

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

Factors influencing career choice among Junior High School students in Mpohor District



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of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
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MARCH 2022

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Louis Ofori–Attah, declare that this thesis, with the exceptions of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature

Date

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with guidelines for supervision of the thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Nyuiemedi Agordzo Edoh-Torgah, Ph.D. (Supervisor)

Signature 

Date

DEDICATION

To my wife Ivy and my children Blessing and Pearl for their encouragement.



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Signature



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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the elements that affect career decisions among Junior High School (JHS) students in the Mpohor District. Employing a descriptive survey method along with a quantitative research strategy, 297 students were chosen through multi-stage sampling methods. Information was collected using a structured questionnaire, and descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were utilized for analysis. The pre-test outcomes, evaluated for internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha using Statistical Product for Service Solution (version 25.0), showed a reliability coefficient of .827, indicating that the instrument is reliable. The research revealed various factors that influence decisions, including gender, parental support, peer pressure, and assistance from teachers, with gender being identified as the most significant factor. No significant differences in average career choices were observed between male and female students or among students of different ages. The study suggests that career guidance should be incorporated into both the Standards-Based and Common Core School Curricula at an early stage to better prepare and inform students regarding their career choices.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The significance of education in a nation's development cannot be diminished. Based on this belief, Olufunmilayo and Olawaiye (2013) stated that education is universally recognized as essential for addressing the socio-economic problems confronting the globe. Nations and individuals rely on education to find solutions for challenges such as poverty, ignorance, drought, excessive rainfall, cognitive disabilities, unemployment, poor governance, inefficient communication systems, hunger, and insufficient housing, among others.

Every country in the world seeks to enhance the quality of life and social standing of its people. Among the many important choices, career selection is a vital decision that students make that will shape their futures. This choice will have a lasting impact on Junior High School (JHS) students in the Mpohor District of the Western Region throughout their lives. According to Olufunmilayo and Olawaiye (2013), the core identity of a student is closely linked to their aspirations for their lifelong career.

The process of selecting a career has become increasingly intricate, particularly for Junior High School (JHS) students in Ghana. Regardless of age, the choice of a job is a significant concern for everyone. Many JHS students envision their future as a promising adventure filled with success. Many of them hold the belief that they can find jobs in either the public or private sectors immediately upon finishing their Senior High School (SHS) education (Olufunmilayo & Olawaiye, 2013). Understanding the various factors that influence career selection and subsequent decisions is essential for educational institutions, policymakers, and career counselors

to provide effective guidance and support for these students. Several elements come into play when JHS students consider their educational and career paths, including socioeconomic background, parental influence, academic performance, personal interests, and awareness of available opportunities, all of which significantly shape these choices.

The perception students have of themselves in relation to their personalities can significantly impact their career choices. Certain professions require specific personality traits that align with the demands of the job. For example, successful sales personnel often need to be outgoing and personable. According to Splaver (2016), individuals must adopt a self-motivated approach to explore career opportunities early in their lives rather than procrastinating and waiting for external pressures to make decisions. Splaver emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, stating that "One must have a good understanding of himself, his personality, if he is to make informed career plans" (p. 12).

Additionally, the availability of opportunities is a crucial factor shaping students' career choices. Opportunities can greatly influence how students envision their futures, particularly regarding the likelihood of success in certain career fields. Furthermore, socio-economic factors, such as poverty, play a significant role in determining the opportunities accessible to students, ultimately affecting their career paths.

Additionally, cultural norms, gender stereotypes, and societal expectations can significantly shape students' choices, potentially restrict their options, and impact their long-term career prospects (Oladele, 2007). The specific context of the Mpohor District, with its distinct cultural and socioeconomic characteristics, adds depth to this

study. Examining the interplay of local factors alongside broader influences can yield valuable insights into the decision-making processes of Junior High School (JHS) students in the district. Furthermore, understanding how these factors relate to career selection is crucial for developing targeted interventions that empower students to make informed choices aligned with their skills, interests, and aspirations.

Scholars globally have interpreted careers in various ways. According to Shertzer and Stone (1976), a career is defined as a chosen path, life's work, and vocation. Additionally, Oladele (2007) notes that a career encompasses the entirety of work performed throughout one's life and is purpose-oriented. He further argues that a career represents a significant progression in an individual's professional journey and is a pursuit undertaken over time.

The significance of a career cannot be understated, as it allows individuals to meet essential needs such as food, shelter, and clothing, along with more elevated needs like self-actualization. Additionally, a career offers a sense of direction, personal satisfaction, opportunities for challenges, and avenues for growth (Baruch, 2004). A person's career impacts not only their own life and family but also the society and nation they are part of. When someone is employed, they can contribute their share to the country's development through income tax payments, thereby supporting a stronger economy.

A person who has established a career can spearhead developmental projects, such as the construction of schools, hospitals, and community centers, which significantly contribute to the growth and enhancement of the community in which they reside. Employment not only provides financial stability for individuals but also opens avenues for investment in various sectors, leading to the creation of job opportunities

for others. This proactive approach helps to mitigate unemployment rates within the country, fostering overall economic growth.

Moreover, an individual with a solid career foundation is likely to lead a fulfilling and rewarding life. With a stable income derived from a well-chosen profession, they are in a better position to raise a healthy family, ensuring access to essential resources like nutrition, healthcare, and education. This, in turn, creates a cycle of prosperity and well-being that benefits both the individual and the larger community. The various dimensions of career development illustrate its profound relevance and impact on people's lives, underlining the importance of making informed career choices (Obiyo & Eze, 2015).

Choosing a career is a crucial aspect to keep in mind, as it enables students to gain insight into the job market and the possibilities that exist for young people. While students may be aware of certain careers, their knowledge of the job market is often limited. As a result, the process of choosing a career and receiving guidance allows students to gain important information about different professions, including the required education and professional credentials, along with other academic prerequisites for those careers. In addition, making well-informed career decisions provides students with insights into potential earnings, opportunities for additional training, career-related risks, and various challenges linked to different fields.

Job interests and career choices do not suddenly appear during a specific life stage but are the outcome of the educational development process. The selection of a career is a developmental journey that reflects earlier stages of growth and requires sufficient maturity due to their important influence on an individual's career and future opportunities.

Kochhar (2006) argues that the family serves as the primary agent of socialization that an individual experiences throughout their life. As they mature, young people are introduced to the professions of their family members, which can later influence their career choices. According to Kochhar (2006), children brought up in families that value artistic activities are more likely to pursue careers in the arts. Similarly, those from families that prioritize intellectual achievements are more inclined to engage in intellectual professions as adults.

A study by Okeke (2000) on the impact of parental influence on career choices reveals that around 60% of children express an interest in careers similar to their fathers', while only 25% prefer careers that align with their mothers'. This inherent tendency to choose careers related to their parents' professional paths is significant. Furthermore, Mburza (2002) highlights that the socioeconomic status of parents plays a pivotal role in shaping their children's career choices, which is integral to their academic development. When parents possess financial stability, they are better equipped to provide the necessary resources and support essential for their children to pursue their chosen career paths. In contrast, parents facing economic challenges often encounter difficulties in offering adequate support. Additionally, children from aristocratic or noble backgrounds are less likely to aspire to careers that are perceived as less prestigious by society.

Kochhar stated in Sara (2010) that societal influences are instrumental in guiding students' career decisions. He also noted that while an individual's interests and skills may lead them to a particular field, societal pressures can lead them to reconsider their decisions. For instance, someone might aspire to become a teacher, but societal perceptions of this profession could push them toward more widely accepted and

trendy careers such as banking or the military, thereby affecting their career decisions. Senior high school education represents a critical stage in adolescents' career selection, compelling them to choose a profession that aligns with their future goals. Unfortunately, this period is frequently characterized by challenges in making such vital choices, highlighting the need for guidance from experts and professionals.

Career counseling has been an essential aspect of the guidance process for a long time. Beginning in the United States around 1900, the guiding movement placed a strong emphasis on legal reforms, educational and career advising, and child welfare. Known as the "Father of the Guidance Movement," Frank Parsons founded Boston's Vocational Bureau in 1908 and was a fervent supporter of career counselling. In his 1909 posthumous book "Choosing a Career," he advocated for career counselling (Gladding 2009).

In the 1960s, advice and counseling were introduced in African nations like Ghana and Nigeria to help students make well-informed professional choices. Students were provided with essential information regarding the labor market, educational opportunities, and employment prospects. However, recent technological advancements, population growth, and rapid shifts in the labor market have significantly transformed the career landscape, requiring a revised approach to career decision-making compared to the 1960s and 1970s (Roberts 2006). Career decision-making is crucial as it offers direction and focus for professional behavior, heavily influenced by prior decisions related to career selection and training (Beach 2014). According to Ford and Alao (2009), difficulties in selecting a career at the secondary school level may arise from elements about the decision-maker, the environment, and the caliber of interactions between the individual and the environment. The challenges

of choosing a career are caused by a variety of other factors, including low-tech occupational stereotypes, career-channeling, limited job awareness, and inadequate career information networks. These elements impede proper job awareness for students in developing countries and lower-income youth in contemporary Western societies (Ford & Alao, 2009). Furthermore, a lack of self-awareness can make job decisions more complicated. Understanding one's interests, values, abilities, health, emotions, temperament, and enduring personality traits is all part of self-awareness. Saka and Gati (2007) state that one significant issue is professional indecision, which describes the difficulties people have when making decisions about their careers. Individuals who score highly across various domains may also find it challenging to choose due to their wide range of interests. Addressing the issues faced by students with diverse interests, as well as those with minimal personality traits, underscores the significance of career guidance.

Career guidance, as defined by Bedal (1978), involves supporting individuals in selecting, preparing for, entering, and advancing in their chosen careers. It is essential to assist students in overcoming challenges related to career decision-making and to cultivate more realistic expectations regarding job opportunities. Research by Taylor and Buku (2006) and Amoah, Kwofie, and Baiden (2015) indicates that the chosen career path significantly influences the academic courses a student may pursue in higher education, ultimately shaping their future career trajectories. Ashong (2013) discovered that junior high school (JHS) students in Ghana's Volta region, transitioning to senior high school (SHS), often lack awareness of career options and post-school employment prospects. His findings revealed that 80% of interviewed students were unaware of the career paths leading them to enroll in unsuitable programs.

Otu (2015) examined the perceptions of Senior High School (SHS) students regarding wealth and how it influences their career choices in Ghana's Akuapem North District. The study revealed that many young people based their career decisions on limited factors such as financial rewards, housing, and other associated benefits. Additionally, the influence of family and religious beliefs played a significant role in their career selection, often leading to disappointment and, in some cases, unemployment.

In 2005, a notable trend emerged in Ghana, where a significant number of youths were drawn to the nursing profession due to increased salaries implemented by the government in response to the inherent risks associated with the job (Amoah et al., 2015). This led many young individuals to pursue nursing purely for financial gain, often overlooking the importance of personal interest and aptitude in their career choices. As a result, some individuals who entered the nursing field solely for monetary reasons found themselves distressed when confronted with the realities of the job, such as encountering blood or dealing with challenging patient interactions. This situation underscores that a career should not be solely about financial incentives; genuine interest and skills are essential components for success. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the elements affecting junior high school (JHS) seniors' job choices when they go from JHS to SHS to match their decisions with their desired careers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

For junior high school (JHS) students, choosing a career usually begins before they enter senior high school (SHS) and then colleges. This early onset of decision-making is essential as students must determine which career path they wish to pursue. The career choices made during this formative period must align with their long-term

aspirations and the educational pathways they will follow throughout their academic journey (Taylor & Betz, 2009).

The process of career choice is not a singular event but rather a developmental journey that evolves throughout an individual's life, often continuing well into their sixties (Super, 2007). This perspective suggests that students need to engage in continuous self-reflection and reassessment of their career choices at various stages of their lives. Super's assertion underscores the importance of fostering a proactive approach to career exploration from an early age.

Furthermore, Bhusumane (2015) highlighted a significant challenge that students face: a limited understanding of the vast array of occupations available to them. This narrow perspective often results in unrealistic career aspirations, as students may not be fully aware of the skills, qualifications, and opportunities required for specific careers. Addressing this knowledge gap is essential in guiding students toward informed and achievable career goals. Providing comprehensive career education and resources can empower students to explore a broader range of possibilities and make decisions that align with their interests and the realities of the job market.

In their study, Omotosho and Nyarko-Sampson (2012) showed that students' career goals typically do not correspond with labor market trends, suggesting that choosing the right job often begins incorrectly. While some students find career decision-making straightforward, many others struggle, particularly when it comes to choosing a career at the Senior High School (SHS) level. Numerous studies have documented this persistent mismatch between the career aspirations and career choices of Junior High School (JHS) students in Ghana.

Without the benefit of proper vocational guidance and career counseling, many young people in Ghana make poor career decisions because of things like peer pressure, inexperience, ignorance, advice from friends, parents, and teachers, and the prestige of particular professions (Salami, 1999). Many may thus find themselves in professions that may not suit their actual personalities. This situation can lead to them becoming a burden, both to themselves and their employers. Often, they struggle to make meaningful contributions to society and ultimately transform into liabilities for the nation.

Recent empirical research has provided insight into how Senior High School (SHS) students in the Kwabre East District make professional decisions. One such study was carried out in 2014 by Oduro-Okyireh and Osei-Owusu. A startling finding from their study is that just 12 percent of the students polled, 37 out of all respondents, sought advice from certified career counselors before making important career decisions. In stark contrast, a staggering 88 percent, or 283 respondents, made these critical decisions without any professional advice, highlighting a concerning trend.

In the Mpohor District, the situation presents its unique challenges. Working as a guidance and counseling coordinator has allowed me to observe personally how many junior high school (JHS) students struggle with career planning, which causes them a great deal of anxiety and confusion. As they near the end of their JHS journey, a crucial time when they are indecisive and under pressure to decide what to do next, this conundrum frequently gets worse.

