

**ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE AMONG
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MERU COUNTY, KENYA**

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JUNE, 2019

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration by student

This research thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other University.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late dad, Njogu; and my mum, Gaturi; my husband, John; and children, Brenda and Collins; for their support, encouragement and prayers.

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First, I thank the Almighty God for good health, intellectual endowment and finances to undertake this study. Secondly, my heartfelt gratitude goes to my supervisors; Dr. Tarsilla Kibaara, PhD and Dr. Paul Gichohi, PhD for their scholarly advice and constructive feedback on my work every time I presented it for direction. Indeed, I am greatly indebted to you for your inspiration and dedication to my work whenever I required your counsel. I also want to acknowledge my husband, John; my children, Brenda and Collins; for your understanding, support and patience throughout the period of this work.

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ABSTRACT

Career selection is one of the many important choices students make which have lifelong effects. This is because choosing a career that matches one's interests, skills and values significantly increases their chances for social-economic success, personal fulfillment and happiness. However, whether or not a student is equipped with requisite career choice information to necessitate informed decisions is yet to be established. Although review of literature shows that students have numerous challenges when selecting careers, the factors that influence career choice among secondary school students and the extent of their impacts were still not clearly understood. This study sought to analyze factors influencing career choice in public secondary schools in Meru County, with a view to determining individual and combined influence of each factor on career choice. It was guided by four objectives; namely; to examine the influence of career guidance services provided to students on career choice, to assess the influence of parental aspirations on career choice, to investigate influence of mass media on career choice and to evaluate the influence of school policy on subject selection in career choice by secondary school students. The study was informed and guided by the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making by John Krumboltz and Contingency Theory of Management by Joan Woodward. It adopted mixed methods approach and used descriptive survey and correlational research designs in investigating the phenomena. The target population comprised 19,862 Form Four students, 364 principals, 364 career guidance teachers and 364 form four Parents Association representatives' from all the 364 public secondary schools in the Meru County. Through stratified, systematic and purposive sampling respectively, 460 participants were selected from 364 schools. A questionnaire and an interview schedule were used to collect data from target population. A pre-test of the instruments was carried out to ensure reliability and validity. Data analysis was done with the help of SPSS (Version 24) and Microsoft excel. Overall response rate was 92.1%. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentages), and inferential statistics (Chi-square test, ANOVA, correlation and regression analysis). The results were presented in frequency distribution tables, charts and in other cases, logical explanations and narratives were provided. Results show that career which students of public secondary schools in Meru County choose are statistically and significantly influenced by nature of career guidance services; parental aspirations, mass media, and school policy on selection of subjects. The findings revealed that mass media and parental aspirations as factors that exert greatest influence on career choices. The findings of this study have implications on career guidance practices and policy in secondary schools. The study recommends that principals, educationists, career guidance teachers to organize for capacity building and awareness campaigns to sensitize students, parents and the general public on the influence of the four factors on career choice and to underscore the role that should be played by each of these stakeholders.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BOM	Board of Management
CBC	Competence Based Curriculum
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CC	Career Choice
CG	Career Guidance
CGS	Career Guidance Services
CGT	Career Guidance Teacher
CODATA	Committee on Data for Science and Technology
CTOM	Contingency Theory of Management
CUE	Commission for University Education
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KCSE	Kenya Certification of Secondary Education
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KLTC	Krumboltz Learning Theory of Career Counseling
KMPDB	Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
KSLTCDM	Krumboltz Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making

KUCCPS	Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement Service
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NACOSTI	National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NICEC	National Institute for Career Education and Counseling
PA	Parents' Association.
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

It is generally presumed that individuals will enter into careers that would bring them lifelong satisfaction after a long period of schooling. However, extensive career knowledge is a prerequisite to a successful rewarding occupation. Career choice is a complex process that needs serious consideration by anyone wishing to live a fruitful and satisfying life. Students in secondary schools are therefore expected to start career planning early so that by the end of their schooling, they can make informed career choices. This investigation was derived from the need to understand the constructs of career choices among students in public secondary schools in Meru County.

Sullivan and Baruch (2009) define career as a combination of an individual's work-related as well as other relevant experiences, both inside and outside an organization, which form an individual's lifespan. According to Pam (2013), career choice is the act of deciding what one wants to do in life which determines their success in the subsequent stages of their lives. These choices are based on such factors as perception of ideal job, mentorship opportunities and education opportunities that secondary school students are exposed to (Mberia & Midigo, 2018). Career choice therefore, can be viewed as an implementation of one's vocational self-concept which is usually influenced by feedback gained from individual experiences as well as feedback from others (Kimberly, Eleanor & Sean, 2016). Career choice propels one to a given occupation; hence, its implications

are long-term in nature. Evidently, an individual with a focused and consistent career choice is less likely to change jobs within short period of time (Mberia & Midigo, 2018).

Published studies, for example, Andrea, Julia, Nicole, Shashank and Thomas (2017); Jackson and Wilton (2017), and Steve (2016), have shown that people choose careers that would lead them to certain occupations. Other reasons for preferring certain careers include: life satisfaction, uncertainty in the labour market, need to serve the society, interesting occupation while others talk of satisfying economic gains (Weiss, 2012). However, there are many life events that take place in people's cultural settings that often shape their values and expectations in relation to their jobs. This implies that every person entering in a certain occupation, therefore, needs to create an occupational profile for specific jobs and identify his or her unique abilities, talents and required skills (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). In regard to these arguments, two questions arise: how do public secondary school students make career choice? Who influences their career paths? Fundamentally, what secondary school students aspire to become basically revolves around what they want to do with their life-long work (Mberia & Midigo, 2018). However, studies indicate that secondary school students continue to face difficulties in making career choices (Bullock-Yowell, McConnell & Schedin, 2014; Holmegaard, Ulriksen & Madsen, 2014). Career preparation helps remove confusion, anxiety and indecisiveness, and further brings life satisfaction that result in enjoyment of what one does; a feeling that emanate from having a level of competency which results from formal assessment (Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015).

Globally, the concept of career choice has been given eminent attention across many developed and developing countries. In countries like USA, Australia and UK, students are subjected to systems that empower and prepare them to undertake certain career aspirations based on their talents, abilities, interests and values (Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Harris, 2013; MoE [Singapore], 2012). In UK for example, Career and Enterprise Company and National Careers Service have been established to help schools and colleges develop closer links with local businesses, ensure employers play a leading role in preparing young people for the world of work, and to support them by providing free, up-to-date, impartial information and advice on careers, skills and the labour market (House of commons, 2016).

Similarly, while in Singapore and Australia, career guidance is more advanced given that it is based on suitable student events from primary to post-secondary school level, and starts early in a child's life, in Britain, career guidance is comprehensive and a compulsory part of the education curriculum (MoE [Singapore], 2012; Mudulia, 2017). Germany has established a centralized career office information center that is operated by qualified career counselors who have undergone a three year course of study (Nong, 2016). These counselors make school visits, run class discussions and also hold small group and personal counseling. On a regular basis, the classes also pay visits to those centers. Ireland, on other hand, has embraced career counseling by ensuring that every secondary school has a well-trained career counselor who must possess a post graduate diploma in career guidance (Harris, 2013; Nong, 2016).

Career choice in African countries like Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Uganda has been given due consideration. For example, Botswana organizes for different activities annually to empower secondary school students with career information that enhance career exploration, planning and career choice among students (Nong, 2016). On the other hand, the government of Uganda has created a career and vocational guidance program that assists students make realistic educational and career choices (Okiror & Otabong, 2015).

The foregoing discussion illustrates that career guidance is critical in career choice and should therefore be more concerned with transition within education and employment systems. As such, students should be prepared in advance for “a lifetime of careers” and not “a career-for-life” (Stillwell & Sable 2013; Hooley & Rice, 2018).

Most countries in the world have sought through scholarly studies to find out the factors that guide career choice among secondary school students. Some of the factors highlighted include; family support, that is, family expectation and family financial support; genetic factors, career advice by teachers and mentors, peers and friends and school counselors (Njeru, 2016; Mundi, 2017; Hooley & rice, 2018; Amoah, Kwofie, & Kwofie, 2015; Kim, Ahn & Fouad, 2016). Additionally, factors like financial outcomes, future job opportunities, social and print media, industrial mentors, personal dynamics and subject selection and grades that students achieve at form four level were also found to guide career choice (Ahmed, Sharif & Ahmad, 2017; Lee, Myong, & Dopson, 2018; Ilouga, Mouloungni & Sahut, 2014; Mudhovozi, 2010; Mtemeri, 2017; Kimathi, 2014).In

South Africa, for example, studies conducted revealed many complex variables such as parental and familial influences, interpersonal relationships, teachers, friends and acquaintances which impact on career choices (Bojuwoye & Mbanjwa, 2006; Naong & Shumba, 2012).

Further, a study conducted in USA by Slovacek, Jacob and Flenoury (2015), revealed that 95% of high school students relied heavily on family for support, and that family influence was most pronounced at early ages up through completion of high school as students contemplated their careers and college choices. Jackson and Wilton (2017); and Albdour and Altarawneh (2014) notes that employees who extensively made career choices while in high school were experiencing more job satisfaction and high level of job engagement that resulted into continued commitment in the organization. However, unreliable labour market, inability to identify ones skills, talents and abilities, as well as, poor adaptability can have a negative effect on the nature of career decision made, as individuals feel less confident and more ambivalent (Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015; Bonenberger, Aikins, Akweongo & Weiss, 2012; Allison, 2015; Steve, 2016). This finding indicates that career guidance should make students aware that they will experience life-long phases of additional update of skills and knowledge.

Ahmed, Sharif and Ahmad (2017) argue that career choice of students should not be based on preconceived notions, imaginations or popular concepts but rather be anchored on strong knowledge, complete information, and be appropriately guided; matching individual personality type, intrinsic and extrinsic factors. According to Robertson (2013), career guidance helps a person to be optimistic, set constructive external goals and focus on future life planning rather than ruminate on past or present problems.

Despite the need for career guidance, Nachmias and Walmsley (2015) observed that majority of students were sure of the career path they wanted to pursue yet, they lacked the ability to make effective career decision. This indicates a gap between policy and practical implementation of career guidance.

Increased competition in the job market has made pro-active career planning even more critical for students since they must decide the type of profession they want to have in life. Consequently, early career decision-making is critical if students are to succeed in the highly competitive job markets (Jackson & Wilton, 2017). Other studies such as Nachmias and Walmsley (2015), Harris (2013), Pitan and Atiku (2017) have noted that in the recent past, career decision in the context of uncertain labour market, unemployment, inability to identify ones skills, talents and abilities is challenging. Regardless of the approaches used in different countries to prepare their citizens for future career paths, research indicate that a career that matches one's interest, skills and values is one of life's most important decisions because it significantly increases one's chances for socio-economic success and personal fulfillment (Stillwell & Sable, 2013; Koech, Bitok, Ruto, Koech, Okoth, Korir & Ngala, 2016; Mudulia, 2017).

