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FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SUNYANI MUNICIPALITY OF GHANA

PETER KUMI

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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(202113714)

A thesis in the Department of Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy (Counselling Psychology) in the University of Education, Winneba

OCTOBER, 2022

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Peter Kumi, hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own 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 the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

PROF. MATTHEW KOJO NAMALE (SUPERVISOR)

Signature:……...……

Date:……

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Madam Christiana Appiah and my four lovely children: Precious, Rex, Audrey and Joycelyn.

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I acknowledge with a heart full of gratitude to the almighty God who gave me knowledge, strength and wisdom for this piece of work. To God Be the Glory.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine factors influencing career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality of Ghana. The study adopted the descriptive survey design using the quantitative paradigm. A sample of 150 students was selected through stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected through a survey questionnaire instrument. Mean and standard deviations were used to analyse research questions 1, 2 and 3. The independent samples t-test was used to test hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. The findings showed a significant difference between males and females on parental influence on career choice of senior high school students. The study also revealed that peer factors influenced career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani municipality. Again, prestige of a profession influenced choice of career among students in the Municipality. It was therefore recommended that, Parents should develop appropriate measures and tools in guiding senior high school graduates in choosing their career of interest and passion which will then inform the program of choice to offer. They should be guided on the basis that; every profession is important and hence career may be chosen based on once interest and passion.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Career choice is one of many important choices' students should make in determining future plans but this has become a complex science with the dawn of information technology, the emergence of post-industrial revolution and job competition (Okwulehie, 2018). Harris et al. (2009) contended that, industrialization and post industrialization have made it possible for a common person to be rich as long as he or she has due skills and knowledge and such decisions will impact them positively throughout their lives. In today 's competitive world of knowledge and the continuous economic hardship, one has not only to make due career planning but also exhaustive career research before making a career choice so as to adjust to the evolving socioeconomic conditions (Harris et al., 2009).

Krumboltz, (2009) asserted that, the essence of who a student is will revolve around what a student wants to do with his or her lifelong work. However, Durlak et al. (2010) mentioned that, senior high school students are disadvantaged as a result of our inability to guide them after school. This is consistent with the assertion that we guide our boys and girls to some extent through school, then drop them into this complex world to sink or swim as the case may be, (Godbey & Gordon, 2019). Perry et al. (2010) ascertain that most times, instead of people choosing occupations suitable to their intellectual abilities, you see them rushing to occupations which they cannot cope with and this often lead them to a confused end. This is why a student needs to be thoroughly furnished with the relevant information to make judicious career decision.

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Lundberg et al. (2017) stated that the child is born knowing nothing of his society. The home provides the biological traits; qualities and natural endowments which direct a human characteristic upon which all other attributes are built. This highlights the fact that home and parents occupy the most important position in the child's education. This is also supported by Egbo (2017) when he asserted that even if schools had the resources with which to meet young people's career guidance needs, neither teachers nor counsellors can replace the influence parents have on their children's career plans.

MacGregor et al. (2006) posited that parents could be a motivating or inhibiting factor to the career choice of their children, especially when it is clear that the home is the first social group which the child comes in contact. It is here that children learn to interpret realities. It offers the psychological and social needs for the growth and development of the child especially in the area of choosing a career (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). Khattab, (2015) stated that of all the factors that influence career choice process, family members, particularly parents are the most influential determinant of career plans, aspirations and occupational expectation.

Okwulehie (2018) posited that career is the totality of experience through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of his way of living. Career therefore can be defined as the progress and actions taken by a person throughout a lifetime, specially related to his occupation. Choosing a career is an extremely important decision that impacts an individual's entire future. Choosing a career is not a trial and error exercise, it is a deliberate effort made at once (Lent & Brown, 2013).

Vondracek et al. (2019) posited; career is an enjoying process that occurs over the life span. A right choice of career by a youth tends to result in a happy progressive and

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fulfilled life. Conversely a wrong choice of career may destroy the future progress of an individual thus leading to unforgettable frustrations and woes. The need to make a good choice of career becomes paramount if one is to find happiness and harmony in life (Seaward, 2017) .

Different inquiries on the life of the students have come up with different findings. The results of a quantitative study conducted in central Pennsylvania by taking rural young adults and adolescents as respondents indicated that influence exerted by an individual's family, society, state of economy, their interpretation of better job and financial constraints were major reasons that can impact their career selection (Ferry, 2006). A systematic review of 600 articles published in 2013 of low-income countries conducted by Puerto's (2013) determined intrinsic factors amongst medical students (age, sex, rural background) and extrinsic factors (salaries, governmental institutions, medical institutes reputation, training techniques) influence a medical student's decision to choose a career in primary care; and to establish that some factors were different among students in high-, middle-, and low-income countries (Lawal, 2016).

According to Koech et al., (2016), career choice is influenced by multiple factors including personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and finance. Lent (2020), observed that each individual considering a career is influenced by several factors including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, social contacts and educational attainment. According to Koech et al., (2016) most people are influenced by careers that their parents favour, others follow the careers that their educational choices have opened for them, some choose to

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follow their passion regardless of how much or little it will make them while others choose the careers that give high income.

It is worth noting that studies have shown that the majority of students in Tanzania finish their secondary school education without adequate knowledge on career choice due to lack of proper career guidance and counselling (Amani, 2013). Consequently, they are directly or indirectly affected when they start university education because the majority of them lack the knowledge necessary to choose fields that best suit their personalities from variety of programmes offered in universities. As observed by Pordelan et al., (2018) when people are provided with adequate information at the right time, it can make a big difference in career planning. However, most people often make wrong career decisions due to lack of information, ignorance, peer pressure, wrong modelling or as a result of prestige attached to certain careers without having adequate career guidance and career counselling (Nwabueze et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, counselling units are not readily available in many of our Senior High Schools in Ghana although it is mandatory for them to have counselling units. The few schools that have counselling units are also plagued with many challenges, such as finances, rendering the functions of these centres very difficult (Nwabueze et al., 2017). Moreover, even though some of the tertiary institutions have counselling centres, sensitization on their relevance is low and thus few students patronize them. More so, due to the busy schedule of academic counsellors who most often double as lecturers, some of the students who would like to seek counselling services are unable to have access to them.

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Today, career choices are frequently difficult because of the many available careers, the staggering array of jobs, the continual changes in the economy and job market, the great potential for making mistakes, and the misery that is likely to happen when people get into the wrong work (Makridakis, 2017). Therefore, giving students in Senior High School (SHS) the skills and knowledge to realistically plan for their future in the world of work is a primary goal of education. Career decision-making, choice and development which are usually influenced by factors that determine the choice of career are vitally important for today's youth, who are more than ever motivated but directionless (Bedu-Addo et al., 2022).

Amoah et al. (n.d.) have commented that effort to guide students to choose and prepare in trades they are studying so as to be economically productive dates back to 1885 when George Merill started the first systematic work in guidance in the United States of America (USA). Wang and Degol, (2013) reports that career choice is relevant in the life of the individual because it has the potency to affect the whole life of the individual. Due to this, Davis, the principal of the Central High School in Detroit, USA, required his 7th grade students to write a weekly report on occupational interest that would influence their choice of career for their English class so that they could be helped in order not to make mistakes that would affect their lives (Amoah et al. n.d.).

In his book 'Choosing a Vocation', published in 1909, Frank Parson provided a conceptual framework for helping individuals to select careers. This framework is used by vocational and/or career counsellors in assisting people to choose their career, an indication that helping people to make appropriate career choice is something that has been there in Europe and the USA since the days of the career education

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movement (Amoah et al., n.d.). The industrial revolution in Europe and the technological breakthrough in Russia in the 1957 which led to the launch of the Sputnik 1 forced many Western Countries, to take a new look at vocational guidance in schools (Bedu-Addo et al., 2022).

In Africa, available literature shows that formal vocational guidance was given to final year students in Nigeria in 1957 (Adekeye et al., 2017). A study in career choice in Ethiopia by Stebleton, (2007) indicated that the student had an internal locus of control and believes that there are numerous external factors which influence their career choice. According to Koech et al., (2016) studies in Kenya show that rural students tend to seek help from parents more than urban students and that parents more than teachers and career counsellors play a major role in the career choice of students.

Olaomi (2019) was of the view that determinants of career preference and decision making of technical education students in Accra, was that 62% of students who choose technical education and select a career in that field have family influence being the major factor that influence their decision and choice. Olaomi, (2019) went further to state that the determining factors includes personal interest, job opportunities, income and the school guidance department.

Young people all over the world have high ambitions, expecting to be highly educated and have professional careers, yet research has shown that many do not develop coherent plans that will help them choose a befitting career that matches their abilities, values, and the opportunities available for achieving this goals (Mann et al., 2020). Career choices are influenced and are determined by one factor or multiples of factors. According to Getange and Sagwe (2016) career choice is influenced by

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multiple factors including personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and finance.

Lee and Gino, (2015) provide a thoughtful scenario that each individual going through career decision process is confronted with choice making and is influenced by several factors including the context or environment in which they live, their personal aptitudes, social contacts and educational attainment as well as the individual's self-efficacy. Career choice is influenced by parental form and from intrinsic or extrinsic or both (Famolu, 2020). Sinclair et al. (2019) gave their version as intellectual ability, aptitudes, influence of schooling, family, personality, self-concept, sex difference, values, prestige, remuneration, risk factors, security, satisfaction, needs and interest.

The Genesis to career choice according to Adu-Gyamfi et al. (2016) in the Ghanaian educational reforms for SHS students require that students choose the programme they will offer at the SHS when they are in the final year of the Junior High School. The career most students choose usually begins from the programme of study they opt for and pursue upon entry into the SHS (Mukminin et al., 2017). These programmes determine to a large extent, which courses he/she can pursue in the University or other higher institutions of learning as well as where one's future career destination will be.

Students are therefore challenged as to which courses their SHS programme will enable them pursue, especially in the University and where such courses will lead them to in terms of career opportunities since students childhood careers are influenced by their childhood career fantasies, instincts and friends but may not consider those determinants of career choice as (Maher & Saugeres, 2007) have

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mentioned. Students do not get enough career guidance that influence the taking of wise and reasonable career decision concerning their future career.

In their bid to choose a reputable career it is required that students acquire advanced learning skills and self-management competencies at school so as to develop their own career and in learning throughout their lifetime (Jung & Takeuchi, 2018). Although academic and technical qualifications open doors for employment, career competencies and lifelong learning skills (intellectual ability) largely determine selection, success and advancement in individual careers (Stöter et al., 2014). These competencies or skills should be taught in schools, since many students leave education without the necessary skills to succeed in the adult work world (Stöter et al., 2014).

Schools are thus seen as 'career centres' in which students are able to acquire career competencies, such as being able to reflect on personal ambitions and motives, and to undertake actions and initiatives to direct their own career choice and development by critically evaluating those factors that determine their choice of career (Stöter et al., 2014). It is based on this that the role of the counsellor becomes imperative. The school counsellor's role in career guidance and/or counselling as well as academic counselling can provide students with the supporting tools to set career goals, and give them an understanding of the education and skills they need to choose a career that meet their life goals, stay in it, grow and develop in it.

The SHS students in the Sunyani municipality due to lack of or inadequate career counselling, see themselves as becoming taxi drivers, store/shop or filling station attendants. Majority of the boys who should have been in post-secondary institution, engage in cyber fraud popularly known as "Sakawa" and other indecent life styles and

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activities which are not influenced by school activities. Whether they were given enough counselling as to the career they enter after mind bogging experience that they do, do not match their ability, personal values, interest, satisfaction and others.

Career plays a very fundamental and significant role in the life of an individual not only because they determine the pattern of income but also because they affect the individual personality and concepts in life (Shim et al., 2009). Career therefore, is a choose pursuit, life work or success in one's profession occupied by a person throughout his/her life (De Vos et al., 2019).

Having a reputable career is the dream of every young person. This dream can come true via the right choice of career. However, in Ghanaian educational system, the choice of one's career starts from the Senior High School where one has to choose courses and/or programmes that directs one's career path. This in effect has contributed to the recent problem of youth unemployment and the new phenomenon of graduate unemployment in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Career decision making process is one of the key elements in an individual's life (Shen et al., 2021). This decision has the potential to open the door for success or close the door of opportunity (Hurmerinta et al., 2015). While often perceived to be an individual choice, research suggests that a variety of influences are likely to manipulate one's ultimate career decision (Jungen, 2008). Slaughter, (2015) asserted that everyone should have an honest occupation since work is one of our greatest blessings. Nonetheless, most Senior High Students are likely to make wrong career choices due to lack of information, ignorance, peer pressure, wrong modelling or as a

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result of prestige attached to certain careers without adequate career guidance and career counselling (Koech et al., (2016).