Given these insights and the noticeable gaps in current research, there is a compelling need to undertake a comprehensive study in the Mpohor District. This research aims to provide empirical evidence on the various factors that influence career selection

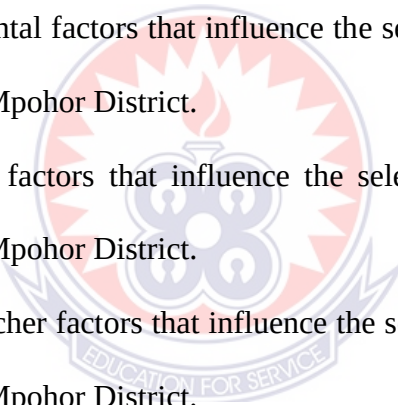
among JHS students, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of their needs and aspirations.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study's goal was to use a quantitative research approach to examine the major determinants of profession choices among JHS students in the Mpohor District.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine gender factors that influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mpohor District.
 2. Investigate parental factors that influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mpohor District.
 3. Determine peer factors that influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mpohor District.
 4. Find out the teacher factors that influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mpohor District.
- 
- The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central sun-like symbol with rays, surrounded by a wreath. Below the wreath, the text 'UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION' is visible, and at the bottom, 'WINNEBA' is written. The entire emblem is set against a light blue background.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What gender factors influence the selection of career among JHS students in the Mpohor District?
2. What parental factors influence the selection of careers among JHS students in the Mpohor District?
3. What peer factors influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mpohor District?

4. What teacher factors influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mpohor District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to give school counselors useful information on the different obstacles that different student groups encounter while choosing a job. Counselors will be better able to provide Junior High School (JHS) students with pertinent career advice by being aware of these challenges and properly addressing their unique problems.

Additionally, it is expected that the results of this study would benefit important players in the nation's career counseling industry. These stakeholders include counselors in the Mpohor District and beyond, as well as JHS students and educational institutions. Students will gain from the study since it emphasizes how important it is to make well-informed professional decisions. It will also inspire students to think about their aptitudes, interests, and skills before choosing a career path.

The findings might help national curriculum makers make well-informed choices about career counseling and guidance. It might also act as a baseline study, inspiring other researchers to carry out comparable studies in Ghana's several provinces and in other African nations. Additionally, counselors would gain essential insights into the challenges faced by students both before and during the career decision-making process. By understanding the different stages their clients encounter in selecting careers, counselors will be better equipped to provide suitable orientation and guidance.

Moreover, this study may enhance counselors' awareness of how various factors, such as gender, peer influence, parental guidance, and teacher input, affect the career choices of junior high school students. With this understanding, counselors will be in a stronger position to offer their students or clients more tailored support. Additionally, the study may provide a basis for future research on career-related subjects by other African scholars, especially those in Ghana. It may also inspire future researchers to investigate additional dimensions of career decision-making that may not have been addressed in the current study.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

This study examines the elements that affect career choices among Junior High School students in Mpohor, with a particular emphasis on the roles of gender, parental guidance, peer pressure, and teacher impact. The research was confined to a specific geographical location and a defined period, allowing for a concentrated evaluation within these parameters.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Career choice: This study defines career choice as the factors influencing a student's preference for a particular career, which may include influences from family, friends, personal values, interests, and guidance from school counselors.

Career path: In this study, the term career path describes the process individuals follow to achieve their goals or how their lives progress. The word "pathway" is used interchangeably with career choice throughout this study.

Parental influence: These include interactions, behaviours, or actions by mothers, fathers, siblings, and significant others who impact the career decision-making process of children.

Parents: In this study, parents are seen as guardians of the students.

Self-awareness: In this study, self-awareness means the state of knowing one's personality make-up.

Career indecision: In this study, it is explained as the challenges one goes through while making career decisions.

Career: In this study, a career is defined as the work or profession an individual actively engages in to secure a livelihood.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is a review of the relevant literature. It concentrated on the writings of multiple authors and research variables pertaining to the elements that affect JHS students' career choices. The primary objective of this review is to establish a comprehensive theoretical and conceptual framework that facilitates a nuanced comparison of this study with the works of other scholars in the field. By doing so, we aim to highlight both the similarities and differences that emerge, thereby enriching our understanding of the topic at hand. Additionally, this review endeavors to pinpoint specific areas that warrant further investigation, thereby contributing to the ongoing dialogue within the discipline. A more structured and targeted examination of the pertinent themes and findings is made possible by the literature's systematic organization under several subheadings that correspond with the study's goals for clarity and convenience of reference.

2.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study was informed by the Developmental Theory of Career Choice and Krumboltz' s Social Learning Theory. The relevance of these two ideas to career issues, specifically career choice, led to their selection. They take into account how social influences, such as watching and imitating the actions of others, influence people's professional decisions. In the context of JHS students, these social influences include interactions with teachers, peers, family members, and exposure to various professions. Students inhabit a dynamic social environment where they actively engage with their peers, educational resources, and societal influences as they

navigate their career paths. This interaction is crucial as it fosters self-awareness and allows them to explore a diverse array of career options. By uncovering their own cognitive processes and understanding their interests and strengths, students are better equipped to make informed decisions about their futures. The exchange of ideas and advice within this social context not only enhances their awareness of potential careers but also instills a sense of agency in shaping their professional identities.

2.1.1 The Developmental Theory of Career Choice

In 1939, Ginzberg, Axelrad, and Herma proposed a theory that views career choice as an irreversible process, unfolding in distinct stages throughout a person's development (Osipow, 2003). As individuals mature, they navigate a process marked by compromises between their desires and feasible options. Growing knowledge and exposure to alternatives empowers them to make rational choices by understanding themselves and their environment (Ginzberg & et al., 1939; Thornburg, 1975). Individual career development is seen as a cumulative process with distinct periods and phases, ultimately leading to success in any career when adequately motivated, prepared, and supported (London, 2003; Osipow, 2003). Ginzberg and associates utilized case studies and interviews to formulate key insights:

1. Career choice unfolds gradually over time, constituting a developmental process.
2. Once made, career decisions are typically irreversible, as time cannot be undone.
3. The ultimate career choice integrates interests, capacities, values, and real-world opportunities and limitations.

Three stages of career decision-making are described by its theory: practical, tentative, and fantasy. During the dream stage, which lasts until the age of eleven, adolescents choose idealized profession choices based on their immediate observations of their surroundings, hoping to work as teachers, nurses, or truck drivers. In the tentative stage (11-18 years), children explore career options based on interests, capacities, values, and transitions, without considering practical factors like needs, ability, or training. Around ages 11 and 12, the first sub-stage marks the entry point to JHS. Children begin recognizing the importance of indicating their career direction, making choices based on intrinsic enjoyment. Notably, career decisions may reflect a strong identification with the mother, despite signs of ambivalence (Osipow, 2003). The child acknowledges their uncertainty and embraces the idea of delaying a definitive career choice until they are older. Osipow (2003) notes that this developmental phenomenon emerges during adolescence, marked by physical and emotional changes.

In the second stage of development, which occurs between the ages of 12 and 15, individuals begin to reflect on their skills concerning their career choices. They concentrate on their interests and start asking themselves whether they have the potential to succeed in those areas. During this time, their identification with their father tends to lessen, and the influence of other significant people in their lives becomes more pronounced. This change arises as they recognize that certain aspects of their father's work may not be appropriate or suitable for them..

At 15 to 16 years old, individuals enter the value stage in career considerations, recognizing the importance of service to society. This indicates a change in the preference for humanitarian occupations over those based on prestige or self-interest

(Peku, 2008; Osipow, 2003). As their time in school draws to a close, people become more aware of their unique talents, acquire clarity on their career lifestyle, and feel pressured to make a decision.

The final sub-stage. Concluding the tentative period typically takes place around the age of 17 or 18, coinciding with the SHS phase in the Ghanaian context. At this point, adolescents experience increasing pressure to make concrete and realistic decisions regarding their future careers. As individuals progress through this stage, they become more aware of external aspects related to work, such as the preparation required for different careers, diverse financial outcomes, and varied life circumstances. At the age of 17, individuals begin to understand their abilities in particular tasks, appreciate the inherent worth of particular pursuits, and progressively begin integrating the four stages of this stage while making tentative decisions.

During the realistic stage (typically starting at age 18), individuals experience phases such as exploration, crystallization, and specification, often during their early career or university years (Osipow, 2003; Hansen, 2006). This period involves a practical assessment of career-related experiences. The theory's authors identified four key factors that impact the appropriateness of a person's career choice in early adulthood: the real-world situation, the ability to delay gratification, and the skill to accept and adapt to compromises in career plans (Osipow, 2003). Studies in the United States by O'Hawa and Tiederman (1990), Osipow (2003), Davis (2000), and Tucci (2005) largely support the main principles of Ginzberg's theory, although there are debates regarding the sequence of these factors. Overall, research shows that some boys make stable career decisions before middle school, while others remain uncertain even after finishing high school (Osipow, 2003; Gostein, 2000).

2.1.2 Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory, articulated by Krumboltz in 1979, underscores the crucial interplay between behavior (actions) and cognition (knowledge and thoughts) in shaping individual choices and actions. According to Sharf (2015), this theory posits that experiences and social interactions significantly inform the decision-making processes individuals undergo when selecting their career paths. Krumboltz argues that generic learning experiences such as personal trials, social influences, and educational opportunities serve to shape the career trajectories of individuals across diverse cultural backgrounds, which is supported by the work of Allen and Stottenberg (2017).

This perspective calls for a deeper investigation into the various factors that impact career development among students, particularly at the Mpohor Junior High School (JHS). In contrast to other career selection theories that might concentrate more narrowly on characteristics or particular influences, the Social Learning Theory highlights the significance of giving students the tools they need to make wise career decisions and the abilities they need to negotiate their options in the labor market (Ireh, 2000).

Furthermore, as Lent and Worthington (2000) point out, a person's cultural background influences the kinds of learning experiences that have a big impact on them. This implies that a person's cultural identity not only influences their experiences but also significantly influences their career decisions; hence, it is important to have a contextual awareness of how cultural elements might influence students' chances and goals.

Krumboltz highlighted four crucial elements for choosing a career: task approach skills, contextual factors, learning experiences, and genetic endowment (Beal, 2016; Ireh, 2000). The term "genetic endowment" describes the innate characteristics that a person inherits rather than learns via education, according to the Social Learning Theory. A person's employment alternatives may be restricted as a result. Environmental influences, which are usually out of a person's control, have a big impact on how they develop their skills and choose a vocation. A) professional success that results from prior learning; b) prior learning experiences that eventually influence career decisions; and c) prior experiences that have a direct influence on career choices are all included in Krumboltz's definition of learning experiences. Furthermore, individuals may observe themselves and their surroundings, using these insights to inform their career decisions, as noted by Sharf (2015).

Capabilities, interests, and work values are important aspects of self-awareness (Ireh, 2000). When making professional decisions, Krumboltz emphasized the importance of task approach abilities, which include goal planning, clarity of values, generating alternatives, and acquiring occupational knowledge. According to Ireh (2000), the skills needed to complete various tasks arise from the interplay of genetic factors, environmental conditions, and learning experiences. Because it considers environmental aspects including gender, family background, and the learning environment, Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory is pertinent to this study.

Our connections with others and how we view ourselves influence our behavior (Schonorr & Ware, 2001). Based on their limited experiences, students make assumptions and generalizations about the workforce and themselves, according to Krumboltz (1991). In this situation, JHS students do not have enough experience

choosing a job, thus counseling and a supportive environment are crucial. The foundations of Krumboltz's theory of professional decision-making are social learning, environmental effects, genetic impacts, and individual learning experiences. It posits that career choices are not dictated solely by innate traits but are significantly affected by social learning, environmental contexts, genetic factors, and individual experiences. For JHS students, exposure to various career paths, positive role models, and encouraging social environments can play a vital role in shaping their aspirations and decisions.

In summary, Krumboltz's Social Learning theory throws light on five key factors.

1. Social Modeling:

The importance of observational learning is emphasized by Krumboltz's theory. JHS students' opinions on various career paths are greatly influenced by social modeling from parents and teachers, among other authoritative people (Krumboltz, 2009).

2. Career beliefs:

Social interactions contribute to the development of career beliefs. Authors like Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) argued that individuals develop their career beliefs through social Learning processes, aligning Krumboltz's theory. These beliefs play a role in career selection.

3. Social Supports:

Authors like Lent et al, (2002) highlighted the importance of social support in career choice. Krumboltz's theory aligns with this by emphasizing the role of social factors in shaping individuals' career choices. Supportive social environments can positively influence JHS students' selection of careers.

4. Environmental Influences:

In the JHS context, the school environment, peer interactions, and exposure to various professions can influence career selection. Social Learning theory suggests that individuals acquire information about career selection through social interactions (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996).

5. Cognitive factors:

Krumboltz's theory acknowledges cognitive factors in decision making. JHS students' self-efficacy beliefs, influenced by social interactions, can affect their confidence in selecting certain careers (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996).

2.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study

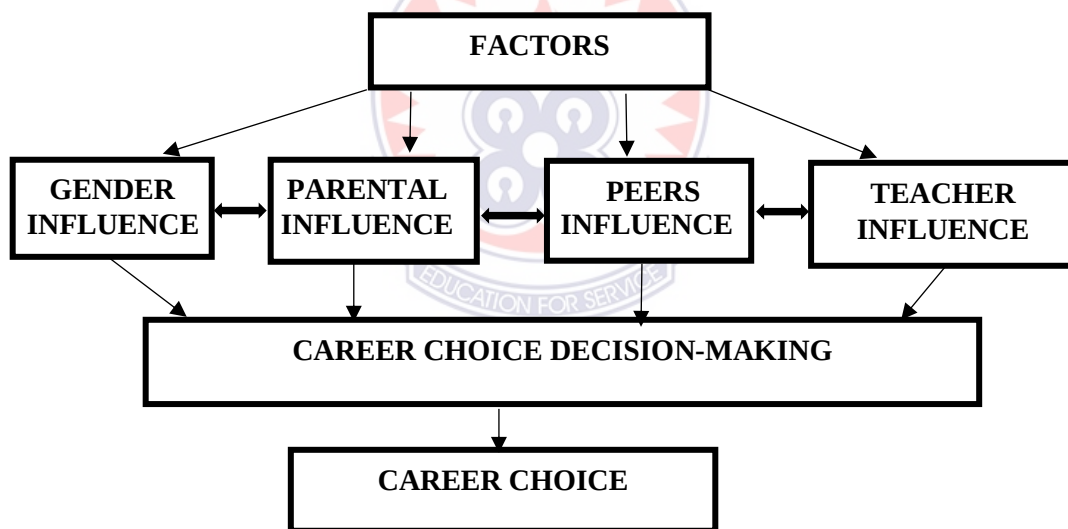


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the study

Source: Researcher's construct (2023/2024)

The researcher used literature read on the topic to develop this model. It was discovered that factors such as gender, parents, peers, and teachers may influence career decision-making and Career Choice. Societal constructs shape the divergence in behaviour, attitude, and emotions between boys and girls. This differentiation

results from interactions such as information exchange about Career Choice, childhood socialization, adolescent peer pressure, and the influence of gendered work and parental roles. has an influence on the career they select. As children grow up, they see the jobs their family members have. This can shape their own career choices later in life. Gender also affects job preferences because of social expectations and stereotypes about what jobs are for men and women.

