinas et al. (2016) in Romania

shows that students' career choices are influenced by family by sixty percent (60%). A study conducted by Mishkin et al. (2016) in Spain found that gender has influence in student career choice. A study by Low et al. (2017) in Australia found that 38.4% of students who want to choose teaching career were influenced by the school teachers or family members who are teachers. This suggests that both teachers and parents have potential possibility to influence the learners on what career to take.

In Africa, career choices of students can be seen through different studies. For instance, the study of Olamide and Olawaiye (2013) in Nigeria found that more than 50% of respondents who are secondary school students admitted that parents have influence on their career choices. Also Zotorvie (2016) in Ghana found that parental profession has influence on students' career choices leading into similar career to that of own parents. A study by Mtemeri (2017) in Zimbabwe found that family has an influence on student career choice whereby mothers have a major influence on children's career choices when compared to the fathers. The study of Dodge and Welderufael (2014) in South Africa found that 68% of students admitted that teacher has influenced them on career choice through conversation. The study of Igere (2017) in Nigeria found that 4.39% of students admitted that they are influenced by their teachers toward their career choice. Therefore, teachers and parents have significant role to play toward career choice of the students.

In East African studies, career choices were observed through Edwards and Quinter (2011) in Kenya who found that availability of jobs has an influence on student career choices by 47%. Also a study by James and Denis (2015) in Uganda found that among selected students at Makerere University, 30.2% said they chose agriculture because of their passion for agriculture and personal interest, 15.5% said they chose the career because they had a farming background, 12.9% said they chose it because of parental and family influence, 20.7% chose their careers because of the job chances in agriculture, 10.3% chose because of career guidance and 10.3% said they chose it because of any other reasons including good grades and radio talks. The study of Koech et al. (2016) in Kenya found that High school teacher's advice, mentors' advice and role models have influence on career choice of students. Also the study of Peace (2017) in Uganda found that 11% of male students mentioned teachers' influence as a factor that contributed to students' selection of a career.

While career choice preparedness is an issue of global context, Tanzania is not exceptional. In Tanzania, a study conducted by Amani and Mkumbo (2018) in the University of Dar es salaam shows that preparation for a career begins at the secondary education level and proceeds up to tertiary education even though career choice as a process has to start early in childhood when one's aspirations and perceptions begin to be shaped. Several

factors, such as family background, where a person grows up and the nature of occupational information one receives may influence an individual's career choice. A study of Amani (2016) in Iringa, Tanzania, found that more than 60% of students admitted that such factors as personal interest, family influence, poor academic performance, secure loan, easy to employment, self-employment and job prestige have influence on career choice. Also, a study by Mabula (2012) in Dar es salaam found that 34.8% of students admitted that career counseling program from schools which is provided by their teachers had influence in their career choice.

Hence, the study sought to establish perception of students on the role of parents and teachers toward career choice preparedness of secondary school students in Arumeru District of Arusha, Tanzania, using the following four research questions:

1. What is the perception of secondary school students in Meru District on their preparedness toward career choice?
2. What is the perception of students on parental and teachers' role in preparing them toward career choice?
3. Is there significant difference in career choice preparedness by students categorized according to their sex and location?
4. Is there significant relationship between parental and teacher guidance and students' preparedness for career choice?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Significance of career choice preparedness

Career choice preparedness is the process of preparing students with essential skills they need to find, acquire, maintain, and grow for their entire life. Every individual will never choose something without any advantage or significance on his or her choice. With this regard, students always have different significant reasons on the career they choose.

Career choice preparedness is mostly significant because it creates in the mind of the learners a sense of informed decisions with regard to their future jobs. According to Ortega et al. (2014), the ultimate goal of career guidance is to contribute to the holistic development of young people, supporting their transition to the world of work and decision making as they strive for continuous improvement throughout their lives. It also helps youth to define their dreams better and to understand themselves in terms of their interests, strengths and chances for improvement. Furthermore, when students are prepared for career choice, they are capable of realistically analyzing their future work environments and the barriers and opportunities that exist. Therefore, general career guidance is very significant for informed decision of the future job.