In a bid to overcome challenges of career choice, some middle and low income countries have developed policy goals for career guidance and orientation services that link high school graduates to technical and vocational education, colleges and universities (Watts, 2013; Slovacek, Jacob & Flenoury, 2015; Egbo, 2017). In Nigeria, for example, vocational guidance was incorporated in secondary school education to help students make appropriate career choice Ego (2017), while Pakistan has emphasized the need to base students career choice on strong knowledge, complete information and appropriate

guidance that match individual personality type and other intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Ahmed et al., 2017).

The capacity to achieve socioeconomic growth and political development envisioned in Kenya vision 2030 blueprint hinges on the development of local workforce. The government of Kenya recognizes that education, training, science and technology fundamentally equips citizens with knowledge and skills that enable them to make informed choices about their social and economic growth (MoEST, 2013). However, this cannot be achieved in isolation without the intervening measure of career guidance services. Formal school guidance and counseling was acknowledged in Kenya in the 1970s, and by 2005, the Vocational and Educational Guidance and Counseling Department was created in the Ministry of Education (MoEST, 2005). Further, the Ministry of Education policy documents in Kenya supports the career guidance in schools by producing a career guidance handbook for pupils and students (MoE, 2009). Although career guidance provisions are incorporated in guidance and counseling in secondary schools. Wambu and Fisher (2015) contend that guidance and counseling is not a major component of education curriculum in Kenyan schools.

Despite the underlying facts that education is at the core of economic growth of the country, many of the youth in Kenya and indeed in many countries are not certain of what career to pursue (Njeru, 2016). For example, a study conducted by Koech, et al. (2016) reported that 77.9% of undergraduate students would opt to change the courses they were pursuing if offered another chance, and only 22.1% of the students were comfortable with the courses they were doing and would not change to any other course.

Ayiro (2016) also reported that an estimated 65% of students from 22 universities in East Africa were not satisfied by the academic programs they were pursuing.

In Kenya, career choice is a critical but complicated task that involves a difficult process of decision making that affects all students (Njeru, 2016; Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). As students prepare for careers while in secondary schools, they face problems of relating subject selection with future career choices based on their abilities, cluster subjects and school performance (Njeru, 2016; Mudulia, 2017; Odour, 2019). As earlier observed, this has resulted to students pursuing courses that are not in line with their career aspirations. According to Odour (2019), this results to graduates being employed in areas that are neither in line with their professional training, nor with their career interests. The effect of such a scenario is job dissatisfaction, lack of motivation, poor job performance, and negative attitude toward work, high absenteeism and high job turnover that can negatively affect ones productivity in the organization, something that may elicit conflict between an employee and the employer (Bonenberger et al., 2014).

The Meru County career education policies do not vary from the national education policies since primary and secondary education are not a devolved function (Republic of Kenya 2010). Studies conducted in the county on career choice revealed that choice of subjects can influence student's aspired careers in high school (Kimathi, 2014; Mutwiri, 2015) and that students were inadequately prepared for career choice. In addition, Muyalo (2017) observed that parental guidance in education had a positive effect on academic performance that ultimately affected career choice of public secondary school students in Igembe North Sub-County, Meru County. Similar sentiments were echoed by Mundi (2017), who found out that 56% of first year students at Consolata Nkubu School

of Nursing were influenced into nursing by personal interaction with nurses, 23% by parents and relatives, 17% by social media, and 7% by career guidance teachers. Other local studies include Mudulia's study (2017) that interrogated the forms of career guidance services offered to secondary school students and their influence on career choice. A study by Mundi (2017) indicated that among the many factors that students pointed out to have had influence on their choice of nursing as a career, 82% indicated that it was a career of choice, a reason that explained why majority had made more than three attempts to apply for the course before they finally got the offer.

Four factors, namely, career guidance services, parental aspirations, mass media and subject selection, are underlined in the aforementioned studies as most significant in influencing career choice among secondary school students. However, not much can be gathered from these works on the extent to which they, as well as the school policy on subject selection influence career choice among secondary school students. It is this knowledge gap that spurred the undertaking of this study in public secondary schools in Meru County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is a great correlation between the kind of career one chooses and the likelihood to get a job. As such, career decision-making processes need to start early to enable young people succeed in the highly competitive job markets. A well planned career path helps remove confusion, anxiety and indecisiveness and brings life satisfaction in what one does (Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015). In this regard, schools in Kenya are expected to put up career guidance policies, structures and services that assist students to develop and nurture career aspirations that can be pursued later in universities, vocational training

institutions and other middle level colleges. Further, the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education has developed a secondary school career curriculum and has provided guideline in its implementation. Besides publishing a career handbook for secondary schools, the government has also supported career guidance services MoEST (2005) and provided policy framework on how secondary schools should go about guiding learners on choosing subjects MoE (2009) which would ultimately lead to preferred career choices.

The secondary school career curriculum also contains guidelines on how to involve parents in the education matters of students. Similarly, the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) has provided a handbook “*The Essential Career Guide: Making an Informed Choice*” (KUCCPS, 2019) that aims at helping students make informed career choices. Additionally, other career books such as “*Exploring Career options A-Z: An essential guide for students on career planning and choice*” Kinoti (2013) have also been approved by the Ministry of Education and are stocked in school libraries. All these measures are geared towards providing career direction to secondary school students in line with their lifelong occupations.

However, in spite of above measures, many public secondary school students complete their studies without a clear understanding of the courses to enroll for upon joining institutions of higher learning or middle level colleges (Koechet al., 2016; Njeru, 2016). Darya (as cited in Aineah, 2019) posits that “there is a huge gap between completion of high school and joining of tertiary institutions” (p.5), while Kinoti, on the same page, asserts that career awareness is not given considerable attention in Kenyan schools.

Mundi (2017), Hooley and Rice (2018); and Low (2015) highlights numerous determinants for career choices. Generally, these career determinants are based on gender, technology, academic discipline, culture, industry, economic and other emerging issues in the society. The problems associated with career indecisiveness can be attributed to various issues that include uncertainty in the labour market, inability to identify one's skills, talents and abilities; poor or inadequate guidance, as well as poor adaptability, which Nachmias and Walmsley (2015) said have negatively impacted on the career choices among many young people. The consequence of such disappointment in career choice is frustrations and job dissatisfaction which negatively affect both the employee and employer.

Notably, the extent of implementation of such policies in secondary schools cannot be ascertained from the existing literature. While previous studies have focused on the strategies that guide career choice among secondary school students, for example, Salami and Salami (2013); Maingi (2007); Gichuki (2015), this study focused on the extent to which factors like career guidance services, parental aspiration, mass media and school policies on subject selection have independently and jointly influenced career choice in public secondary schools in Meru County. It is on the basis of this research gap that this study was conducted to analyze the effects of the aforementioned variables in influencing career choices among public secondary school students in Meru County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze factors influencing career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County, with a view of determining individual and combined influence of these factors on career choice.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following research objectives:

- i. To examine the influence of career guidance services provided on career choice among students in public secondary school in Meru County.
- ii. To assess the influence of parental aspirations on career choice among students in public secondary school in Meru County.
- iii. To investigate the influence of mass media on the choice of careers among students in public secondary school in Meru County.
- iv. To evaluate the influence of school policy on subject selection on career choice among students in public secondary school in Meru County.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

This study was guided by the following research hypotheses:

- H_{01} : Nature of career guidance services provided does not significantly influence choice of career among students in public secondary schools in Meru County.
- H_{02} : Parental aspirations do not significantly influence choice of career among students in public secondary schools in Meru County.

- H₀₃: Mass media does not significantly influence choice of career among students in public secondary schools in Meru County.
- H₀₄: School policy on subject selection does not significantly influence choice of career among students in public secondary schools in Meru County.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study expands the existing knowledge regarding factors that influence career choice among secondary school students. Career choice is an important aspect in an individual's life as it dictates the kind of work one gets engaged in after a period of schooling. It is therefore crucial that career planning starts early and continues systematically throughout students' life. Therefore, career choice was an important area for research, particularly an inquiry into factors influencing career choices among public secondary school students in Meru County. This was because many students in secondary school complete their studies without a clear understanding of the courses to enroll for upon joining institutions of higher learning or middle level colleges. Consequently, they enter into careers that are not in line with their aspirations, interests, skills or values.

The findings of the study will help create awareness of the importance of career choice in schools. The Ministry of Education may also use the findings of the study to align career guidance policies so that provision of career services can be viewed as a coherent system with multiple stakeholders. The government through the Ministry of Education will be able to give priorities to career guidance services. This is because career guidance services were statistically found to be significant in determining careers of secondary school students. Some of the areas that can be prioritized are in-servicing career teachers,

supervision on career curriculum implementation, availing adequate finances for resource and infrastructural development and creation of more contact hours between career guidance teachers and students.

In addition, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) may also use the findings of this study to review and improve the career guidance curriculum for secondary schools. In particular, it may review the career information to include information on courses, occupations, career paths, and labour market information. It can also use the findings to outline the expected competence areas for career providers, such as being knowledgeable about current information on educational, training and employment trends in the labour market and social issues that may affect career choice of secondary school students. Career education may also be part of the education curriculum in which attention is paid to help individuals to develop the competencies for managing their career development.

The career guidance teachers are the engines of change in career guidance departments in secondary schools. Therefore, career guidance teachers may use the findings of this study to broaden career guidance services to include career information, career counseling and career education. The results gathered from this study will help them to integrate theory and research into practice. It informs on new approaches and practices in guidance and counseling of secondary school students. This would assist individuals of any age and any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their own careers from informed point of view.

Equally, parents and other interested stakeholders will find the results of this study useful. The results have demonstrated that students should be engaged in career planning and learning throughout their lives. As such, they are able to respond flexibly to the opportunities offered given the dynamic labour market. The findings will help parents to understand the reasons behind their children's choices of particular occupations and help them to give moral and economic support to their children.

This study has made significant contributions to the existing knowledge in career choice and added value to other related research area. For example, it has come out clearly that when all the factors that guide career choice under this study are in action, it is the mass media and the parental aspirations that largely shape and characterize the career that a student chooses. Through this study, a new paradigm in career guidance designed to support lifelong career development has emerged.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study focused on analyzing factors influencing career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County, Kenya. However, there was inadequate literature on career choice among secondary schools in Kenya and particularly in Meru County. As such, to some extent, there was overreliance on foreign literature. There was a challenge on accessing the parents and organizing interview venues. In some instances, venues and time schedules would change. However, through mobile phone contacts obtained from the school principals, the researcher managed to reschedule interviews at the comfort and availability of the respondents.