Friends and classmates can influence career choices through shared interests, discussions, or peer pressure. Parental expectations, socioeconomic status, and career backgrounds often shape students' career aspirations. Teachers provide career guidance, serve as role models, and influence students' perceptions of different career paths.

Once more, the majority of pupils are impacted by the professions that their parents favor. Students may choose jobs that their parents want to appease them and prevent arguments at home (Taylor, 2004; Hewitt, 2010). This makes the youth confused as to why parents still see them as children and are incapable of making their own decisions. The students follow this career, hiding their true selves from their parents, which could influence the individual negatively. Okeke (2000) conducted studies on the parental influence over children's choice of career. According to the results, just 25% of children showed a comparable interest in their mother's job, whereas 60% of youngsters wanted to follow in their father's footsteps.

Once more, Chemeli (2013) concurred, claiming that gender-based divisions among students affect their profession choices. Boys and girls have distinct goals when they are in separate classrooms, but when they are together, they seem to influence one another and choose jobs that they would not have chosen otherwise. According to

Abbasi and Sarwat (2014) and Faiter and Faiter (2013), students were impacted by their peers in a variety of ways, including peer counseling, peer involvement, peer mentoring, and peer relationships. Peer relationships have an impact on career choice through peer pressure.

Once more, peer relationships have been found to have a significant impact on students' profession choices in Kenya (Walaba & Kiboss, 2013) and Uganda (Okiror & Otabong, 2015). As students engage with one another, they exchange information about various careers. Crucially, it is noteworthy that these factors are interrelated. The interaction of these influencing factors in students' decision-making processes ultimately culminates in career selection. These variables can help in analyzing how different social and personal factors shape students' career decisions at the JHS level. This observation is supported by various researchers in the literature review of the study.

2.3 Gender Influence and Career Selection

Gender remains a significant factor influencing career selection among JHS students. Recent studies challenge traditional stereotypes, emphasizing the need for gender-neutral career guidance (Koshy, 2022). Gender identity and expression are recognized as dynamic factors, with ongoing research exploring the intersections between gender, self-perception, and career choices. Contemporary perspectives highlight the importance of fostering inclusivity and eliminating gender bias in educational and career contexts (Smith & Johnson, 2023). Jamabo et al. (2012) describe gender as the biological division of people into the two groups of males and females. Ferrington et al. (2012) suggest that career choice among females, males, and different ethnic groups varies significantly due to attitudes towards specific careers, influenced by

developmental experiences. Gottfredson (2014) highlights that individuals tend to select careers based on their gender and the perceived prestige associated with those careers. Kerr and Colangelo (2015) suggest that men often pursue careers perceived as masculine, while Gedde et al. (2015) argue that women prioritize family considerations in career decisions, whereas men are influenced by career prestige.

Males and females choose occupations for different reasons, such as personal ambition and a desire to help patients, according to Kerr and Colangelo (2015). As students' progress in their studies, their career preferences may shift, for instance, from aspiring to specialize in medical schools to preferring to become general practitioners as they gain experience in the field. Fauad and Byars-Winston (2015) discovered that while race and ethnicity do not directly affect professional choices, how various groups view chances within professions does. According to Ferrington et al. (2012), white people in South Africa are more likely to start their own business, while other ethnic groups encounter obstacles mostly because of varying perspectives. This suggests that barriers in certain career fields, like entrepreneurship, stem from ethnic groups' varying perspectives.

Again, studies show that both males and females have difficulty selecting career. The difficulties males confront in selecting a career, however, differ from those females do in several situations. According to Gati et al. (2001), men and women handled external problems and dysfunctional concepts in different ways. Zhou and Santos (2007) found that male participants found choosing career issues easier than female ones. The effects of two different career counseling brochures on men's perceptions of career counseling and interest in utilizing career counseling services were examined by Rochlen et al. (2002). Males showed a greater appreciation for the

advantages of career counseling and a reduction in the stigma associated with it after reading a career counseling leaflet. The usefulness of a gender-specific (i.e., female-focused) brochure and a gender-neutral brochure was the same. For males who struggled with gender roles, self-clarity, job knowledge, and assistance with general indecision-related worries were also top needs. There were no differences in the utility of a gender-specific (that is, aimed toward males) brochure vs. a gender-neutral brochure. Gender role-conflicted males prioritized self-clarity, occupational information, and assistance with general indecisiveness issues.

In their 2009 study of the difficulties faced by female students in choosing a job, Talib and Aun found that female undergraduates who performed well academically but lacked occupational knowledge and a professional identity were less likely to have made a career decision. The researchers were searching for any indications of career hesitation among undergraduates from Malaysia. The authoritarian parenting style harms the professional choices made by female pupils. Fawcett and Maycock (2001) reported that female decision-makers were very confident. The Career Decision Scale (CDS) was used in their study, which included 113 high school seniors, to examine the differences in career decisiveness levels between genders. Quantitative analyses revealed that female seniors had higher levels of confidence in their professional choices. Oztemel (2013) found no differences in Emotional and Personality Career Difficulties (EPCD) ratings between males and females in a similar study. The goal of the study was to use Saka and Gati's (2007) approach to examine high school students' emotional and personality-related career selection (professional decision-making) concerns within Turkish culture. 523 high school students answered the Emotional and Personality-Related Aspects of Career Decision-Making Difficulties survey in Turkish. Cluster and confirmatory factor analyses validated the ternary classification

system of the emotional and personality-related career decision-making problems model and questionnaire, indicating the cross-cultural validity of the suggested model. Additionally, students who made a decision reported fewer emotional and personality-related employment troubles than those who were undecided, indicating a connection between decision-making and emotional and personality-related professional challenges. Three aspects of career preferences were examined by Gati et al. (1995): the structure of aspects derived from within-aspect preferences (desirable work attributes), the relative priority assigned to career-related aspects, and within-aspect preferences. Wasylow et al. (2005) looked into how college topic focus and gender affected career choices. The purpose of this study was to determine whether personality traits, occupational personality traits, and professional decision-making traits were related in any way. There were 276 individuals in all (129 girls and 147 males) in this study. Each participant completed the three tests and a quick demographic survey. According to the study's findings, male and female students exhibited comparable levels of anxiety related to job choices, equivalent requirements for professional information and self-knowledge, and general indecision on career decision-making factors. For male participants, moderate correlations existed between Career Choice Anxiety and Neuroticism and Conscientiousness, and General Indecisiveness and Neuroticism. Moderate relationships were found for female students between General Indecisiveness and Conscientiousness and Neuroticism. Moderate correlations were found between the need for Career Information and the Enterprising and Conventional Scales for males. These correlations suggested that men who are interested in acquiring additional occupational information were also inquisitive, energetic, and ambitious. Migundes et al. (2015) found that gender significantly affects profession choice and decision-making status after studying the

decision-making status of teens in Kisumu municipality. Tagay (2015) contrasted Turkish and American high school pupils in terms of profession choice and career decision-making issues. 296 high school students from the United States and 280 high school students from Turkey made up the study's sample of 576 pupils. It was found that there were notable gender differences in the difficulties high school students in Turkey and the US faced when choosing a career and making professional decisions. Hijazi, Tatar, and Gati (2004) examined 1,613 Arab 12th-grade students in East Jerusalem, the West Bank under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority, and Israel to determine the taxonomy of profession choices and career decision-making hurdles. Although there were gender differences in the primary category, there were no notable differences among the three locations. Lack of drive, general indecision, ignorance of other sources, and external conflicts are the four measures of lack of preparation. In their exploratory study to ascertain the extent of career selection and career decision-making challenges reported in other countries, Omotosho et al. (2015) found no significant differences between male and female students in their career decision-making difficulties.

Farrar (2009) investigated how vocational decision-making styles could enhance comprehension of problems related to the professional decision-making difficulties faced by residential high school students from low socioeconomic status (SES). When comparing the means of male and female students who took the VDSI test, no statistically significant differences were found. The differences between the dress styles of men and women were so great that neither had a unique style. Albion (2000) researched how young people's professional decision-making obstacles differ by gender. Overall, degrees of career determination did not differ by gender. Girls claimed to be more driven and adaptable in their professional choices, despite guys'

superior practical expertise. Using a correlational methodology, Crişan and Turda (2015) examined the link between youth in their senior year of high school's perceived self-efficacy in making professional decisions and career indecision (N = 160). The results showed a considerable positive correlation between participants' self-efficacy in making professional decisions and their gender, but a negligible negative correlation between gender and career indecision. Stereotypes and educational intensity and difficulty are commonly used to study gender variations in career and educational choices.

According to Goldin (2006), emerging countries have a greater preference for science and mathematics-related academic careers and vocational domains. Goldin (2006) argued that there are significant gender differences in these two academic domains. In a survey conducted by Goldin (2006), which included 2938 students from five African countries, it was discovered that almost 80% of the boys were determined to pursue science and mathematics-related topics, whereas less than 20% of the girls were willing to pursue these subjects. Goldin (2006) argued that about 65% of the girls perceived that mathematics and science related subjects were difficult, hence their readiness to choose less difficult careers in humanities. The study of Ellisson and Swanson (2010) also concluded that among 750 female students they sampled for their study in United States, only 25% were willing to graduate with major in mathematics, engineering, science, information communication technology as compared to over 60% who were willing to graduate with literature, linguistics, sociology, management, human resource management and other humanity careers. 60% also said that courses in mathematics, engineering, ICT, and other applied disciplines were difficult to pursue. A woman's function is to be a homemaker, whereas a man's role is to provide for his family (Corrigall and Konrad, 2007). They

underlined that there is a paradigm shift as more Americans think males should assist with childcare and other traditionally female-dominated household duties, and that women should contribute financially to the family. Put another way, males may pursue what society views as women's professions, while women could seek fields that are dominated by men.

More significantly, numerous studies have discovered that gender affects the choice of career. In Nigeria, female students choose jobs that are more feminine, while their male counterparts choose careers that are more masculine (Akinbode and Fagbohunge, 2011). Additionally, gender role indoctrination creates a distinct division between gender roles, bias, and discrimination, all of which have an impact on women's economic standing, according to Chow and Ngo (2002).

Additionally, Kenyan women choose occupations that align with their traditional gender roles, whereas Kenyan men choose careers that align with their traditional gender roles, according to Migunde et al. (2012). According to (Griffin et al. 2011), when gender attitudes are prevalent in America, they most effectively alter behavior via affecting how people perceive what other people expect of them. According to Ahuja et al. (2006), gender influences behavior and preferences in a variety of contexts. Additionally, male pupils use computers from an early age, especially to play computer games, according to Ahuja et al. (2006). In Nigeria, using computers and the internet to research careers could give male students a leg up over their female counterparts, according to Durosaro and Adebanye (2012).

Conversely, Miliszewska and Sztendur (2010) discovered that girls have a positive view regarding computers. The participants attended different high schools in Melbourne, Australia, and represented a range of ethnic backgrounds, including

Europeans, Asians, Australians, and Africans. The decision of Nigerian male students to pursue a career in secretarial work, which is mainly targeted to female students, was influenced by their parents, according to Igbiniedion (2011). According to Agarwala (2008), Indian fathers have the biggest impact on Indian boys' and girls' management profession choices. The same study found that mothers had an impact on females as well. The results are congruent with those of Paa and McWhirter (2000), who discovered that American females regularly stated that their parents of the same gender had a greater favorable influence on them.

equal amounts. According to Klapwijk and Rommes (2009), women in the Netherlands are still dominated by men, even despite initiatives to encourage them to pursue technical and natural sciences. Even though Dutch girls are a diverse group with a wide range of career aspirations, the masculine stereotype remains a significant and enduring obstacle. As in many other countries, the assumption that women do not want to deal with real products is widespread in the Netherlands (Klapwijk and Rommes, 2009). In America, female students are more likely than male students to choose careers that include self-expression and assisting others (Griffin et al., 2011; Tang et al., 2008), whereas boys are more interested in having higher self-efficacy and are more likely to select data or realistic, investigative, enterprising, and conventional occupations. Furthermore, according to (Jamabo et al. 2012), Nigerian girls prefer literacy, clerical, creative, musical, and social activities to guys, who choose outdoor, mechanical, computational, commercial, and industrial vocations.

The presumption that boys and girls choose jobs along gender lines is created throughout adolescence, when gender roles start to take shape, claim Klapwijk and Rommes (2009). This is because girls may dislike technical occupations due to

gender prejudice, which links them with masculinity. English males like courses that are typically masculine, whereas English girls favor traditionally feminine courses, according to Favara (2012). This is expected to have an impact on the gender-based job choices of the two groups. According to a study of American public relations students, college students categorize public relations specializations by gender based on the subjects and qualities they are looking for in a profession (Andsager and Hust, 2005). They proved that women predominate in the field of public relations. According to Behrend et al. (2007), women prioritize holistic patient care more than their male counterparts, and men and women in the medical field have different areas of specialization. This is also consistent with the findings of Corrigan and Konrad (2007), who contended that American men and women have different ideas about appropriate responsibilities and behaviors for both sexes in the home and in paid employment. This implies that choosing a vocation at different phases of life is influenced by gender.