Student career choice preparedness has significance in future prospects since it acts as driving force in the motivation of students to follow a certain direction. In fact, students are likely to get motivated by the future expectation of the profession rather than immediate salary in a certain occupation. Statistically, however, results of the analysis of the motivational factors indicate that there is a significant relationship between future prospects, prestige, better salary and career choice (Umar, 2014). Career choice preparedness has significance to students on the implication of their choice to see salary, job security, prestige, solving family problem, availability of job and future prospects in their choice demand. Generally, students are therefore motivated due to the availability of information they need to have in order to launch a successful occupational life, along with all of the accomplishments, pride, stability and progression.

Career choice preparedness helps learners to find and access career information and creates awareness to students toward the right and informed career. According to Baloch and Shah (2014), in their study about significance of awareness about selection and recruitment processes in students' career decision making, awareness about selection and recruitment processes has significance and considerable impact on students' right career choices. Abbasi and Sarwat (2014) in their study about factors inducing career choice found that there is significance of career choice preparedness because it helps students to make the right decisions with consideration of monetary and non-monetary benefits associated with potential professions.

According to Durosaro and Adebanye (2012), in their study about gender as a factor in the career choice readiness of senior secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State, Nigeria, development of the majority of adolescents has not reached a degree of readiness which permits commitment to a particular vocation or career. Particularly, adolescents in the senior secondary schools vary greatly in career choice readiness, in their tendency to anticipate choices which they will have to make in their exploration of alternatives and in their tendency to acquire relevant information. This is against the fact that students need to be aware of where they should go so that they may be able to commit themselves and have their mind ready for the work they anticipate in the future.

Nasir and Lin (2013) in their study about the relationship between self-concept and career awareness amongst students argued that student career choice preparedness should be done continuously because it helps students to concentrate towards brighter future. Career choice preparedness is therefore significant for students to have self-appreciation which brings motivation to learn and have the best goals for a bright future. With the right preparedness, students will feel like they are talented and will want to gain the satisfaction by meeting the career choices they have made. Furthermore, career choice

preparedness creates ability for learners to assess themselves positively to see if they meet qualifications for potential jobs and if not, determine to make further efforts to reach the intended goals.

Devi (2018) in the study about preparing for career among adolescents found that career choice is significant since it helps students to choose better jobs than the jobs of their parents. In this regard, adolescents have more job alternatives than their parents. According to Abubakar (2013), who conducted a study in career guidance in Nigeria, students should possess the career choice preparedness because it has significance in determining better career choices which in turn have both short and long run effects on their future. Low participation in career choice preparedness in schools brings about inadequate preparedness of students and incapability to match personality with occupational environment. Career choice preparedness is a primary mediator in activities aimed at promoting career development among adolescents through building of essential career exploration, planning strategies, coping behaviors and problem-solving skills (Koivisto et al., 2011). This implies that adolescents in secondary schools must be exposed to career choice knowledge which will lead to effective preparedness.

Freeman et al. (2017) in their study about career course impact on college students' career decision indicated that a career course can positively influence students' ability to navigate the career decision-making process, especially increasing their career choice certainty. In this study, students reported a higher level of satisfaction with their choice upon completion of the career course. Therefore, school systems need to incorporate career choice aspects in the curriculum. Norman-Burgdolf and Vanderford (2017) studied about preparing future professionals for enhancing workforce readiness and found that preparing students for future professionals courses helps students first to understand the realities of the job market and the variety of career paths available, second to realize what skills are required for transition into a career and third to identify resources that can be leveraged in order to obtain a job within a chosen career path, and fourth to gain an appreciation for what can be done within one's academic training to prepare for a career. So, career choice preparedness is vital to the students because it brings good self-relation on which career a student wants to fulfill on his or her satisfaction and interrogate with outside market either internationally or nationally. Therefore, career choice preparedness has important role to the students and parents because it helps them to have good information, they demand without misleading the information on their different career demand and provide an appropriate advice to the students.

The role of parents in career choice preparedness

Parents have a role in grooming their children toward

future career without necessarily forcing their desire but to bring good understanding to their children for making career choice of their preferences. Parents therefore have to contribute in preparing their children on ways of selecting career and providing information on different career and their importance in their future prospects. Parental aspirations are considered to be a possible predictor of completion of a college degree for low socio-economic status first generation students. Evidently, various forms of parental involvement yield benefits for children. Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) in their study about factors affecting students' career choice found that parents' professions influence students on the career choice and that education of parents has a significant influence on the student career choice.