Since Meru County is quite expansive, there were some socio-economic and environmental challenges occasioned by distance. The researcher engaged the services of boda boda in areas where the terrains were rough. A number of principals were newly posted in the schools as a result of delocalization directive from the Ministry of Education. Therefore, the researcher was in most cases referred to the deputies who felt that though there was need for the school to participate in the study some of the data collected would taint the image of their schools. The researcher, however, assured them of confidentiality and that the collected data would strictly be used for purposes of the study at hand.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study is confined to Meru County in eastern region of Kenya. All Public secondary schools that are in Meru County were included in the study. The public secondary schools in the county comprised both day and boarding secondary schools, which are either mixed or single gender. Information was collected from 2018 Form Four students who made up the KCSE candidate class at the time of the study. Students from other classes were not included. Career choice for the form four students was the area of concern since reviewed studies indicated a gap between completion of secondary schooling and joining of institutions of higher learning. Therefore, the form four students were expected to have done subjects selection while in the lower forms and were preparing or had prepared for career choice as they progressed to post-secondary education level. The findings of this study, therefore, could be generalized to students in other classes since they were also expected to do the same as they progressively moved to higher classes.

Principals, career guidance teachers and parents were involved in this study because they are policy makers and implementers. All the participants in this study, though drawn from Meru County, came from all different regions of this country, and as such the results can accurately be generalized to other counties. The study confined itself to selected factors that influence career choices among public secondary school students, namely; career services, parental aspirations, mass media and school policy on subject selection. However, it did not investigate deeply the tenets of Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) towards future careers since the new curriculum was still in its initial trial implementation stage.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study is based on the following assumptions;

- i. The sample size used would be representative of the target population.
- ii. All participants in the study would co-operative and willingly provide reliable responses.
- iii. All selected schools were assumed to be following and using the prescribed career curriculum as provided by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD).
- iv. The study assumed that the answers on careers which form four students would want to pursue did not differ significantly across various public secondary schools in Meru County. Secondary schools in Meru County were categorized in form of girls boarding, boys boarding, mixed boarding and mixed day secondary schools, and hence any significant difference in career choices would indicate different

exposures, something that may necessitate a comparative study which was not the main focus of this study.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Career:	An occupation or work in an individuals' life.
Choice:	Selecting from among many subjects or careers.
Career Choice:	Selecting a particular occupation or work in an individual's life and leaving out others.
Career Awareness	The act of having knowledge of something and its value in nature.
Guidance:	The process of helping individuals to understand themselves and the world around them.
Career Guidance Services:	A range of interventions that career guidance teachers give to students to help them navigate through career related issues.
Gender	Act of being male or female.
Mass Media:	Include any technology that is intended to reach a mass audience like television, radio, mobile phones, magazines, movies, drama and internet.
Parental Aspirations:	A parents' wish, hope or desire that his or her child select a particular career.
Placement	The process of assigning KCSE candidates degree courses to pursue in higher institutions of learning.
Subject Selection:	Selecting subjects as specified by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC).

Policy:	Guidelines that govern schools in their determination of subjects to be offered from the optional categories.
Nature:	Quality of guidance services provided to students in terms of adequacy and relevancy.
Subjects Cluster:	Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) way of grouping of KCSE subjects.
Stereotyping	An assumption that some careers are suited to women while others are exceptional to men.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews studies on factors influencing students' career choices. It is organized according to the research variables, namely: career choice, nature of career guidance services availed to secondary school students, influence of parental aspirations on career choice, impact of mass media on career choice and influence of school policy on subject selection and career choice among public secondary school students. It also outlines the theoretical and conceptual frameworks; and provides a summary of the reviewed literature.

2.2 Concept of Career Choice

Career choice in this study was perceived to mean the act of selecting a particular occupation or work in an individual's life while living out other occupations. Due to the complexity in the job market, individuals are faced with the task of eliminating seemingly unfavourable career options so as to be left with those that would bring life satisfaction (Mudulia, 2017). Similarly, the complexity in human nature in terms of uniqueness in personality and characteristics, environmental circumstances in which individuals live and their special abilities, career choice may assume diverse set of steps and stages (Mberia & Midigo, 2018). Du Toit and Van Zyl (2012) describes career as involving a variety of occupations in an individual's lifetime that has multifaceted roles such as the family member, worker, social and leisure-time participant and that which has opportunities for progress. Career choice is perceived to be a critical aspect in an

individual's life that involves an implementation of one's vocational self-concept usually influenced by feedback gained from individual experience, as well, as feedback received from others (Kimberly et al., 2016; Mberia & Midigo, 2018). Notably, career choice is not a one point decision since what one may have perceived at the age 18years may not necessarily be true at 21years of age. Thus, continued flexibility based on guided, informed and well thought out career decision is necessary (Mberia & Midigo, 2018). This is also confirmed by Mutekwe, Modiba and Mophosa (2011) who asserts that as early as grade one, pupils in Zimbabwe are often asked about their future career aspirations.

A study by Nachmias and Walmsley (2015) noted that in the recent past, the nature of career decision has become challenging in the context of the changing labour market, globalization, socialization which have presented a significant challenge for individuals to negotiate as they approach the labour market. These challenges explain why some people have found themselves in careers that do not fit them; a situation that is commonly called job mismatch (Robert, 2014). To avoid this, every person entering a certain occupation needs to prepare well in advance and create occupational profile for specific jobs; as well as to identify his or her unique abilities, talents and required skills so as to match these traits with the appropriate tasks (Mberia & Midigo, 2018; Stillwell & Sable, 2013; Hooley & Rice, 2018). Such considerations have today become relevant more than ever before because information technology has made the world a global village a thing that has enhanced people to enter into careers as long as they have required skills and knowledge. Fundamentally, what a student wants to become revolves around what he/she wants to do with his /her lifelong work. The questions that arise and beg for

answers are; what determines how public secondary school students make career choices, who influence these career paths, and what is the extent of their influence? This is the knowledge gap which this study intended to address.

Different studies have given varied reasons as to why people engage in certain occupations. The commonly highlighted reasons include: life satisfaction, uncertain labour market, giving back to the society and economic gains (Andrea, Julia, Nicole, Shashank & Thomas, 2017; Weiss, 2012; Steve, 2016). Research by Jackson and Wilton (2017); and Albdour and Altarawneh (2014) advocated extensive career exploration while in high school citing that those who did so were found to have more job satisfaction and high level of job engagement that resulted into continued commitment in the organization. Nevertheless, there are many life events that take place in our cultural settings that often shape our values and expectations in relation to jobs. Uncertain labour markets, inability to identify ones skills, talents and abilities, as well as, poor adaptability can have a negative effect on the nature of career decision made, as individuals feel less confident and more ambivalent (Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015).

Therefore, an individual's career decision impacts on his or her life in the short run as well as in the future. The process of achieving the above desirable end results of career choice as opposed to the reasons for choosing a career is more critical. In other words, how students negotiate the career decision path dictates the outcome. Students in public secondary schools in Kenya today, more than ever before need career preparation in order to adjust to the ever-changing socio-economic dynamics of the society (Mberia & Midigo, 2018). This is confirmed by Darya (as cited in Aineah, 2019) who admitted that

there is a knowledge gap between secondary school leavers and the students joining institutions of higher learning.

Career choice by secondary school students can be regarded as a process that lead students to making informed decisions on available occupations. A study by Nachmias & Walmsley, (2015) observed that majority of students were sure of the career path they wanted to pursue yet, they lacked the ability to make informed and effective career decisions. Kinoti (cited in Aineah, 2019) explains that this is so because “career awareness is not taken seriously in Kenyan schools” (p. 5). Such observation is a threat to the Kenya’s capacity to realize socioeconomic growth and political development as anticipated in Kenya Vision 2030 blueprint of development projections. Against such background, Ombaba, Keraro, Sindabi and Asienyo (2014) state that proper career guidance offered to secondary school students to enable them take up fitting post-secondary school careers is key in the realization of vision 2030. Career choice is therefore a multifaceted matter that is dependent upon not only the personality or the opportunity factors, but also on environmental factors (Gavo, 2014). Gacohi, Sindabi & Chepchieng (2017) asserts that the responsibility of choosing the course to pursue in the university is an essential career task in the life of a student. Indeed, such career choices marks readiness for work life much as it determines the availability of future job opportunities of the learner (Gacohi, Sindabi & Chepchieng, 2017).

From the reviewed literature, several factors have been cited as having influence on career choice. For example, Shin-ye, Taeyong and Nadya (2016); Muyalo (2017), Hooley and Rice (2018); Njeru (2016), and Mundi (2017) observed that family informational

support, family expectation, family financial support and parental educational background may influence students' career choice. Students' values and characteristics, as well as school characteristics such as curriculum structure may also have an influence on career choice (Querido, Vergouw, Wigersma, Batenburg & Marlies, 2016). Other studies noted that the process of career choice is largely influenced by issues such as student's personal interests, misconceptions, mass media, teachers who teach the subject, parents' aspirations, prospects of getting a job, influence by peers, performance in examinations, knowledge that students have and contribution of career guidance teachers (Nong, 2016; Mberia & Midigo, 2018; Okiror & Otabong, 2015).

Some of these factors have been investigated by diverse scholars to confirm their influence on career choice. For example, Kimani, Kara and Njagi (2013) investigated teacher factors would influence students' performance. Their findings revealed that teachers' workload, administration of students' classroom assignment and completion of form four syllabuses significantly influenced students' performance. It is worth noting here that good academic performance provides flexibility in career selection as students are not limited by grades. While interrogating this construct, Ahmed et al., (2017) revealed that interest in given school subjects was the most significant factor that influences career choices in business students, as compared to personal factors like ease of subject and future job opportunities which had minimal impact. It was further noted that interest in the subject had some linkage with personality type. Mishra, Ismail and Al Hadabi (2017) observed that school or academic advisors in secondary schools or colleges, as well as the availability of career information may also influence career

choice. Accessibility and utilization of media by secondary school students may also play a significant role in career decision making (Borchert, 2010).

These scholarly works demonstrate that many researchers have investigated varied and diverse factors that influence career choice. Several factors have been brought forth to have contributed to choice of career by secondary school students. While examining factors that influence career choice in Kenyan university, Gavo (2014) notes that the high turnover and absenteeism within workplaces is pointer to little or no career preparation for career choices in Kenyan universities. According to him, such lack of preparedness makes many students to choose careers that do not interest them. Indeed, Oigo and Kaluyu (2016) note that there is no statistically significant effect of career training, provision of career information services and career counseling offered to students in private universities in Kenya. Orange (2011) observes that though career guidance resources are present in some schools, they are not responsive to the modern world information age environment where internet connectivity is widely used. Oigo & Kaluyu (2016) therefore recommend that career guidance practitioners and policy makers in higher education to develop formal career guidance curriculum which should be presented to students in formats that appeal to them with respect to their ages and responsiveness to labour market information. Arguably, the development of such curriculum would check the career choice challenge among rural secondary school girls highlighted by Rukwaro (2010), where she notes that girls generally choose careers that are poorly paid to be in keeping with socio-cultural norms of the society (Rukwaro, 2010).

From the studies, there are four most recurring factors which influence career choice, namely; career guidance services, parental aspirations, mass media and school policy on subject selection. Additionally, financial outcomes, future job opportunities, social and print media, industrial mentors, personal dynamics and subject selection and grades that students achieve at form four level are also cited as determinants of career choice (Ahmed et al., 2017; Lee, Myong & Dopson, 2018; Ilouga, Mouloungni & Sahut, 2014; Mudhovozi, 2010; Mtemeri, 2017; Kimathi, 2014). However, whereas the aforementioned studies focused on factors influencing career choices among secondary school students, there is none that investigated degree of influence that each had on career choice among secondary school students in Meru County. This study focused on the extent to which career guidance services, parental aspirations, mass media and school policy on subject selection independently and jointly influenced career choice among public secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya.