Consequently, students are bereft of alternatives to career choices that are not consistent with their inherent capacities and invariably turn to uninformed channels, like their friends, family, to make the very important decision of choosing suitable career paths (Chukwu et al., 2022). This leads to a large number of students falling into careers by happenstance instead of via an objective and holistic analysis to find a fit that takes all aspects of their personality and skills into consideration.

Ampofo, (2020) further proved that most students in Ghana complete their Senior High school without adequate knowledge on career choice. He attributed this to lack of proper career guidance and counselling. Wrong career selection opens the door for lifelong consequences.

Oduro-Okyireh and Osei-Owusu (2014) assessed the rationality of senior high school students' choice of academic programmes in Kwabre East District of Ghana. From their study, it was realized that only 37 respondents representing 12% of the total respondents for the study sought counselling from qualified counsellors before choosing their programmes of study. As many as 283 (88%) did not seek counselling at all before choosing their programmes. The above study has confirmed that career decision-making difficulty is a reality in Ghana.

However, gender parity which is perceived to play a significant role in carrier choice appear to have been ignored by the literature. Therefore, this study will fill the gender gap which has been ignored by the literature. Also, in reviewing the literature, it was further observed that most of the researchers on factors of career choice used the

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qualitative approach and therefore their findings could not be generalised. This study therefore used the quantitative approach so that the findings could be generalised among the population.

It is relatively difficult in Ghanaian modern education system for students to change their programs during their first year of Senior High School because high school curricula are generally structured and predetermined. However, there are instances where students may switch programs or courses within their first year due to various reasons. Therefore, there is a need to explore the factors that prompt the career choices of senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality.

The choice of Sunyani Municipality as the study area stemmed from the fact that it is one of the over-populated and growing municipalities in the Bono Region which is inhabited by a large number of people from different cultural backgrounds and geographical regions. More importantly, Sunyani municipality has a number of senior high schools which attract students from all parts of the country. Therefore, conducting this study in Sunyani municipality was meant to produce results that likely showed factors that influence career choice of senior high school students face.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical literature shows several theories that have been propounded to explain career choices of individuals. Theories relevant to this study are explained in this section. The study was guided by the Anne Roe's theory of career choice and Holland's theory of career.

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1.3.1 Anne Roe's theory of career choice

Career development theory can help you gain a better understanding of yourself and your career. Early relations within the family and their subsequent effects on career direction have been the main focus of Anne Roes work. Anne Roe's (1957) theory states that individuals choose their careers based on interactions with their parents. Roe believes that the way a child interacts with their parents would lead them to a greater extent to choose their future careers. She believed that any needs that were not satisfied during childhood, would either be eliminated from one's consciousness, or serve as unconscious motivators. For example, Roe (1957) stated that, "A child whose expressions of natural curiosity were thoroughly blocked, would cease to be curious" (p. 213). Therefore, Roe (1957) maintained that parental attitudes toward their children were more important than the career they possessed or their behaviours.

Roe also believed that parenting styles were a major factor in determining a child's career choice. She included the following six parenting styles in her model: "overprotection," "overdemanding," "emotional rejection," "neglect of the child," "casual acceptance," and "loving acceptance" (Roe, 1957, p. 214). Roe (1957) hypothesized that children who experienced the parenting styles of "loving acceptance," "overprotection," and "overdernanding" would be orientated towards careers with persons, such as jobs dealing with service, culture, or entertainment (p. 216).

On the other hand, children exposed to parenting styles of "casual acceptance," "neglect," and "emotional rejection" would be oriented towards careers with nonpersons, such as scientific and mechanical interests (Roe, 1957, p. 216). According to Trice (1995), Roe abandoned most of her hypotheses in 1964, suggesting that children pursued careers based on parental attachment. For instance,

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Roe stated that children with secure attachments most often pursued person-oriented occupations (Trice, 1995). This theory is relevant to this research because it undergirds the variables reviewed in this study.

1.3.2 Holland's theory of career

Holland's theory has been very useful to researchers and practitioners in the area of career development (Bullock, Andrews, Braud & Reardon, 2009). According to Holland's theory, vocational interest is an expression of one's personality. Hence individuals choose occupations and work environments that would conform to their personalities. Holland contended that each individual, to some extent, resembles one of six basic personality types, and the more one resembles any given type, the more likely one is to manifest some of the behaviours and traits associated with that type. He classified personalities into Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional (Holland, 1985 cited in Brown & Brooks, 1990). This has resulted into the popular acronym 'RIASEC'.

According to the theory, people search for work environments that enable them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles. Those who choose to work in an environment similar to their self-concept are more likely to be successful and satisfied.

So when the profile of a person (that is, the extent to which parents have control over one's decision-making, one's sense of prestige in relation to jobs and the extent to which one's peers have influence on one's decisions) is matched with the profile of an occupation, the degree of fit between the person and the occupation would then influence the individual to make a career choice (Akoto, 2021). This is when the adolescents narrow down their choices and initiate behaviour that enables them to

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enter some type of career. Adopting Holland and Anne Roe's argument on career choice, the study focuses on seeing how these theories can shape the career choice of SHS Students.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out factors influencing the career choice of senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality.

1.5 Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify parental factors that contribute to career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani municipality.
2. Indicate how prestige influences choice of career among senior high school students in the Municipality.
3. Identify the peer factors that contribute to career choice of senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality.
4. Examine the difference between males and females with regard to parental influence in career choice among students in the Sunyani Municipality.
5. Identify the difference between males and females with regard to peer influence in career choice among SHS students in Sunyani Municipality.
6. Identify the difference between males and females with regard to prestige influencing in career choice of students in Sunyani Municipality.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What parental factors influence career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality?
2. To what extent does prestige influence career choice among senior high school

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students in Sunyani Municipality?

3. How do peer factors influence career choice of senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality?

1.7 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated in the study.

H_{01}: There will be no statistically significant gender difference in parental influence on career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality.

H_1: There will be statistically significant gender difference in parental influence on career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality.

H_{02}: There will be no statistically significant gender difference in prestige as a factor influencing career choice of senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality.

H_2: There will be statistically significant gender difference in prestige as a factor influencing career choice of senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality.

H_{03}: There will be no statistically significant gender differences in peer influence as a factor of career choice among senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality.

H_3: There will be statistically significant gender differences in peer influence as a factor of career choice among senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited to the public Senior High Schools in the Sunyani Municipality, which is among the 12 Administrative Districts/Municipals in the Bono Region of Ghana. Again, the researcher assessed the factors influencing career choice among

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students which includes parental influence, prestige and peer influence even though there were other factors that could have been considered in this study.

1.9 Limitation of the Study

The sample size for the study may not be adequate and therefore may affect the generalization of the findings of this study. Also the researcher used only the quantitative approach in this study. Mixed method approach could have given enhanced findings instead of one research approach. In spite of the above limitations, the findings of this study can be generalised and used by other researchers.

1.10 Definition of Terms

The key terms used in the study are defined as they are used operationally in this study.

Career: This is a work pattern that a person follows throughout their life as it relates to preparations and experiences.

Career choices: This is used to refer to the decision of students regarding the career they want to pursue after school.

Parental factors: This include both the parents' and family's well-being (anxiety, depression, parental stress, conjugality, family functioning) and parenting, defined in terms of affection, responsiveness, encouragement, and teaching.

Peer influence: Peer pressure or influence is when you do something because you want to feel accepted and valued by your friends. Peer influence can be positive or negative.

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Prestige: widespread respect and admiration felt for someone or something on the basis of a perception of their achievements or quality.

Gender: the male sex or the female sex, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones, or one of a range of other identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female.

Students: Person who is studying at a university or other place of higher education.

Career counselling: Career Counselling is a process that will help you to know and understand yourself and the world of work in order to make career, educational, and life decisions.

1.11 Significance of the Study

Findings from this study are significant to a number of stakeholders, institutions and individuals such as policy makers, teachers, career counsellors, students, parents, community, industry and organizations both nationally and internationally. Firstly, policymakers may accept recommendations originating from the study to integrate career information into the centre stage of education to ensure student's smooth transition and success in life. Secondly, it is hoped that the findings will add to the body of scientific and professional knowledge on senior high school students' career goals, which will be extremely useful to teachers, school counsellors, legislators, parents, and the community at large. Thirdly, Students will benefit from this research by understanding that their grades and test scores are only part of the picture when exploring career options. Many other factors are important in determining which occupations will bring personal success and fulfilment to them. Fourthly, it will also help in appreciating the peculiar challenges senior high school students face in making career choice. Students will be guided in choosing occupations that are

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appropriate for their skills and interests. Fifthly, all stakeholders and individuals may be encouraged to support practical solutions to these problems. Finally, this study may serve as a valuable foundation for future research.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature pertaining to the study. The section begins with the identified concepts which includes career choice and its related factors.

2.1 The Concept of Career Choice

Choosing a career is often considered a major turning point in a young adult's life. This decision alone has the potential to open the door for success or close the door of opportunity. While often perceived to be an individual choice, research suggests that a variety of influences such as family, peers, prestige, school, community, and social and economic factors are likely to manipulate one's ultimate career decision (Ferry, 2006).

Making a career decision is one of the most important decisions that a person has to make in his entire existence. Many researches have shown that in adolescence, we encounter more career decision difficulties than in any other developmental stages (Perţe & Patroc, 2012). Making a career choice becomes a major priority for adolescents during the last year of high school Hijazi, Tatar, and Gati (2004). At this point in the lives of the adolescents, some of them may be able to make ideal career choice; others would also encounter some difficulties.

Career is described as an individual trajectory or progression of work and its related experiences over time. It is associated with the individual's continuous development in a career as they are engaged in a particular working sector and gain important skills and experience to attain career growth (Ates, 2016). Career choice is an important

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problem in the evolving lives of teenagers since it is connected with optimistic as well as detrimental physical, psychological, and socioeconomic disparities that persevere well ahead of the youthful age into an individual's adult life (Bubić & Ivanišević, 2016). The right career choice for students who enrolled in professional education is crucial as it has a tremendous influence on their future professional lives and future accomplishment. Career choices are prominent among the most important factors that senior high school students take into consideration since it will support them in their future reflection (Ahmed et al., 2017).

Career choice is one of the biggest dilemmas and challenge in any student's life. It involves interplay of many factors which are intricately intertwined. It is not a straightforward task but involves a difficult process of decision making. This issue is not confined to Ghanaian students only but is universal in nature. According to Kazi and Akhlaq, (2017) an individual's environment, talents, skills, and academic achievement exert an influence on career choice. In case of a wrong choice, it may lead to resultant failure and disappointment. Research shows homes, schools and the social setups influence individuals' career choice. Financial prospects influence the career choice of men as they have to meet household expenses, whereas women show more concern for social values and utility (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Other factors such as aptitude, life circumstances, and academic achievement have also been proven as factors of career choice (Ferry, 2006; Steinmayr et al., 2016).

A similar finding was also made in the study of Fouad, Guillen, Harris-Hodge, Henry, Novakovic, Terry and Kantamneni (2006). This study examined whether university students were psychologically distressed or had difficulties with career decisions to indicate whether they needed career services, whether they were aware of the services

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offered by the campus counselling and career services, and finally, whether they had used the services. Findings indicated that students indicated difficulties with career decisions, high levels of psychological distress, and low levels of psychological well-being and that about half of students were aware of career services but much fewer had used those services.

2.2 Parental Influence on Career Choice

Parents play a vital role in every aspect of their children's lives including their career choice (Michele et al., 2018). Besides, Omar et al. (2021) also found there is a significant relationship between parents and career choices. Children tend to love their parents' ideal careers more than others if their careers provide a comfortable lifestyle, satisfaction, prestige, performance, and social status (Zhou et al., 2016). According to Gwelo (2019), as children grow up, they gain a clear picture of their parents' careers. For instance, if one parent is a teacher, the child can also choose a career as a teacher.

Research studies show that families, parents and guardians in particular, play a significant role in the occupational aspirations and career goal development of their children. Without parental approval or support, students and young adults are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities. Rahawarin et al. (2020) found that college students and young adults cite parents as an important influence on their choice of career. In a similar vein, some studies have found that the family plays a critical role in a child's career development (Gibbons & Woodside, 2014). According to Okwulehie (2018) some of the variables that influence students' occupational goals include the family, level of parental education, school, peers, personality, and socioeconomic status.

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The extents to which the parents advise their children differ from home to home. Some students avoid discussing careers with their parents because their parents lack formal education. Parents have a feeling that they should tell the students what to choose. This is expected in families of low social economic status and parents with limited education (Auerbach, 2007). Some parents cannot help their children because they do not understand the requirements of various careers. They further pointed out that many young people will be subtly pressurized into a given career by parents and guardians and other persons in positions of moral superiority over them. Young people may therefore find themselves pushed into living their parent's life or attempting to live the life that their parents wished to but never had a chance (Myers et al., 2009).