The study of Palos and Drobot (2010) on the impact of family influence on the career choice of adolescents found that affection and warmth displayed by parents in the way they raise their children has an influence on children's future career choice. According to Fizer (2013), in the study on factors affecting career choices of college students enrolled in agriculture, the factor that most influenced students' career choice in agricultural areas was parents and guidance counselors, with 27% of students choosing that response. Therefore, parents have a significant role to play in helping student to address choice of their future career.

Literature has also indicated that for the students to make proper decisions on their future career, there is need for both parents to play various roles. According to Pang (2014), in the study on factors affecting students' career choice in New Zealand, students of both genders would prefer to seek guidance with regard to career choice to their mothers or stepmothers than their fathers or stepfathers for career advice. Specifically, the study established that 62.9% of respondents preferred referring to their mothers or stepmothers for career advice while only 23.2% preferred referring to their fathers or stepfathers. On the other hand, 12.6% reported seeking guidance to other caregiver apart from parents and 1.3% did not state their preferences. Therefore, since students had trust in their parents as guiders with regard to potential career choice, parents have a significant role in contributing toward career choice of their children. Thus, there is need for parents to get involved in assisting their children to choose their future careers.

Khan et al. (2012), in their study on the role of teachers in providing educational and career counseling to the secondary school students in Pakistan found that educated parents are a source of career counseling for their children. Specifically, those parents who are educated provide information regarding the potential careers that would be selected by their children. Such parents possessed updated information on current careers and they would easily discuss the career related issues with teachers in attempt to determine a successful career choice for their children.

Furthermore, in African countries, students demand guidance and counseling of the parents in order to reach their career goals. In the study conducted by Shumba and Naong (2012) about factors influencing students' career choice and aspirations in South Africa, the issue of career choice and aspirations of students can be a nightmare if students do not receive career counseling and support from their parents. Therefore, they suggested that parents are a significant factor in determining children's proper career choice. According to Ukaegbu (2014) in the study of parent's socio-demographic factors as determinants of career choice conflict among senior secondary school students in Abuja, parents' type of education significantly influence the mean response of students' career choice conflict between students.

Udoh and Sanni (2012) in the study of parental background variables and the career choice of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area, Nigeria, found that parents' attitudes towards occupations, parent's level of formal education and parents' occupations have significant influence toward students to have decision on career choice. This also suggests that parents have a significant role to play toward their children's potential choice of their future career. Therefore, since some parents may have negative attitude or lower level of education to make informed decisions regarding the future career of their children, there is need for other school stakeholders such as teachers to supplement the role of such parents with regard to career choice of their children. Wachari (2018) in the study on relationship between parental variables and career choices among students in mixed day secondary schools in Kenya found that 59.4% of the respondents agreed that their parents had confidence and believed in their abilities.

Palos and Drobot (2010) in the study of the impact of family influence on the career choice of adolescents found that the only identified statistically significant relationship was the negative correlation between the child's anxious ambivalent type of attachment and specific career-oriented support given by the father. Halim et al. (2017), in their study on the roles of parents in cultivating children's interest towards science learning and careers, found that parents viewed the field of science as one holding more opportunities compared to the arts. Thus, they encouraged their children to explore the field of science and motivated their children to choose science-related careers.

According to Oymak (2018), in the study of high school students' views on who influences their thinking about education and careers found that family members including parents were the group that most often had the most influence on their children's thinking about education after high school. Almost half of the students (49%) reported that parents influenced their thinking on education and careers. Sinkombo (2016) in the study of influence of parents on career choice of their children at the University of Zambia found that parents give children more working ideas about career choices using their

experiences, observations from what their friends, neighbors and family members have achieved out of such particular careers which based in support, encouragement, positive interaction and combination of support, encouragement and positive interaction.

In East Africa, parents are very important in career choices of their children. According to Peace (2017) in the study on determinants of students' career choices in secondary schools from southwestern Uganda, students' reasons of choice of learning disciplines is determined by economic background or parents' ability to pay fees, home background or parents/guardians having studied the same field, identified domestic chores resulting into poor performance influence as a factor that contributed to students' selection of discipline to study. Therefore, parental role can play big role toward career choice of children.

The role of teachers on student career choice preparedness

Like parents, teachers are very important for student career choice because they can play a pivotal role in career development of students. A study conducted by Faitar and Faitar (2013) on teachers' influence on students' science career choices in USA revealed that students connect their future success with the support from their teachers. Students acknowledged the importance of being supported in their efforts by their teachers in various aspects of learning. Nkechi et al. (2018) in their study on the role of guidance and counseling on effective teaching and learning in schools found that teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subject content and skills.

