Parental Influence on Career Choices of Navrongo Senior High School Students in the Kassena-Nankana Municipality

Alfred Alunga Anovunga

Department of Counselling Psychology, University of Education, Winneba, Post Office Box 25, Winneba, Ghana

Abstract

This study examined parental influence on the career choices of Navrongo Senior High School students in the Kassena-Nankana Municipality. The study sought to assess parental factors that contribute to the career choice of Navrongo Senior High School students in the Kasena Nankana Municipality, examine the effects of parental influence on the career choice of their children in Navrongo Senior High School, and find out the strategies that Navrongo Senior High School can adopt to assist students make informed career choice. Participants included in this study were 150 senior high school students. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the sample size. Both open-ended and closed Likert Scale questionnaires were used for data collection. Percentages, bar charts, pie charts, and standard deviations were used to present the results. The result indicated that parents, in one way or the other, do influence their children in choosing careers. From the study, the respondents believed that when parents choose careers for their children, they do not enjoy their lifelong vocation. It was therefore recommended that the school solicit parents' views when organizing career guidance for students, and parents should also be made aware of the negative consequences of their actions when they impose their opinions on their children when planning for their careers. Again, career programs should be introduced in senior high schools to assist students in making appropriate career choices.

Keywords: career choice, parental influence, senior high school students

Introduction

A career is characterized as a person's progression-oriented sequence and range of vocations pursued during a substantial portion of their life. A "career" extensively encompasses labor, learning, leisure pursuits, and life roles. It encompasses everything of your life's labor, paid and unpaid, as well as your education and responsibilities (Adegboyega, 2017; Hammell, 2004). The concept of career has been recognized by Arthur et al. (1989) as the series of a person's work experiences that have unfolded over time. The major viewpoint highlighted in this definition is that one's career is more related to time rather than the view of work arrangements. This would view one's career success as based on upward mobility within a single organization rather than mobility possibilities between organizations, industries, or national contexts (Arthur et al., 2005). A career is a person's lifelong endeavor, life work, or level of achievement in their chosen field of endeavor. A career is the culmination of all the labor one accomplishes in one lifetime. As it is focused on the individual, it is extremely important to each person as they get ready for the future. According to Stebleton (2017), a career is the culmination of all a person's experiences while learning about and getting ready to work as a part of his or her way of life.

Career plays a very fundamental and significant role in the individual's life, not only because it determines the pattern of income but because it also affects the individual's personality. Choosing a career is a very important decision because it impacts an individual's future. Families, especially parents, play a significant role in their children's occupational aspirations and career goal development. Without parental approval or support, students and young adults, for that matter, are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities (Taylor et al., 2004). Navin (2009) opines that exploring career options before committing to a career choice increases future career success and life satisfaction. In this vein, variables that influence the career exploration of adolescents should be identified. Borchert (2012) observed that several factors influenced the career choices of high school students. Identifying these factors would give parents, educators, and industry an idea of where students place most of their trust in the career selection process. These factors include the students' immediate environment, opportunities available to the student, and finally, his/her personality.

According to Wright et al. (2014), perceived support from the most powerful individuals will probably directly impact the decision-making process regarding a career than other contextual elements. This influence is more prominent during adolescence when young individuals form a sense of self and clarify their vocational identity (Rodríguez et al., 2015). According to research, a person's family can have an impact on their professional growth in two interrelated ways: structurally and through process-oriented elements (Keller & Whiston, 2008; Lindstrom et al., 2007). The family socioeconomic position is one example of a generally constant family trait represented by family structural features. Family process-oriented features are specific family dynamic processes that impact the development of career aspirations, career exploration, and adolescents' perceived self-efficacy (Metheny & McWhirter, 2013; Rogers & Creed, 2011). Examples of these processes include parental support and family-member interactions.

Parental influence on their children's career choices is consistently important, even across gender and racial lines. Although schools, peers, and the students' community impact young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years' personality and career choices, parental influence on their children has been key to shaping their career choices (Ferry, 2006). A research study carried out by Creamer and Laughlin (2005) found that parents' influence on children's career aspirations was high among teachers, faculty, and career counselors.