There are varying opinions and findings, however, as to which specific family characteristics influence career aspirations. For instance, conflicting data exist regarding the influence of socioeconomic variables on career aspirations. Other studies Berzin, (2010) suggest that both parent education and income influence career aspirations, whilst other studies Ainsworth (2002) show that only parent education is an influence. Other family variables that have been shown to influence career aspirations include the parents' occupation and family size (Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014). Family size also appears to influence adolescent career aspirations because parents with large families tend to have less money to take care of their children in school (Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014).

Adetunji et al. (2019) suggests that children are influenced in their career choice by socio-demographic factors and these factors include family, school and peers. In his study, Adetunji et al. (2019) found that family involvement as the most significant

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predictor of career choice in gender-dominated occupations. Similarly, Slaten and Baskin (2014) opined that the family provides information and guidance directly or indirectly and influences young people's career choice. For instance, parents offer appropriate support for certain occupational choices which tend to follow their own (Rocha & Van Praag, 2020). Owusu et al. (2021) found that mothers were the most influential and that daughters' occupational aspirations were often similar to their mothers' chosen professions.

Additional studies show that parents have a greater influence than teachers on career choice (Kniveton, 2004) and can even influence what major their children choose to pursue in college (Simpson, 2003). It is clear that parents believe they have less influence over their children's career decisions than the research supports. This perception seems to differ from the perception of children, who often report their parents to be of the highest influence (Ferry, 2006).

Parents may also be unaware of the impact their norms and values have on their child's career choice. According to Biddle, Bank, and Marlin (as cited in Simpson, 2003), "rather than responding directly to external pressures, students internalize parental norms and preferences and act in accordance with those norms" (Simpson, 2003). Because parental norms and values are likely to affect career choice, it is important that parents understand the subtle ways that they communicate their norms and values on a regular basis. While parents assume that their direct career advice may be influential, they may be unaware that they can also exert a strong career influence simply by serving as examples of workers (Kniveton, 2004). In fact, children as young as five years old begin to identify with the occupation of their

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mother or father (Havighurst, 1964). Parents start influencing career decisions as soon as their children can pronounce their job title.

Research shows that parental norms and values most often affect children's career aspirations via parental interactions, involvement in school work (Simpson, 2003), and gender expectations (Jacobs & Bleeker, 2006). While parents may assume other variables such as occupation or education to be most influential, their influence is most often exerted through normative channels including their interest in schoolwork and aspirations for educational achievement (Simpson, 2003).

Many adults underestimate their children's intuitive capabilities (Jacobsen, 1999). Poulter (2006) states that, "Children have a nonstop camera running in their mind, recording any and all behaviors, comments, and attitudes of their parents" (p. 174). For instance, children's career preference can be influenced by regularly witnessing gender typed interactions in the home (Lavine, 1982). This might include the portrayal of a dominant or non-dominant parental role that conveys a message to children about their own role in society. While parents may not consider this to be influential at a young age, these interactions can profoundly limit or expand their children's future career aspirations.

In addition to becoming aware of the norms and values they portray, parents also need to know that their children will likely adopt these norms and values as their own. Michael Rutter (as cited in Otto, 2000) stated that, "Young people tend ... to share their parents' values on the major issues oflife ... " (p. 111). Similarly, Otto (2000) said that ninety-three percent of high school juniors in his study reported holding similar values to their parents. This is significant because it dispels the myth that

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children and adolescents tend to defy their parents' values and expectations. Instead, it may be more accurate to say that children are quick to adopt their parent's norms and values, perhaps without ever exploring their own. This may be due to children's natural desire to connect with their parents (Poulter, 2006). As a result, they seek acceptance by adopting parental values and living out their career aspirations. Jacobsen (1999) referred to this phenomenon as "handme-down dreams," which is the title of her book about parental influence.

The danger in these quick assumptions is that children may aspire to a career that follows their parents' norms and values without developing their own sense of self. Jacobsen (1999) pointed out the following wager: "If your family's values mesh with your own, you can find strength and guidance in them throughout your career, however, if these values don't mesh, you'll build a career that your parents take pride in, but that leaves you frustrated and empty" (Jacobsen, 1999, p. 101). For that reason, it is important for parents to understand the many ways that they can influence their children's career choice.

Parents demonstrate their expectations by showing heightened support for particular careers. This was shown in a study done by Ferry (2006), which looked at the factors that influenced the career choices of adolescents in rural Pennsylvania. Through the use of twelve focus groups, Ferry (2006) was able to identify the groups' perceptions of the importance of family factors when choosing a career. Ferry (2006) reported that, "Parents, followed by other family members, provided valuable learning experiences through their own role models and supporting activities that assisted in exploring career interests" (Findings section, ~ 3). By showing support for particular activities, parents demonstrated their preference for certain career options over others.

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Not surprisingly, parents tended to show additional support for occupational choices that mirrored their own (Kniveton, 2004).

In addition to demonstrating a preference for certain activities, most parental values and expectations can be seen in the norms they model at home. Biddle, Bank, and Marlin (as cited in Simpson, 2003) argued that the way in which parents influence their children's values is most often accomplished through socializing norms, rather than enforcing specific expectations or modeling behaviors. Therefore, instead of rewarding children for conforming to parental expectations, children simply internalize the norms of their parents and then pursue careers that fall in line with those norms (Simpson, 2003). This was demonstrated in a study by Otto (2000), who asked a cross-sectional group of juniors from six high schools how closely their ideas matched their parents' ideas about which occupations to pursue. In the results, 46 % said their ideas were "mostly similar" to their parents and 36% said "very similar" (Otto, 2000, p. 113). This shows that by the time children reached adolescence, they had adopted their parents' norms and expectations as their own.

Kazi and Akhlaq, (2017) also opines that a child coming from an environment where he/she receives parental support and lives harmoniously is more likely to be dictated by them. In such a situation, a child's occupational aspiration is most likely to be influenced by the parents' profession. Research reports that career choice is greatly influenced by students' surroundings, society and family (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). In his analysis, Keshf and Khanum, (2021) concluded that developing countries direct their students into careers according to the country needs. Professions have varying degrees of acceptability in different cultures which also influences an individual's career choice (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017).

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Getange and Sagwe (2016) conducted a review on career choice among primary and secondary school students on basic issues that affect career choice and identified knowledge of the job, self-knowledge, parental and peer group constraints, and parental financial status influenced career choice pattern of students. Socioeconomic factors, therefore, are also important in motivating the students to make career decisions (Yerdelen et al., 2016). A comprehensive study by Robinson and Diale (2017) reports that students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds made wrong career decisions, and chose professions which required a short duration of training, primarily due to financial constraints. As the old adage goes, nothing succeeds like success, similarly, a student who fare well academically have better career prospects and choices as compared to the struggling ones. Kazi and Akhlaq, (2017) assert that a well-read person has more information related to career choice, and reads more to make a crucial decision. Thus, their decisions are likely to be correct and wise.

The role of parents in the lives of children is undeniable. Kingdon et al. (2015) asserts that it so happens that parents have pre-determined the careers for their wards, and only serve to steer them in that direction. In other research, it is elaborated that the attitude of parents and the influence of the home environment influences a child's career path. Similarly, parents' education has been proven as a factor influencing career choice (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Research supports the position that parents' education is linked with the students' career choice. Literature reports that parents' educational level is the most important factor in students' career decision (Wang & Degol, 2013).

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According to Taylor, Harris and Taylor (2004), the reaction and comments that parents make about particular careers, "will be of significant influence" (Discussion section, ~ 5). Therefore, even indirect responses, such as body language, gestures, or tone of voice, will be important in shaping children's perceptions of certain careers. According to Jacobsen (1999), "Adults often *underestimate* children's intuitive abilities and *overestimate* their own self-knowledge and self-control" (p.14). As a result, children may be greatly influenced by a "hidden" meaning, while parents may assume little to no influence. Although many parents believe they are neutral in regard to their children's career choices, most possess certain career preferences for their children (Jacobsen, 1999). Oftentimes, the adoption of norms and expectations occurs covertly, without parents even realizing that it is taking place. Jacobsen (1999) said that, "Even parents who believe children should be free to develop their own budding talents and goals sometimes indirectly contradict this stance" (p.15). Parents do this by demonstrating nonverbal responses to particular comments or by showing little interest in particular activities.

In addition to their homemaker status, studies also found that mothers tended to utilize different parenting practices according to their career. For instance, Maier (2005) found that mothers who had a career in the math and science field provided an equal amount of challenge and support to their male and female teenagers. However, mothers who worked in other high status professions, such as law or business, tended to show more support to their daughters and less to their sons. Maier (2005) argued that, "By engaging in differential treatment of their teenagers, mothers are reinforcing traditional gender roles" (415). She hypothesized that because of the unequal treatment that mothers in the math and science field experienced when pursuing their

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careers, they take extra precautions to ensure similar home environments for their daughters and sons (Maier, 2005).

The results uphold that the parent is a child's first teacher, and thus plays the role of a guide, advisor and counsellor in their lives. Bladeless cited in Chukwu et al., (2022) explains that parents exert emotional pressure on their wards regarding the choice of careers. They make independent consultations regarding the career they think is most suitable for their children. The child's preferences are never a matter of concern for them.

According to Li and Kerpelman (2007), adolescents who feel connected to their parents tend to be troubled if their parents disagree with their career choice and will often choose a career that is more pleasing to them. On the other hand, if adolescents feel emotionally separated from their parents, they will likely to maintain their career choice regardless of parental approval (Li & Kerpelman, 2007). Chope (2006) had a similar assertion, stating that supportive family environments with high expectations were associated with "high level educational and occupational aspirations" (p. 32). When these variables were in place, adolescents had an increased self-esteem and recognized how their present actions contributed to their future (Rathunde, Carroll & Huang, 2000).

A study by Nikiforidis et al. (2018) shows that mothers have a stronger influence on their children as compared to their fathers. Another fact proven by research is that children prefer to discuss their plans and choices with their mother more as compared to their fathers (Pascual, 2014). According to Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) different values are attached to different career options. These values according to him stem from life experiences, educational background, and the environment. Values are also attached

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to the stability which is attached to a particular career. An important factor in determining students' career choice is the school to which they belong(Ahmed et al., 2017). Different curriculum options, hidden curriculum, and school culture are all determinant of a student's career choice. Schools' role is to provide accurate guidance, and also encourage students to continue with education and not drop out (Blount, 2012). He further elaborates that some parents are receptive to suggestions.

However, these types of parents usually set high standards for their children from the very outset, and then pave the way for them to follow that path. Studies report that children who are initially dependent on parents regarding career decisions tend to become more independent as they enter high school when they are adolescents (Simmons & Blyth, 2017). Different studies show that adolescents all over the world, irrespective of their gender face the same problem in career choice (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Decisions which involve the choice of elective subjects, courses of specializations and subsequent careers are equally stressful and trying for girls and boys completing schooling and proceeding to college (Vainionpää et al., 2020). They have to weigh their options according to the environment in which they live, their interest and their educational performance. Both the genders lay emphasis on social type and investigate the type of occupations, with more girls favouring the former, and boys the latter (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). In the same study it was also reported that 80% of both genders lay great stress on high status occupations. Stereotyping of jobs has also been observed amongst both genders, where boys tend to opt for high earning careers, and girls in schools and day-cares.

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2.3 Gender and Students' Career Choice

Gender refers to the social roles and responsibilities that are believed to belong to males and females within a particular social group (Barth et al., 2022). Gender roles are created by a society and are learnt from one generation to the next as part of the society's culture (Christensen et al., 2020). Thébaud and Charles (2018) also added that cultural beliefs about gender accord men higher status in society than women. These status beliefs can evoke gender differentiated standards for attributing performance to ability, which provides a differentiated bias of self-assessments that men and women make of their own competence at career-relevant tasks. This situation occurs especially when there are widely held beliefs in culture attaching greater social value and competence with one category of the attribute. For example, men being matched with doctor whereas women with nurse.

In addition, just as parents directly and indirectly communicate their career preferences, they also communicate gender information to their children. Enrolling girls in ballet classes and signing up boys for football programs communicates gender socialization (HesseBiber & Carter, 2000). Children are also gender socialized by watching the role parents play in the home. For instance, many mothers continue to be the main contributor for most ofthe household tasks. Hesse-Biber and Carter (2000) contend that regardless of the increase in males sharing household chores, many women still take on the bulk of the duties. Children grow up experiencing gender socialization based on norms established in the home. Perceptions regarding gender roles and parental power structure may impact the career choices of children.

Added to this, children may also infer gender stereotypes at home by observing the power structure between mothers and fathers. This is exhibited in which parent

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enforces the discipline, controls the money, plans family events, and initiates family dialog. In 1983, Fishman (as cited in Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000) analyzed the conversational patterns between husbands and wives and found that topics introduced by women were regarded as tentative and were more likely to be dismissed than those of males. He further concluded that husbands "control what will be produced as reality by interaction. They ... continually establish and enforce their rights to define what the interaction and reality will be about" (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000, p. 96). As children are routinely exposed to these types of power structure interactions, they may identify males as having more influential power in some areas than women.