Additionally, American students and professionals perceive male-dominated subjects like science, math, and physical exertion as gendered; this belief is probably based on different expectations for education (Andsager & Hust, 2005). Students thought specialized fields with a female focus were more moral and compassionate. This indicates that students think women in physically dominant industries are more moral and compassionate. Compared to male-oriented fields, which have a bad reputation for ethics and care, this pays far less. According to Mutekwe et al. (2011), there was also a difference in the job choices of male and female students, with the former favoring the sciences and the latter the arts. Based on the things they had learned, students would be persuaded to choose various vocations. There is a gender gap among students, according to the aforementioned studies. As previously said, the

purpose of this study was to determine whether gender had an impact on career choice. The research cannot be applicable to other jobs because they were designed to ascertain how gender influences career choices for particular career types; therefore, a study that does not concentrate on a particular career is required.

Gender remains a barrier to career choice, claim Klapwijk and Rommes (2009). In a similar vein, Swiss men were less likely than women to seek career guidance and counseling, according to Balin and Hirschi (2010). This shows that their way of thinking has already been set up due to socialization, as evidenced by their preference for careers that are gender specific. Students' opinions about guidance and counselling services are heavily influenced by their gender (Eyo et al., 2010). A gender gap in student attitudes resulted in a mean score of 22.00 for females and a lower mean score of 19.00 for males (Eyo et al., 2010). In comparison to males, girls responded more favorably to career counselling services. Similarly, female students in the United States were more satisfied with their career counselling than male students (Dellana & Snyder 2004). In the same study, females, more than males, reported feelings of uneasiness when talking with guidance counsellors and males reported, more often than females, that guidance counsellors were not well informed in terms of careers. This implies that gender influenced the way students responded to career counselling. Unlike male students, female students reported that school counsellors and college resource materials were helpful (Griffin et al., 2011). According to the same study, female students were more likely than male students to say they used a variety of sources to learn about their career and educational goals.

Nigerian students' profession choices are greatly influenced by their gender, both for those who receive counseling and those who do not (Eyo, 2011). "Whether or not

students received counseling, gender influence is still visible in them." Furthermore, occupations where Dutch preparatory and secondary vocational education is provided had significantly more gender segregation (Klapwijk and Rommes 2009). Separating students based on gender has an impact on the careers they select, claims Chemeli (2013). Boys and girls have distinct goals when they are in separate classrooms, but when they are together, they seem to influence one another and choose jobs that they would not have chosen otherwise. The impact of gender on profession choices has been the subject of numerous studies, although some have used a different tack. For instance, Ojeda and Flores (2008) discovered that the influence patterns on the present career expectations of male and female students in the United States were comparable. According to other studies, including those by Malubay (2015), gender does not influence the choice of a career.

Similarly, both sexes made essentially comparable choices for careers in teaching, trading or business, law, and judicial services, indicating no discernible difference between boys and girls (Ottu & Nkenchor, 2010; Migunde et al., 2012). The literature examined above indicates that choosing a career was difficult for both men and women. In contrast, men were better able to predict difficulties in making professional decisions in areas including dysfunctional myths, lack of motivation, and external conflicts. Professional decision-making challenges for women also included indecision, parental influence, and lack of information, and indecision. Once more, men faced fewer difficulties than women.

2.4 Parental Influence and Career Selection

Without a doubt, parents have the greatest influence on their children's career selection. For example, a parent whose son was accepted into a Ghanaian institution

to study veterinary medicine said, Anyone who does not go to school can look after cows and goats" (Yeboah, 2014). With this historical perspective and some parents' blunt judgments, it should be emphasized that the kind of parental influence on professional selection and how parental influence is exercised may become an impediment to young people's career selection. When making decisions like selecting a career or a career path, or applying to universities, this influence is felt explicitly.

Once again, research on family influence has expanded rapidly in recent years, but there is still limited understanding of how families shape career choices. Most studies focus on the impact of individual parents, such as mothers or fathers, on their children's career decisions. However, this research looks at the influence of all family members, including parents, siblings, and extended family, on career choice. A child's first interactions happen at home with family members, including parents, siblings, and relatives (Bollu-Steve & Sanni 2013). Various family-related factors affect a child, such as parents' marital relationship, socioeconomic status, home environment (warm or hostile), environmental conditions, parents' occupational status, and the number of siblings (Bollu-Steve & Sanni, 2013). These family dynamics play an important role in a student's career readiness.

Numerous studies demonstrate that parents are crucial in assisting high school children in making career decisions. The United States, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Romania have all demonstrated that. Abbasi and Sarwat (2014) compared young people's career choices to a rock polisher, explaining that many influences shape their decisions, but parents have the biggest impact. In America, research found that even with strong school support for career choices, teachers and counselors cannot replace parents' influence.

Other family members also affect children's career decisions. Research indicates that mothers are the most influential when shaping their children's career goals. For example, many young American children, especially African American girls, are guided by their mothers' ambitions. Bracey (2008) found that a mother's job and her bond with her child greatly affect career outcomes.

Both boys and girls view their parents as significant positive effects on their career ambitions, according to a study by Paa and McWhirter (2000). According to Wortman, Loftus, and Marshall (2014), African American moms instill in their children middle-class ideals like responsibility and hard work, value education, set high standards, and share cultural values. Fathers typically offer support when it comes to choosing a career. A study by King in 1993 found that 53% of participants felt their mothers strongly encouraged them to pursue teaching careers.

Additionally, a student's family income can significantly affect their career choices and future opportunities. Some students have to plan their education costs based on their income. Splaver (2016) noted that teens need career training to navigate educational and social challenges and meet basic standards. Many students also need proper guidance to be successful.

Effective support groups can significantly assist students in their career selection by offering financial, educational, and emotional guidance. Often, students opt for the path of least resistance when considering higher education. If parents apply considerable pressure and students lack definitive plans, they may feel compelled to follow their parents' suggestions. Students need to contemplate their career choices during their final year of Junior High School, as this is the time to establish concrete

plans. The surrounding environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' career decisions.

Marriage has a big impact on students' career choices, and many stay at home to continue their studies or enter the workforce (Bollu-Steve & Sanni, 2013). Students' professional prospects are significantly impacted by a variety of contextual influences, such as media exposure and recreational facilities, as well as the support of peers, parents, siblings, teachers, and counselors. Students in secondary school have many options to choose from, and if they make careful, thorough decisions that take into account all relevant aspects, they are likely to make successful career decisions (Splaver, 2016).

Career planning should begin in nursery school and continue throughout elementary, secondary, and university education, claims Davis (2014). A person's social standing, wealth, lifestyle, friend selection, and physical and mental health are all greatly influenced by their work. Because of this, choosing a career and making judgments about it are difficult but essential processes. Individuals must navigate these choices, prepare for their careers, embark on them, and advance within them. Making an incorrect career choice can result in long-lasting dissatisfaction and career maladjustment. Bad professional choices can hurt society overall, in addition to the individual. As a result, giving students the tools they need to make wise career decisions is crucial.

Parents serve as career role models for their children, as noted by Schulenberg (2005). Trice and Knapp (1992) emphasized that children's perceptions of occupations are particularly shaped by their mothers' careers. According to Mullis, Mullis, and Gerwhels (2012), students' professional goals frequently resemble those of their

parents. According to Mullis et al. (2012), children of parents with low-skilled employment are more likely to be interested in practical vocations, while children of parents with professional or skilled jobs are more likely to pursue conventional, artistic, or social careers. According to Nyamwenge (2016), students' professional choices may also be influenced by German families. Numerous studies carried out in diverse settings shed light on the ways parents, for example, support and encourage their children's professional choices. According to a study conducted in Kenya, teenagers usually ask their parents for advice when it comes to job choices (Mudhovozi & Chireshe, 2012). Despite having comparable goals to the current study, this research's qualitative methodology may limit the results' impartiality and generalizability. The influence of parental support on children's career choices in the hotel sector was the subject of another Kenyan study (Nyamwenge, 2016).

According to studies conducted in Nigeria on the effect of family background on secondary school students' academic achievement, children's career choices and success depend heavily on supportive parental engagement (Barker, 2010; Clutter, 2010). Nigerian parents have a big influence on students' academic achievement and job choices, according to a 2013 study by Bollu-Steve and Sanni. Notwithstanding their disparate areas of interest, these studies together highlight how crucial parental guidance is when it comes to choosing a course of study and a vocation.

Studies carried out in nations such as Kenya (Barker, 2010) and Nigeria (Holland, 2015; Abiola, 2014) show that parental choices have a significant impact on the behaviors of children and young people. Parental choices regarding living situations, material and relational provisions, and the organization of children's out-of-school time play a crucial role in their development and future success in the workforce

(Abiola, 2012). Beggs, Bustham, and Taylor (2008) refer to "helicopter parents" as those who are highly involved in their children's college experiences, from selecting a university to guiding career paths. This high degree of parental involvement is consistent with social learning theory, which emphasizes how important the environment is in forming students.

Students' professional choices are not usually influenced by their families. According to research conducted in South Africa by Clutter (2010) and Hoyt (2014), families have minimal influence over these decisions. Parental values do not significantly impact the career ambitions or plans of Chinese American kids, as demonstrated by Igbinedion (2011). Additionally, the study discovered that when kids get older, they prioritize pursuing a fulfilling career over merely appeasing their family. Future job selections may be harmed by excessive family meddling.

Parents and family members have a big influence on library and information science job decisions in Nigeria (Holland, 2015). Nonetheless, Bracey (2013) discovered that Nigerian parents do influence their kids' choices to become nurses. This study may be biased, as it used purposive sampling and focused only on nursing. The downside of this approach is that it doesn't include a broad section of the population, making it hard to generalize the results. Additionally, whereas the current study focuses on final-year JHS students and their general job choices, Bracey's study included participants from nursing colleges and only examined nursing vocations.

Stratified random sampling, which is used in this study, captures significant demographic characteristics and yields results that can be applied broadly. Lent et al. (2021) investigated how globalization is altering the roles of parents. Global viewpoints now impact modern family dynamics, with parents directing their children

toward professions that align with global prospects. Garcia & Rodriguez (2023) looked at how technology helps improve communication between parents and students about career choices. Virtual workshops and online resources are now essential for parents to become informed and actively help in their child's career planning. The idea of "portfolio parenting" is also becoming more popular, as parents curate a range of educational and career experiences for their children.

Despite the significant increase in research on parental influence in recent years, our understanding of how parents affect their children's career choices remains limited. The impact of individual parents, such as mothers or fathers, pushing their children to follow particular professions is the subject of a large portion of the research now in publication. This study emphasizes how parents have an impact on junior high school children's job choices. Asante (2010) posited that a key factor determining the career preferences and decision-making of technical education students in Accra is familial influence, with 62% of those choosing technical fields citing family as the primary factor in their decisions. He further identified other determinants, including community and parental influence, personal interest, job opportunities, income, and the support of the school guidance department.

Young students worldwide often possess high ambitions, aiming for extensive education and professional careers. Nonetheless, studies have shown that many people fail to create clear plans for choosing occupations that fit their skills, values, and available possibilities (Schneider & Stevenson, 2013). Research by Bergen (2006) at the University of North Texas looked at how family affects young adults' aspirations and job decisions. According to the study, parents have a big influence on their children's professional choices. Due to the multiple factors affecting career selection,

the complexity of the family's influence was also noted. Bergen (2006) employed concepts from self-determination, attachment, and career theories to create a framework for understanding how families affect young adult career aspirations. The study proposed that families influence the internal processes of individuals that are critical to successful career selection rather than making direct career decisions.

The study utilized hierarchical regression analyses to determine the effects of various aspects of family relationships and environments on young individuals, which subsequently influence their career choices. A questionnaire was filled out by a sample of 34 male and 99 female students, all between the ages of 18 and 20 (mean age: 18.67). The findings showed that diverse family characteristics affected a number of variables linked to future goals and profession choice. In particular, extrinsic goals and professional salience were predicted by family achievement orientation. While supportive and deeper relationships with mothers, as well as lower levels of conflict with fathers, were linked to more career maturity, conflict with mothers was linked to career salience. Additionally, high career salience was found to be a predictor of career maturity. These findings point to the need for future research to explore multiple family aspects and their implications for career selection comprehensively. The results also underscore the importance of career counselors assessing family dynamics when assisting young individuals in their career decision-making processes.

A study by Jacqueline (2013) examined how occupational information and social influence affected Tanzanian undergraduate students' intentions to choose a job. The research aimed to determine how much these factors predict the intentions of students to pursue specific careers after completing their studies. To gather data, a quantitative

cross-sectional survey design was used. The study included a convenience sample of 100 students from both the first and last years of secondary school, comprising 63 males and 37 girls. Demographic traits, occupational knowledge levels, social influence, and career selection intents were all evaluated using a standardized questionnaire.

According to the study, students' job goals are greatly influenced by their professional knowledge as well as the social effects of significant others, including instructors, parents, and friends. Due in great part to the influence of these important individuals in their life, it was found that most students intend to follow their careers after graduation. According to studies by Taylor, Harris, and Taylor (2004) and Hairstone (2000), teachers and counselors can still change the impact that parents have on their children, even in cases when schools lack the resources to address the vocational demands of young people. Additionally, parents are acknowledged to have a significant impact on their children's decisions in the American setting (Tillman, 2015; Griffin, Hutchins & Meese, 2011; Ojeda & Flores, 2008).

Kracke (2002) also discovered that students' professional choices are greatly influenced by their German families. These studies were carried out in very different environments from the one being studied now. According to a study done in Kenya, teenagers frequently ask their parents for advice on how to prepare for the workforce (Edwards & Quinter, 2011). Parental support is essential for children's vocational decision-making and future success, according to another study that looked at the effect of family background on the academic achievement of secondary school pupils in Nigeria (Barker, 2010; Clutter, 2010).

Nigerian parents have a significant influence on their children's academic achievement and professional decisions, claim Bollu-Steve and Sanni (2013). They emphasized the significance of parental support in guiding children's educational and professional paths. Research focused on parental influence on career preferences indicates that many environments in which children and adolescents engage are determined by their parents' decisions, as noted in African studies conducted in Kenya (Mokoro, 2014) and Nigeria (Abiyo & Eze, 2015; Abiola, 2014). Consequently, decisions made by parents regarding housing, material provisions within the home, and the management of children's extracurricular time profoundly impact their development, which is integral to their future success in the workplace (Abiola, 2014).