Navin (2009) found out that parental attachment is positively correlated with career exploration and parental attachment, which is the extent to which one feels emotionally close to and supported by one's parents, was also positively related to career exploration. Similarly, some studies posit that parental attachment is positively correlated with career maturity, which is defined as how prepared an adolescent is to make career decisions (Lee & Hughey, 2001; Navin, 2009). According to Navin (2009), parental attachment is important for self-efficacy. Effective career exploration is necessary to facilitate feelings of career self-efficacy. Parental influence on the career choices of students in the Navrongo Senior High School appears to be a common practice, as most students take to their parents' careers upon graduation.

Statement of the Problem

Parents' influence on adolescents' career choices has been a subject of great interest to both vocational and career educators and researchers. Career choice is very hard to decide, especially as an individual's life will depend on it. However, every human being needs to do one job or the other to help contribute his/her value to the country's development. The career choice process of young adults can be compared to rocks in a polisher. All kinds of people grind away at them. But parents are the big rocks in the tumbler. Parents' educational background may influence student views on whether or not to continue their education and the choice of career path (Natalie, 2016). Parents serve as major influences in the lives of their children. Keller and Whiston (2008) opine that parental factors often influence career development and decision-making, which career counselors and parents have been interested in understanding for several decades. However, understanding the precise ways family impacts career development has proven difficult because the constructs of family and career development are broad and because the association between these constructs varies with age (Keller, 2004).

Navrongo Senior High School students are from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds with parents in various careers. Students from an educated background are often observed taking after their parents' careers, while those from families without formal education choose what pleases them based on their little knowledge of that career and the advice from teachers, friends, and counselors. As a result of this, the majority of students are observed taking after the careers of their parents upon completing tertiary education. While some become successful in their careers, many of them become dissatisfied with the careers and occupations they took after their parents. Amidst this, one wonders about the kind of influence parents have on their children, such that the individual interests of these children are often overshadowed. In light of this, the researcher sought to explore students' views on the kind of influence or advice they receive from their parents in an attempt to choose their life-long careers.

Theoretical Review

This research paper is underpinned by the Socio-Cultural Theory of Career Development and Choice propounded by Blau et al. (1956). It states a strong inter-relationship of sociological and cultural factors in occupational choice and development. Thus, individual characteristics responsible for choice are biologically determined but socially conditioned through family influences, values, attitudes, place of birth, social positions and relations, environmental and educational experiences, and sex-role characteristics. Blau et al. (1956) further espoused that career choices are greatly influenced by the reality of the occupational opportunity structure that is part of the macro-system, of which

social and cultural systems are indispensable parts. Inferring from this theory, it can be said that the impact of the structure of occupational opportunity on career development and choice hinges on the interaction between an individual and the socio-cultural context that constitutes the individual's environment and further highlights the need to conform to occupational demands of the context. Besides, the theory suggests that socio-cultural practices are likely to influence individuals' career development, aspirations, and choices, as they are likely to make career choices that they consider most appropriate and will enable them to meet certain societal obligations. Eventually, the individual reaches a preference hierarchy from which choices are made. It is evident that genetic factors are independent of one's culture and that the interactions between such characteristics and social factors result in a certain career choice (Buku, 2016). Osipow (1968) avers that credence is given to the values within the home, the adult models such as parents who act as strong influential agents readily available to the individual and with whom the individual may identify. All the aforementioned influences contribute to the individual's production and career pattern. This is in line with the current study, which sought to find out the parental influence on the career choices of Navrongo Senior High School students in the Kassena-Nankana Municipality. Caplow (1954) also noted two sociological factors, which are almost dichotomous but are the fundamental determinants of a person's occupation and career development. Thus, the hereditary factor, in which the father's work history and lifestyle serve as a model to the son, imposes strict limitations on the work alternatives for the son. The other extremity lies within the society where occupational choice is exclusively the result of the individual's personal characteristics.

Objectives

The study sought to:
1. Assess parental factors that contribute to the career choice of Navrongo Senior High School students in the Kasena Nankana Municipality.
2. Examine the effects of parental influence on their children's career choice in Navrongo Senior High School.
3. Find out the strategies that Navrongo Senior High School can adopt to assist students in making informed career choices.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:
1. What parental factors contribute to the career choice of Navrongo Senior High School students in the Kasena Nankana Municipality?
2. What are the effects of parental influence on students' career choices in Navrongo Senior High School?
3. What strategies can Navrongo Senior High School adopt to assist students in making informed career choices?