2.3 Career Guidance Services and Career Choice

Career guidance refers to all activities that consist of planned experiences designed to facilitate the development of self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision learning and transition learning skills (Pitan & Atiku, 2017). These activities form an individual's lifespan in relation to work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside an organization (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Career guidance provides emotional support, builds confidence and makes one to be optimistic, set constructive external goals by identifying future goals and vocational identity (Okiror & Otabong, 2015; Robertson, 2013).

According to Nong (2016), provision of educational and vocational knowledge to secondary school students helps them to explore the career options available before settling on a specific one. Well-designed career guidance therefore, enhances good career choice. Pam (2013) defines career choice as the act of deciding what one wants to do in life that determines their success in the next stages of life. In this respect, career choice is viewed as an implementation of one's vocational self-concept usually influenced by feedback gained from individual experience, as well as feedback received from others (Kimberly et al., 2016). It propels one to a given occupation; hence its implications are long-term in nature. Nong (2016) argues that on average, a person spends 86,400 hours in his or her lifetime at work. Thus, there is need to make a decision that will lead to a productive and fulfilling life.

There are many life events that take place in people's cultural settings that often shape their values and expectations in relation to jobs. This implies that every person entering in a certain occupation needs to create an occupational profile for specific jobs and identify his or her unique abilities, talents and required skills (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). The creation of such profiles and ability to identify these unique personality traits rest with the provision of career guidance services within the education system of a country. The study by Nong (2016) reported several benefits accrued when career guidance services are provided to secondary school students. Some of the benefits highlighted in his study include;

- a). *Improved output in the job market.* Improved output in the job market is a consequence of intensive career research on what suits individual student and

aligning their abilities, interests and skills with the trends in the labour market. It is argued that when an individual chooses what he/she likes, they end up in careers that give them job satisfaction, and subsequent increased output, commitment and high adaptability in the organization.

b). *Increased job employability rate, by enhancing availability of critical skills.*

When students receive comprehensive career guidance services, they are more likely to stick to a particular occupation when offered a chance. Arguably, change of jobs creates unemployability due to high job turnover, job dissatisfaction, negative attitude toward the work and lack of motivation.

c). *Leads to high rate of school completion.* When high school students are adequately guided on career choice, they are motivated to complete schooling and to perform well in their KCSE since they have a driving force on what they want to achieve, unlike those who have not gone through any career guidance.

In the present economic age which can be termed as “economic globalization age”, all individuals are affected by an array of work-related concerns due to increased complexity and competition in the job market (Mann & Huddleston, 2016); (Egbo, 2017). Therefore, many people, particularly the youth, face serious challenges as they transit from school to the world of work. Egbo (2017) asserts that making appropriate career choice has become an uphill task among secondary school students in Enugu South, Nigeria. Nong (2016) points out that “Many learners don’t have a clue about what to study after they finish school” (p. 4). In order to tackle this problem and navigate the changes in the job market successfully, an individual requires extensive knowledge about self, education and

occupational opportunities that are available (Hooley & Rice, 2018). In view of these studies, the present research underscores the need to embrace varied approaches to career guidance.

In response to this need, KUCCPS (2019) provides the model below that guide the career planning process. This model can be adopted by career guidance teachers to expound career guidance service framework in institutions of learning.

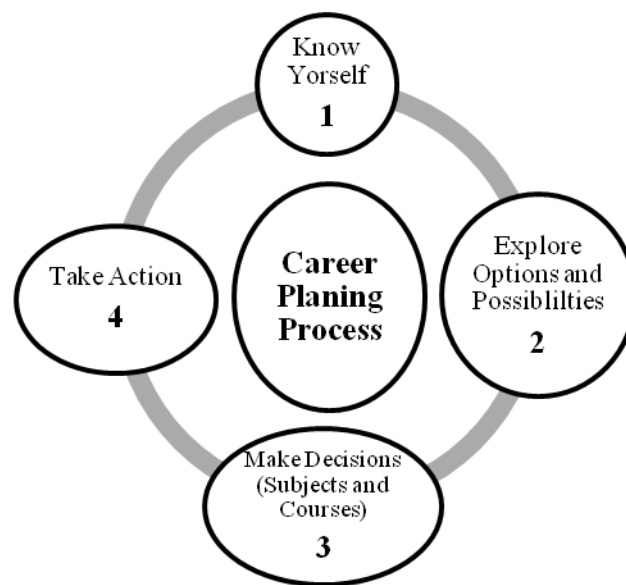


Figure 2.1 Career Planning Model

Source: Adopted from ‘‘The Essential Career Guide: Making an Informed Choice’’ p. 7

The model gives a cyclic approach to career choice where knowledge of oneself in terms of interests, skills, abilities, personality traits, values and talents forms the foundation from which other stages in the cycle arise. This is then followed by exploration of options and possibilities by carrying out research (career information) on the variety of careers, occupations, market trends and opportunities. Upon exploring these options, a student should be in a position to make an informed career decision on subject and career choice.

The last step in this model is to take action by implementing the decided plan by selecting relevant subjects and choosing desired career.

The above model confirms that vocational career guidance and counseling does not only provide information relating to self, education and work, but also serves as a pivotal tool in molding, rebuilding and assuaging the risk of making wrong career choices (Egbo, 2017). Mudulia (2017) opines that if career guidance is infused in the school curriculum, it would shed a lot of light on the relationship between work and school. This study concurs with Mudulia (2017) that students should have adequate time to seek career guidance services. A similar observation is made by Nong (2016) who asserts that career guidance was given little attention despite the fact that it is seen as a major pillar within the education system that make a significant change in peoples' lives. The study further recommended that career guidance should be given same status as other mainstream subjects within the school curriculum.

Watts and Fretwell (2010) argues that career orientation and guidance services are meant to help persons at any point in life to succeed in their careers, besides empowering them to make occupational, educational and training choices. While examining career guidance on university students' readiness to make career choices, Oigo and Kaluyu (2016) observe that a large majority of students have low exposure to career guidance services, either because of the quality of career guidance services offered in their institutions, or their perceptions of the career guidance services. According to them, career guidance services in Kenyan universities are not as established or sophisticated as they are in other developing countries; nor are they structured and tailored to meet individual needs of the

Kenyan university students (Oigo & Kaluyu, 2016). Ombaba et al (2014) note that high school graduates join universities or colleges with little information about the future prospects of the courses of their choice would offer. Arguably, such a situation would be the genesis of frustration, dissatisfaction and college/university drop out cases. Maingi and Wasanga (2011), while examining factors that affect career certainty among university students, observe that most university students are not certain about their career choices because they lack enough occupational knowledge, and have a poor understanding of their abilities, aptitudes, potentials, likes and dislikes. Certainly, this justifies establishment of professional career guidance and counseling structures, not only in the universities, but also in all levels of Kenyan education system.

Career preparation helps remove confusion, anxiety and indecisiveness and brings life satisfaction that result in enjoying what one does and having a level of competency through formal assessment (Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015). Career guidance services consist of three main elements, namely; information on career paths, information on relevant occupations and courses, and career counseling tactics which recommends holding individual or group interviews with a view of addressing unique career issues that people face (Wattset al., 2010; Kirema, 2016). This study affirms that in a secondary school setting, career guidance is a very important element in guidance and counseling since it helps in shaping students for future careers. Career guidance should therefore focus on personal needs, interests and abilities of individual students. As such, these services should be designed to help students to shape and manage their career in the long run.

Countries like the USA, Canada and Australia have developed a blueprint for career management skills that sought to create a competency framework that articulate the concept of career management skills for career workers, policy makers, teachers and students (Hooley, Watts, Sultana & Neary, 2013). Further, USA and Singapore have all-inclusive school guidance and counseling services that are implemented by trained permanent school counselors (Harris, 2013; MoE [Singapore], 2012). In Singapore the education system has incorporated career guidance curriculum based on suitable student events from primary to post-secondary school with three progressive phases, namely; career awareness, career exploration and career planning. In their formative years, the pupils are exposed to career awareness programs. As they progress to secondary school, the students are engaged in career exploration programs and at tertiary level, there is career planning.

Through these comprehensive programs, the students develop life roles, abilities and values. The students' outcome from such an integrated career guidance curriculum are proactiveness, adaptability and resilience that leads to social and emotional competencies that help them navigate through a life time of careers (MoE [Singapore], 2012). In Canada, though career guidance framework varies between and within provinces, some substantial class hours have been dedicated to career guidance services. British Columbia, for example, has set aside about 60 hours per year for career education and personal planning (Nong, 2016). However, in Kenya, the present study illustrates that this is not the case.

In Nigeria, vocational guidance is an area of guidance and counseling in secondary schools. However, studies show that towards the end of their secondary school education,

secondary school students in Nigeria are faced with problems of vocational or career choice due to poor form of guidance programs being run in their schools (Egbo, 2017). Further, a study by Kaneez and Medha (2018) revealed that many schools in Mauritius did not provide career guidance altogether. In their study, Kaneez and Medha (2018) noted that 64% of the respondents were not aware of any guidance provided on careers, while 36% who were aware had accessed career guidance through guest speakers and through seminars outside school. Similarly, in Rwanda, career guidance is aimed at giving students orientation to various educational options (Ministry of Education-Rwanda, 2015), but there is disconnect between institutions, with some providing career guidance services without frameworks to guide decision-making and institutionalizing the process (Mparananayo & Andala, 2015). A study by Mekingwe (2010) revealed that secondary school curriculum in Botswana has assigned a 40 minutes session in a week for career counseling, besides organizing varied activities that enhance provision of career information, and facilitate career exploration and development, thereby helping learners in making appropriate career choices.

Scholars such as, Murunga (2016); Mutwiri (2015); Mudulia (2017) and Nong (2016) identified lack of appropriate career information, poor academic performance and unsatisfactory career counseling as barriers to career choice. Any career guidance service should endeavour to ensure students are exposed to occupational information, be provided with integrative cognitive structures which are able to provide insight about vocational aspirations and provision of social support systems (Stan, 2016). Lack of career guidance may imply poor course selection which eventually impact negatively on the limited job opportunities (Nong, 2016). The question on when career guidance

should start and the time span when career guidance services should take also arose. Rajinder (2010) advocates for career guidance to start as early as the child enters school and records on the child evolution from the time he/she enters school up to time of exit kept electronically for future reference. The findings of Rajinder (2010) concur with those of Wambu and Fisher (2015) who also recommended for early exposure of students to information on careers. Stan (2016) notes that career preparation and career management should not start at work, but rather at school where specific educational needs are developed. Nong (2016) recommends for career guidance at early age so as to challenge self-concept to directly focus on academic success that will lead to perceived career paths. In addition, Otieno (2019) affirms that persisting biases and gender stereotypes start in early stages of life of a person. Researchers, therefore, accentuate the need to start career planning early so as to address biases.