Teachers can therefore help students toward proper career choice through providing awareness concerning different career students can choose, depending on their areas of specialization. Khan et al. (2012) in their study on the role of teachers in providing educational and career counseling to the secondary school students in Gilgit-Baltistan revealed that although providing career guidance is not obligatory for the teachers but in most cases, teachers can act as career guides considering it as their moral responsibility. With this respect, teachers can give students awareness about the various career opportunities and guidelines according to their own ability and areas of specialization.

The study of Basham (2011) on the role of career education and guidance for students and its implications for students' career decision making found that classroom teachers had some influence, particularly around subject selection. Since subject selection is a key element in determining students' future career, the role of teachers in predicting future career of the learners should therefore not be underestimated. According to Georgiana (2015), school teacher meets the needs of student in three basic

domains: academic development, career development, and personal/social development. This implies that apart from teaching, the teachers need to carry the responsibility of guiding learners toward career choice preparedness. Therefore, teachers need to indulge on helping students to discern on the career they should pursue. On this manner, they need to prepare them toward whatever lies ahead of them. This is because career selection is one of many important choice's students will make in determining their future plans. This can be made possible only when teachers embrace their role as guides in addition to teaching (Cortez, 2019).

In Nigeria, a study conducted by Akinjide and Sehinde (2011) found that teachers' role in motivating and influencing student toward career choice preparedness can be realized in different way like the quality of teaching, social interaction with students, punctuality to school and classes, teachers' conduct and behavior in school. Therefore, in career choice preparedness, teachers have a role to collaborate with parents in making clear and valuable decisions for future career choice. Parents and teachers are mostly significant and they have a virtual role to play to help the students through effective career education because they spend most of the time with students at home and schools.

MATERIALS AND INSTRUMENTS

Research design

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), research design is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose. It is the plan, structure and strategy an investigation is done to obtain solutions to the problem under investigation. The study employed survey research design. According to Glasgow (2005), survey research design helps in gathering information about characteristics, actions and opinions of a large group of people. Furthermore, it is used to assess needs, evaluate demands and examine impact. With this design the study sought to determine the role of parents and teachers toward secondary school students' career choice preparedness and the extent to which students are prepared for career choice among secondary schools in Meru District. A total number of 406 sampled respondents participated by filling a questionnaire. Of these, 180 (48.3%) were females while 225 (55.4%) were males. One participant (0.2%) did not disclose his or her sex. The purpose of the study was explained in the introduction section of the questionnaire, and participants used about 20 minutes to fill the questionnaire.

This study employed quantitative approach since survey research design matches very well with quantitative data. According to Rahman (2017), quantitative research is a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the

collection and analysis of data. This research method attempts to investigate the answers to the questions starting with how many, how much, to what extent and is suitable for generalizing whole population or a sub-population because it involves the larger sample which is randomly selected. The questionnaire had 18 items to which students were to respond by ticking appropriate option ranging from 4 - strongly agree, 3 - agree, 2 - disagree and 1- strongly disagree. Scale of mean score interpretation was as follows: 3.50-4.00 = strongly agree; 2.50-3.49 = agree; 1.50-2.49 = disagree and; 1.50-2.50 = strongly disagree. Through Pearson Correlation Test, nature of existing correlations between the variables would be either positive or negative and was interpreted based on the following criteria: ≥ 0.70 = strong relationship, ≥ 0.50 = moderate relationship and ≤ 0.50 = weak relationship.

Population and sample procedures

Population is a set of subjects such as individuals, groups, institutions or countries. It exists if and only if its subjects can be distinguished from other subjects that do not belong to the very population while sample is a subset of the population and it can be purposively selected or random (Plümpera and Neumayer, 2012). In this study, sample was drawn from different secondary schools in Meru District which is one of Districts in Arusha Region of Tanzania. Meru District comprises of 65 secondary schools. To determine the sample, systematic and purposive sampling procedures were employed. According to Shama (2017) systematic sampling is a fair way of selecting a sample from given population whereby every member is given equal chances to be selected. In this sense, schools were listed alphabetically from the 1st to the 65th. With the interval of five, ten schools were randomly selected to constitute the desired sample of ten schools. From each school, one stream of form four students was randomly selected to fill the questionnaire. Form Four students were purposely selected because they had longer experience in schools than form one, two and three and therefore, they were more informed than their lower class counterparts.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

As indicated in Table 2, ten schools participated in the study. These include Goodwill, Makumira, Unambwe, Mariado, Muungano, TASS, Kikatiti, Ailanga, Maji ya Chai and Ngongongare. Table 3 further indicates respondents categorized according to sex and where they lived (day or boarding). As far as the sex is concerned, 180 (26.6%) were males while 225 (55.4%) were females. One respondent (0.2%) did not disclose his or her sex identity. Therefore, a total number of 406 students participated, majority of them being females.