Again, literature finds a significant influence of gender stereotypes in students' career choice decisions. Even before entering university, high school students already have a gender-stereotyped perception of bachelors and careers that should be pursued by men and women (Makarova et al., 2019). Hence, Sari, (2022)find that men are interested in more realistic professions such as science and business, while women are interested in social and artistic tracks like teaching or nursing. In spite of this, girls might consider male and female-dominated jobs, while boys only consider male-dominated jobs (Banchefsky & Park, 2018). This is consistent with the evidence found by van der Van der Vleuten, (2018) that gender expectations are stricter for boys than for girls and that the more traditional the gender ideology of a boy the higher the probability of entering a traditional occupation, although this is not the case for girls.

Jacobs, Chhin and Bleeker (2006) were among the first researchers to explore the relationship between parents' early gender-type expectations and the career choices their children made as adults. Their results reflected that parental expectations had an influence on young adults' career decisions, particularly fathers' expectations for their

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daughters (Jacobs, Chhin & Bleeker, 2006). Otto (2000) also noted that young adults most often look to their mothers for career guidance. Poulter (2006) found that fathers have a more significant impact on children's career choices, and Jacobs, Chhin and Bleeker (2006) concluded that children respond differently to maternal and paternal expectation depending on the gender of the child. All three researchers agreed that the variable of gender-stereotypes may greatly impact career choices of children.

While mothers tend to show different levels of challenge and support according to their occupation, adolescents consistently identify them as more influential than fathers when it comes to career planning (Otto, 2000). Even though boys perceive a positive influence from their fathers, they reported, "equal and occasionally higher percentages of positive influence from their mothers" (Paa & McWhirter, 2000). Maier (2005) suggested that this might be due to more frequent discussions that happen between a mother and her children. She stated that, "Discussions are more likely to occur on a *daily basis* between mothers and adolescents. Fathers may involve themselves after a majority ofthe discussion has taken place with the mother" (Maier, 2005, p. 414). Li and Kerpelman (2007) stressed how important it is for mothers to be aware of their power to influence their adolescents' life choices, especially those oftheir daughters. They suggested that mothers use this influence to "support their daughters' construction of career aspirations" (Li & Kerpelman, 2007).

In addition, Njenga (2019) conducted a study based on the impact of gender on academic performance on 160 Arts-Related subjects in Nasarawa State University concluded that female students preformed significantly better than males in Arts-Related subjects. Similarly, Buabeng et al. (2012) studied female senior high school students' interest in physics as a course of study at the University level in Ghana,

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concluded that female students do not prefer physics as a course of study at the University level due to limited employment opportunities for females in physics as a career.

Furthermore, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) framework emphasizes the role of self-efficacy and competence beliefs in students' career choice decisions. Thus, if boys perceive themselves as mathematically competent or overestimate their abilities and girls do not, then it is likely that more boys will pursue a math, science or technological related career than girls. So cultural gender beliefs could be biasing the competence belief of boys and girls, which in turn leads to more boys enrolling in STEM majors not because they are better at math related subjects, but because they think they are (der Vleuten et al., 2016). Van der Vleuten et al. (2016) present evidence in a similar direction: they find that boys competence beliefs are not affected by gender stereotypes, while girls are.

Additionally, the Choice model of the SCCT framework also takes into account the influence of environmental variables other than personal interests (Mohtar et al., 2019). Dalmau Valls et al., (2018) find that boys are more influenced by future earnings, power and influence a job has associated than girls, who are more concerned in helping others. Moreover, father's profession is also a determinant variable in career choice for boys (Ramaci et al., 2017).

Zölitz and Feld, (2018) are of the view that women who are randomly assigned to work with women peers were less likely to select male-dominated subjects, while males, when assigned to work with female peers, were more likely to select male-dominated subjects. A study found that women in male-dominated subjects are often faced with a difficult climate on campus. Martin & Barnard, (2013) in their research

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on US higher education, showed that women were marginalized or harassed, for instance, by sexualized jokes.

Similarly, Poulin and Pedersen (2007) indicated that girls and boys have mostly same-sex friends in childhood, they start to gain more mixed-sex peer networks throughout adolescence. These mixed-sex friendships may be riskier for girls than for boys; research has indicated that girls tend to be influenced more by their male friends than are boys by their female friends regarding career choice (Arndorfer & Stormshak, 2008). However, findings regarding female friend influence on male adolescents are mixed. Some research indicates boys and girls do not differ in their susceptibility to socialization effects by their opposite-sex peers, such that opposite-sex friends tend to be more influential then same-sex friends regarding alcohol socialization for both boys and girls (Dick et al. 2007).

Another study showed that role models impacted on the gender gap in subject choice. The study found that when there were female role models, it raised students' interest in science-related careers, and it sharply reduced the prevalence of stereotypes associated with jobs in science and gender differences in abilities (Breda et al., 2021). According to Liberante, (2012), teachers and educators influence the gender roles of their students and thus have an impact on their educational outcomes. "We all grow up among the influence of our family and cultures, and as teachers, we may see ourselves, rightly, in the role of instilling cultural values in the children in our classes" (Renzaho et al., 2011).

Role models have been defined as people whose lives and activities influence another person in some way (Morgenroth et al., 2015). Individuals tend to seek role models who are similar to them in some easily identifiable way, such as gender or race (Cross

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et al., 2017). Role models may be especially important to women because a lack of female role models in non-traditional careers (such as engineering, science) has been identified as a barrier for women who choose to enter these professions. Indeed, researchers have shown that female students perceive role models to be especially important for women who want to pursue non-traditional careers (Olsson & Martiny, 2018).

Despite studies showing that role models are influential in women's career decisions, it is unknown whether role models have a direct influence on women's career choices or if they are related to career choice indirectly through their influence on self-efficacy. Previous research on women's career development has identified self-efficacy as a critical factor in women's decision to choose non-traditional fields, including investigative and realistic career types (Hartman & Barber, 2020). However, few studies have examined the role of self-efficacy or role models as predictors of career choice in other academic/career domains (Fenning & May, 2013).

Parsons (2017) asserts that career choices are influenced by role models who are often familial or educational rather than famous societal figures. Direct forms of parental influence, such as the degree to which students see their parents choosing careers or having contact with technology, are motivators to train for technical jobs. Family members can also motivate career choices indirectly by encouraging girls to pursue careers perceived to be "masculine." Women entering male-dominated fields come from families where mothers have four year degrees, mothers are working, both parents are highly educated, and success is considered critical (Contreras Aguirre et al., 2020).

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However, recent studies show that women are adopting professions which are conventionally male-oriented. Brock and Kazi and Akhlaq, (2017), interviewed school children from six countries, viz. India Bangladesh, Jamaica, Cameroon, Sierra Vanuatu and Leone, asked them to share their opinion on gender factor which acts as a barrier for women education. Access to school was reported as a common factor for females. A major disadvantage to females is culture biases toward males rather than females. Media in today's world plays a very strong influence in decision making at various levels. Gender stereotypes are created by commercial advertising. Different commercials and posters provide information about different occupations. These messages leave an impact on the people and they adopt the careers which are not traditionally associated with their gender. According to Kazi and Akhlaq (2017), children tend to be more informed about situations they see on television and movies, rather than the reality, which serves as a strong influence on their career decisions. Similarly, Kottak (2016), assert that media, particularly television teaches us to value those professions which are portrayed to be more socially valued in a society. According to Olayinka, (2020), the various means through which we are bombarded with information are "television, radio, newspapers, magazines, internet, billboards and marketing materials".

At the time of personal development, these types of advertisements leave a lasting impression on the youth. A factor which influences career choice is the lack of awareness regarding professions (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Students have misconceptions about professions due to lack of information, which prevents them from choosing them. On the contrary, these fields were actually gaining more demand and were expanding.

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2.4 Peer Influence and Students' Career Choice

Peer influence is the pressure exerted by friends in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes, values, or behaviour in order to conform to groups' norms. Peer pressure is probably the single biggest determinant of a career choice in any group of young people with a shared sub-culture. Every generation of students in a given school, and probably even several generations adopt certain careers as the ideal or ultimate choice. As a result, many of them, including those with no aptitude for revered career, aspire to it often at the expense of equally substantive options that they would better suit for and be happier at (Berndt, 2018).

Peer influence cannot be underestimated as it was found to be influential in career choices. Empirical findings have confirmed to a greater extent, the impact of peer influence and objectives on children's choice of career (Lee et al., 2019). College students always choose their friends and they often choose roommates, neighbours and classmates. They are likely to choose peers whose unobservable characteristics are systematically related to their own (Goulas et al., 2018). Even when the choice of peers is not explicitly voluntary, there may be associations between characteristics of peers. For example, by enrolling in a difficult course, a good student would surround himself or herself with good peers (Daniel, 2017).

In addition, Mtemeri (2020) in America; Iroaganachi et al. (2021); and Shumba and Arif et al. (2019) in South Africa found that students were influenced by their peers in a variety of ways, such as peer counselling, peer interaction, peer advice and peer relationships. Peer counselling is a way of relating, responding and helping, which is aimed at exploring feelings, thoughts and concerns with the hope of reaching a clear understanding (Purohit et al., 2020). In schools, peer counselling is a phenomenon

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that was established to help students in schools solve problems (Akinla et al., 2018). The main goal of peer counselling is to enable students to appreciate each other, as well as to understand the importance of education (Mtemeri, 2020). Sottie et al. (2013) also revealed that peer counsellors are important in mentoring students, sharing information and supporting each other.

Again, Mtemeri (2020) revealed that peer interactions influence students in choosing careers. As the students interact, they share information about careers. This is in line with Krumboltz' social learning theory, which emphasises the importance of learners interacting with one another in their environment (Yarberry & Sims, 2021). Chaudhuri et al. (2020) reiterated the influence of peer advice on career choices. According to Koech et al. (2016), when Kenyan students interact with their friends, they may take into consideration the career advice they receive.

Similarly, students' interactions with peers play a central role in how students think about themselves Nguyen et al. (2018).In his study in China, Zhang and Tsung (2019) revealed that students' interactions with peers of diversified interests, races and backgrounds have the potential to stimulate reflection, knowledge and beliefs which may lead to new ways of thinking about the world, other peers and eventually themselves. For peers to understand the world of work, their interaction makes it possible for them to venture into careers they were unaware of. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) also revealed the importance of peer interaction in Finland when he stated that the academic orientation typical of the peer group to which they belong may potentially have a long-term impact on individual adolescents' vocational careers.

In the absence of proper career guidance and teacher mentorship, students resort to peer mentorship (Mtemeri, 2020). According to Miheso and others (2020) in Kenya,

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students turn to peers who have similar experiences for mentorship, information and guidance on career issues, especially when other proper avenues like school career guidance are not properly functioning. (Koech et al., 2016) also emphasised the influence of peer mentorship in students' choices of careers. However, in United Arab Emirates Eldahamsheh and Nowakowski (2019), peer mentorship was found to have little influence on medical students' choices of careers.

Additionally, peer relationships were also found to be influential in students' choices of careers. Mtemeri (2020) purports that, in Finland, peer group members who are closely related are likely to end up in similar educational trajectories as they are likely to accept opinions from members who are similar to themselves. Mtemeri, (2020) further states that peer group members resembled each other, not only in their educational expectations, but also their subsequent educational trajectories. In a Nigerian study by Bankole and Filade et al. (2019), peer relationships were revealed as a significant factor in helping students choose careers. Pakistani students who were close to each other in terms of friendship were likely to influence each other to take certain careers (Mtemeri, 2020).

Miheso and others (2020) espoused that peer encouragement was found to be a critical factor in influencing American students' choice of careers. This is in line with Bandura's social cognitive theory, which states that realistic encouragement leads to greater effort and eventually to greater success. Since high school students are adolescents, they may rely on people of their own age. Amesi et al. (2021) agree that the student's peer group is the single most potent source of influence with regard to career choices. Adolescents are easily influenced by their peers because they rely on

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their friends to provide validation of the choices that they make, including career decisions (Mtemeri, 2020).

Moreover, some students may want to identify with their friends in the class. Hence, they choose subject combinations which would lead to certain careers simply because a friend belongs to that particular group. Akosah-Twumasi et al. (2018) further noted that peer influence is an asset for developing career opportunities and decision making among youth. This is consistent with the findings of Owusu et al. (2021) who found that peer relationship has a great influence in determining academic performance and, by extension, career choice.

Contrary to earlier findings, it has been observed in America that there was no significant relationship between peer group influence and career choices in humanities among secondary school adolescents (Kumar, 2016). Peers were found to be less likely to influence high school students in choosing careers.