In Kenya, formal school guidance and counseling was acknowledged in the 1970s and an entity to deal with vocational and educational guidance and counseling was created by the Ministry of Education (MoEST, 2005). However, many reports and studies showed that learning institutions in Kenya especially secondary schools, had continuously released students that were not well equipped for future careers (Mudulia, 2017; Njeru, 2016; Mundi, 2017). This state of affair was made worse by the fact that most of these counseling programs were run by teachers designated as counselors with very little or no training in counseling and career guidance (Mudulia, 2017; Kimathi, 2014). Gitonga (2013) corroborates the above findings when he observed that 87% of guidance and counseling teachers were inadequately prepared and not knowledgeable to run the guidance and counseling programs in secondary schools. From this development, it is

well understood that guidance and counseling in Kenya has grown out of the need to not only address students' socio-emotional needs but also their career prospects needs while in secondary school. This was against the recognition that guidance and counseling services were intended to address the all-rounded developmental and future career needs of all school going students (UNESCO, 2002).

Despite efforts taken by schools which include in-servicing of teachers and having "career days", the current status in Kenyan schools with reference to career guidance and counseling is that students have continued to experience difficulties in making informed future career decisions. As studies indicate, lack of a clear definition of roles has greatly hindered the delivery of guidance and counseling services by teachers in Kenyan schools (Gitonga, 2013; Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

The role of guidance and counseling teachers in Kenya are diverse and depends on the context of individual schools (Wambu & Wickman, 2011). Scholarly work asserts that career guidance services were run by subject teachers appointed as career guidance and counselors with no professional training (Bita, 2015; Wambu & Fisher, 2015; Mudulia, 2017). Koech and Kimemia (2012) opposes this observation and argues that guidance and counseling teachers often had an ideal view of their role but they were confronted by the demand for quest for high subject mean score, co-curriculum, administrative work or lack of clinical practice beyond their training. Their observation raises the following significant questions: do the current career guidance services address student career needs adequately? Are the teacher-counselors adequately and professionally qualified to articulate and demonstrate an understanding of career guidance? This study corroborates

with the above studies on the training needs of career guidance teachers and provision of career guidance services to public secondary school students in Meru County.

Most of the public secondary schools, apart from the guidance and counseling teachers, there was a teacher appointed as a career master or curriculum master whose main role was to help students to select elective subjects and to navigate through KUCCPS requirements for degree programs (Njeru, 2016; Mudulia, 2017). These teachers provide the students with very little information about available career options in the higher institutions of learning. As a result, after form four, some students ended up enrolling for degree programs that had no match with individual skills, talent, interests and values while others requested for transfer of courses (Mudulia, 2017; Odour, 2019).

In order to successfully and effectively impart necessary skills to the youth, an effective secondary education in the twenty-first century must provide a good balance between academics, education and skills development that will lead to a desired career pathway (Gichuki, 2015; KUCCPS, 2019). This can be achieved by providing well trained career guidance teachers who can easily integrate the role of a career master by offering career guidance relevant in the 21st Century. This is supported by Wachira (2018) who observed that 34.2% of secondary school students in Kinangop, Nyandarua County, were likely to consult career counselors on career choice while 33.6% would consult teachers.

In order for these teachers to work effectively, they need to access career resources such as computers, internet, career books, journals and magazines. However, a study by Mudulia et al. (2017) observed that despite availability of career guidance department in

secondary schools in Vihiga County, it was unfortunate that most of them were not equipped with necessary resources for career guidance. A below 50% rating of availability of such resources like videos, computers, internet, career books, journals and magazines was observed in most of the schools. In agreement with Mudulia et al. (2017), Bitu (2015) and Nong (2016) noted that career guidance is essential yet many secondary schools had inadequately funded, ill-equipped and understaffed their career guidance departments.

A study carried out on high school students in Ghana revealed that career guidance, career goal identification, organization of career days and conferences were among career intervention roles by school counselors that influenced career choice (Amoah, Kwofie & Kwofie, 2015). Nong (2016) observes that in order to improve career guidance services the schools need to do in-service training for career educators, organize workshops and develop career guidance guidelines and monitoring tools. These interventions can only be realized with a clear policy on funding career guidance that adequately allocates enough funds to career oriented activities. Thus, this research also sought to find out the extent to which career guidance services are financed in public secondary schools in Meru County.

The foregoing discussion is indicative of the importance of student career counseling sessions and other interventions meant to provide them with up to date knowledge and dependable sources of occupational information for exploration in the world of work (Ahmed et al., 2017). These sentiments are re-affirmed by Egbo (2017) who noted that vocational guidance has become indispensable as long as making career choice is concerned. Further, not much was gathered from literature reviewed on whether funding

of career activities was in tandem with career needs of high school students. It was on this understanding; therefore, that effort was made to establish in this study whether the manner in which career guidance was done was effective in achieving the desired results. Hence, the need to carry out this study was validated.

2.4 Parental Aspirations and Career Choice

Parental aspirations refer to the extent to which the parents or family members influence the career decision paths of children (Salami & Salami, 2013). Parental aspirations comprise of parental expectations, career related parental support and educational plans that parents have for their children (Zhang, 2016; Rinat, Cinamon & Tova, 2015). However some parents have been found to have a misconception of what their expectations are, about their children's career choices. This can be illustrated using the hypothetical scenario of Joan and her mother. 'Joan', not her real name wanted to be a dancer but her mother insisted that Joan should enroll for a 'real' career like journalism since to them dancing was just a hobby. A similar predicament is observed in two high school boys in Embu County who lamented that their parents were persuading them into becoming a gym instructor and a doctor respectively, instead of pursuing their dream careers of comedy and newscaster respectively (Aineah, 2019). Scholars have suggested that in order to achieve an effective education plan for their children, parents must be involved in their education both at school and at home and must discuss with them about their career choices (Watson, Vernon, Seddon, Andrews & Wang, 2016; Zhang, 2016; Wachira, 2018; KUCCPS, 2019). For example, a study by Watson et al. (2016) revealed that secondary schools students in Australia who discuss with their parents their university aspirations recorded a higher aspiration and expectation to attend university.

Parental involvement as a construct according to Jacob (2010) can be considered in four dimensions namely;

- a. Parent–child communication about school. This aims at enhancing academic performance, school discipline as well as selection of subject in relation to career choice.
- b. Home environment and monitoring. This is an essential aspect of parental involvement because the socioeconomic status of the family and family involvement in schooling has been found to statistically influence career choice among secondary school students.
- c. Parental participation in school related activities like attending class meetings, academic clinic days and other forums that discuss students’ welfare.
- d. Parental aspirations and expectations that basically express the hope or desire that parents have for their children in relation to career choice based on more realistic facts that are derived from well thought out process of career decision making. It is argued that parents who do not expect their children to enroll for courses in tertiary institutions are less likely to be involved in their secondary education.

From the forgoing discussion, it is evident that parental involvement in a school setting is conceptualized as the act of the parents being engaged with children in school activities, providing instructions of academic skills, engaging in and out of school learning activities, being involved in schooling process, provision of the required learning resources, providing educational experiences and providing relevant learning experiences (Zhang, 2016; Slovacek, Jacob & Flenoury, 2015). In addition, Low (2015) notes that

parental involvement can take many forms conveying both explicit and implicit expectations, and providing parental support and encouragement. Thus, parental discussion on future career expectations is necessary. KUCCPS (2019) contends that children's career choice is significantly influenced by their parents and as such if parents were involved in supporting and assisting the adolescents in their career aspirations, then they are more likely to pursue their dream careers (Bates, 2015).

However, KUCCPS cautions parents not to pressurize children into their (parents') career interests but encourage their children by giving them support, guiding them in decision making, motivating them to develop and achieve their academic goals and instilling in them a responsible attitude and positive outlook towards life (KUCCPS, 2019). Nevertheless, parents should help the students to carry out a self-assessment test in readiness for career choice, plan for possible career paths they can pursue in institutions of higher learning and encourage them to perform better in high school in order to increase their chances of being admitted to universities and colleges to do courses that are in line with their career path (Jacob, 2010).

Another aspect of parental aspirations is control and monitoring. This involves exerting control over the child's learning environment, tracking and having knowledge of daily educational activities, and giving parental approval and communication between parents and children regarding achievements and schooling (Zhang, 2016). Bates (2015) opines that recognizing and understanding family influence on career choice may be more important now than in the past due to the changing composition, structure and dynamics of families. Hadjar and Aeschlimann (2015) contends that there is a strong link between

occupational and workforce participation of the parents in vocational aspirations and career choice of their children. Mbagwu and Ajaegbu (2016) affirms the observation that children of parents with high education background were not likely to have difficulties in making career choice as compared to those whose parents were from low education background.

Likewise, students from disadvantaged socio-economic background were less likely to enroll in university education compared to those from higher socioeconomic background (Watson et al., 2016). Muyalo (2017) explains this scenario from three perspectives. First, he argues that students from such poor backgrounds often lack resources to go beyond secondary education unlike their counterparts from higher socioeconomic background. Secondly, parents of students from disadvantaged backgrounds hardly encourage them to maintain good grades that would lead them to university education. Lastly, unlike high social class parents, low social class parents have either limited or no time to spend with their children hence the subject of career choices was hardly discussed.

Studies conducted in Nigeria by Salami and Salami (2013) and Mutekwa et al. (2011) in Zimbabwe on the factors determining the choices of career among secondary school students revealed that the most significant future career choice predictor in gender dominated occupations was parental aspiration. Scholars such as Kaneez and Medha (2018); Mutekwe et al. (2011); and Slovacek et al. (2015) also note that one of the factors that greatly influence career choices is social context of family and community. High educational achievement of parents as well as ability of the family to finance education of

their children were also found to influence academic performance of students by providing a better chance to choose appropriate career paths (Muyalo, 2017). Similar findings were observed by Jacob (2010) who noted that parents with high education achievement had high expectations and aspirations of their children educational attainment that strategically placed them in courses of their choice.

On the contrary, a study by Kobia (2011) in public day secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya observed that some parents especially those with low education attainment were unenthusiastic about educational matters of their children. No wonder majority of such parents had delegated their parenting duties to teachers and guardians. Further, Ochieng (2015) conducted a study on self-efficacy and academic achievement, particularly in Mathematics, among secondary schools in Kenya. He observes that 57% of the students did not believe in their ability in mathematics performance yet they expressed interest in mathematics-related courses. Such students, according to KUCCPS (2019) need to consult for clear insight from among others; parents, teachers, career guidance and counseling professionals, mentors, role models and people currently engaged in the profession and institution of their choice.

Naong and Shumba (2012) investigated first and second year students in the faculty of education in South Africa and found out that family, parents and guardians play a significant role (30.83%) in occupational aspiration and career goals development of their children. In particular, family financial and education background greatly influences students on what career they choose at a specific period of their life (Wachira, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2017; Muyalo, 2017). For example, Mberia and Midigo (2018) and Jacob (2010) assert that parents' educational background and financial ability can also affect

students' education progression. In light of the above supposition, Tejedor, Mangas and Sierra (2016) noted that students had difficulties in career decision-making, particularly those at risk of poverty and social exclusion being most vulnerable.