Children's professional choices are significantly influenced by parental education. For instance, Eccles (2007) found that, in the United States, the education and occupation of parents are linked to their children's academic achievement. British students have also cited parental education as a critical factor in their career decisions (Dustman, 2004). Pfingst (2015) and Abiola (2014) discovered that parents with higher levels of education are better able to provide their children with financial and academic support than parents with lower levels of education. According to Uka (2015), parents' educational attainment has an impact on their children's professional decisions in Albania.

Furthermore, research by O'Shea and Kirrane (2008) shows that fathers' educational attainment influences the career views of Irish teenagers; as a father's education level rises from primary to graduate, their children tend to have a more optimistic outlook on balancing career and parental roles. In Canada, parents with higher education

levels are better equipped to help their children reach their educational and career goals (Domene et al., 2006). In Nigeria, Obiyo and Eze (2015) argued that parental education significantly influences children's career choices.

Additionally, it has been found that the occupations of Indian parents influence their children's career decisions (Bakshi, Ghandi, Shah & Maru, 2012). Children are more likely to emulate the behaviors and interactions of their educated parents with the outside world. Kumar (2016) noted that the quality of the relationship between Indian parents and their children also affects the career choices of the younger generation. This suggests that the nature of the parent-child relationship influences the careers selected by children.

Clutter (2010) found that adolescents in the United States who were more independent from their parents in adolescence and early adulthood were more confident in their professional choices than children who remained dependent on them. Alderfer (2004) asserts that American teens who are unable to sufficiently distance themselves from their parents frequently lack the autonomy to make choices that are in line with their preferences, instead choosing to follow their parents' lead. This suggests that parental influence possesses definable limits; when these limits are disregarded, children's career choices may be affected.

Neimeyer's (2010) findings are consistent with those of Clutter (1993). Americans are active actors who jointly create the meanings of their experiencing world, according to Neimeyer's (1993) theory. In a related context, Aslam, Jahan, and Rahman (2012) argued that the entrepreneurial attitudes of Pakistani parents, influenced by their own prior experiences in business, both directly and indirectly through parental business backgrounds, significantly shape their children's

entrepreneurial mindset. Children who have parents who are entrepreneurs or self-employed may have positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship; on the other hand, parents who have had bad experiences with their entrepreneurial endeavors may discourage their children from pursuing entrepreneurship (Aslam et al., 2012).

In this context, the entrepreneurial environment affects the extent to which young individuals engage in entrepreneurial pursuits. If parents do not achieve specific career goals, their setbacks may impact their children's aspirations, potentially leading to discouragement from pursuing certain careers. While the aforementioned study addressed career choices in a general framework, Aslam et al. (2012) specifically concentrated on parental influence in the realm of entrepreneurship.

The research cited does not specifically focus on junior high school students but rather on youth in a broader sense. Parents transmit their values, beliefs, and standards to their children with the intention that these imparted lessons will assist their children in making autonomous decisions and actions. A similar framework may be applied to the influence parents exert over their children's career choices. Furthermore, parental support tends to motivate students to meet their parents' expectations and fulfill their aspirations (Ellefsen & Beran, 2007). Additionally, in Hong Kong, students place significant importance on their parents' opinions (Law & Yeun, 2011), indicating that parents can actively foster their children's career interests from an early age.

According to Bardick, Berns, Magnusson, and Witko (2004), Canadian teenagers place a high weight on their parents' advice as the main source of direction on issues pertaining to their careers. Adolescent parents in Canada have a big say in their children's job choices because of their extensive knowledge of their growth, interests, and strengths, as well as the trust they have developed with them (Bardick et al.,

2004). On the other hand, studies conducted in Singapore have demonstrated that family engagement has a major influence on nursing profession choices (Ching & Keith, 2011). Furthermore, it has been determined that American parents are important providers of networking, financial, material, and emotional support for their children when they are choosing a job (Duffy & Dik, 2009). This indicates that the bond between a mother and her child established from infancy continues into adolescence, thereby affecting career choices. This is consistent with research by Hashim and Embong (2015), who found that Malaysian parents—particularly mothers—have a significant impact on secondary school adolescents' profession choices. Examining whether these observations hold for the Mpohor district was the aim of this investigation. Parents' impact on early career selections and subsequent employment choices is essential in helping students with career-related difficulties, claim Duffy and Dik (2009).

In addition to giving their children a sense of identity for their professional growth, parents also influence how they view different careers (Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999). Students can learn from role models in their surroundings, regardless of whether they reside in urban or rural areas. In this context, parents serve as the child's immediate influence. Additionally, relatives can act as important role models (Braza & Guillo, 2015).

Mapfumo et al. (2002) indicate that relatives are the most significant factor in students' career choices within their communities. According to their research, the upbringing that male and female pupils receive shapes specific behaviors based on cultural norms. Although they did not identify the specific factors impacting employment choice, Mapfumo et al. (2002) did emphasize the critical influence that

parents play. Bartle-Haring et al. (2012) indicate that family involvement, parental routines and linkages, parenting techniques, and social support—particularly parental expectations for academic success—are additional contextual factors associated with school engagement. Parents who lack effective coordination may struggle to inspire their children in choosing a career path. In Nigeria, the influence of parents and relatives on the decision to pursue a profession in library and information science is minimal (Oloasebikan & Olusakin, 2014). Conversely, Egunjobi et al. (2013) indicated that Nigerian parents do exert an influence on their children's choice of nursing as a profession. However, it's important to note that the findings of Egunjobi et al. may be subject to bias due to their use of purposive sampling and focus on a specific profession; nevertheless, they remain significant.

Non-probability sampling methods, such as purposive sampling, have the significant drawback of not representing the entire population accurately. As a result, the findings from such research cannot be generalized to a broader context. In their study, Egunjobi et al. employed purposive sampling and focused solely on participants from nursing colleges, thereby limiting their research to nursing vocations. This approach contrasts with the current study, which examines career choices among Junior High School (JHS) students.

Additionally, Gostein (2003) argues that parents often directly influence their children's career choices by insisting on specific schools and courses, thereby steering them toward predetermined career paths. This circumstance frequently arises irrespective of the child's abilities, passions, and goals. Children may end up in occupations that are not a good fit for them if they do not vehemently disagree with their parents' wishes. Parents may force their children to make these decisions to steer

them toward professions they had always wanted but never pursued (Gostein, 2000). As a result, parents can experience life via their kids. Gostein (2000) adds that kids usually follow their parents' wishes since they don't know what they want or don't want to offend them.

2.5 Peer Influence and Career Selection

Peer influences play a significant role in students' career choices, and this impact should not be overlooked. Research by Abbasi and Sarwat (2014) and Faiter and Faiter (2013) indicates that students are affected by their peers through various means, including peer counseling, engagement, guidance, and connections. Keshishian (2010) investigated the factors affecting college students' selection of academic majors and found that the university often failed to address the specific needs of underrepresented peer groups. Additionally, first-year peer group members generally expressed lower satisfaction with their studies, except for pharmacy students, who reported higher levels of contentment with their career choice.

Notably, those within the pharmacy peer group made their decision independently, free from external influence. These findings suggest that peer group members with a well-defined career path, like those in pharmacy, tend to be more satisfied with their choices, whereas those lacking clarity about their career direction are often less satisfied. Amino and Timothy (2014) explained that the choices made by peer group members influence their academic performance. Consequently, satisfaction with their selected careers has a positive effect on their academic achievements.

Fizer (2013) observed that many individuals in peer groups often choose careers based on their academic abilities. However, some of these group members may have work habits that do not match their selected career paths, resulting in low job

satisfaction. Consequently, these learners might find their fields both challenging and unengaging. Thus, effective career guidance is essential to help them identify more suitable fields and career paths. Agarwala (2008) identified various factors influencing learners' choice of careers, including interest, ambition, career challenges, intellectual ability, and job prospects. The study found that peer group members lacked proper career guidance and often made uninformed decisions. Consequently, it recommended providing professional school counsellors in high schools. Agarwala (2008) again highlighted that skills and competence in a specific field influence one's career choice and career path.

Gottfredson (2014) posited that young people select their careers based on their unique circumstances. In contrast, Hoyt (2014) underscored the importance of preparedness in making informed decisions and career choices. Learners can greatly benefit from additional interventions designed to equip them for life after high school. The study demonstrated that participation in workshops enabled peer group members to make more informed career choices. These interventions also facilitate planning and enhance career readiness. Furthermore, workshops serve as a cost-effective means to assist peer group members in making appropriate academic and career decisions.

Peer therapy, as defined by Odirile (2012), involves interacting, responding to, and assisting others to examine feelings, thoughts, and issues to achieve a clearer understanding. Brown and Green (2020) focused on the digital transformation of peer pressure, highlighting the necessity for education in digital literacy. Their research explored the positive dimensions of peer influence, particularly in the realm of collaborative career exploration through online platforms. Insights from Jackson et al. (2020) revealed that digital interventions, such as gamified career exploration apps,

can effectively harness positive peer pressure to facilitate informed decision-making. As social network analyses continue to evolve, there is an increasing need to understand how online communities influence career aspirations in a complex digital landscape.

Peer counseling was first implemented in schools to help kids deal with their problems (Bett, 2013). Peer counseling's main goal is to help students appreciate one another while highlighting the value of education (Odirile, 2012). Peer counselors are essential for mentoring students, exchanging expertise, and offering mutual support, according to research done in Kenya (Kaaria et al., 2014; Marangu et al., 2012). According to Bett (2013), the rationale for peer counselling is rooted in the understanding that individuals with similar characteristics and age groups tend to influence each other significantly.

Similarly, Chireshe (2013) highlighted the importance of peer counseling in educational settings, noting that information can be disseminated effectively through these interactions. Research conducted in Kenya (Walaba & Kiboss, 2013) and Uganda (Okiror & Otabong, 2015) has shown that peer pressure, which originates from peer interactions, affects profession choices. Students exchange insightful information about different job routes as they interact with one another. Furthermore, students' perceptions of themselves are significantly impacted by their interactions with their classmates (Yi-Hui, 2006). Interactions with peers of different interests, races, and origins can foster self-reflection, increase knowledge, and influence beliefs, according to a 2006 study by Yi-Hui in China. These interactions have the potential to foster new perspectives on the world, other individuals, and ultimately, oneself (Yi-Hui, 2006). Engaging with peers allows students to explore career options that they

may not have previously considered, leading to a deeper understanding of the professional landscape.

Kiuru (2008) highlighted the importance of peer relationships in Finland, pointing out that a peer group's academic interests can have a long-lasting effect on a teen's future choices. Roy (2016) and Faiter and Faiter (2013) provided more evidence for this notion by reiterating the critical impact that peer guidance plays in career decisions. In Kenya, students may evaluate the career advice provided by their peers, particularly in the absence of official career counseling (Migunde et al., 2012). According to Okiror and Otabong (2015) and Njeri (2013), students frequently look to their peer mentors for advice, information, and assistance on career-related matters under these circumstances. When there are no other options, such as career counseling at school, this need for peer mentorship is very noticeable. Additionally, Koech et al. (2016) emphasized the significance of peer mentorship in influencing Kenyan students' career choices.

Conversely, a study by Ausman et al. (2013) revealed that peer mentoring had little impact on the career choices of medical students in the United Arab Emirates. However, this research focused on individuals who were already trained for particular careers, differing from the current study, which looks at students still exploring their options. Moreover, it was found that peer interactions can significantly influence students' decisions about their careers. Kiuru (2008) observed that closely connected peers in Finland are more inclined to pursue similar educational paths, as they tend to adopt the viewpoints of like-minded peers. This pattern was echoed in a Nigerian study by Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015), which identified peer networks as essential for guiding students in their career selections. Additionally, in Pakistan, Naz et al.

(2014) noted that friends who share a close bond are more likely to encourage one another to choose specific careers.

The studies by Obwoye and Kibor (2016), Alika (2010), and Ho (2006) have found that peer support plays a major role in determining the profession choices of American students. Due to their adolescent developmental stage, junior high school pupils frequently depend on their classmates. When it comes to choosing a career, Hashim and Embong (2015) stress that a student's peer group is the most potent form of influence. Adolescents in this period are prone to being influenced by their peers and look to them for approval of their choices, particularly work-related ones. The purpose of this study was to investigate how peer approval can influence students' career decisions.

The efficacy of peer counseling in schools has been scrutinized for various reasons. For instance, Chireshe (2013) highlighted a lack of training among peer counselors, while Kamore and Tiego (2015) found that the inability of Kenyan peer counselors to manage their own issues adversely affected their responsibilities as peer counselors. In contrast to previous findings, a study in the United States indicated no significant association between peer group influence and career preferences in the humanities among high school students (Alika, 2010). This research suggested that peers were less likely to impact high school students' career selections, and it specifically examined students majoring in humanities.

2.6 Teacher Influence and Programme Selection

According to the Yorkshire Times in 2012, Tong High School in England placed a strong emphasis on staff training to empower teachers in guiding students' career choices and nurturing their potential. This highlights the significant influence that

educators have on students' career decisions. Enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and dedicated teachers play a crucial role in steering young individuals toward their career paths, as noted by Bright, Pryor, and Wilkenfeld, alongside Ear (2005). They emphasized that teachers rank just below parents in assisting students with career decision-making and choices. A poll conducted by the Yorkshire Times in 2012 revealed that half of those surveyed attributed their career choices to a particular teacher, as indicated by Senyonyi, Ochieng, and Sells. British school teachers are adept at recognizing students' abilities and interests, guiding them toward specific subjects and career opportunities through initiatives such as work experience and job visits.

According to Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012), helpful professors must possess certain qualities, especially when it comes to the professional trajectories of Australian students. These characteristics include matching instruction to students' interests, exhibiting enthusiasm for the subject, having solid subject-matter expertise, making sure that learning experiences are relevant, establishing high standards, deftly elucidating difficult ideas, and efficiently running the classroom. These routines are essential for inspiring pupils to pursue their professional goals.

In developed nations, career guidance responsibility extends beyond school counselors and teachers to include independent counselors as well. Although independent counseling may involve fees, Balin and Hirschi (2010) argued that students who forgo this option can still benefit from classroom-based career guidance. Students who receive this kind of help develop a relationship with school counselors and become more receptive to future one-on-one conversations. For people who are having trouble getting expert advice outside of school, school-based career counseling

may be the best option. According to Balin and Hirschi (2010), career counseling and group activities in Swiss schools help pupils increase their job adaptability.