Methodology

Design

The study used a descriptive survey design. Orodho (2003) indicates that a descriptive survey collects information by administering questionnaires to a sample. Descriptive research is a research method that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon under study. A descriptive survey focuses more on the "what" of the research subject than the "why" of the research subject. Orodho (2003) opines that descriptive survey design can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits, or various education or social issues. Further, Kombo and Tromp (2006) argue that the major purpose of descriptive research is to describe the state of affairs as it exists. Since the study sought to describe in detail the influence of parents on their children's career choices in Navrongo Senior High School, a descriptive survey design was considered appropriate.

Survey research enables data collection from a large number of people (and can typically do so efficiently), allows for the generalizability of results to large populations, and is versatile in

terms of what can be investigated and how (i.e., the various modes of data collection).

Population

Kasonde (2013, p. 35) points out that "a population is a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement." Thus, it is the unit for which information is required and studied. The study's target population was approximately 928 students, comprised of 460 males and 468 females.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

A sample size of 150 students was selected for the study. The sample size was selected through a stratified sampling strategy, which is a way of selecting a sample so that the identified sub-groups in the population are represented in the sample in the same proportion that they exist in the population. The students were put into three strata. Thus, form one student numbered 320, form two students numbered 310, and form three students numbered 298. A simple random sampling procedure was then used to randomly select 52 students from form one, 50 from form two, and 48 from form three. Simple random sampling is where the unit of the universe is chosen in such a way that each has an equal chance of being selected and that each choice is independent of any other choice. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the student population in each class and the sample selected.

Table 1
Population and Sampling of Respondents

Form	Class size	Sample
Form 1	320	52
Form 2	310	50
Form 3	298	48
Total	928	150

Note. Data was collected by the author in 2023.

Instrument

The researcher used a questionnaire to gather data for the study. The questionnaire was structured into sections A and B. Section A was used to identify the demographics of the respondents, while section B was used to collect data on parental factors of career decisions among Navrongo Senior High School students. The questionnaire was selected as the data collection instrument because it is known for providing valid and reliable data. The questionnaire was structured in a four-point Likert Scale based on the research questions with the following anchors: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, and 4 = *strongly agree*. To ensure the instrument's reliability, the questionnaire was piloted among 20 Notre Dame Senior High School students in the Navrongo Municipality who were not part of the study population. Cronbach's alpha value was calculated for dimensions of parental

factors in career choice. An Alpha coefficient value of .8 was realized, indicating that the items used were reliable for data collection. According to Bryman and Cramer (1999), any calculated Cronbach's alpha at .8 is acceptable and reliable.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2
Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	*f*	%
12 – 15	22	15
16 – 19	112	75
20 – 25	16	10
Total	150	100

Note. Data was collected by the author in 2023.

From Table 2, a majority of 112 respondents, representing 75%, were within the age group of 16-19 years, 22 respondents, representing 15%, were between the ages of 12-15 years, while a minority of 16 respondents representing 10% were within the ages of 20-25 years. This implies that most Navrongo Senior High School students were between the age group of 16-19 years.

Figure 1 shows that male respondents outnumbered their female counterparts. Seventy-eight respondents, representing 52%, were males, while 72 respondents representing 48% were female students.

Figure 1
Gender Distribution of Respondents
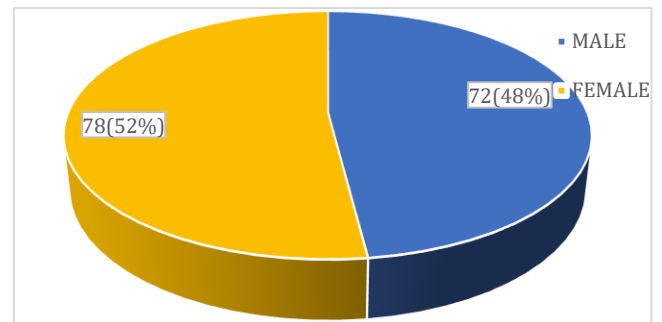
Note. Data was collected by the author in 2023.