A study done by Oyamo and Amoth (2008) revealed that a significant number of Kenyan rural students tend to seek help from parents more than their counterparts in urban areas. However, they stress that parents play a major role in the career choices of their children. This report corroborates with a study in China by Liang (2016) who observed that the youth of ages 18-24 years and majority of whom were university students, ranked their parents as second most in influencing their career decision. Similarly, Kohout and Wicherski (2011) observed that the day -to- day decisions made by parents during the growth and development stage of their children largely determined the future career of their children. Involving parents in the education matters of their children positively impact on learning both at school and out of school. This involvement surpasses parents' income and educational levels in influencing career choice (Muyalo, 2017). However, parents with limited exposure to knowledge and little experience in higher education levels may negatively influence students' future expectations to attend university (Watson et al., 2016). Mbagwu and Ajaegbu (2016) contents that children of parents with high educational background were less likely to have difficulties in making career choices compared with those whose parents had low education background.

Focusing on social factors that influence career choice for female computer science students in Malaysia, Malik and Al-Emran (2017) observed that 59.7% of the university students reported that their parents had a strong influence on their choice for computer

science. One consistent finding in most literature is that students' own career aspirations are significantly influenced by their parent's aspirations or expectations (Mtemeri, 2017; Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017; Fareo & Garkuwa, 2018; Kingi, 2013). Gitonga (2013) noted that slightly 45% of secondary school students from Kiambu West Sub-County obtained career information from their parents and guardians, while 90% of the career guidance teachers observed that the students could not match their self-abilities, interests and knowledge and course selection. In contrast, a study by Wachira (2018) revealed that 59.4 % of secondary school students agreed that parents had confidence and believed in their ability yet only 12.3% of students would consult them on career related issues. A further 43.8% of the respondents did not discuss career issues with their parents. These findings correlate with Watson et al. (2016) who investigated the influence of parents on secondary students' university aspirations in Australia. Though they agree that parental involvement was a strong predictor of higher education aspirations, they observe that a parent's communication of high expectations of the student to go to university does not always support the student aspirations to go to the university.

Different countries have used different approaches to tap the benefits of parental influence on students' academic and career success. In Singapore, for example, the education curriculum has included parental involvement in career guidance where the parents are first educated to ensure that they are able to guide their children through the education and career decision making processes (Ministry of Education [Singapore], 2012). Similarly, in Nigeria, Eziuzo and Enueme (2013) note that the formation of Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) was to heighten the combined involvement of teachers and parents in their children's education by assuming a partnership responsibility. In Kenya,

Parents Association (PA) is mandated to encourage healthy working relationships between parents and teachers by assisting school management in monitoring, guiding, counseling and disciplining students among other functions (MoE, 2013).

In order to perform the above functions, parents are expected to have relevant knowledge and skills. In an interview with the standard newspaper on the role of parents in course selection, director Ma Taji advised parents to be knowledgeable on the emerging careers so that they do not ruminate on the old traditional course but rather allow children to explore more career options (Aineah, 2019). However, while examining the role of BOM & PTA in district public schools in Pakistan in the context of conflicts and challenges, Ijaz and Muhammad (2011) revealed that 50% of the parents did not have an understanding of their role, though 90% recognized PA as partners in the teaching and learning process. The PA members who were interviewed revealed that lack of training, lack of clear guidelines, lack of appropriate induction programs and lack of confidence were some of the challenges they encountered while carrying out their mandate. They also noted that parents with low level education were limited in their ability to provide accurate information and career guidance (Kirk, Lewis, Scott, Wren, Nilsen, & Colvin, 2012). A study by Kingi, (2013) on the role of PTA in management of public secondary schools in Gatundu North, Kenya recommended the formulation of relevant policies to enable PA to be more useful in management. Wachira (2018) asserts that there has been limited effort to involve parents on career choice of their children by schools, yet the parents are actively involved in other school activities.

A study by Odongo, Aloka and Raburu (2016) contends that authoritative parenting style has a stronger influence on students' academic achievement as compared to other parenting styles. However, their study left yawning gaps since the principals did not conclusively identify the nature of parent representing the students. Children career choice apprehensions are eased when parents approve of their decisions to prepare for a certain career through frequent discussions (Hairston, 2000; Watson et al., 2016).

The reviewed studies have showed that parental involvement, control and monitoring as well as parental approval of desired courses were important aspects of parental aspirations that influenced career choice. However, studies were inconclusive on whether parental aspirations included parental involvement in the academic and career guidance of their children. Similarly, the extent to which parental role has been implemented in public secondary schools was not well documented in literature thus the pertinent issue here was whether appropriate induction and training programs were in place and whether clear guidance policies were available to enable the parents make informed decisions on career choices of their children. Based on this gap, this study set out to assess the influence of parental aspirations on career choice among students in public secondary schools in Meru County.

2.5 Mass Media and Career Choice

Media and communication technology has swamped modern lives by influencing ones perception of the world and mediating personal interactions with individual and society (Hoag & Grant, 2017). According to Wanyama (2012), all media technologies including the internet, television, newspaper, mobile phones and radio which are used for mass communication have collectively been referred to as mass media.

Mass media was found to correlate highly with career choice since it influences career selection process by shaping personal choices through character development, language and habit formation (Noshina, Mian, Irfaan & Rao, 2014). Wanyama (2012) asserts that information technology, mass media and communication systems have resulted to accelerated globalization and career trends are equally changing to cope up with the effects of globalization. Similarly, Hoag and Grant (2017) posit that an increase in the use of media and technology positively predicted students' choice of journalism course. A study by Onditi (2016) points out that television, radio, newspapers and social media websites were frequently used by the youth to seek information regarding various professions, job market and knowledge about the world around them. Mu Hu (2016) argued that some TV viewers and users of interactive media have developed personal relationships with fiction characters, on-air personalities and media celebrities. Focusing on these studies, Wanyama (2012); Hoag and Grant (2017); Onditi (2016), and Noshina, Mian, Irfaan and Rao (2014) observe that it is clear that the society should embrace technology to change what is important to learn through availing a variety of ways of learning, like creating videos and animation, rather than assuming that the only way to improve education is to improve the school (Collins & Halverson, 2009).

Various researchers have underscored the importance of media in career choice. For example, a study conducted by Borchert (2010) observed that high school students in the US confirmed that their career choice had been influenced by somebody they watched on television, an indication that their dream jobs were positively correlated with attributes of TV characters' jobs. These results corroborates with Wanyama (2012) who observed that

76.7% of secondary school students in Kisii County indicated that career of people seen or read on media had influenced them a lot in the choice of career to pursue.

A study in Australia by Dana (2017) revealed that social media and gaming has become a more common career aspiration for 21st Century youngsters and children. The study observes that career aspirations in children and youngsters are influenced by gender stereotypes or what they see in the media such as TV and film. Further, Busayo (2017) highlighted mass media as one of the major factors that influence students to choose a career in librarianship in Nigeria. Similarly Adedeji, Ojelabi, Lekan and Adefarati (2017) observed that notable personalities in a certain profession had a significant influence on career decision of secondary school students in Nigeria. In addition, Mishra, Ismail and Al Hadabi (2017) observes that availability and utilization of media by secondary school students may also play a role in career decision making since seeing or interacting with media personalities may influence them to take or change their dream careers. Nong (2016) revealed that 53% of secondary school students in South Africa utilized mobile phones and internet to access career information, 18% used print media, that is, newspapers and magazines; and 6% accessed the information by reading career book.

Focusing on this narrative, it was evident that media did not only create awareness but it also built people's capacity to make informed decisions. Although previous studies have documented a link between media characters and children occupational beliefs (Wanyama (2012); Adedeji et al. 2017) and Dana, 2017), few studies have examined the extent to which different forms of mass media influence career choice.

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education has elevated the influence of mass media on career choices in Kenyan secondary schools. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) supports information gathering, processing, distribution and usage; communicating, capturing, transmitting and displaying data and information electronically, via TVs, radios, overhead projectors (OHPs), computers, laptops, smart boards, PC tablets, PDA's and computer networks, among others (Kaaria,2014;Mbugua, Gori & Tanui, 2015). Career information attained through school career programs has shown that interaction with TV and other media personalities can equip the students with ideas to make the appropriate decisions in their careers and pursue the precise subject combinations needed for their dream careers (Denniston, Swahn, Hertz & Romero, 2017). Gehrau and Vom Hofe (2013) reaffirmed these findings when he reported that 30% of students who heavily viewed TV on health-related series had health-oriented occupation aspirations, compared to 20% of those students that lightly viewed the series.

The impact of internet in education has become more dynamic and pervasive than that of any previous breakthrough in Information Technology (Wanyama, 2012; Mbugua et al., 2015). Accessibility of career information through internet by the students can have a great impact on career awareness as well as facts that are compulsory in career decision making process critical in matching personal needs with job requirements. For example, the education and career guidance syllabus for secondary schools in Singapore has gone further to provide useful website links that can help parents, career guidance teachers and students to obtain relevant information on career choice (Ministry of Education [Singapore], 2012).

A study conducted by Wanyama (2012) in both public and private secondary schools in Kisii Central District indicated that 46.7 % of students' utilized internet as a source of career information, while 38.3% used print media as a source of career information. However, a study by Kaaria (2014) on the utilization of ICT in teaching, learning and in managing secondary schools in Meru County revealed that 48% of students used internet services to learn new ideas, while 54% of both teachers and students were not competent in the use of ICT. A similar study by Mbugua et al. (2015) reaffirms this observation when they note that 63.7% of the teachers were incapable of starting or shutting down a computer. These are rather high percentages bearing in mind that the Ministry of Education has made tremendous steps towards the implementation of ICT policy since its publication in 2006. This indicates that illiteracy in technology may impede use of technology in teaching and learning, which impacts the use of ICT in guiding career choices in secondary school students.

These studies have reaffirmed importance of mass media in career choice. However, there is gap in the common programs viewed in different forms of mass media. In addition, other researchers have established that there is increased access to mobile phones by secondary school students (Rosempta, 2013; Wanyama, 2012), yet, considering that mobile phones are nowadays used as a medium to accessing all other mass media, not much is gathered on how these students are using this garget to enhance their career choices. Therefore, this study has sought to address this gap by investigating the impact of mass media on students' career choices in secondary schools in Meru County.

2.6 School Policy on Subject Selection and Career Choice

Subject choice is an integral part of the school system, particularly at secondary school level. The correct choice of subjects is a key step towards attaining educational objectives and career placement (Ajidagba, 2010; Mudulia, 2017). A policy is a course of action made in response to some sort of problems that require attention (Birkland, 2015; Singh, 2016). In this study, the school policy has been taken to refer to guidelines that govern schools in their determination of subjects to be offered from a list of optional subjects. In other words, out of a possible 23 subjects, less three compulsory subjects, the study seeks to establish how and what should dictate the best alternatives as a checklist for schools to use while selecting subjects for their students.