According to research, career counseling in schools is crucial in helping Kenyan students get ready for their future professional decisions (Owino & Odundo, 2016; Edwards & Quinter, 2011). To expand students' future employment options, career guidance teachers play a crucial role in creating thorough career plans that complement their interests and abilities. According to research by Hoyt (2014) and Obiyo and Eze (2015), these teachers have a special impact on fostering students' interest in careers in healthcare. Furthermore, the feedback provided by American focus group participants indicates that a significant number of them view career guidance teachers as useful resources.

2.7 Summary of Review of Related Literature

This chapter rigorously examines the existing literature on career selection and directly compares it to the current study. We will delve into several crucial subtopics, including the effects of gender on career choices, the influence of parents, the role of peers, and the impact of teachers in guiding career decisions. Additionally, we will pinpoint specific gaps in the research that demands further exploration. The following chapter will clearly outline the research methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology for the study, which encompasses the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validity and reliability of the instruments, ethical considerations, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, potential harm to participants, data collection procedures, and data processing and analysis.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The positivist paradigm is employed for this study. According to Kusi (2012), the positivist paradigm is situated within normative studies and is linked to the objectivists' epistemological perspective. It posits that social reality exists independently of the observer. The positivist framework assumes that human behavior is governed by rules (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Researchers operating within this paradigm aim to identify laws that can predict general patterns of human behavior (Creswell, 2009). This position is based on the belief in an objective reality that can be understood by the researcher (Kusi, 2012).

In this study, quantitative analysis and empirical observation can be used to examine the factors impacting junior high school (JHS) students' job choices. By utilizing survey and statistical methods, it is possible to objectively evaluate variables such as gender, peer influence, parental influence, and teacher influence to identify patterns and correlations that affect students' choices. This approach aims to provide a systematic understanding of the determinants of career selection, contributing insights for educational institutions and policymakers. Thus, evaluating the research

philosophy within this study seeks to address the question of the factors that influence JHS students' career selection in the Mpohor District.

3.2 Research Approach

The positivist paradigm-informed quantitative technique was used in this study to determine the factors impacting junior high school (JHS) students' job choices. The researcher opted for this approach based on the belief in objectivity, with the premise that a reality exists that can be observed. Utilizing a quantitative method facilitated an objective analysis, enabling the generation of factual knowledge through measurement. The application of measures and statistics to describe phenomena (Hoy, 2010) was essential, as it allowed for a thorough analysis and explanation of the factors affecting career choices among JHS students.

3.3 Research Design

A research design acts as a roadmap or blueprint for a study, detailing the strategies and methods employed to address a research question while minimizing uncertainty (Kothari, 2014; Cresswell, 2013). Its main goal is to guarantee that the evidence gathered adequately addresses the research questions. A descriptive research design was used in this investigation. To collect data for analysis and interpretation, which will ultimately lead to a report on the current state of the subject or phenomenon under investigation, Polit and Hunglar (1995) state that descriptive design entails looking at current conditions, perspectives, attitudes, ongoing processes, and emerging trends.

This method is economical for gathering information from a large sample with high turnover rates and enables thorough descriptions in their natural setting (Kothari, 2004).

According to Dawson (2002), a research design provides the fundamental structure for carrying out research. To collect data on the determinants impacting job selection among JHS students in the Mpohor District, this study used a descriptive research approach, namely a descriptive survey. A descriptive research approach was chosen because it allows for the accurate collection of data to address current aspects of the topic being investigated. The survey provided valuable insights into the research problem by examining relevant variables. Descriptive research aims to reveal the current situation, employing survey methods such as questionnaires and researcher observations to collect information on the subject matter. This approach includes data derived from both questionnaires and observations made by researchers.

3.4 Population

The target population of the study was all public JHS Form Three final-year students in the Mpohor Circuit within the District. Therefore, the study's target population was 648 students, all of whom would be selecting their careers at the SHS after taking the BECE in the Mpohor Circuit of the District in the Western Region.

Table 1: Distribution of the population by Schools

Schools	Number of Students
Ghana-China Friendship School	144
Ebenezer Methodist Basic	168
Obrayebona Wesley Methodist Basic	156
Mpohor D/A Basic	180
Total	648

Source: Mpohor Education Directorate 2023/2024

3.5 Research Setting

The Mpohor District in Ghana's Western Region served as the study's location. The Mpohor District is mainly a rural region where agriculture is the primary economic activity. It was separated from the larger Mpohor Wasa East District in 2012. The district capital is Mpohor. The district is known for its dispersed settlements, limited infrastructure, and relatively low access to career guidance services in schools. The Mpohor district comprises five educational circuits, each overseeing a cluster of public and private basic schools. The circuits are Mpohor, Adum Bansa, Ayiem/Dominase, Manso "A" and Manso "B" circuits. Each circuit has several JHSs under its jurisdiction and is supervised by School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) from the Ghana Education Service (GES). Mpohor District has thirty-two (32) JHSs and one (1) SHS in the district, according to data from the Mpohor District Education Directorate (as of the 2024 academic year). The Mpohor district was purposively selected for this study due to several contextual and empirical reasons that align with the objectives of this research.

Firstly, the district has a total JHS students' population of approximately 2,537, comprising 1,312 males (51.7%) and 1,225 females (48.3%), across 32 schools in five educational circuits. This offers a diverse and statistically viable population for conducting quantitative analysis on career choice determinants among adolescents.

Secondly, the Mpohor district is predominantly rural, with limited access to structured career guidance programmes. Preliminary data from the district education office indicates that over 85% of JHSs lack trained school counsellors. The lack of these crucial support networks offers an appropriate backdrop for examining the variables

influencing students' career decisions in educational environments with limited resources.

Thirdly, the district has recorded relatively low transition rates from JHS to senior high school. For example, Ghana Education Service (2023) reports show that only 62% of JHS graduates from the Mpohor district transition to SHS, which is below the national average of 74%. This discrepancy underscores the need to examine the decision-making processes that affect students' educational and career pathways.

Fourth, despite the educational challenges in the area, there is a lack of existing quantitative research specifically addressing career choice dynamics among JHS students in the district. This study seeks to fill that empirical gap by generating data-driven insights to inform educational planning and policy interventions.

Finally, the choice of the Mpohor District is based on logistical considerations, including the accessibility of the research sites and the support from the district education directorate, which has granted permission for school-based data collection. This enhances the feasibility and reliability of the study.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study selected 297 respondents from the target population using disproportionate sampling across the schools, employing multistage sampling techniques. Simple random sampling and unequal quota sampling were among the techniques used in the multistage sampling procedure. All Junior High School (JHS) pupils in the Mpohor Circuit were categorized based on their traits in the first phase. Each chosen school was given a disproportionate sub-sample in the next step. In the final stage, respondents were selected from each school using simple random sampling (lottery

method). The school administrators were contacted to obtain the class registers, and students were randomly selected using the lottery method until the desired number was reached. To choose students for the study, I used basic random sampling. I chose this strategy because it allowed me to use a variety of sample approaches to guarantee the representativeness of the participants.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Selection/ Sampling Frame

Name of School	Number of Students	Sample Selected
Ghana-China Friendship School	144	56
Ebenezer Methodist Basic	168	83
Obrayebona Anglican Basic	156	59
Mpohor D/A Basic	180	99
Total	648	297

Source: Mpohor Education Directorate 2023/2024

3.7 Instrumentation

The structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the study. The structured questionnaire employed by the study facilitates quantitative analysis by providing standardized response options (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2012). Fraenkel and Wallen (2012), stated that structured questionnaires enable researchers to quantify responses and perform statistical analysis to identify patterns and correlations among factors influencing career selection among JHS students. Cohen et al (2011) stated that questionnaires are commonly used and valuable tools for gathering survey data. They provide structured, numerical information, are administered without the researcher present, and are relatively easy to analyze.

However, questionnaires cannot probe, prompting, and clarifying questions, posing a limitation. When employing questionnaires, the identity of respondents and the circumstances of their responses remain unknown, raising uncertainty about accuracy. Additionally, lack of supervision may lead to potential parental response (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Despite these disadvantages, questionnaires guarantee the quick and easy gathering of statistically significant data for social science studies (Amedahe, 2000). There were five sections on the questionnaires. The background characteristics of the respondents were covered in Section A. The gender factors influencing career choice were the subject of Section B. Sections C, D, and E discuss the influences of parents, peers, and teachers, respectively. Except for section A, all sections used a four-point Likert scale to measure responses, with scores ranging from Strongly Agree (SA)= 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) =2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability, which indicates that repeated procedures should yield the same results (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003), was tested to assess the instrument's consistency. To improve the instrument's reliability, a pre-test was carried out at Mpohor Catholic Basic in the Mpohor District, Western Region. The location was selected due to its comparable features. Enhancing the instrument's dependability was the aim of the pre-test. Draft versions of the questionnaire were given to the participants, and they were urged to speak candidly with me about any misunderstandings, contradictions, or confusion they had. Following trial testing, the necessary adjustments were performed. Cronbach's alpha was used to analyze the pre-test results for internal consistency with the Statistical Product for Service Solution (version 25.0). The

results showed a reliability coefficient of .827 (see Appendix B), which indicates the dependability of the instrument.

3.9 Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire was validated at two levels: face validity and content validity. Before submitting the questionnaire to my supervisors and several lecturers in the Department of Counseling Psychology for additional assessment and input, face validity was ensured through conversations with my peers. To ensure both face and content validity of the items, a thorough examination was conducted to ensure alignment with the research questions and overall study interests. Content validity was confirmed by ensuring that the items reflected these interests (Kothari & Carg, 2014). To improve their acceptance, feedback was given on the research instruments' language, clarity, relevance, format, structure, and content. Rewording, adding, and eliminating several pointless questions were among the suggestions. Adjustments were made to the questionnaire's format and overall content, with unclear items being reworded to ensure that the questions effectively targeted the necessary information for each objective. The instrument was carefully reviewed for appropriate presentation, structure, and item format, thus guaranteeing both face and construct validity for the study.

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher asked the University's Department of Counseling Psychology for an introductory letter before distributing the surveys (see Appendix C). The researcher's introduction to the chosen schools in the Western Region's Mpohor District was made easier by this letter. To help with data collecting, the researcher also educated some research assistants and gave them advice on how to interact with respondents

efficiently. To make sure respondents knew how to answer each question, the researcher and the assistants individually distributed the questionnaires. Pupils were allowed ample time to finish the survey without feeling rushed.

3.11 Data Analysis Procedures

After being numbered and examined one after the other, the surveys were loaded into SPSS software (version 25.0). Coding, organizing, characterizing, interpreting, cross-tabulating, and making conclusions were all part of the analysis. The computation of frequency counts, percentages, averages, and standard deviations was among the descriptive statistics that were the main focus. To show pertinent proportions, the data were combined and displayed in tabular form. The data analysis is shown in Table 3, which also lists the precise statistical instruments used for each goal. For every goal, specific statistical techniques were applied.

Table 3 – Summary of how the Research Questions were analysed.

Questions	Statistical Tool Used
What gender factors influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mohur District?	Means and standard deviations.
What parental factors influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mpohor District?	Means and standard deviations.
What peer factors influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mpohor District?	Means and standard deviations.
What teacher factors influence the selection of a career among JHS students in the Mpohor District?	Means and standard deviations.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ary, Jacobs, and Winston (2013) outline four key phases of research ethics: planning, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and dissemination of findings. During data collection, honesty was maintained while administering questionnaires, ensuring students could fill them out privately to safeguard confidentiality. When sharing the research results, careful measures were implemented to safeguard the participants' privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality, ensuring that their identities remained undisclosed (Maree, 2007). The analysis of the findings prioritized identifying emerging trends in the data rather than relying on preconceived notions. Students received a letter seeking their consent to participate in the study, both as a courtesy and to ensure informed consent. Additionally, the survey questions underwent rigorous review by University of Winneba professionals, confirming their ethical suitability for educational research.

3.12.1 Informed Consent

According to Baloch and Shad (2014), participants must agree to participate in research after being fully told about all the study's information, including any potential risks and benefits. This is known as informed consent. Participants must thus comprehend the goal of the study and how they stand to benefit from it. Students were allowed to assess the risks and advantages of participating in the research and make a voluntary decision. They were fully briefed on all aspects of the study, including potential risks and benefits. Since the majority of participants were kids, the schools legally signed consent forms on behalf of the pupils. Before the study started, permission was acquired from the school administration. Participants received thorough information about the goals of the study as well as any possible dangers involved.

3.12.2 Confidentiality

Cohen et al. (2011) described confidentiality as safeguarding participants' information to prevent identification or tracing. They utilized coded identifiers instead of names, obscured specific details, and secured data with passwords to prevent unauthorized access.

3.12.3 Anonymity

Anonymity ensures that individuals and research sites remain unidentified (Walford, 2005). In this study, numbers replaced participants' and schools' names on questionnaires to prevent their identification.

3.12.4 Harm to participants

Each researcher must balance protecting respondents' identities to prevent harm while also respecting their ownership rights, as outlined by Grinyer (2002). In this study, the researcher ensured participants' safety from physical, psychological, and emotional harm, provided adequate information for informed decisions, obtained consent before disclosing data, and conducted a comprehensive risk/benefit analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demography of the Respondents

This section provides background details about the respondents, such as their gender and ages. Table 4 displays the demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of the Students

Variable	Sub-scale	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	99	34.7
	Female	186	65.3
Age Range	Below 14 years	68	23.9
	14-15 years	189	66.3
	16 and above	28	9.82

Source: Field data (2023/2024) N= 285

The above table outlines the demographics of the respondents. It reveals that 65.3% of the students were female (n=186), while 34.7% were male (n=99). In terms of age, the majority (66.3%, n=189) fell within 14-15 years.

4.2 Analysis of the Research Questions (Q1-Q4)

On a scale of Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1, JHS students from the Mpohor District in the Western Region were asked to score their remarks. 2.50 was the criterion value used to calibrate the scale. The sum of the scores was calculated and then divided by the total number of items on the scale ($4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$). JHS students in the Mpohor District of the Western Region had mean scores ranging from 0.00 to 2.49, which were interpreted as indicating a

low factor influencing their choice of career. In the Mpohor District of the Western Region, items or statements with mean scores between 2.50 and 4.00 were found to be important factors influencing junior high school students' choice of career.