Research question 1: What parental factors contribute to the career choice of Navrongo Senior High School students in the Kasena Nankana Municipality? This research question sought to find out the influence of parents on students' career choices. Percentages, Mean, and Standard Deviations were used to present the analysis in a Likert scale form, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Influence of Parents on Students' Career Choices

Statements	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*
Students choose their careers based on the interests of their parents	6(4%)	13(9%)	48(32%)	83(54%)	14.7	2.9
Parents choose careers for their wards because they have to set expectations for their ward	11(7%)	37(25%)	64(43%)	38(25%)	16.7	3.5
Parents choose careers for their wards because they want to see their wards happy	12(8%)	47(31%)	48(32%)	43(29%)	21.2	3.4
Parents choose careers for their wards because they know their capabilities	31(21%)	50(33%)	39(26%)	30(20%)	17.2	3.5
Parents choose careers for their wards because of prestige	10(6%)	26(17%)	49(33%)	66(44%)	19.7	3.2
Parents choose careers for their wards because they believe that the children are not mature enough	9(6%)	37(25%)	52(35%)	52(35%)	20.2	3.4
Parents have more knowledge about the economy of their country and therefore choose careers for their wards that suit the economy	25(17%)	54(36%)	46(30%)	25(17%)	18.7	3.6
Parents choose careers for their wards because they have experience	37(25%)	60(40%)	38(25%)	15(10%)	22.0	3.6

Note. Data was collected by the author in 2023.
SA = strong agree; A = agree; D = disagree; SD = strong disagree. Range: SD = 1.00 – 1.75   D = 1.76 – 2.50   A = 2.51 – 3.25   SA = 3.26 – 4.00

From Table 3, and based on the range of mean and standard deviation, it could be realized that all the respondents agreed to all the statements on the table as parents having some influence on their career choices. The first statement, "students choose their careers based on the interest of their parents," which had the lowest mean and standard deviation score of $M = 14.7$; $SD = 2.9$, fell within the range of 'Agree' with the highest mean and standard deviation score of $M = 22.0$; $SD = 3.6$ on the statement, "Parents choose the career for their wards because they have experience" falling within the range of 'Agree.'

Generally, it could be realized from Table 3 that all respondents agreed to all the items, thereby suggesting that parents of students in the Navrongo Senior High School influence their career choices. These findings agree with Ellie and Williams (2009), who found that parents have more say in the choice of future careers of their children because it is parents who choose the type of schools their

children should attend and even pay their school fees. According to Wright et al. (2014), perceived support from the most powerful individuals will probably directly impact the decision-making process regarding a career than other contextual elements. According to Gander and Gardner (1998), children frequently interacted with their parents as they approached adolescence. This supports the claim that parents influenced their children by indicating that they were expected to take over the family business or follow the parents' profession, resulting in career aspirations and choices later in life. Thus, parents had various intentions regarding their children's career development and choices.

Research question 2: How does parental influence affect students' career choices in Navrongo Senior High School? This research question sought to determine the effects of parental influence on students' career choices. The analysis is in a bar chart, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Effects of Parental Influence on their Children's Career Choices
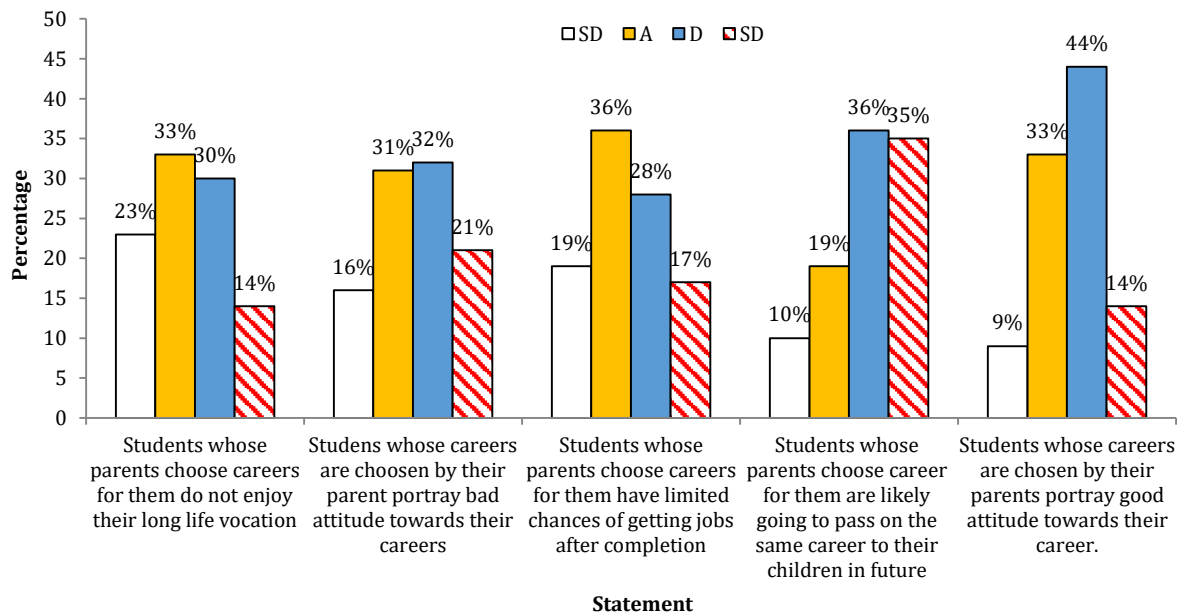
From Figure 2, the study revealed that 33% of the respondents agreed with the statement that students whose parents choose careers for them do not enjoy their long life vocation, 30% of the respondents disagreed with this statement, 23% strongly agreed with this statement while 14% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement. This implies that the students believed that when parents choose careers for them, they do not enjoy their lifelong vocation. This revelation is confirmed by Herwood (2008), who states that if their parents' aspirations overshadow adolescent's aspirations, it may result in a defined career choice for the child. In this situation, children may not enjoy their careers because they were not chosen based on their aspirations or interests but based on the aspirations and interests of their parents.