Table 3 indicates that 140 (34.5%) students were day scholars while 245 (60.3%) were boarding students. Twenty-one (5.2%) students however did not disclose their day-boarding status. Therefore, majority of respondents were boarding students. Since majority of respondents spend most of their school time with teachers in schools, teachers have a significant role to play in guiding them toward career choice.

Validity and reliability

Validity means the instrument measures what is intended to be measured in the study (Taherdoost, 2016). It further refers to procedure used to check and test measures and what is supposed to measure (Mohajan, 2017). Validity expresses degree to which a measurement measures what it reasons to measure (Bolarinwa, 2015). This study used a questionnaire which was constructed by the researchers through information from the literature. Expert judgment ensured the content of the questionnaire measured what it was intended to measure. Particularly, a panel of 5 experts from the University of Arusha vet the questionnaire items against research questions and hypotheses and gave comments for improvement before the questionnaire was taken to the field for pilot testing. The comments were used to improve the quality of the questionnaire.

According to Heale and Twycross (2015), reliability on the other hand, brings up the *consistency* of a measure. It comprises of homogeneity (internal consistency), stability and Equivalence. Mohajan (2017) argues that reliability has a tendency to evaluate the stability of measures administered at different times to the same individuals and the equivalence of sets of items from the same. Reliability must be in terms of accuracy and precision of measurement procedure. To guarantee acceptable reliability, the questionnaire went through a pilot testing to determine appropriate Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The cut off point for acceptable reliability was 0.700. The pilot test involved one school in Meru District which is not part of the sampled schools. Results of the reliability test appear in Table 1 where the Cronbach's Alpha for the role of teachers was 0.777, for the role of parents was 0.842 and for students; preparedness was 0.841. Since Cronbach's alpha in all variables was above 0.700, it is concluded that the questionnaire was reliable for data collection.

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues were considered in this study. Respondents were given total freedom to participate or to withdraw from participation. Research permit was sought from government authorities, particularly, Meru District Council, before data was collected from the field. University of

Table 1. Reliability analysis results.

SN	Variable in Question	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
1.	The Role of Teachers	0.777	Reliable
2.	The Role of Parents	0.842	Reliable
3.	Students' Preparedness for Career Choice	0.841	Reliable

Table 2. Respondents by schools.

SN	Name of School	Respondents	Percent
1.	Goodwill Secondary School	43	10.6
2.	Makumira Secondary School	41	10.1
3.	Unambwe Secondary School	40	9.9
4.	Mariado Secondary School	28	6.9
5.	Muongano Secondary School	44	10.8
6.	TASS Secondary School	39	9.6
7.	Kikatiti Secondary School	40	9.9
8.	Ailanga Secondary School	41	10.1
9.	Maji ya Chai Secondary School	47	11.6
10.	Ngongongare Secondary School	43	10.6
	Total	406	100.0

Table 3. Respondents by demographic factors.

SN	Demographic factor	Frequency	Percent
1	Sex of respondents		
	Male	180	44.3
	Female	225	55.4
	Missing	1	0.2
	Total	406	100.0
2	Location (Day/Boarding)		
	Day Scholars	140	34.5
	Boarding Scholars	245	60.3
	Missing	21	5.2
	Total	406	100.0

Arusha thesis committee ensured that all ethical issues are attended before the researchers went to the field to collect data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of research questions

The first two research questions were analyzed through descriptive statistics to indicate students' perception on preparedness for career choice as well as students' perception on parental role in guiding students toward career choice. The third and fourth research question called for hypothesis testing and therefore were tested

through inferential statistical tool namely t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in order to determine differences in perception and the influence of parental and teachers' role on students' preparedness for career choice.

Descriptive analysis of data

Under descriptive data analysis, two research questions about perception of students toward their preparedness for career choice and the role of parents and teachers in preparing students toward career choice were used. The questionnaire had 18 items to which students were to respond by ticking appropriate option ranging from 4 -

Table 4. Students' preparedness toward career choice.