4.2.1 Research Question One: What gender factors influence the career selection among JHS students in the Mpohor District?

Investigating the gender-related elements that affect junior high school (JHS) students' career decisions in the Mpohor District in the Western Region was the goal of this study. Table 5 summarizes the results by showing the means and standard deviations of the influence of gender on these students' job choices.



Table 5: Gender Impact (GI)

VARIABLE Gender (G1)	M Statistics	SD Std. Error Test Value= 2.50	Kurtosis Statistics	MR
Career trips influence my career selection.	3.81	.674	.688	1 st
My preferred career is linked to my favorite subjects.	3.80	.924	.840	2 nd
School career days influence my career selection.	3.72	.234	.101	3 rd
The subjects I do influence my career decision.	3.69	.235	.327	4 th
My school head was influential to the career I want to offer.	3.42	.564	.189	5 th
The career guidance counsellor is influential to my career I want to offer.	3.38	.501	.620	6 th
School career guidance cleared career confusion I had.	3.32	.249	.588	7 th
My school career exploration and career decision-making activities broaden horizons in my selected field.	3.19	.364	.473	8 th
Former students' careers had a positive influence on my career selection	2.98	.345	.120	9 th
Career guidance is broadly offered at my school.	1.54	.433	.147	10 th
Mean of Means/SD	3.29	.452	.409	

Source: Field Data (2023/2024)

(n=285)

Key-M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, MR=Means Ranking, N=Sample Size

The results of a study on how gender affects JHS students' profession choices in the Mpohor District are shown in Table 5. Kurtosis values within the allowed range indicates that the variables have a normal distribution of ± 2 (George & Mallery,

2011). With an average mean score of 3.29, which is higher than the Test Value of 2.50, the results show that gender has a considerable impact on job choice among JHS students in the Mpohor District.

Many students indicated that career excursions affected their career choices ($M=3.81 > TV (2.50)$, $SD=0.674$, $K=0.688$, $n=285$), indicating that career trips are one of the gender-related factors impacting career choices among JHS students in the Mpohor District. Given that students also reported that their favorite topics are frequently connected to their intended vocations ($M=3.80 > TV (2.50)$, $SD=0.924$, $K=0.840$, $n=285$), the availability of gender-related occupations in schools appears to be a significant determinant.

Additionally, students said that professional days influence their job decision ($M=3.72 > TV (2.50)$, $SD=0.234$, $K=0.101$, $n=285$), indicating the importance of these gender-related activities. Furthermore, it was found that school administrators significantly influenced the career choices of their students ($M=3.42 > TV (2.50)$, $SD=0.564$, $K=0.189$, $n=285$). The results provide credence to the idea that school career days and career excursions significantly influence gender-related career preferences. According to Higgins et al. (2014), for example, research from the United Kingdom showed that these professional visits had an impact on gender-specific career choices. In several nations, including Ghana, Pakistan, Ireland, and the United States, similar incidents have been demonstrated to influence gender-related employment choices (Mudhovozi & Chireshe, 2012; Behrandt & Franklin, 2014; Shakil, Faizi & Hafeez, 2011; Higgins et al., 2014; Amoah et al., 2015).

Hansen (2006) noted that in Switzerland, participating in activities related to school career exploration and decision-making can enhance students' understanding of their

interests, abilities, and potential career options. According to Bardick (2004), Building trustworthy relationships with counselors, exploring occupational interests, comprehending the stages of decision-making in career selection and development planning, and receiving help with career research are all beneficial to Canadian students. According to Bardick (2004), counselors who want to have a bigger influence on students' career planning may need to get more involved in their everyday life and offer career counseling outside of the classroom.

The Roberts review (2011) emphasized that although teachers' subject-matter expertise and instructional strategies are important, students are frequently inspired to connect with a subject by their excitement. However, Roberts (2011) noted that few instructors take action to improve their topic knowledge throughout their careers, indicating a worrying lack of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) among educators. Furthermore, Perna et al. (2008) discussed the difficulties in teaching specific engineering topics in technology courses, which are mostly caused by ineffective curriculum communication between the science and technology departments.

4.2.2 Research Question Two: What parental factors influence SHS career selection among JHS students in the Mpohor District?

The purpose of this study was to determine the parental factors that affect JHS students in the Mpohor District's choice of SHS career. The results are shown in Table 6. Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations of the parental characteristics that affect JHS students in the Mpohor District's choice of SHS career.

Table 6: Parental Influence

VARIABLE Parental Influence (PI)	M Statistics	SD Std. Error Test Value=2.50	Kurtosis Statistics	MR
My mother is influential to the career I want to pursue.	3.92	.924	.740	1st
The family business is a factor in my selecting a career.	3.83	.234	.181	2nd
My father influenced me in the career I want to pursue.	3.79	.674	.049	3rd
My parents' dominants profession is my family preferred career selection.	3.73	.235	.327	4th
The information I received from my parents assisted me in selecting a career.	3.70	.564	.189	5th
My father's career influenced my selection of a career.	3.67	.501	.620	6th
Older siblings influenced my career selection.	3.45	.364	.045	7th
My mother's career influenced my career selection.	3.32	.249	.384	8th
An extended family member is powerful in the career I selected.	3.18	.454	.039	9th
Mean of Mean/SD	3.62	.454	.286	
<i>Source: Field Data (2023/2024)</i>		<i>(n=285)</i>		

Key=M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, MR=Means Ranking, N=Sample Size

Table 6 displays findings regarding parental factors that influence SHS students' career choices among JHS students in the Mpohor District when choosing their academic and career paths. Kurtosis values falling within the allowed range of ± 2 indicate that the data is normally distributed, supporting the idea that the variables

follow a normal distribution (George and Mallery, 2011). According to the results in Table 6, some parental factors have a major impact on the academic career and career path choices made by JHS students in the Mpohor District. This was demonstrated by the fact that a student's mean score ($MM=3.62$) was higher than the test value of 2.50. For instance, the majority of students stated that their moms significantly influence the career choices they make ($M=3.92 > TV (2.50)$, $SD=.924$, $K=.740$, $N=285$). This implies that a large number of mothers in the Mpohor District have an impact on the profession choices made by JHS students. Another parental factor impacting SHS profession choices among JHS students in Mpohor District was involvement in family company ($M=3.83 > TV (2.50)$, $SD=.234$, $K=(.181)$, $n=285$). The importance of dads as parental variables influencing profession selection among JHS students in the Mpohor District was further highlighted by the fact that many students stated that their fathers had a considerable influence on their career goals ($M=3.79 > TV (2.50)$, $SD=.674$, $K=.049$, $n=285$).

For junior high school pupils in the Mpohor District, the principal occupation in the family has been found to be a significant parental influence influencing career choice ($M=3.73 > TV (2.50)$, $SD=0.235$). It has also been discovered that parental advice has a significant impact on profession choices ($M=3.70 > TV (2.50)$, $SD=0.564$, $K=0.189$, $n=285$). These results support claims made by Abbasi and Sarwat (2014) in the American context, who likened young people's profession choices to rocks in a rock polisher, with parents acting as the main determinants. According to other American research, parents have a significant influence on their children's job choices, and even with the resources offered by schools, neither teachers nor counselors can fully replace this influence (Baloch & Shah, 2014; Abbasi & Sarwat, 2014).

Furthermore, in American households, children's job paths are significantly influenced by family members other than their parents (Tillman, 2015; Hutchins & Meese, 2011; Ojeda & Flores, 2008). The results further support the findings of Wortman, Loftus, and Marshall (2014) and Bracey (2008), who highlighted the distinct roles that parents play in shaping their children's professional goals. Notably, their study finds moms to be extremely significant role models, particularly for American girls in their early years. According to Bracey (2008), African American children's job decision outcomes are highly influenced by their mothers' employment status and the equality of their mother-child connection. Additionally, a study by Paa and McWhirter (2000) that involved students from two American metropolitan schools in the Midwest found that both male and female students view their parents as having a good influence on their professional goals. According to Mullis, Mullis, and Gerwhels (2012), students usually match their parents' occupations with their own professional goals.

In a similar vein, Nyamwenge (2016) observed that certain families substantially shape students' career decisions, despite the differing contexts of the studies when compared to the current research. Parents influence professional choices in some ways, such as by offering encouragement and support. According to a Kenyan study, teenagers frequently ask their parents for advice on job planning (Mudhovozi & Chireshe, 2012). Although the emphasis and goals of this study are comparable to those of the current research, the findings' objectivity and generalizability may be limited by its qualitative methodology.

4.2.3 Research Question Three: What peer factors influence the selection of SHS career among JHS students in the Mpohor District?

The purpose of this study was to investigate how peer influences affect JHS students in the Mpohor District's choice of SHS career. The results are shown in Table 7. Table 7 shows the means and standard deviations of peer factors that affect JHS students in the Mpohor District's choice of SHS career.

Table 7: Peer Influence

VARIABLE Peer Influence (PI)	M Statistics	SD Std. Error Test Value=2.50	KURTOSIS Statistics	MR
I have ability in that career	3.85	.564	.456	1 st
It will give me the opportunity to utilize my talents.	3.82	.513	.458	2 nd
I accept the advice I obtain from peers that I cherish most	3.78	.729	.737	3 rd
It will help me stay authentic and true to myself.	3.62	.483	.349	4 th
I am personally interested in choosing my career path.	3.56	.234	.766	5 th
Peer advice on career paths is important to fellow learners.	3.53	.924	.557	6 th
It suits my gender.	3.38	.543	.429	7 th
Career education comes from peers.	3.37	.493	.048	8 th
I rely on encouragement from peers.	3.55	.355	.563	9 th
Mean of Means/SD	3.58	.537	.484	

Source; Field data (2023/2024)

(n=285)

Key-M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, MR=Means Ranking, n=Sample Size

Results about peer factors influencing junior high school (JHS) students in the Mpohor District's senior high school (SHS) career choice are shown in Table 7. The results show that the variables have a normal distribution because the Kurtosis values are within the allowed range of ± 2 , which suggests that the data has normal distribution features (George and Mallery, 2011).

Peer variables have a major impact on SHS career choices among JHS students in the Mpohor District, as shown by a comparison of the mean values with the test results in Table 7. The average mean (MM=3.58) of the students' answers was higher than the test mark of 2.50. Based on a sample size (n) of 285 individuals, several peer factors were found, such as perceived aptitude in the selected professional path, where the mean value (M=3.58) was higher than the test value (TV) of 2.50, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.537 and a Kurtosis (K) of 0.484.

With a mean value (M=3.82) higher than the test value of 2.50, a standard deviation (SD) of 0.513, and a Kurtosis (K) of 0.458 from the same sample size, students also acknowledged that choosing a vocation offers the opportunity to use their talents. Additionally, a large number of students (M=3.78 > TV 2.50), with a standard deviation of 0.279 and a Kurtosis value of 0.737 within the sample size of 285, indicated that they appreciate peer guidance. Finally, with a K of 0.766 and an SD of 0.234 from the same sample size, it was found that students frequently use their interests to influence their career choice (M=3.56 > TV 2.50).

These results are consistent with a study by Fizer (2013) that shows a lot of students focus their professional choices on their academic prowess. However, some students might not be satisfied if their work habits don't fit with their chosen subject of study. These individuals may perceive their chosen field as challenging and unengaging.

Consequently, effective career guidance becomes crucial in helping such students select suitable career paths. The findings also support Hoyt's (2014) research, emphasizing the significance of preparedness in career decision-making. According to Hoyt, extra help can help pupils become more prepared for life after high school. According to a study on job readiness interventions, students who participated in workshops were better able to make wise career decisions. Moreover, interventions help learners plan their careers, enhancing their overall preparedness. It is suggested that cost-effective methods like workshops can aid learners in making suitable career decisions.

4.2.4 Research Question Three: What teacher factors influence the SHS career selection among JHS students in the Mpohor District?

This research question aimed to evaluate the teacher-related factors that affect career selection among Junior High School students in the Mpohor District. The findings were analyzed using means and standard deviations, which are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 - Means and Standard Deviations of Teacher Influence on Senior High School Career Selection.

Table 8: Teacher Influence

VARIABLE Teacher Influence (TI)	M Statistics	SD Std Error Test Value=2.50	KURTOSIS Statistics	MR
Information on entrepreneurship is powerful if it comes from teachers.	3.99	.234	.766	1 st
My class teacher is powerful to the career I want to pursue.	3.92	.294	.543	2 nd
Validation of careers is given by teachers.	3.82	.453	.079	3 rd
Career behaviour modification comes from my teachers.	3.48	.324	.627	4 th
Teachers' influence on career selection is influential.	3.34	.113	.178	5 th
The teachers' advice on career guidance was helpful to me.	3.27	.224	.520	6 th
Information on careers given by teachers is dependable.	3.26	.364	.465	7 th
Teachers provide appropriate and comprehensive advice on career selection.	3.22	.249	.764	8 th
Mean of Means/SD	3.48	.282	.493	

Source: Field Data (2023/2024)

(n=285)

Key-M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, MR=Mean Ranking, N=Sample Size

The results about teacher factors that impact job choice among JHS students in the Mpohor District are shown in Table 8. Kurtosis values falling within the allowed range of 2 imply a normal data distribution, which supports the findings that the variables follow a normal distribution (George and Mallery, 2011). Teacher factors had a considerable impact on job choices among JHS students in the Mpohor District, according to a comparison of mean values with the Test Value in Table 8. The

average mean of student responses ($MM=3.48$), for instance, is higher than the test value of 2.50, highlighting the influence of teachers on career decisions.

Several teacher-related factors were identified, notably that information about entrepreneurship is perceived as most influential when provided by teachers ($M=3.99$, $TV=2.50$, $SD=.234$, $K=.766$, $n=285$). This indicates that teachers play a pivotal role in affecting career selection among JHS students in the Mpohor District. Additionally, students expressed that their class teachers significantly shape their career aspirations ($M=3.92$, $TV=2.50$, $SD=.294$, $K=.543$, $n=285$), further highlighting the considerable influence teachers have on students' career choices in this area. Students also reported that teachers validate their career aspirations ($M=3.82$, $TV=2.50$, $SD=.453$, $K=.079$, $n=285$) and help in modifying behaviors related to career decisions ($M=3.48$, $TV=2.50$, $SD=.324$, $K=.627$, $n=285$).