The study also revealed that the majority (32%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that students whose careers are chosen by their parents portray bad attitudes towards their careers; 31% of the respondents agreed with this statement, 21% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement whiles a minority of 16% of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. The analysis revealed that respondents were of the view that children do not show bad attitudes towards their careers because their parents choose them. Borchert (2012) observed that several factors influenced the career choices of high school students. Identifying these factors would give parents, educators, and industry an idea of where students place most of their trust in the career selection process. According to Clutter and McMillan

(2008), parents play a huge role in children's choices when they start looking for a career. They influence the level of education or training that their children achieve, their knowledge about work and different occupations, their beliefs and attitudes about work, and their motivation to succeed. Parents' attitude matters most in such a way that every parent has to stay positive when advising children about which career to select. Bringing up a positive gesture about your workplace despite the main changes and challenges involved may help children develop a positive attitude and learn about various industries. However, parents should give children room for their views and opinions on such choices as they keep encouraging them to gather information on various available career choices and later make informed choices.

The study further revealed that a majority of 36% of the respondents agreed with the statement that students whose parents choose careers for them have limited chances of getting jobs after completion, 28% of the respondents disagreed with this statement, 19% of the respondents strongly agreeing to this statement whiles a minority of 17% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement. In this case, respondents were of the view that when parents choose careers for their children, they are unlikely to get jobs after completing these courses. Herwood (2008) reports that external influences that help to shape an individual's career choice are good. However, suppose the individual child does not choose his career based on personal characteristics and allows external or parental influences. In that case, he may not have a good job to match his characteristics. It

shows that adolescents' aspirations influenced by their parents' aspirations or expectations may result in a career choice that does not match the child's characteristics. Hence, the child may live to change jobs or become jobless.

The study also revealed that 36% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that students whose parents choose careers for them are likely to pass on the same career to their children in the future, 35% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement, 19% of the respondents agreed with this statement whiles a minority of 10% of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. This indicates that the respondents did not believe that students whose careers are chosen by their parents will pass those same careers to their children in the future. Fazarro (2006) conducted a study in Australia on how parents influenced the career development and choices of their children and it was revealed that about 90% of these children passed on their career aspirations to their children when they grew up. Thus, findings showed that through parental guidance, children have access to career opportunities that make them gather the necessary information to make informed career decisions, which may be passed on to the next generation. Parents' educational background may influence student views on whether or not to continue their education and the choice of career path (Natalie, 2016).

Lastly, the study revealed that the majority (44%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that students whose careers are chosen by their parents portray good attitude towards their careers; 33% of the respondents agreed with this statement, 14% strongly disagreed with this statement while 9% strongly agreed with this statement. This revelation shows that the respondents did not believe that students whose careers have been

chosen by their parents show a good attitude towards their careers. Jocelyn (2000) asserts that parents offered career guidance to their children as they gave them the freedom to make choices and not to impose their ideas. Thus, the parents' goals here were to help their children find their way based on their interests and skills and not to follow the ideas of parents and interests, which could prove counter-productive. By discussing interests, dreams, and goals, parents got to know their children better, which helped them guide them properly.