2.5 Prestige and Career Choice

Prestige as a concept**,** refers to an occupational esteem "thus, the regard in which an occupation is held by the general public by virtue of the personal qualities which members are perceived as bringing to their core task" (Hargreaves, 2009)**.** Usually, careers with the highest prestige are also the ones that are able to attract and retain highly skilled labour, as is the case in medicine or engineering(Csed\Ho, 2008). In his study of career choice of Nigerian youths, Koech et al. (2016) mentioned that many youths make wrong career choices as a result of prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate guidance and career counselling to enable them understand who they are in the face of career choice.

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Professional prestige was identified as an important deciding factor for youth career decision making in India (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018), South Africa (Mudhovozi, 2015), Croatia (Wüst & Šimić, 2017), Japan and Korea (Ivory, 2015) which are all collectivist settings. Prestige statuses attached to some occupations were strong incentives to career choices; was ranked as the second most important positive influence in career decision making by over half of the respondents in a South African study, indicating that these youths wanted prestigious jobs so that they could live good lives and be respected in the society (Akinlolu et al., 2021) Japanese and Korean students were also highly influenced by occupational prestige (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018); however, the Korean students considered it of higher importance than their Japanese counterparts.

In addition, low prestige is associated with the mental health and has contributed to the relative lack of trained mental health professionals in low and middle-income countries. For example, a study of Ghanaian medical students showed that the students thought psychiatry had little prestige and was less lucrative than other specialties, and the majority felt uncomfortable interacting with patients with mental illness (Agyapong et al., 2015).

2.6 Personality Type and Career Choice

A career choice that is compatible with one's personality type is believed to be reinforced and rewarded by an academic environment (Kemboi et al., 2016). According to Tarsianer et al. (2021) theory, people seek environments that are aligned with their personality types and engage in activities that utilize their abilities. People with low vocational identity are more likely to make incompatible career choices and experience frequent career change than those with high vocational identity. Studies

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that adopted Holland's theory have found that there is a relationship between personality types and career choice (Kemboi et al., 2016). Holland's theory has evolved over time and nowadays represents the interaction between person matching stable personality traits with the environment (Jemini-Gashi et al., 2017). People interact with their work environments and enjoy their environment if it matches their personality traits (Jemini-Gashi et al., 2017). According to Arieli et al., (2020), lack of harmony between personality and environment leads individuals to make efforts in behaviour modification or their working environment, seeking stability at work, as Holland put it.

In addition, career certainty is seen to be connected with personality traits congruent with chosen career. Individuals with higher congruence between personality and their chosen career, also show higher certainty in their career decision making, supporting Holland's theory (Pesch et al., 2018). Perera and McIlveen (2018) conducted a study with a sample of 162 students. They examined deviation from the circular normative model RIASEC of interest-based organization, to ascertain whether the deviation is connected with career indecision and career decision certainty. The study results showed that individuals who adjusted to the normative model of work interests reported a higher level of career certainty. Students who reported higher congruence between career interests and preferred work also reported higher career certainty.

However, parental influences have been recognized as a determining factor in students' career decision-making. These influences could be either positive or negative on their decisions (Eremie, 2014). Sometimes parental influence tends to ignore the child's personal interest. Individual interest in making career choice is central in trait and factor theory of career decision making. In every endeavour of

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human life, interest of the doer is very crucial for success. In other words, career interest is defined as preference for specific life events that often play a major role in career decision making and choice (Gati et al., 2019). Basically, three types of career interests are distinguished: Expressed interests are those interests that are verbally reported by the student. “I would like to work as medical doctor”. Manifest interests refer to the events in which individuals engage. For example, an individual who enjoys writing may manifest his or her interest by doing Journalistic writing. While tested interests are shown in an individual’s knowledge of a specific area as measured by standardized objective tests (Eremie, 2015).

Added to this, the researcher is of the view that the derailment in career development is due to lack of senior high school and University plans that provide students with sound occupational information and self-awareness. On this note, students are likely to face barriers that may deter their optimal career development. It is on record that while factors such as gender, peer pressure, parents, exam grades and career status are by and large the first to be considered by students during career decision making process: Little or no consideration is given to personality types. Linda, a first class honours graduate in Architecture in University of Nairobi, Kenya aspired for medicine and wanted to be like her father and to help the helpless. But her mother, a high school teacher pointed out to her that her fingers resembled those of an architect. Her characteristics included: good listener, perfectionism and always worked for the best (Mugwima & Anne-Marie, 2018). Rashid aspired to be a doctor and never imagined to be a mechanic. He scored good grades to be admitted to school of medicine but cars fascinated him. Out of his own effort he perfected his skills by training on car repair and discovered that he was talented in it (Kemboi et al., 2016). From the above scenarios one may aspire for a certain career due to role model or

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examination grades and yet the personal internal characteristics (personality type) are pointing elsewhere.

Since there is no definite direction for choosing a career, Perger and Takács (2016) suggested that students are to understand their personal characteristics and associate them to their most compatible career. The way students evaluate themselves in association with a personality trait is a factor influencing the type of career to choose(Ahmed et al., 2017). Gwelo, (2019) found that students' personalities influence their career choices. Kemboi et al. (2016) have stated that an individual's personality plays a significant role in their career choice in that they choose the career they prefer the most because it meets their unique identity, and it matches their personality the best. Gwelo (2019) further adds that students are more likely to choose a career that best suits their personality so that they can enjoy learning and gain job satisfactions.

2.7 Career Counsellor/School Counsellor and Career Choice

Some students are uncertain about their strengths. They don't know what their career path or inclination might be. Career counsellors assist people in getting a clear picture of what's important to them, how they can prepare for their careers autonomously, and assist in making difficult decisions (Jain & Ranjan, 2020). According to Kok and Low (2017), students continually want expert career counsellors to supervise them to cultivate self-awareness in personal potentials, interests, knowledge, skills, weaknesses and explore career opportunities such as trends in employment, competencies needed to be in the fields, employment requirements, and job descriptions. This is in line with the findings Omar et al. (2021) who found that there is a relationship between career counsellors and students' career choices.

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Also, Ogunlade and Akeredolu (2012) examined the influence of counselling on career preference among secondary school student in Ekiti State concluded that there were significant differences in external influence as factors. Choosing a career from a large and challenging array of possibilities is a problem to the youth because a lot of attention is paid to academic performance with little information on the link between the subject chosen and future careers (Kemboi et al., 2016). Career Masters have led young people to select careers because it has an attractive feature or is described as glamorous (Kemboi et al., 2016). Afful (2019), noted that at the senior secondary school level, the student faces the decision of continuing his/her formal education to the university or any tertiary institution or going to work. Consequently, the scope of guidance at the senior secondary school should encompass the educational, vocational, and personal-social needs of students.

Afful (2019), perceived guidance as a concept, an educational construct and a service. As a concept, guidance denotes the utilization of a point of view in order to help an individual. As an educational construct, it refers to the provision of an experience that helps students to understand themselves, accept themselves and live effectively in their society. In this wise, the school becomes responsible for the total personal growth and development of the child and not only for character training and intellectual development. Thus, counsellors can play a positive role in guiding them to make informed choices. Being interested in a particular profession is very important in decision making (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). If a student is forced into a career, he may exhibit low self-esteem and poor performance (Mocheche et al., 2017). Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) reports that several studies have indicated a positive relationship between interests and career choice.

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It can consequently not be over emphasised that there is the need to put in place a mechanism such as, guidance and counselling in every educational setting to help meet students' educational, personal-social, and vocational needs. Such guidance services assist students to take meaningful decisions and make positive adjustments in life. Hence, guidance which is a helping service aims at behavioural change toward a functional life. Within the guidance programme are the following services: appraisal, information, counselling, placement, orientation, consultation, referral and follow-up. Thus, educational changes must go beyond mere diversification of the curriculum if the changes should be a means of helping students to have integrated personality to realize their true potentials. Guidance is therefore expected to be an essential component of the educational system to facilitate students' decisions in the selection and appropriate combination of subjects or courses that best suit their aptitudes and aspirations for the future world of work.

Career decision making is of critical importance as every student needs to choose his or her area of professional specialization when he applies for college or university (Sulaiman et al., 2015). Career choice has become a complex science with the advent of information technology, the emergence of post industrial revolution and job competition (Joshi & Gir, 2015). Lack of necessary information about technical fields or the world of work affect career decision making. Knowledge in career would help the student to be focused and clear about his or her career choice (Mohd et al., 2010).

Gati et al. (2019), further stated that vocational guidance is a factor in getting a job. Gati beliefs that vocational counselling could reduce the number of changing vocational choices early in one's life. Psychological testing, one means of helping a student focus on an appropriate career choice, resulted in better employment records,

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as shown for example in the stability, promotions earnings, and employer ratings throughout the student's career.

According to Theresa (2015), when an individual makes vocational choice, he or she does so in relation to the understanding of him or herself. More so, psychologically, career choices are ''drives" by self-concepts. What this implies is that making satisfying vocational choices requires a good understanding of self. It also follows that understanding self is the key to making a successful vocational choice. But it is also important, however, for one to know the requirements and work activities of different occupations. Theresah believes that if knowledge of any occupation or its demand is faulty, that occupation is not going to be well evaluated in relation to one's self-concept. Unfortunately, career choices are made with little awareness of the real world (Bright & Pryor, 2016). Students make crucial decisions at a stage when they may not be fully informed of their choices, or else unavoidable circumstances prevent them from pursuing their goals.

Again, referring to the World Bank Position paper on professional services in Kenya, Kemboi et al. (2016) attributed the serious shortage of professional skills to failure by Universities and other tertiary institution to help students chart credible career paths. Studies conducted in Kenya showed that people get employment in areas that are neither in line with their careers or professional training nor personality traits or interests. They go for what is available rather than what is in their personal interest, value, ability or skill to re-orient their interest to the available (Ahmed et al., 2017). When such people are employed they experience job frustration and dissatisfaction. This is characterized by low work morale and reduced productivity which has far

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reaching social and economic consequences. This is a manifestation of poor career choice.

In assessing the impact that career guidance counsellors have on various difficulties in the career decision-making process of late adolescents, Taylor (2007) analyzed 10 subcategories of the CDDQ. His findings revealed that career guidance counselling had the greatest impact in reducing adolescents' career decision-making difficulties in the major category *of Lack of Information*. Late adolescents who receive career guidance counselling are more likely to experience a reduction in their level of career indecision than adolescents who do not receive any form of career guidance counselling intervention. Therefore, those who had access to career information, stand a lower chance of being over-burdened with career decision-making.

2.8 Influence of Economic Considerations on Career Choice

The economic situation denotes the state in the local economy in which a person is going to search for their careers (Omar et al., 2021). It is true that economic growth in the country is connected to the increment in employment rates and the increment in people's spending capacity. A growing business will create more connections and more openings for employment. This will naturally draw students to those growing fields. This is because they may see great potential for their life growth and income. A study by Omar et al., (2021) argued that demographic culture was different in exposing the influence of economic factor towards student's career choice. This is because abundant people crave to choose a career that could give them a sound basis for a better standard of living.

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2.9 Opportunities as factor of Career Choice

Opportunity is an important determinant since a career path is a long-term process where students are assumed to get involved in a particular job by choosing the most favourable career that has a stable demand in the market (Gwelo, 2019). On top of that, Omar et al., (2021) stated that being exposed towards the available opportunities would make students have a good chance in choosing the finest career that suits their aptitudes. The opportunities may be in term of academic qualification, practical field attachment, and job shadowing. Nevertheless, the utmost possible opportunity would be employment opportunity. There is statistical data to prove that career choice is significantly impacted by opportunity (Gwelo, 2019)). Gwelo, (2019) highlighted that people always attempt to predict uncertain future. Similarly, students constantly strive to plan their careers for a stable future where excellent job opportunities are important factors that can influence career choices.

Okwulehie (2018), further stated that training to be portfolio workers, managing our skills as if we were our own job entity, may be the opportunities students will be faced with in the future. He stated that individuals should consider themselves a collection of attributes and skills, not a job. The key skills of the portfolio worker are versatility, flexibility, creativity, self-direction, interpersonal and communication skills, a facility with computer and information technology, the ability to learn continuously, and the ability to manage work, time, and money (Bhagra & Sharma, 2018). This would be quite different from the traditional view as is known today.

Korir and Wafula (2012), also noted that timing and location of the opportunities are very important in fulfilling aspirations. Students have shown all the ambition, talent, and skill needed for a particular career, but if the student has not capitalized on the

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right location at the right point in time, his hopes for that productive career are reduced or nil. However, much of the literature concerning career choice discusses the need for students to investigate. The student must have investigated, brainstormed, and tried alternate methods, rather than giving in to first opportunity available. The student must not have been satisfied with the easiest opportunity that comes along. In fact, the constant career exploration could be adopted as a lifelong strategy throughout one's life (Hollifield et al., 2015).