SN	Item in the Questionnaire	Min.	Max.	Mean	Interpretation
1.	I study hard to reach my future career dream	1.00	4.00	3.63	Strongly Agree
2.	By now, I know what is my future career/ job	1.00	4.00	3.61	Strongly Agree
3.	I know type of subjects to choose to reach my desired future career	1.00	4.00	3.59	Strongly Agree
4.	I made the right choice to select the subjects I am currently studying	1.00	4.00	3.52	Strongly Agree
5.	The subject I am taking are in harmony with the job I am desiring	1.00	4.00	3.50	Strongly Agree
6.	Just in case plan A fails, I know alternative career to choose	1.00	4.00	3.40	Agree

Table 5. Perceived parental role in career choice preparedness.

SN	Item in the Questionnaire	Min.	Max.	Mean	Interpretation
1.	My parents talk about how to reach my future career	1.00	4.00	3.58	Strongly Agree
2.	My future career aspiration is influenced by my parents	1.00	4.00	3.55	Strongly Agree
3.	At least one parent/ guardian guides and counsel regarding future career	1.00	4.00	3.41	Agree
4.	The home environment prepares me very well toward a certain career	1.00	4.00	3.29	Agree
5.	Parents link me with a person dealing with guidance and counseling	1.00	4.00	3.18	Agree
6.	Conversations with my parents focuses on the job I am aspiring	1.00	4.00	3.18	Agree

strongly agree, 3 - agree, 2 - disagree and 1 - strongly disagree. Scale of mean score interpretation was as follows: 3.50-4.00 = strongly agree; 2.50-3.49 = agree; 1.50-2.49 = disagree and; 1.50-2.50 = strongly disagree

Research question 1: *What is the perception of secondary school students in Meru District on their preparedness toward career choice?*

The first research question sought to test the level of students' preparedness toward career choice. Table 4 indicates perception of students. In all cases, the minimum score of respondents was 1 and maximum was 4. Significance of career choice prepared is brought to view by Nasir and Lin (2013) who in their study about the relationship between self-concept and career awareness argued that career choice preparedness should be done continuously because it helps students to concentrate towards brighter future. The mean score for the first five items was between 3.50 and 4.00 denoting strong agreement. This means that students strongly agreed that they study hard to reach their future career (3.63), they knew their future career (3.61), they knew types of subjects to choose to reach their desired future career (3.59) and the subjects they were taking are in harmony with their desirable careers (3.50). The findings are quite encouraging since career preparedness has both short- and long-term effects on future career. Appropriate participation in informed career choice preparedness brings about adequate readiness and capability to match personality with occupational environment (Abubakar, 2013).

Furthermore, the mean score for the last item ranged between 2.50 and 3.49, denoting agreement. Particularly,

they agreed that just in case plan A fails, they knew alternative career to choose (3.40). These results indicate that students are well prepared toward career choices. According to Ortega et al. (2014), the ultimate goal of career guidance is to contribute to the holistic development of young people, supporting their transition to the world of work and decision making as they strive for continuous improvement throughout their lives. These findings therefore suggest that students in schools under investigation are well prepared for informed decisions regarding their future careers.

Research question 2: *What is the perception of students on parental and teachers' role in preparing them toward career choice?*

Perception of students on parental role: In determining perception of students on the role of the parents, six items were listed in the questionnaire for students to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. Table 5 indicates perception of students on the role played by their parents in guiding them toward career choice.

The Table 5 indicates that respondents strongly agreed with the first two items that their parents talk about how to reach future career (3.58) and that their future career aspiration is actually influence by their parents (3.55). Furthermore, students agreed that at least one of their parents or guardian guides and counsels them regarding career choice (3.41), the home environment prepares them very well toward a certain career (3.29) and that conversations with parents focus on the aspired jobs (3.18). This implies that parents are perceived by their children to have played their role very well in preparing

Table 6. Perceived teacher role in career choice preparedness.