Generally, it could be realized that the study's findings revealed that when parents choose careers for their children, they do not enjoy their long life vocation simply because their choices were not based on their aspirations or interests but rather on the aspirations and interests of their parents. The study also reported that students whose parents choose careers for them have limited chances of getting jobs after graduation. However, the study found that students whose careers are chosen by their parents have a positive attitude toward their careers because the parents' goals, in this case, were to help their children find their way based on their interests and skills rather than to follow ideas and interests of parents, which could be counter-productive.

Research question 3: What strategies should Navrongo Senior High School adopt to assist students in making informed career choices?

This research question examined the strategies that can be used to help students make informed career choices in Navrongo Senior High School. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they *strongly agree* (SA), *agree* (A), *disagree* (D), or *strongly disagree* (SD) with the statements. Mean and standard deviation were used for the analysis.

Table 4
Strategies to Help Students Make Informed Career Choices in Navrongo Senior High School

Strategies	M	SD
There is a need for guidance and counseling services in school	1.33	.730
The headmaster should inform students about guidance and counseling service	1.51	.683
The guidance and counseling coordinator should inform students about the guidance and counseling services in the school	1.49	.712
Guidance and counseling services should be for all students in the school	1.38	.748
Guidance and counseling on career choices should be given to students	1.45	.765
Students gain more knowledge on career choices through counseling services	1.42	.780
Students choose their careers based on their own interest	1.55	1.142
Guidance and counseling coordinator should pay attention to career counseling	1.48	.621
Students who are given career counseling will choose careers that they will be happy with	1.47	.800
Career counseling should be a teamwork	1.67	.737
Average score	1.48	.78

Note. Data was collected by the author in 2023.

From Table 4, it is observed that the second strategy, which is "the headmaster should inform students about guidance and counseling services," had the highest mean score of 1.51, followed by the third strategy, which is "the guidance and counseling coordinator should inform students about the guidance and counseling services in the school" *M* = 1.49; *SD* = .712. This implies that making guidance and counseling services available to students in school is the most effective strategy to help students make informed career choices.

Moreover, the seventh statement, "Students choose their career based on their interest," *M* = 1.55; *SD* = 1.142, and the eighth item which is, "Guidance and counseling coordinator should pay attention to career counseling" *M* = 1.48; *SD* = .621 all emphases on the significant role of guidance and counseling Coordinators in providing appropriate career guidance to students. This role must be carried out collaboratively with all concerned stakeholders, as reflected in the tenth statement of the respondents, "Career counseling should be a teamwork" *M* = 1.67; *SD* = .737.

Borchert (2012) observed that several factors influenced the career choices of high school students. Identifying these factors would give parents, educators, and industry an idea of where students place most of their trust in the career selection process. These factors include the students' immediate environment, opportunities available to the student, and finally, his/her personality. Family process-oriented features also influence career

aspirations. These features are specific family dynamic processes that impact the development of career aspirations, career exploration, and adolescents' perceived self-efficacy (Metheny & McWhirter, 2013; Rogers & Creed, 2011). Examples of these processes include parental support and family-member interactions. According to Kerka (2000), career choice is influenced by multiple factors, including personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support, and available resources such as information and financial which the school authority must help students realize through guidance and counseling services. He further states that each undertaking the career development process is influenced by several guidance and counseling programs in the school and other factors, including the context in which they live, their aptitudes, social contacts, and educational attainment.

Conclusion

It was revealed that most respondents agreed with parental influence on choosing careers for their wards. It can, therefore be concluded that parental influence in their children's career choice cannot be left out entirely. Parents, in one way or another, influence their children in choosing a career. The study showed that respondents believed that when parents choose careers for their children, they do not enjoy their lifelong vocation. The

provision of guidance and counseling in senior high schools is very important. It will, among other things, help students make appropriate career choices because the Counsellor will consider their interests, attitudes, values, goals, and educational achievements. The mean value of the standard deviation was close to the mean of the data set, indicating a small amount of variation in the group being studied regarding their views on the strategies for helping students make informed career choices.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made:
1. The school should solicit parents' views when organizing career guidance for students.
2. Parents should be made aware of the negative consequences of their actions when they impose their opinions on their children when planning for their careers.
3. Career programs should be introduced in senior high schools to assist students in making appropriate career choices.

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