Many students all over the world go through school with wrong career notions (Ahmed et al., 2017). Careers such as Engineering, Law, Architecture, Medicine and Accountancy were every student 's dream (Njuguna, 2011). Career development during adolescence and early adulthood is an ongoing process. Students' career plans are in the formative stages, and these plans will continue to develop and change over time (Haley et al., 2015). Habitually, students try to make decisions about college or careers before they have really spent time thinking about their own interests, values, talents, and abilities (Elder & Paul, 2020).

Joblessness in countries has resulted in both the trained and untrained individuals to scramble for whatever jobs they could land their hands-on. The slow economic growth has not been able to absorb those seeking employment (Getange & Sagwe, 2016). This had been accelerated by the labour market imperfection that manifested itself in the form of career information breakdown, which particularly affected students who graduated. Carnoy et al. (2007) said that, a better match between graduates of different levels and sectors of educational system and the job opportunities in the labour market had always been the major preoccupation of educational planning. Career guidance had a role to play in providing direction to the

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youth at the senior high school level (Wong et al., 2022). Guiding the youth in appropriate subject choices leading to their engagement in a relevant career path.

Choices that people make related to their career can be categorized to be influenced by two factors that are psychological and social. Social factors are part of an individual's social bonds which include their parents, family, history and other characteristics of their environment. Psychological factors can be an individual's perception, cognitive and effective intentions, beliefs, ideas, personality and assessments related to forthcoming business environment (Ahmed et al., 2017)

Studies have confirmed to a great extent the impact of family on career choice. Therefore, career should not be left to chance or accidents among adolescents who frantically look for help from parents, teachers, peers and social media. If adolescents are left unguided in the choice of career, some of them may choose wrongly and regret throughout their lives.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the general approach and specific techniques adopted to address the objectives of the research. It also presents the study design, the population, and geographical area of the study, the sample and sampling techniques as well as research instruments. Finally, the procedure used for the administration of instruments for the study and the data analysis employed are also discussed.

3.1 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) the degree to which a chosen philosophy is appropriate may be decided by the underlying concerns the study wants to answer, and that two paradigms are accessible for the conceptualization of research philosophy. Objectivity and subjectivity are the two components of ontology. Objectivists believe that social events and social actors operate independently of one another in real-world settings, and that facts are not influenced by personal preferences or societal standards (Creswell, 2012).

The philosophical underpinning of this study is positivism. In accordance with Saunders et al. (2012), this study believes that positivist philosophy is the best paradigm to assist in answering research related questions. Using a positivist paradigm makes sense given the descriptive survey design of this study, and the use of structured questionnaire for data collection.

Doing positivist study constrain researchers in their power to influence individual participants and the data gathering methods. Positivist researchers use highly

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organized procedures that prioritize measurable data, exactly like in the natural sciences, which can be analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2012).

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopted quantitative research approach. This approach utilizes numerical estimation and analysis of data (Saunders et al., 2012). Using quantitative approach was appropriate for this study as the data collected from the field was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis.

The research questions under investigation could easily be answered, and so situating the study within the quantitative structure is not problematic. Studies that use quantitative research usually have a large sample size which concentrates on a number of responses and insights from respondents (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Thus, equally important justification for adopting quantitative approach was that the population from which the sample for this study was taken was large enough to guarantee the pursuit of quantitative analysis. The format for quantitative research is that the design requires each respondent to answer the same questions so that bias is prevented, and ensure a fair way of analysing the data (Klassen et al., 2012). Employing numerically scaled questionnaire for data collection fulfils this assertion because this study distributed paper questionnaires containing the same set of question items to the target respondents.

Advantages of quantitative research, according to Saunders et al. (2012), are that accurate and precise findings can be obtained due to the assurance of objectivity and certainty. Again, such studies are easy to plan and execute, and data collection activities less cumbersome which can be accomplished within limited space of time, while data analysis processes are quite straightforward (Klassen et al, 2012).

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3.3 Research Design

Dannels, (2018) indicated that research design provides the glue that holds the research project together. Rittenbruch et al., (2022) further described research design as the overall plans for collecting data in order to answer the research questions. A design is used to structure the research, to show how all the major parts of the research project, that is, the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programmes, and methods of assignment work together to try to address the central research questions.

The researcher employed descriptive survey design using the quantitative paradigm in the study. A survey is used to collect data for describing a population too large to observe directly Hermans and Schoeman (2015). A survey obtains information from a sample of people by means of self-report, that is, the people respond to a series of questions posed by the investigator (Pordelan et al., 2018). In this study the information was collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed personally to the participants by the researcher.

A descriptive survey was selected because it provides an accurate account of the characteristics, for example behaviour, opinions, abilities, beliefs, and knowledge of the participants. This design was chosen to meet the objectives of the study, namely to find out factors influencing the career choice of Senior High School students in Sunyani Municipality.

3.4 Research Setting

The research was conducted in Sunyani Municipality which is among the 12 Administrative Districts/Municipals in the Bono Region of Ghana. The population of Sunyani Municipal, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, is 193,595

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representing 16.0 percent of the region's total population. Males constitute 49.8 percent and females represent 50.2 percent. More than eighty percent of the population is urban (80.8). The Municipality covers a total land area of 506 Km2. It is located at the heart of Bono Region lying between Latitudes 70 20'N and 70 05'N and Longitudes 20 30'W and 2010'W. It is bordered on the north by Sunyani West District; west by Dormaa East District south by Asutifi District to the South and east by Tano North District.

The economy of the municipality used to be predominantly agrarian. However, the upsurge of commercial, industrial and service activities depicts potential diversification of the local economy. Currently the service sector employs majority (58.3%) of the population in the Municipality. About 62.0 percent of the populations aged 15 years and older are economically active while 38.1 per cent are economically not active. Of the economically active population, 93.2 percent are employed while 6.8 percent are unemployed. For those who are economically not active, a larger percentage of them are students (75.4 %), 10.7% perform household duties and 2.1 percent are disabled or too sick to work. Six out of ten unemployed are seeking work for the first time.

Employment status, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, of the population 15 years and older 49.2 percent are self-employed without employees, 8.1 percent are contributing family workers, 1.7 percent are casual workers and 0.4 percent are domestic employees (house helps). Overall, men constitute the highest proportion in each employment category except the contributing family workers and apprentices. The private informal sector is the largest employer in the district,

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employing 74.6 percent of the population followed by the public sector with 14.3 percent.

The Municipality has a number of educational facilities. Under the public sector, it has 56 kindergartens, 66 primary schools, 60 junior high schools, five senior high/ vocational and two tertiaries. The private sector on the other hand has 58 kindergartens, 55 primary schools, 42 junior high school and 7 senior high/vocational schools (2021 Population & Housing Census). The Municipality was specifically chosen because it is an industrialised area with a lot of different jobs and occupations. These varied job alternatives put students in situations where they have to make choices regarding their career. In this sense, investigating into the factors influencing the career choices of students is necessary. Specifically, the study was carried out in three senior high schools, thus, St. James Seminary/Senior High School, Sunyani Senior High School and Twene Amanfo Senior High/Technical School.

3.5 Population of the Study

According to Amara (2015), population is defined as all elements (individuals, objects and events) that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. The quality of data depends much on the quality of the population in which the sample is drawn. The target population of the study was final year students from all the three public senior high schools in the Sunyani Municipality. The schools were St. James Seminary/Senior High School, Sunyani Senior High School and Twene Amanfo Senior High/Technical School. The total number of students who formed the accessible population was 1500 final year students from the three public schools.

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3.6 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Apandi and Kusriandi, (2016) define a sample as elements selected with the intention of finding out something about the total population from which they are taken. The purposive sampling method was used to select the three public senior high schools selected for the study. The three schools were used because of easy accessibility.

With a student population of about 1500 from 3 schools, there was the need to determine the sample size for this study since the whole population of final year students could not be studied. I applied the sample size determination procedure introduced by Beck and Simons (1983) which states that 10% of a research population is sufficient to conduct a study. In this research, the population was 1500. Therefore, the sample size was 150 students (ie.10/100 ×1500).

Table 3.1: Distribution of samples among SHS schools for the study

School	Final year population	Sample
St. James SHS	440	44
Sunyani SHS	683	68
Twene Amanfo SHS	377	38
Total	**1,500**	**150**

Source: Researchers field work 2022

The samples for each school was obtained using the formula below: $n = \frac{P}{TP} \times SS$

Where 'P' is the population of final year students of each school, 'n' is the sample size to be determined, 'TP' is the total population of all the final year students from the three schools and 'SS' is the sample size of the study.

From table 3.1, St James had a student population of 440 and a sample of 44. Again, Sunyani SHS had a population of 683 and a sample of 68. Lastly, Twene Amanfo

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SHS had a final year population of 377 and a sample of 38. For example, the sample for St. James was obtained using the formula; (P/TP×SS) 440/1500×150 = 44. That was done for the rest of the schools to get a sample size of 150 respondents for the study.

This study applied purposive sampling technique to select student respondents from each school. The assumption behind the use of purposive sampling was that every student has basic ideas or knowledge about their career intentions and choices. Therefore, by purposively selecting the students, adequate information required for achieving objectives of the study was obtained.

3.7 Instrument

As in the opinion of Viswanath et al., (2008), questionnaires were used by the researcher to convert into data the information directly given by the respondents.

The survey instrument employed to gather data was an adapted version of factors influencing students' career choice questionnaire developed by (Semordzi et al., 2019). The questionnaire was adapted because this instrument was not designed for the people of Ghana in particular. Therefore, relative alterations were made in terms of personalizing the statements to make it suitable for the target group. For example: "Good salary will influence my choice" (original statement), "Perceived good salary influences my choice" (personalized statement). After the modifications, both my supervisors and experts in counselling confirmed that the questionnaire was valid for use.

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The questionnaire was made up of two sections, A and B. Section A sought the demographic characteristics such as gender, age of the respondents. Section B contained three sub-sections with a total of 26 items covering parental influence as a factor of career choice among students (10 items), prestige as a factor of career choice among students (8 items) and peer influence as a factor of career choice among students (8 items). The 4-point Likert scale item questionnaire were used for all sub-sections in section B with 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3= Agree 4 = Strongly agree.

3.8 Validity of the Instrument

Validity refers to the soundness of a research instrument. It elicits the accurate response needed for the study. To ensure a higher level of validity, the questionnaire was structured to reflect the research questions. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), instrument validation is improved through expert judgment. The items were therefore handed over to three experts in counselling psychology, and my supervisors for scrutiny. The recommendations from the experts and supervisors were the basis for its content validation.

3.9 Reliability of the Instrument

Sawalmeh (2013), refer to reliability as the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was carried out. The instrument was piloted in Sacred Heart Senior High School, in Sunyani West Municipality. The choice for the pre-testing was due to the similarities borne by the selected school and the other schools that were used for the main study. A sample of 15 students were randomly selected from Sacred Heart Senior High School to take part in the pre-test study. According to

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Connelly (2008), a sample size for a pre-test study should be 10% of the sample projected for the parent study. Hill (1998) also asserted 10-30 participants are ideal for feasibility studies.

The responses were obtained and analysed to determine whether it was appropriate for the study. Reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained for the questionnaire. This implied that the instrument was reliable for the study.

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

The authorities of the various schools were contacted to arrange for a convenient date for meeting with them to discuss the possibility of using their schools for an academic research work. After the dates were fixed, the researcher went to the schools with an introductory letter from the Department of Counselling Psychology, University of Education, Winneba.

In the researcher's next appointment date, the heads voluntarily gave permission for the administration of questionnaires. Each of the schools assigned a teacher to assist the researcher to administer the questionnaires. The purpose of the study with its ethical implications of anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation was disclosed to the students. The Questionnaire were distributed to the students personally after the selection of the respondents from the three selected schools. It was observed that out of the 158 questionnaire distributed, 150 were found usable representing 95% retrieval rate.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data generated from the instrument were analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS for Windows), version 23.0. Means and standard deviations

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were used to analyse research questions 1, 2 and 3 while the independent sample t-test was used to test the three hypotheses generated for the study.

3.12 Ethical Consideration

Carrying out a research requires not only expertise and diligence, but also honesty and integrity. This is done to recognise and protect the rights of the participants. To render the study ethical, the rights to anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent were observed.

Consent of the respondents was obtained before they were made to complete the questionnaires. Jnr, (2019) define informed consent as the prospective subject's agreement to participate voluntarily in a study, which is reached after assimilation of essential information about the study. The participants were informed of their rights to voluntarily decline to participate, and to withdraw participation at any time without penalty. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures that would be used to collect the data, and assured that there were no potential risks or costs involved.

Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. Jnr, (2019) define anonymity as when subjects cannot be linked, even by the researcher, with his or her individual responses. In this study, anonymity was ensured by not disclosing the teacher's name on the questionnaire and research reports and detaching the written consent from the questionnaire.