SN	Item in the Questionnaire	Min.	Max.	Mean	Interpretation
1.	My teachers talk about how to reach my future career	1.00	4.00	3.21	Agree
2.	At least one of my teachers guide and counsel regarding future career	1.00	4.00	3.10	Agree
3.	My future career aspiration is influenced by my teacher	1.00	4.00	3.05	Agree
4.	The school prepares me very well toward a certain career	1.00	4.00	3.02	Agree
5.	The school has a teacher who deals with guidance and counseling	1.00	4.00	2.99	Agree
6.	The teaching-learning process focuses on the aspired career	1.00	4.00	2.77	Agree

them for future or desired career choice. These findings are similar with that of Oymak (2018), in their study regarding high school students' views on who influences their thinking about education and careers. Their findings indicated that family members including parents were the group that most often influenced their children's thinking about education after high school.

Perception of students on teachers' role: Having determined the perceived role of parents in guiding students toward career choice preparedness, Table 6 indicates the perception of students on the role of their teachers. In all cases in the Table 6, the minimum score of responses was 1 and the maximum was 4. This suggests variation of responses from students, but the mean score ranged between 2.50 and 3.49, denoting agreement with the statements about teachers' role in career choice preparedness.

Particularly, students perceived that their teachers talk about how to reach future career (3.21), at least one of teachers guide and counsel regarding future career (3.10), their future career aspiration is influenced by teachers (3.05), the schools have a teacher who deals with career guidance and counseling (2.99) and that the teaching and learning process focuses on the aspired careers (2.77). Like parents, teachers were also perceived by students to have played their role in guiding students for career choice preparedness. No wonder study findings of Faitar and Faitar (2013) in USA revealed that students connect their future success with the support from their teachers. The findings are also similar to those of Basham (2011) on the role of career education and guidance for students and its implications for students' career decision making, that classroom teachers had some influence, particularly around subject selection. Since subject selection is a key element in determining students' future career, the role of teachers in predicting future career of the learners should therefore not be underestimated. Therefore, it is important to encourage teachers to do their part effectively in guiding students toward preparedness in career choice.

Inferential analysis of data

This section tested two null hypotheses which emanated from research questions. The two hypotheses were about

relationship and difference in perception of students categorized according to their sex and day-boarding status as follows:

Research question 3: *Is there significant difference in career choice preparedness by students categorized according to their sex and location?*

The third research question sought to establish mean score difference in career choice preparedness by students categorized according to their sex and day-boarding status of students. This research question called for testing of a hypothesis which states: *There is no significant difference in career choice preparedness by students categorized according to their sex and location.* By location we mean where students stay, whether day or boarding.

As observed in Table 7, the null hypothesis was tested through t-test. Although the mean score for male (3.487) and female students (3.587) and for day (3.50) and boarding (3.56) students seemed to appear in variation, the significance of 0.069 for sex and 0.250 for location were greater than the critical value of 0.05 which leads to failure to reject the null hypothesis and therefore maintaining that there is no significant difference in career choice preparedness by students categorized according to their sex and location. There is no difference in career choice preparedness whether students stay at home or at school after class hours. Therefore, sex difference and location do not influence difference in career choice preparedness among students under investigation.

Research question 4: *Is there significant relationship between parental and teacher guidance and students' preparedness for career choice?*

This research question sought to establish the relationship between the dependent variable (career choice preparedness) and two independent variables (parental role and teachers' role). The question called for testing of a null hypothesis which states: *there is no significant relationship between parental and teacher guidance and students' preparedness for career choice.* The hypothesis was analyzed through Pearson correlation. Nature of existing correlations between the variables would be either positive or negative and was interpreted based on the

Table 7. Difference in preparedness by sex and location.

Parameters	Mean Score by Demographics	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance	T-Test for Equality of Means		Interpretation
Sex					
Male	3.487	0.037	Eq. Var. Assumed	0.063	No significant difference
Female	3.587		Eq. Var. not Assumed	0.069	
Day-Boarding					
Day	3.50	0.748	Eq. Var. Assumed	0.250	No significant difference
Boarding	3.56		Eq. Var. not Assumed	0.249	

Table 8. Correlates of career choice preparedness.

		Teacher role	Parental role	Preparedness
Teacher Role	Pearson Correlation	1	0.337**	0.393**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000
	N	406	406	405
Parental Role	Pearson Correlation	0.337**	1	0.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000
	N	406	406	405
Preparedness	Pearson Correlation	0.393**	0.520**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	405	405	405

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

following criteria: ≥ 0.70 = strong relationship, ≥ 0.50 = moderate relationship and ≤ 0.50 = weak relationship.