According to a related study by Bright, Pryor, Wilkenfeld, and Earl (2005), instructors are the second most important group in influencing students' job choices. According to a 2012 Yorkshire Times survey, half of participants cited a particular instructor as having a significant impact on their career decisions. Researchers Senyonyi and Ochieng, among others, also urge students to visit different workplaces, engage in job experiences, and investigate topics. According to the current study's findings, career counseling is provided in industrialized nations not only by teachers and school counselors but also by outside counselors, frequently at a cost, which may deter some students from asking for help. Nonetheless, Balin and Hirschi (2010) contended that career counseling in the classroom might still be advantageous for students who choose not to seek assistance from outside counselors. By developing a relationship with school counselors, students can feel more at ease asking for individualized

support in the future. Career counseling offered by schools could be a useful option for people who are having trouble finding qualified advice elsewhere.

Furthermore, it is clear from several sources that career guidance teachers are essential in helping students create thorough career plans that complement their skills and interests, thereby increasing their options for future employment (Hoyt, 2014). In a similar vein, Obiyo and Eze (2015) emphasized the special capacity of career counseling instructors to pique students' interest in careers in healthcare. In parallel, several participants in focus groups held in America expressed a great deal of gratitude for the assistance that career advice teachers gave.

4.3 Limitations

The research aimed to identify factors influencing career choices among JHS students in Mpohor. It is important to note that the findings do not apply to all Ghanaian students. The data gathering process was hampered by a number of respondents who chose not to participate, as well as those who submitted incomplete or delayed questionnaires. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, efforts were made to strengthen the data's authenticity and dependability, which lessened some of the findings' flaws.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study aimed to explore the factors influencing career selection among JHS students in the Mpohor District. It used a descriptive survey design with a quantitative research approach, guided by four research questions. The target population included all three public JHS students in the Mpohor District, totaling 648 students. From this, a sample of 297 students (with a 96% response rate of 285) was selected using multistage sampling. Data was collected using a structured (self-developed) questionnaire, with reliability and validity ensured through pre-testing. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the data collection process. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, average of means, and standard deviations were used for data analysis.

5.1.1 Key Findings

The following findings were identified:

First, the study discovered that JHS students in the Mpohor District's job choices are greatly influenced by gender-related factors, including school career days, favored courses, and career visits. The influence of professional tours, such as students touring factories and industries, on career choice is one of the major gender factors. The preferred careers are linked to learners' favorite subjects, and places like factories and school career days also influence JHS learners' career choices. However, a negative aspect of this finding is that it reinforces traditional gender stereotypes by exposing boys and girls to gender-specific career paths and providing unequal access

to career-related activities, which also leads to reliance on favorite subjects and isolated school events.

Furthermore, the job choices of Junior High School (JHS) pupils in the Mpohor District are greatly influenced by a variety of family variables. While some students stated that family companies influence their professional choices, others stated that their mothers are crucial in determining their future goals. Furthermore, fathers also exert influence over the career paths their children pursue. A concerning aspect of this finding is that, in certain instances, students may feel compelled to follow career trajectories that align with parental preferences or familial traditions, rather than pursuing their interests or abilities. This phenomenon can lead to a lack of personal fulfillment and diminished motivation in the long term.

Furthermore, the study found that among JHS students in the Mpohor District, peer factors are also quite important when choosing a vocation. Personal interest, proven aptitude in particular professions, and the chance to use their skills are a few of the peer effects that have been documented. However, a potential drawback of this finding is that when students base their decisions predominantly on peer comparisons or subjective beliefs about their capabilities, without adequate guidance, they may either overestimate or underestimate their potential.

The research further indicated that teacher-related factors are influential in guiding career choices among JHS students in the Mpohor District. Notable teacher factors include the provision of entrepreneurial information, the teachers' influential roles, the validation of career options, and efforts to modify student behavior towards certain careers. However, a critical concern arising from these findings is that excessive reliance on teachers' opinions may constrain students' capacities to make independent

career decisions. If the entrepreneurial or career information disseminated by teachers is outdated or inadequate, it may misinform students, resulting in unrealistic expectations or ill-suited career paths. Additionally, the endeavor to modify student behavior regarding specific careers may stifle creativity and discourage exploration of non-traditional or emerging fields. Lastly, an overreliance on teacher validation in career choice decisions can undermine students' confidence in their judgment.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concluded that:

In Mpohor District, the selection of careers among learners was largely influenced by their parents and other significant figures in their lives, a finding that the study corroborated. Crucially, the findings show that among the factors impacting junior high school (JHS) students in the Mpohor District job choices, gender is a significant determinant. Additionally, since peers exert similar influences, the study found no significant differences between male and female learners in their understanding of career selection. It was also observed that there were no appreciable variations in the factors influencing learners' profession choices across age groups, owing to the same effects of peers and gender.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends the following.

First and foremost, career selection guidance should be integrated into both the Standard-Based and Common Core Curriculum by the Ghana Education Service (GES). By doing so, learners will gain an understanding of the essential factors to consider in their career choices right from the start. In addition, parents must refrain from selecting career paths for their children. Instead, they should encourage them to

explore their interests and choose careers that align with their passions. To communicate this effectively, counselors should utilize mass media to educate parents on the importance of allowing their children the autonomy to make their own career decisions. Moreover, the Ghana Education Service (GES) should mandate that all learners consult with a counselor regarding their career paths and choices, with oversight from these counselors. This requirement would ensure that students who may not seek help independently receive the necessary guidance for selecting their future careers.

Lastly, all basic school teachers should participate in specialized training workshops centered on career guidance that are organized by the Ghana Education Service (GES) in partnership with the National Teaching Council (NTC). Prioritizing the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of career guidance educators is vital to ensure their competitiveness and effectiveness in supporting students.

5.4 Areas for Further Study

The following research directions are suggested.

1. This study looked at the variables affecting JHS students in the Mpohor District's choice of career. To confirm and extrapolate these results, more studies in different districts are required.
2. The factors influencing JHS students' profession choices were the main focus of this study. What determines working-class people's employment choices should be the subject of future research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This survey is being carried out for MPhil research to “investigate factors influencing career selection among JHS students in Mpohor district This is not an assessment of your efforts and there is no right or wrong answers. All information obtained shall be kept with utmost confidentiality and would be solely for this academic purpose. Your support and contribution would be very much appreciated since the outcome of this research is mainly for academic purposes as stated earlier.

SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHY OF RESPONDENTS

1. Gender a. Male [☐] b. Female [☐]
2. Age a. Below 13 years [☐] b. 14– 15 years [☐] c. 16years and above [☐]
3. Primary care giver a. Father [☐] b. Mother [☐] c. Both parent [☐] d. Family member [☐]
4. Occupation of parent/Guardian
a. Farmer/Fisherman [☐] b. Teacher [☐] c. Nurse/Doctor/Midwife [☐] d. Trader [☐]
e. Mechanic [☐]
5. Religion. a. Christian [☐] b. Muslim [☐] c. Traditionalist [☐] d. None [☐]
6. Ethnicity. a. Fante [☐] b. Asante [☐] c. Ewe [☐] d. Hausa [☐] e. Specify.....

SECTION B**RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: GENDER INFLUENCE**

Please respond to the following statements on **your knowledge of gender influence that affects career selection**. Indicate the extent to which you Strongly Agree-SA, Agree-A, Disagree-D and Strongly Disagree-SD to the statement below

Directions: Indicate with a circle [0] on how gender influence affect career selection.

Where: SA = Strongly Agree, (4), A= Agree, (3) D= Disagree, (2) and SD =Strongly Disagree (1)

	Statements	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
7.	Career trips influence my career selection.	4	3	2	1
8.	My preferred career selection is link to my favourite subjects.	4	3	2	1
9.	School career days influence my career selection.	4	3	2	1
10.	The subject I do influences my career decision.	4	3	2	1
11.	My school head is influential to the career I want to offer.	4	3	2	1
12.	The career guidance counselor is influential to my career to the career I want to do.	4	3	2	1
13.	School career guidance cleared career confusion I had in my career choice.	4	3	2	1
14.	My school career exploration and career decision-making	4	3	2	1

	activities broaden horizons in my selected field.				
15.	Former students' careers had a positive influence on my career selection	4	3	2	1
16.	Career guidance is broadly offered at my school.	4	3	2	1

SECTION C

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: PARENTAL INFLUENCE

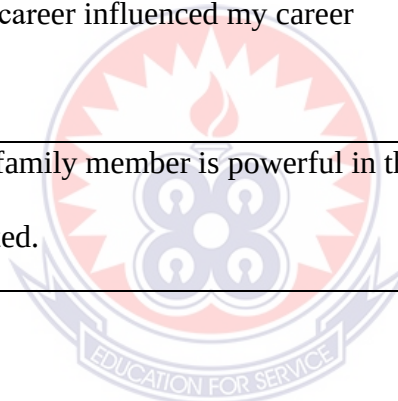
Please respond to the following statements on your knowledge of parental influence that affects career selection. Indicate the extent to which you Strongly Agree-SA, Agree-A, Disagree-D and Strongly Disagree-SD to the statement below

Direction: Indicate with a circle [0] on how parental influence affects career selection.

Where: SA = Strongly Agree, (4), A = Agree, (3) D = Disagree, (2) and SD = Strongly Disagree (1)

	Statements	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
17.	My mother is influential to the career I want to pursue.	4	3	2	1
18.	The family business is a factor in my selecting career I want to veer into.	4	3	2	1
19.	My father influenced me in the career I want to pursue.	4	3	2	1

20.	My parents' dominants profession is my family preferred career selection.	4	3	2	1
21.	Information I received from my parents assisted me to select a career.	4	3	2	1
22.	My father's career had an influence on my selection of a career.	4	3	2	1
23.	Older siblings had an influence on my career selection.	4	3	2	1
24.	My mother's career influenced my career selection.	4	3	2	1
25.	An extended family member is powerful in the career I selected.	4	3	2	1



SECTION D**RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: PEER INFLUENCE**

Please respond to the following statements on your knowledge of peer influence that affects career selection. Indicate the extent to which you Strongly Agree-SA, Agree-A, Disagree-D, and Strongly Disagree-SD to the statements below

Directions: Indicate with a circle [0] on how peer influence affects career selection.

Where: SA=Strongly Agree, (4), A=Agree, (3) D=Disagree, (2) and SD =Strongly Disagree (1)

	Statements	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
26.	I have ability in that career.	4	3	2	1
27.	It will give me the opportunity to utilize my talents.	4	3	2	1
28.	I accept the advice I obtain from peers that I cherish most.	4	3	2	1
29.	It will help me stay authentic and true to myself.	4	3	2	1
30.	I am personally interested in choosing my study career path.	4	3	2	1
31.	Peer advice on career paths is important to fellow learners.	4	3	2	1

32.	It suits my gender.	4	3	2	1
33.	Career education comes from peers	4	3	2	1
34.	I rely on encouragement from peers	4	3	2	1

SECTION E

Please respond to the following statements on your knowledge on teacher influence that affects career selection. Indicate the extent to which you Strongly Agree-SA, Agree-A, Disagree-D, and Strongly Disagree-SD to the statements below

Directions: Indicate with a circle [0] on how teacher influence affects career selection.

Where: SA=Strongly Agree, (4), A=Agree, (3) D=Disagree, (2) and SD =Strongly Disagree (1)

Statements	SA	A	D	SD
Information on entrepreneurship is powerful if it comes from teachers	4	3	2	1
My class teacher is powerful to the career I want to pursue	4	3	2	1
Validation of careers is given by teachers.	4	3	2	1
Career behaviour modification comes from my teachers.	4	3	2	1
Teachers influence on career selection and career development is influential.	4	3	2	1

Teachers' advice on career guidance was helpful to me.	4	3	2	1
Information on careers given by teachers is dependable.	4	3	2	1
Teachers provide appropriate and comprehensive advice on career selection.	4	3	2	1



APPENDIX B

RELIABILITY TEST RESULTS OF THE SECTIONS OF THE

INSTRUMENTS

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Cases Valid	30	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

- a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.827	39

RELIABILITY TEST RESULTS OF THE INSTRUMENT

GENDER INFLUENCE

Case Processing Summary

	No.	%
Cases Valid	30	100.0%
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0%

- a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.745	10

RELIABILITY TEST RESULTS OF THE INSTRUMENT**PARENTAL INFLUENCE****Case Processing Summary**

	N	%
Cases Valid	30	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

- a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.798	11

RELIABILITY TEST RESULTS OF THE INSTRUMENT**PEER INFLUENCE****Case Processing Summary**

	No.	%
Cases Valid	30	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

- a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.785	10

RELIABILITY TEST RESULTS OF THE INSTRUMENT

TEACHER INFLUENCE

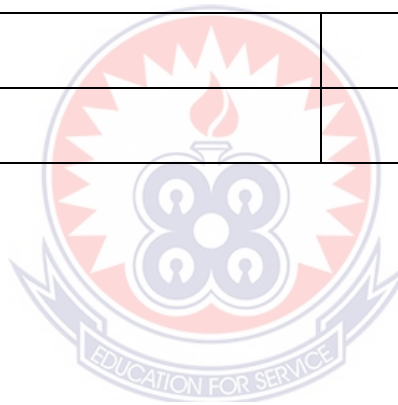
Case Processing Summary

	No.	%
Cases Valid	30	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	0
Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.728	11



APPENDIX C

Mpohor Ghana Education Service

Post Office Box 2

Mpohor

16th December 2020

The Head of Department

Department of Counselling Psychology and Education

University Of Education, Winneba

Winneba

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION FOR INTRODUCTORY LETTER

LOUIS OFORI – ATTAH

STUDENT ID: 8180170002

I wish to apply for an introductory letter to enable me to undertake my research work on the topic “Factors Influencing Programme of study Selection and career development among JHS students in the Mpohor district in the Western Region, Ghana.

I am a final year MPhil. (Counselling Psychology) student and would be very grateful if my request is granted.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

.....

LOUIS OFORI – ATTAH

(0243657260)