When participants are promised confidentiality, it means that the information they provide will not be publicly reported in a way which identifies them (Kotowski & Roye, 2017). In this study, confidentiality was maintained by keeping the collected

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data confidential and not revealing the participants' identities when reporting or publishing the study. No identifying information was entered onto the questionnaires, and questionnaires were only numbered after data was collected.

3.13 Summary

The chapter described the research approach, design, the study area, population of the research and the sample and sampling techniques employed for the study. It also discussed the research instruments used, data collection procedure and data analysis for the data collected. The next chapter presents and analyses the data gathered.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discusses the findings of the study. Before analysing the data collected, the completed questionnaires were given serial numbers and tallies were done in order to identify the respondents' responses to each of the questionnaire items. Responses to items were keyed into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 23.0. The results are presented in line with the research questions. The first section of the chapter presents demographic characteristics of respondents, while the subsequent sections focus on the specific objectives of the study.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The researcher wanted to know the gender distribution of respondents and this is represented in table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (100%)
Male	105	70
Female	45	30
Total	**150**	**100**

Source: Researchers field work 2022

From table 4.1 above, the total respondents were 150. Out of the total, 105 (70%) were males and the remaining 45 (30%) respondents were females. This indicates that, majority of respondents were male.

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The researcher needed to know the age of respondents and this is represented in table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2: Age distribution of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (100%)
14 -16	0	0
17 – 19	133	89
20 and Above	17	11
Total	**150**	**100**

Source: Researchers field work 2022

From table 4.2 above, respondents who were between the ages of 17 to 19 were 133 representing 89% of the respondents. The remaining 17 respondents were between the ages of 20 and above representing 11% of the respondents. This indicates that majority of respondents were between the ages of 17 to 19.

The researcher needed to know the program respondents are offering. This is represented in table 4.3 to 4.4 below:

Table 4.3: Program of study of respondents

Program	Frequency	Percentage (100%)	Cumulative Percent
General Science	43	29	29
General Arts	20	13	42
Home Economics	33	22	64
Business	24	16	80
Visual Arts	10	7	88
Vocational/Technical	10	7	93
Agriculture	10	7	100
Total	**150**	**100**	

Source: Researchers field work 2022

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From table 4.3 above, 43 of the respondents indicated they are offering science (Gen) representing 29%, 20 (13%) of the respondents indicated they are offering General Arts. 33 (22%) respondents indicated they are offering Home Economics. 24 (16%) respondents also indicated they are offering Business. 10 (7%) of the respondents indicated they are offering visual Arts. 10 (7%) of the respondents indicated they are offering vocational /Technical. The remaining 10 (7%) respondents indicated they are offering Agriculture. This therefore indicates that, majority of respondents are offering Science (Gen.)

4.2 Research Question 1

What parental factors influence career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality?

The researcher attempted to assess the parental factors that influence career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani municipality. This is represented in table 4.4 below**:**

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Table 4.4: Parental factors influencing career choice of SHS students

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have chosen the career to pursue because my parents always speak favourably of it	150	2.45	1.07
I feel motivated with what my parents do which makes me focus on the same profession	150	2.55	1.04
I developed an early understanding and desire of my career choice through observation of my parents	150	2.65	1.07
My career choice has been influenced by the socio-economic status of my parents	150	2.46	.98
My parents always warned me never to choose certain careers and that is why I am careful not to pick the one they won't like	150	2.23	1.09
My father's advice is key in my career choice	150	2.89	.92
My mother's career interest influenced my choice	150	2.45	.97
My parents encourage me to choose whatever career I want	150	3.00	1.09
My career choice has been influenced by the occupation of my parents	150	2.49	1.04
My parent advices have enabled me to focus on the rightful career	150	3.27	.88

Source: Researchers field work 2022

The findings on Table 4.4 showed that respondents agreed (mean = 2.45: std =1.07) that they have chosen the career to pursue because their parents always speak favourably of it. It was further agreed (mean = 2.55: std =1.04) that they feel motivated with what their parents do which makes them focus on the same profession. Again, it was agreed (mean= 2.65: std = 1.07) that, they developed an early understanding and desire of their career choice through observation of their parents. It went further to agree that, their career choice has been influenced by the socio-economic status of their parents (mean = 2.46; std = 0.98) and that, their parents always warned them never to choose certain careers and that is why are careful not to pick the one they won't like (mean = 2.23: std =1.09). The respondents agreed that

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(mean= 2.89: std = 0.928) that, their father's advice is key in their career choice. The respondents agreed that (mean= 2.45: std = 0.97) that, their mother's career interest influenced their choice. The respondents agreed that (mean= 3.0: std = 1.09) that, their parents encourage them to choose whatever career they want. The respondents agreed that (mean= 2.49: std = 1.04) that, their career choice has been influenced by the occupation of their parents. The respondents agreed that (mean= 3.27: std = .88) that, their parent advices have enabled them to focus on the rightful career. To determine whether parental factor influence career choice, the grand mean of the various constructs was calculated. Thus, the grand mean of 2.64 was arrived at and was compared to the cut of point of 2.5 to determine the level of parental influence.

From the analysis, it was found that ''My parent advices have enabled me to focus on the rightful career'', ''My parents encourage me to choose whatever career I want'' and ''My father's advice is key in my career choice'' were the parental factors that influenced career choice of Senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality.

The above findings confirmed the assertion by Michele et al., (2018) which indicated that parents' advice play a vital role in every aspect of their children's lives including their career choice. Again the findings was also supported by Egbo, (2017) when he asserted that parents advice enabled their children to focus on their rightful career. Rahawarin et al., (2020) further noted that parents encouraged their children to choose teaching as their careers.

The findings further affirmed the study of Omar et al., (2021), which indicated that parents encouragement was rated high among the items of career choice by their children. Children tend to love their parents' careers more than others when considering career choice among the youth (Zhou et al., 2016).

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According to Anne Roe's, (1957) theory, as children grow up, they rely on the advice and encouragement from their parents to chat their career path. Roe is of the view that individuals choose their careers based on interactions with their parents.

4.3 Research Question 2

To what extent does Prestige influence career choice among senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality?

This section presents the numerical results relating to the second research question understudy. This question seeks to determine how prestige influences choice of career among senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality. The descriptive statistical results for this question are reported in Table 4.5 below:

Table 4.5: Influence of prestige on career choice of students

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
An attractive working conditions influences my choice	150	3.17	.95
The feeling of importance influenced my choice	150	3.15	.87
Having an improved social status influenced my choice	150	3.02	.95
Perceived good salary influences my choice	150	3.13	.92
My career choice strategically was based on money and power	150	2.48	1.00
Having stable and secure future influences my choice	150	3.34	.85
Publicity and recognition given to people in the field influences my choice	150	2.84	.99
I want to feel a sense of accomplishment in my choice	150	3.27	.88

Source: Researchers field work 2022

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The results presented in table 4.5 showed that students or respondents agreed that 'Having stable and secure future influences my choice of career'. This statement had a mean score of 3.34 with a std of .85. Again, the statement that 'I want to feel a sense of accomplishment' had a mean score of 3.27 and std of .88. From the table, it was also realised that respondents agreed that 'An attractive working conditions influence their career choice'. This statement had a mean of 3.17 and a std of .95. The respondents again agreed to the statement that 'The feeling of importance influenced their career choice' this statement had a mean of 3.15 and std of .87. Respondents agreed that 'Perceived good salary influence their career choice' this statement had a mean of 3.13 and a std of .92. Again, from the table it was realised that respondents agreed to the statement 'Having an improved social status influenced their career choice'. This statement had a mean of 3.02 and std of .95. From the table it was also found that 'Publicity and recognition given to people in the field influences career choice' this statement had a mean of 2.84 and std of .99. However, respondents disagreed with the statement that 'My career choice strategically was based on money and power'. This statement had a mean of 2.48 and std of .99.

From the analysis in table 4.5, having stable and secure future, feeling a sense of accomplishment, an attractive working conditions, and Good salary were the factors of prestige that influence the career choice of the students.

The findings were consistent with the study of Akosah-Twumasi et al., (2018) which identified prestige as an important deciding factor for youth career choice making in India which include feeling a sense of accomplishment, an attractive working conditions and having a stable and secure future. They further noted that prestige statuses attached to some occupations were strong incentives to career

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choices. When people are scouting for jobs, they normally think about the ones that the community consider as very prestigious so that when they have access to those jobs they become satisfied because people see such jobs as important. In a study it was found that Japanese and Korean students were also highly influenced by occupational prestige (Lamichhane et al., 2022).

However, only one construct, "My career choice strategically was based on money and power" has a mean of 2.48 and std of 1.00. This indicates that majority of the students disagreed with this construct or item. The underlying implication concerning the item with mean below 2.5 is that students' choice of career may not necessarily base on money and power.

4.4 Research Question 3

How do peer factors influence career choice of senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality?

This section presents the numerical results relating to the third research question. This question sought to determine how peer factors influence career choice of senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality. The descriptive statistical results for this question are reported in Table 4.6 below:

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Table 4.6: Peer influence and career choice

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My choice is influenced by my friends who are doing well in their career	150	2.93	1.03
My friends suggested my career choice	150	2.70	.78
My friends want us to be in the same career	150	2.59	.72
Favourable opinion of friends influenced my choice	150	2.88	.87
The interest of my friends influenced my choice	150	2.61	.74
The desire to make my friends happy influences my choice	150	2.63	.79
The desire to be like my friend influences my choice	150	1.60	.78
My career education comes from other students	150	1.63	.78

Source: Researchers field work 2022

The data in table 4.6 is about peer influence on career choice. Respondents agreed that 'My choice is influenced by my friends who are doing well in their career'. This statement had a mean score of 2.93 and std of 1.03. Respondents agreed that 'Favourable opinion of friends influenced my career choice'. This statement had a mean of 2.88 and std of .87. Again, the statement that 'My friends suggested my career choice' had a mean of 2.70 and std .78. It was also realised from the table that 'the desire to make my friends happy influences my career choice'. This statement had a mean of 2.63 and std of .79. Respondents agreed that 'My friends want us to be in the same career'. This statement had a mean of 2.59 and the std of .72. From the table, respondents agreed to the statement that 'The interest of my friends influenced my career choice'. It had a mean score of 2.61 and std of .74.

It was found that the major peer influence of career choice is 'my choice is influenced by my friends who are doing well in their career', 'favourable opinion of friends influenced my career choice', my friends suggested my career choice. The findings

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imply that; peer factors influence career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani municipality.

These findings are similar to the findings obtained by Mtemeri, (2020) which revealed that peer interactions influence students in choosing careers. As the students interact, they share information about careers. This is in line with Krumboltz' social learning theory, which emphasises the importance of learners interacting with one another in their environment (Yarberry & Sims, 2021). Chaudhuri et al., (2020) reiterated the influence of peer advice, opinions and suggestions on career choices. Also according to Koech et al., (2016), when Kenyan students interact with their friends, they take into consideration the career advice and suggestions they receive.

4.5 Testing of Hypotheses

Independent samples test (t-test) was used to determine significant differences in gender, parental influence, prestige and peer influence as a factors of career choice. The hypothesis was tested at a significance level of $p < .05$. The t-test result is presented in Table 4.7 to 4.9.

H_{01}: There will be no statistically significant gender difference in parental influence on career choice of senior high schools in Sunyani Municipality.

H_1: There will be statistically significant gender difference in parental influence on career choice of senior high schools in Sunyani Municipality.

This hypothesis was tested to find out whether there was statistically significant difference between male and female students with regard to parental influence in career choice in Sunyani Municipality. The results are presented in the table 4.7 below:

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Table 4.7: Summary of independent Sample t-test result of gender difference on parental influence on career choice

Gender	N	Mean	SD	*Df*	*t*	*P*
Male	105	2.789	.562	148	-2.116	0.036
Female	45	2.576	.568			

NB: *p=0.05, Source: Field study (2022)

The results as presented in Table 4.7 showed a significant difference (t =-2.116, df=148, p = 0.036) between males and females on the issue of parental influence on career choice of senior high school students. A further observation of their mean indicated that males reported a slightly higher score (M=2.789) than the females (M=2.76) signifying that parents have significant influence in the career choice of their male wards than females. Therefore, the Null hypothesis which stated that 'there will be no statistically significant gender difference in parental influence on career choice in senior high schools in Sunyani Municipality' was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was rather supported.

This finding may be because of the typical Ghanaian cultural perception that men are breadwinners of their families (i.e., women, children and other dependents). Even though this narrative has taken a global shift, the results of this study show otherwise in the Ghanaian context and hence more education needs to be done in promoting female independency and career advancement.