As observed in Table 8, there are three existing interrelationships among variables under investigation. Firstly, there is a significant positive yet weak relationship between the role of teachers and students' career preparedness ($r = 0.393$, $\text{sig.} = 0.000$). Since the intensity of this relationship is positive, it can be inferred that the role of teachers in career choice slightly influences students' preparedness for career choice in a positive way. The more the teachers play their role, the more the students are prepared for career choice. This finding relates to that of Faitar and Faitar (2013) on teachers' influence on students' science career choices in USA which revealed that students connect their future success with the support from their teachers. Particularly, students acknowledged the importance of being supported in their efforts by their teachers in various aspects of learning including career choice preparedness. The finding further is similar to that of Basham (2011) who investigated on the influence of teachers' career education and guidance on students' preparedness for career choice and found that classroom teachers had some influence, particularly around subject selection which indirectly determines the future career of the students who experience such guidance from the teacher.

Secondly, there is a significant positive yet moderate relationship between parental role and students' preparedness for career choice ($r = 0.520$, $\text{sig.} = 0.000$). Since the intensity of this relationship is moderate, it can

be concluded that parental role moderately influences students' preparedness for career choice. This finding relates with that of Wachari (2018) who investigated about relationship between parental variables and career choices among students in mixed day secondary schools of Kenya and found that 59.4% of the respondents indicated a relationship between parental involvement and students' career choice. Similarly, the study of Sinkombo (2016) on the influence of parents on career choice of their children at the University of Zambia found that parents give children more working ideas about career choices using their experiences, observations from their friends, neighbors and family members which helped in leading students toward informed decisions about their future career. Therefore, parental involvement is a key determinant for students' career choice preparedness.

Lastly, Table 8 indicates a significant and positive relationship between the role of teachers and the role of parents ($r = 0.337$, $\text{sig.} = 0.000$). Since the intensity of this relationship is positive, it can be concluded that the role of teachers and the role of parents toward students' preparedness for career choice correlate. This means that when parents do their career guidance effectively at home, it will simplify the role of teachers in career guidance and preparation of students toward informed decisions of their future career.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings of this study, the researchers came up

with several conclusions and recommendations with regard to parental and teachers' role toward students' preparedness for career choice.

Conclusions of the study

The following conclusions emanated from findings of the study regarding teachers and parents' role toward students' career choice preparedness:

1. Students in schools under investigation are well prepared for career choice. This is indicated by the fact that they knew types of subjects to choose to reach desired future career, they studied very hard to reach the future career of their choice and the subjects they were taking are in harmony with desirable future careers.
2. Parents are perceived by their children to have played their role very well in preparing them for desired career choice. This is indicated by the fact that the parents talk with their children about how to reach future career, at least one of their parents guides and counsels them very well about career choice and the home environment prepares them very well toward a certain career.
3. Students' future career aspirations are positively influenced by teachers. This because teachers spend most of their time in guiding students toward appropriate choice of future career. This is made possible by the fact that some schools have a teacher who deals with career guidance and counseling.
4. There is no difference in career choice preparedness by students characterized according to sex and location (day or boarding). Therefore, sex difference and location do not bring any difference in career choice preparedness.
5. There is a significant positive relationship between parents and teachers' involvement in career choice guidance and students' career choice preparedness. The more the teachers and parents provide career guidance, the more the students' preparedness for career choice.
6. There is a significant positive relationship between teachers and parents' involvement in students' career choice preparedness. This means that when parents do their career guidance effectively at home, it will simplify the role of teachers in career guidance and preparation of students toward informed decisions of their future career.

Recommendations of the study

The following recommendations emanated from conclusions of the study regarding teachers and parents' role toward students' career choice preparedness:

1. Since it is perceived that students are focused with

career choices of their interest, there is need for schools under investigation to provide a wide range of academic programs that will stimulate the students to choose subjects that prepare them to reach their desired careers.

2. Parents should continue to give career guidance at home, as the practice yields positive results toward students' career choice preparedness. This can be accomplished through talking with their children about how to reach future career and giving them material and moral support that will enable them to reach their goals.
3. Since students' future career aspirations are positively influenced by teachers, it is recommended that teachers should spend most of their time in guiding students toward appropriate choice of future career. Additionally, each school should plan to have a teacher who specialized in guidance and counseling for the same course.
4. Parents should increase the rate of preparing their children for career choice as it has been proven that the exercise influences teachers' involvement to support career choice preparedness of students.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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