This result affirms the views of Thébaud and Charles (2018) who postulated that cultural beliefs about gender accord men higher status in society than women. It is also consistent with the evidence found by van der Van der Vleuten, (2018) that gender expectations are stricter for boys than for girls and that the more traditional the

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gender ideology of a boy the higher the probability of entering a traditional occupation, although this is not the case for girls. Moreover, father's profession is also a determinant variable in career choice for boys (Ramaci et al., 2017).

The present study confirms Kumazhege (2017) study which also found a significant relationship between parents and career choices. Children tend to love their parents' ideal careers more than others if their careers provide a comfortable lifestyle, satisfaction, prestige, performance, and social status (Zhou, Guan, Xin, Mak & Deng, 2016). According to Gwelo (2019), as children grow up, they gain a clear picture of their parents' careers. For instance, if one parent is a teacher, the child can also choose a career as a teacher.

Abrahams et al., (2015) suggest that children are influenced in their career choice by socio-demographic factors and these factors include family, school and peers. In his study, Salami (2006) found that family involvement as the most significant predictor of career choice in gender-dominated occupations.

Similarly, Mtemeri, (2020) opined that the family provides information and guidance directly or indirectly and influences young people's career choice. For instance, parents offer appropriate support to their male children for certain occupational choices which tend to follow their own (Shumba & Naong, 2012). The above studies are consistent with the present one.

H_{02} There will be no statistically significant gender difference in prestige as a factor influencing career choice in SHS in Sunyani Municipality.

H_2: There will be statistically significant gender difference in prestige as a factor influencing career choice in SHS in Sunyani Municipality.

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Hypothesis two was tested to find out gender difference in prestige as a factor influencing career choice in senior high school in Sunyani Municipality.

The results are presented in the table 4.8 below:

Table 4.8: Summary of independent sample t-test on Gender difference in prestige

Gender	N	Mean	SD	*Df*	*T*	*P*
Male	105	3.056	.697	148	.012	0.991
Female	45	3.037	.577			
Total	**150**					

NB: *p=0.05, Source: Field study (2022)

Results from the above independent sample t-test shows that 105 are males (M=3.056) and 45 are females (M=3.037) generally, gender difference in prestige was not significant (i.e., t (148) =.012, p = 0.991). Thus, an observation of their mean indicates that males reported higher than females, however the result shows that there is no significant gender difference in the prestige associated with career choice among senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states "there will be no statistically significant gender difference in prestige as a factor influencing career choice in SHS in Sunyani Municipality" was supported.

This finding could be attributed to the fact that adolescents being who they are appreciate good things in their communities. They also identify themselves with those who are popular and respected by all. In line with these both groups will have a similar interest in choosing a career that portrays their interest

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This finding is in line with Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) who asserted that adolescents all over the world, irrespective of their gender do not differ in career choice with regard to prestige as a factor.

H_{03}: There will be no statistically significant gender differences in peer influence as a factor of career choice among senior high school students in Sunyani Municipal.

H_3: There will be statistically significant gender differences in peer influence as a factor of career choice among senior high school students in Sunyani Municipal.

The third hypothesis was tested to find out whether there was statistically significant difference between male and female students with regard to peer influence in career choice of SHS students in Sunyani Municipality. The results are presented in the table 4.9 below:

Table 4.9: Summary of independent sample t-test result on gender and peer pressure

Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	***Df***	***T***	***P***
Male	105	1.684	.605	148	-.346	0.730
Female	45	1.719	.562			
Total	**150**					

NB: *p<0.05, Source: Field study (2022)

Results from the independent sample t-test shows that 105 are males (M=1.684) and 45 are females (M=1.719) generally, gender difference in peer influence was not statistically significant (t=-.346, df=148, p = 0.730). Thus, an observation of their mean indicates that female reported higher than male; however, the result shows that there is no significant gender difference in peer pressure influence so far as career choice among senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality is concerned.

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Therefore, the null hypothesis that states "there will be no statistically significant gender differences in peer influence as a factor of career choice among senior high school students in Sunyani Municipal'' was supported.

This result is in line with the finding of a study conducted by Dick et al. (2007) which indicated that boys and girls do not differ in their susceptibility to peer influence effects by their opposite-sex peers, such that opposite-sex friends tend to be more influential than same-sex friends regarding peer influence on career choice for both boys and girls. However, the finding did not support the studies by Svensson, (2003) which indicated that girls are more susceptible to peer influence compared to boys when parental monitoring is low. This gender difference may be influenced by socialization of gender roles; girls are instructed to be more cooperative and compliant compared to boys, which fosters a higher pre-occupation with social approval and abandonment (Rose & Rudolph 2006).

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the study, recommendations made to help improve career choice of senior high school students and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study examined the factors influencing career choice of senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality. It adopted a descriptive survey design using the quantitative paradigm. A total of 150 final year students comprising 105 males and 45 female students from three senior high schools were selected using a combination of stratified and random sampling techniques for the study. Questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = 0.78) was used for data collection. The quantitative data was analysed descriptively via SPSS, and this was presented in tables and figures as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was computed using t-tests at a significance level of $p \leq .05$ using a confidence interval (C.I) of 95%.

5.2 Key Findings

The following were the findings of the study.

1 The study showed that parental advice and encouragement helps students to choose the rightful career.

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2 The study showed that students had a feeling of sense of accomplishment as an aspect of prestige in career choice.

3 It was found that students chose their career based on the attractive working conditions.

4 Students choose careers that will let them have a stable and secure future.

5 Students career choice was based on the opinions and suggestions from their peers.

6 There was statistically significant difference between male and female with the male having the higher mean score which indicates that parents influence male respondents in their career choices.

7 There was no statistically significance gender difference with regard to prestige as a factor for career choice.

8 There was no statistically significance gender difference with regard to peer influence in career choice.

5.3 Conclusion

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study.

Career information should not just be limited to how best to study, pass examinations, and enter the appropriate institutions, but it should cover areas such as job requirement, benefits, prospects, and even job hazards and everything that ought to be known about career and the world of work. This awareness will go a long way to appropriately inform students' career choices since limited career information negatively affects individuals' career decisions and their entire life. Students tend to highly rely on external factors rather than knowing who they are and what they are capable of doing in respect to choice of study and career, if their exposure to

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knowledge about the world of work is inadequate, they cannot relate their capabilities to their occupational choices.

Careful, thoughtful, effective and efficient planning is important in every endeavour in the world including one's career. Thus, for students to succeed in choosing a career, it behoves them to carefully plan it. This is because the career one chooses affects their total life including one's income, standard of living, social status and contacts, emotional health and feeling of self-worth. It would also affect one's use of time, general satisfaction with life, and spiritual well-being. As a result, the planning should be done by following the career planning process carefully. The process requires students to plan their career by consulting all relevant stakeholders including the counsellor. Students should also explore various careers and choose schools and courses or programmes that can help them to reach their career goal.

Students choose their careers under the influence of certain factors that are ideal for their occupational lives. This is because making a wrong decision may lead to a choosing a career would not only affect one's psychology but productivity as well. If students in Sunyani Municipality choose careers that are congruent with their personality, interest, life goals, careers that are realistic, it could help reduce the number of those who join the "sakawa band".

From the study, it was determined that parental influence over their children's career choice in the Sunyani municipality was communicated through many channels. These channels include parental advice and encouragement. These variables were found within the Anne Roe's theory of career choice which indicated that parenting styles were the greatest influence over a child's career choice, particularly in regard to

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deciding upon a person oriented career. She later concluded that a child's attachment to their parent was the most influential factor.

The study also revealed that students were influenced by their peers in the form of peer advice and encouragement. Peer education was also cited as another way in which students were influenced by their peers. There was no gender disparity between boys and girls as regards peer influence. Friends were cited as quite influential in students' career choice.

It is also concluded that, prestige of a profession, influence career choice among senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality. Again, based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that there was no significant influence of prestige of a profession on career choice among male and female senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipal. In addition, it was again revealed that parents have high influence on their male students than female senior high school students in Sunyani Municipal.

It was finally concluded that, since one cannot totally rule out the possibility of these factors from influencing students' career choices, career guidance providers should find ways of involving them in the career guidance activities of students. This will in a way help educate everyone when it comes to individuals and career decisions.

5.4 Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1 The study showed that parental advice and encouragement influence students career choice. It is therefore recommended that, orientation programs should be organized for parents and guardians during PTA meetings or interactions

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to sensitize them to know that they are very important factor in their children career choice. This strategy will make parents more aware of the roles that they have to play as far as the future careers of their children is concern.

2 The study showed that students' sense of accomplishment as an aspect of prestige influence their career choice. Base on this findings, it is therefore recommended that, school guidance & counselling coordinators should organise field trip or excursions to work places to expose students to the field of work.

3 The study showed that students career choice was based on the opinions and suggestions from their peers. Based on this findings, it is therefore recommended that the guidance and counselling coordinator should often give guidance talk on how peers influence each other in selecting a career. This will let peers be aware of how their suggestions and opinions can contribute to career choice among peers.

4. The findings showed that there was statistically significant difference between male and female with the male having the higher mean score which indicates that parents influence male respondents in their career choices. Based on this findings, it is recommended that parents should give equal opportunities to both male and female children when given information in the form of advice and encouragement to their adolescence students.
5. It is also recommended that policy makers and implementers should intensify career guidance in the basic schools to enable children to explore the world of work at the early stage of their life. This would help them get enough career information; hence they would be able to make career decisions with less

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difficulties in senior high school. Career opportunities should be inculcated in the school curriculum so that right from the start students would know career avenues available to them and what goes into choosing a particular career.

5.5 Limitations and Area for Further Study

There are some limitations to this research. First, the findings of this research are based on data collected from students from only Sunyani Municipality. The results are thus not representative of factors influencing career choice of senior high school students in the country. Future studies could consider this same subject matter using students in other senior high schools within the country to allow the generalisations of the present findings. Second, the study limited the students' response to only the career choice factors that were mentioned in the questionnaires distributed. Respondents were not given the opportunity to state any other peculiar factors which they consider influential on their career choices. An important avenue for extension of the current study will therefore be the need to consider these other factors by means of a qualitative design.

Despite these limitations, this study provides some evidence that career choices of Senior high school students are not made in a vacuum, but certain underlining factors significantly shape students' decision to pursue a particular career.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire for Student

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

TOPIC: FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SUNYANI MUNICIPALITY.

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is designed for the purpose of collecting relevant information on factors influencing the career choice of senior high school students in Sunyani Municipality. The information provided by you will be used for research purpose only. You are kindly requested to provide information with all honesty.

You are assured of confidentiality and anonymity throughout this study and your willingness to participate or not in answering the questions, will not in any way influence your relationship with me.

Thank you for your cooperation.

SECTION - A DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please tick [√] or write where appropriate

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age: 14-16 [ ] 17-19 [ ] 20 and above [ ]

3. What program are you offering?

Science (Gen) [ ] General Arts [ ] Home Economics [ ] Business [ ]

Visual Art [ ] Vocational/Technical [ ] Agricultural [ ]

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SECTION B

This Section is concerned with students' career choice. For each statement given in parts **A, B** and **C** below, please read each carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree with the statement by placing a tick **[√]** in the appropriate space using a rating scale of 1- 4 where; Strongly Disagree **(SD)** =1, Disagree **(D)** =2, Agree, **(A)** =3, Strongly Agree **(SA)** =4

A. PARENTAL INFLUENCE AS A FACTOR OF CAREER CHOICE AMONG STUDENTS

NO	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA
1	I have chosen the career to pursue because my parents always speak favourably of it				
2	I feel motivated with what my parents do which makes me focus on the same profession				
3	I developed an early understanding and desire of my career choice through observation of my parents				
4	My career choice has been influenced by the socio-economic status of my parents				
5	My parents always warned me never to choose certain careers and that is why I am careful not to pick the one they won't like				
6	My father's advice is key in my career choice				
7	My mother's career interest influenced my choice				
8	My parents encourage me to choose whatever career I want				
9	My career choice has been influenced by the occupation of my parents				
10	My parent advices have enabled me to focus on the rightful career				

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B. PRESTIGE AS A FACTOR OF CAREER CHOICE AMONG STUDENTS

NO	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA
1	An attractive working conditions influences my choice				
2	The feeling of importance influenced my choice				
3	Having an improved social status influenced my choice				
4	Perceived good salary influences my choice				
5	My career choice strategically was based on money and power				
6	Having stable and secure future influences my choice				
7	Publicity and recognition given to people in the field influences my choice				
8	I want to feel a sense of accomplishment in my choice				

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C. PEER INFLUENCE AS A FACTOR OF CAREER CHOICE AMONG STUDENTS

NO	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA
1	My choice is influenced by my friends and peers who are doing well in their career				
2	My friends or fellow students suggested my career choice				
3	I chose this course because I wanted to be with my friends				
4	Favourable opinion of friends influenced my choice				
5	The interest of my friends influenced my choice				
6	The desire to make my friends happy influences my choice				
7	The desire to be like my friend influences my choice				
8	My career education comes from other students				