According to Wong and Wong (2019), policies are important because they help define rules, regulations, procedures, practice and protocols to help a school to run smoothly and safely and ensure that students receive quality education. A school policy should therefore be designed to fit the needs of the students for whom they have been formulated. Jun Li (2017), while conducting a study on educational policy development in China for the 21st century, noted that one of the major challenges in educational policy development was that most policies emanated from theoretical debates and general discussions that were not based on any empirical evidence. The question that arises from this revelation and which begs for answers is whether school policy on subject selection is flexible enough to address students' career needs in public secondary schools in Meru County. A study by Yamin-Ali (2014) revealed that about 50% of form four students in Trinidad were dissatisfied with their subject selection and there was some evidence of

mismatch between subject selection and students' career preference. A majority of the students indicated the need for more options in subject selection.

Given that Oduol (2006); Jun Li, (2017); and Innes (2012) have noted that there is low research utilization on policy making processes in education, this study has emphasized the need for evidence based approach in formulating policies on career choices. In fact, Jun Li (2012) opines that lack of solid training in the disciplinary field of policy studies by the researchers have contributed to the scenario where disconnect in regard to formulation of educational policies on basis of theory and practice exists. It is against this revelation that the scantiness of literature on the construct of school policy on subject selection in many countries is understood. However, despite the scanty literature on this subject, in Australia, schools are provided with policy and advisory guide that give quick and easy access to governance and operational policies and advice (Department of Education and Training, Melbourne, 2019). These guidelines are in line with the legislative and regulatory requirements as stipulated in their Education and Training Reform Act of 2006, and the Education and Training Reform Regulation of 2017.

In line with these guidelines, Golden Grove High School in South Australia, for example, has a policy that students must make subject selection request Golden Grove High School, (2018) and thereafter, they be invited for an interview to discuss subject options. After a successful approval of the request, the student is allowed to take the subject, depending on the number of students that have applied for that subject. Likewise, in the United States of America, every state has control on what is taught in its schools and a huge variation among schools regarding courses, subjects and other school activities is

evident (Bunker, 2018). Basically, Bunker (2018) notes that a six subject curriculum is offered in USA, although these subjects are supplemented each year with subjects in related disciplines.

Students at career decision making phase require support and understanding which calls for urgent attention through school planning and policy (Yamin-Ali, 2014). Nevertheless, a policy can fail to make any practical difference unless it is relevant, participatory, inclusive, and knowledge-based, that is, scientifically sound, and be used as a living document (Mugabe, 2011). For example, Innes (2012) in South Africa found that geography was not a requirement for admission to university offering geospatial technology programs, yet it should prepare geospatially competent school leavers for a Geography Information Systems (GIS)-enabled future in South Africa. Innes, therefore, recommended that geography be included in the list of recommended school subjects for geospatial technologies qualifications in the university. When this subject is taught effectively at school, Innes argued that it would significantly add to the map skills and other geographical competencies required at tertiary level. Yamin-Ali (2014) asserts that limited subject offerings, timetabling, coupled with inadequate timeframes has negated students desire to study subjects of their interest. In an effort to investigate the implication of the Nigerian national senior secondary school curriculum on students admission to university, Adejuyigbe and Adejuyigbe (2016) observed that some elective subjects taken together with the core subjects would give combinations that could lead to what they called “dead end certificates”. In other words, the certificates would not get the students admitted to any university. Subject selection policy in a school therefore, is

critical to students because it avoids mismatch between students' career preference and their subject selection (Yamin-Ali, 2014).

In the Kenyan context the interaction between curriculum and the clientele, that is, the student, forms the basis of choice of optional subjects (Gathaiga, 2012). However, as Githuku (2014) asserts, some schools have prohibitive subject selection policies that undermine students' democratic right in choosing optional subjects. A similar situation was observed by Yamin-Ali (2014) in Trinidad, New York, where students needed more options in subjects being offered in secondary schools.

Researchers such as, Kaplan (2015), Shash, Rahman, Ajmal and Hamidullah (2011), Mustapha and Greenan (2007) and KICD (2016), have shown that education policies on subject selection are tailored to meet desired educational outcomes, and selection criteria differ from one country to another. In the United States, for example, education policy on subject selection allows selection of subjects to be done in primary school where the pupils select what they want to learn; while in Australia, subject selection begins in 10th grade, where students choose subjects they have interest in pursuing or for which they show an innate talent (Kaplan, 2015).

The streamlining of the Kenyan education system in 1984, from 7-4-2-3 structure of education to the current broad-based 8-4-4 curriculum KICD (2016) was meant to offer learners practical skills and competences that would enable them to become self-reliant. A lot of emphasis was therefore put on practical subjects like music, agriculture, art and craft; woodwork and home science. However, subsequent reports Kamunge Report

(1988) and Koech Report (1999) recommended that the content in each subject as well as the examinable subjects in both primary and secondary school be reduced. Some of the reasons cited in these reports included: broadness of the curriculum, cost implications and burdensome of the curriculum to pupils and students. Moving forward in 2002, based on “Total Integration of Quality Education and Training” report of 1999, the national curriculum of secondary education was reviewed to remove the overloads and unnecessary overlaps within and across the subjects and to mainstream emerging issues (KICD, 2016).

Despite the milestones achieved after the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education, a summative evaluation in 2009 revealed that the curriculum content relegated practical skills required for economic development to non-examinable subjects (KIE, 2010). According to KICD (2016), this led to release of secondary school graduates that lacked adequate skills and competencies to join the job market. This situation was as a result of skills gaps such as agricultural skills, entrepreneurial skills, vocational and technical skills; innovation and creativity and ICT skills as learners opted not to take these subjects (KICD, 2016; Mutwiri, 2015).

The education reforms over the years have therefore resolved that a Kenya Secondary School Education (KCSE) candidate can sit for nine subjects as maximum and seven subjects as minimum (KUCCPS, 2019). The critical issue therefore, is to link these chosen subjects with Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) requirements, since admission to Kenyan universities is pegged on basic aggregate points, raw cluster points and weighted clusters (Mudulia, 2017).

Despite agriculture being the backbone of most African countries economies, countries like Nigeria and Kenya offer agriculture as an optional subject to be chosen alongside others like Home Science, Art and Design, Woodwork, Music and Metal Work among others (Ajidagba, 2010). A study advocating for music to be among mainstream subjects by Njooa (2015), argues that policies that exclude music from the curriculum create instructional imbalances, which even though it may not be measurable in physical terms, but could have far-reaching implications on “total education” for the students, given that music is important in the development of the total person.

Out of twenty-six subjects taught at secondary school level in Kenyan schools, only three subjects are compulsory. These are: Mathematics, English and Kiswahili. The other twenty three subjects are optional (KUCCPS, 2019). According to the current Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) policy guidelines, the subjects are categorized into five major groups (KNEC, 2013; Githuku, 2014).

- Group 1 - Mathematics, English and Kiswahili
- Group 2 - Chemistry, Biology and Physics
- Group 3 - History and Government, Geography, Christian Religious Education and Hindu Religious Education
- Group 4 - Home Science, Art and Design, Woodwork, Metal Work, Agriculture, Building Construction, Electricity, Power Mechanics, Drawing and Design Aviation Technology and Computer Science

Group 5 - French, German, Arabic, Kenyan Sign Language, Music and
Business Studies

In consideration of this classification, a candidate is supposed to select a minimum of seven subjects in accordance to the following criteria: all three subjects in Group One, at least two subjects from Group Two, at least one subject from Group Three and at least one subject from either group 2, 3, 4 or 5. Candidates can sit for a minimum of seven subjects and a maximum of nine. The extra one or two subjects can be selected from any of groups 2 and 5 (KNEC, 2013; KUCCPS, 2019). This means that only subjects in group one are compulsory, yet research by Kimathi (2014); Mutwiri (2015), and Mudulia (2017) indicated that some schools had made subjects in other groups compulsory. In fact, some schools did not offer some optional subjects due to lack of adequate teachers, teaching resources or too difficult subjects that may compromise their school mean score (Mudulia, 2017). However, a good policy should be implementable using current or existing capacities like skills, infrastructure and finances and it should possess in-built mechanisms for self-termination or renewal (Mugabe, 2011).

Kinoti (as cited in Aineah, 2019) advise students to be focused on their career interests when selecting subjects, and desist from selecting subjects on the basis of their simplicity, or even avoiding those subjects presumed to be difficult. He further cautions students to choose subjects rightly to allow them to be admitted into their careers of choice, rather than choosing those subjects that would easily guarantee them admission to institutions of higher learning. Undoubtedly, such school policy on subject selection influence career choice of secondary school students. However, there is no literature on

the extent to which the influence of such school policy on subject selection affects secondary school students in Kenya.

A study by Githuku (2014) revealed that subjects offered by schools in Nakuru County were a major factor that influenced students in selecting geography as a career subject. In a similar study conducted in Makueni County which investigated the factors influencing students' performance in chemistry examination in KCSE, 41.7% of principals and 50% of teachers strongly agreed that students choose chemistry subject because it was compulsory in their schools (Kyalo, 2016). In the same county a study by Munyao, Mwanja and Mwizi (2017) observed that most students choose Christian Religious Education (CRE) not necessarily for career choice but to boost their KCSE grades and enable them attain required cluster points for career options. Studies by Kimathi (2014), Gathaiga (2012) and Ongang'a, Nkurumwa and Konyango (2015) revealed that school policy on subject choice in Kenya was one of the possible contributors to choice of subject by secondary school students.

For smooth running of any organization, managers must formulate proper policies in the organization. In a school setting, the principal is the chief executive officer (CEO) hence; he/she is responsible for policy formulation in the institution. Any policy established for public consumption goes through several stages which include identifying the policy area, identifying various alternative policies, assessing the alternatives, selecting the most appropriate policy, testing a policy and implementing it (Singh, 2016; Cotter, 2012). This process requires proper participation by the stakeholders, it should ensure organizational goals are achieved and proper communication is done to all members who will be

affected by the policy (Cotter, 2012; Oduol, 2006). The stakeholders that may be involved in the case of secondary schools include; teachers, students, parents, Board of Management (BOM) and the Ministry of Education as well as Teachers Service Commission (TSC). In reviewing the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement of 2011 in South Africa, Innes (2012) notes that a lot of public participation was invited when compiling the document and the first draft was again circulated to the public to give their comment or feedback. In Nigeria there is a national policy on education Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) which has outlined subjects to be offered at each level of education.

In Kenya, several bodies and institutions are involved in preparing secondary school graduates for university education. In their individual and collaborative ways, they ensure smooth transition from secondary school to institutions of higher learning. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is mandated to develop curriculum and curriculum support materials which are in tandem with the varied needs of students of different education levels except university (KICD, 2016). They achieve this by initiating and conducting research; doing evaluation and assessment, as well as through monitoring. These activities help in addressing emerging educational needs in the changing socio-economic and technological environment. The ministry of education science and technology (MoEST), together with the Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) are mandated to oversee formulation of subject clusters of each college and university programs offered in Kenya, as well as manage placement of qualifying form four candidates in those programs (Gitonga, 2013).

The Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) then prepares and administers examinations to secondary school students with the aim of meeting the set subject cluster criterion. The policies formulated by these bodies trickle down to secondary school level for implementation where stakeholders, mainly career guidance teachers, subject teachers, parents, BOM, PA, principals and students, are also expected to adhere to them. However, there is a gap between policy and practice because secondary schools are expected to ensure provision of resources in terms of physical structures, learning and teaching materials and human and financial resources in order to implement these policies (Gitonga, 2013). Yet not much was gathered from the literature on how public secondary schools carried out this mandate. It was this gap that the researcher sought to address by conducting this study to ascertain the level of involvement of the stakeholders and the determinants of subjects offered in public secondary schools in Meru County, with a view of evaluating the influence of school policy on subject selection on career choice of students.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

The reviewed literature and empirical studies were based on themes that emanated from the objectives of the study. From the literature reviewed in this chapter, it was clear that secondary school students are faced with career choice challenges as they transit from school to the world of work. In order to tackle this problem, individuals require extensive knowledge about self, education and occupational opportunities that are available. This career information would be relevant if provided at secondary school level. However, despite availability of good policy framework on career guidance, students had continued to experience difficulties in making informed future career decisions. There were

different approaches to career guidance that were reviewed in various studies but the extent to which they influenced career choice among secondary school students had not been adequately addressed by researchers. This study therefore was concerned on the training needs of career guidance teachers, planning for career programs and activities; career budgetary allocation, and provision of relevant and diverse career services.

The reviewed studies have indicated that parental aspirations encompasses engagement with children in school and out of school learning activities, providing required learning resources and instructions of academic skills and providing relevant learning experiences. However, studies were inconclusive on whether parental aspirations comprised parental involvement; career oriented support as well as parental approval of desired courses; and whether these factors were important aspects that influenced career choice. Similarly, the extent to which parental role had been implemented in secondary schools was not well documented in the literature review of this study. Thus, the pertinent issue here was whether appropriate induction and training programs were in place and whether clear guidance policies were available in order to enable the parents to make informed decisions on career choices for their children. Based on this gap, this study was set out to assess the influence of parental aspirations on career choice among students in secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya.

The role of mass media in career choice has explicitly been explored in the reviewed literature. The most researched area in this construct was on use of media in predicting career choice, the utilization of mass media in education, and the impact of ICT in education (Wanyama, 2012; Kaaria, 2014; Rosempta, 2013; Mwadime, 2017). However, not much literature was available on the type of mass media available and accessible to

secondary school students, and whether the common programs and series viewed in different forms of mass media were relevant. Further, studies revealed increased access to mobile phones by secondary school students (Rosempta, 2013; Wanyama, 2012). Yet, not much was gathered on how the students were using the phone bearing in mind that mobile phones are nowadays used as a medium of accessing all other mass media. Therefore this study had embarked on addressing these gaps by investigating the impact of mass media influence on students' career choice in secondary schools in Meru County.

A policy need to be relevant, participatory, inclusive and knowledge-based for it to make any practical difference. School policies on subject selection are derived from the ministry of education policies and any other body mandated by the government, such as Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). However, from reviewed, literature a mismatch between policy and practice is evident. The level of stakeholder involvement, as well as inclusivity in policy formulation on subject selection was not clear. This study, therefore, was meant to address the determinants of subjects offered in public secondary schools in Meru County with a view of establishing how the same affect career choice among students.

Evidently, the reviewed literature applied both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. At the globally scale, studies reviewed have empirically ascertained that career choices by secondary school students is a defining phase in their lives however difficult a task this is. Through surveying and interrogating literature on students in terms of factors that would influence their career choice, the researcher was able to understand the complexity in career choice. Locally, little research was done in line with career

choices at secondary school level at the time of this study. The studies done globally, however, were geared towards planning appropriate career guidance and counseling interventions to secondary school students. There was a shortfall of well documented career choice works, as well as works on factors influencing career choice in secondary schools in Meru County. The few studies accessed by the researcher were based on either the influence of specific subject areas on academic performance, or they were case studies on particular career occupations. There was inadequate literature on the area of factors influencing career choice at the local scale. Consequently, the status of career choice among secondary school students was therefore not available at the time of this study.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making and Contingency Theory of Management.

2.8.1 Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making

Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making by John Krumboltz was first developed in 1976 (Krumlotz, Mitchell & Jones, 1976). The theory is divided into two parts namely: the Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (KSLTCDM) and the Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Counseling (KLTCC). The first part of the theory; KSLTCDM, addresses the reason behind decisions to enter, change or express interest in educational programs or occupations while the second part focuses on how career counselors could solve career-related problems.

In regard to the first part of the theory, KSLTCDM, Krumboltz (1998) believed that there are four factors that influence career decision making path; these were: genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. As a result of the interaction of these four factors, people develop self-observation and world view generalizations. The generalizations and skills developed make persons get involved in several actions that steer entry into a career.

The second part of the theory; that is, KLTCC recognizes that life is constantly changing, and Krumboltz (1998) makes allowances for “happenstance”, that is, the possibility of unexpected career opportunities. Therefore, the role of the career counselor is to help the career seeker, who is an explorer, to cope more effectively with career concerns, such as, acquiring more accurate self and worldwide generalization, learning new tasks approach, hence, taking appropriate actions, expanding their interests and capabilities and preparing for a changing work environment.

This theory is relevant in this study because it describes the four factors that influence career decision-making path, besides expounding the role of the career counselor, both of which help the researcher to make analysis of factors in guiding career choice among students in secondary schools. The theory recognized the influence of factors such as genetic endowment and special abilities; environmental conditions, task approach skills, and learning experiences on career choice. These factors were more or less the same as the independent variables of the study, namely; nature of career services and programs

provided to students, parental aspirations, mass media and school policy on students' subject choice.

In the first part of Krumboltz (KSLTCDM) theory, career guidance programs availed to secondary school students should help students to understand certain inherited qualities that may limit them in educational and occupational preferences. Additionally, genetic endowment and special abilities can also inform the school on the most appropriate policy on subject selection, particularly in situations where a school dictates that students taking certain subjects should have scored certain annual mean grades in specified subjects. The factor on learning experiences was useful in identifying the people who were significant. Such individuals included: parents, teachers, peers and family members in influencing career choice of secondary school students. The learning experiences were linked to the exposure that a student has in school, their interactions with subject teachers; peer influence, and other people. By understanding the influence people have on career choice, the researcher was able to interrogate the findings related to these constructs and make appropriate recommendations. Factors that are outside an individual, to a large extent, influence educational and occupational decision making. For example, the environmental conditions help to understand orientations that a student undergoes while at home, in the presence of role models, and parental interventions which go a long way in shaping ones knowledge on career options and prospects.

Further, according to the second part of the theory, the role of the career counselor is to help the career seekers to cope more effectively with career concerns such as acquiring more accurate self and global generalizations that affect their career choice. Accordingly,

this concept helped the researcher to establish the nature of career guidance services provided to secondary school students which was the first research objective of this study. The Krumboltz theory of career decision making argues that career decision making is a product of numerous learning encounters that are as a result of interactions with people, institutions and events in the unique environment of a person. That is, people choose careers based on what they have learnt and the kind of the interactions they have had. Events such as career days, mentorship programs, academic days and career guidance programs in secondary schools are practical applications of this theory.

Critiques of social learning theory argue that the theory is purely behaviorist since it argues that children are motivated to imitate a behavior so long as there is some kind of reward or praise. However, the theory is relevant in education because it explain inconsistencies in behavior of students and brings an accurate picture of how behavior is learned by combining several important modes of learning (Ormord & Merrill, 2004).

According to Brown 1990a (as cited in Stephen, 2008), one of the weaknesses of the social learning theory of career decision making was that it is not developmental and cannot account for job change. It may therefore not be useful in determining normative behavior or formulating career development programs. Brown however maintained that the theory was tightly constructed and hypotheses of the theory were testable. In addition, Ormrod and Merrill (2004) argue that this theory does not take into account both physical and mental changes; much as it does not consider that, what one person views as punishment, another may view as a reward. These criticisms of the theory are outside the

scope of this study, and the highlighted weaknesses cannot affect the relevance and application of social learning theory in this study.

2.8.2 Contingency Theory of Management (CTOM)

Contingency Theory of Management by Joan Woodward was developed in 1958. The theory was a result of an investigation by Joan on why some organizations were performing better than others (Sewell, Phillips & Griffiths, 2010). Contingency theory postulates that managers of high performing organizations made better decisions on situational context (Harney, 2016). In other words, effective managers must be adaptable to unique situations and circumstances by developing skills that are most useful in identifying the important situational factors. Contingency theory as an organizational theory claims that, there is no one best way to organize, lead or make decision in an organization; the optimal course of action is contingent upon the internal and external situation (Ghofar & Sardar, 2015). Thus, the theory recognizes that every situation is unique and that no one best way can fit in all situations. Ideally, successful application of a technique in one situation does not guarantee success in its application in another. Therefore, contingency theory is designed to provide a manager with the capabilities to examine numerous possible solutions to a problem.

The application of this theory to the present study derives from the fact that principals are managers of secondary schools and career guidance teachers are expected to provide a leadership role in career guidance services. By examining, for example, school policy on subject selection in terms of how it is affected by contextual, infrastructural and human resource, the principal is able to influence and mobilize teachers, students, parents and

other stakeholders, towards actualizing the intent that is embedded in such policies. This can be achieved through establishment of communication and control; staff training and development, and identifying and solving problems under different situations and contexts since decisions are understood on the basis of internal and external fit. This study acknowledges that secondary schools in Kenya face different geopolitical and geo-economic environment that requires different approaches which may have a bearing on policy that guides on subject selection. The career guidance teachers may apply this theory by considering a wide range of external and internal factors that influence students' career aspirations and paths, and hence focus on corrective and directional actions that best fit a given situation.

Despite its strength, contingency theory of management has been criticized on the basis of the fact that unique situations would lead management to practice only by intuition and judgment, thereby negating the values of prior knowledge and wisdom (Harney, 2016). However, Wadongo and Abdel-Kader (2014) affirm that the theory remains plausible because it helps understand contextual variables that lead to organizational effectiveness in the highly complex and dynamic world. It is undisputable that in career counseling, there is no one best way in handling different career aspirations of secondary school students. This is because circumstances and situation in the job markets keep on shifting; geopolitical and geo-economic environment varies; and the society keeps on experiencing frequent changes of tastes and preferences. Moreover, the impact of ICT is enormous with far reaching and unpredictable impacts on emerging careers. That notwithstanding, career guidance teachers and principals are expected to use their intuition, experience and skills in providing leadership and guidance to students within the confines of given

contexts; something that makes their secondary schools effective organizations in so far as contributing to community and labour development.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a schematic diagram showing a number of related concepts that explain or predict a given event, as well as give a broader understanding of the phenomenon of interest in a study (Kamla-Raj, 2014).

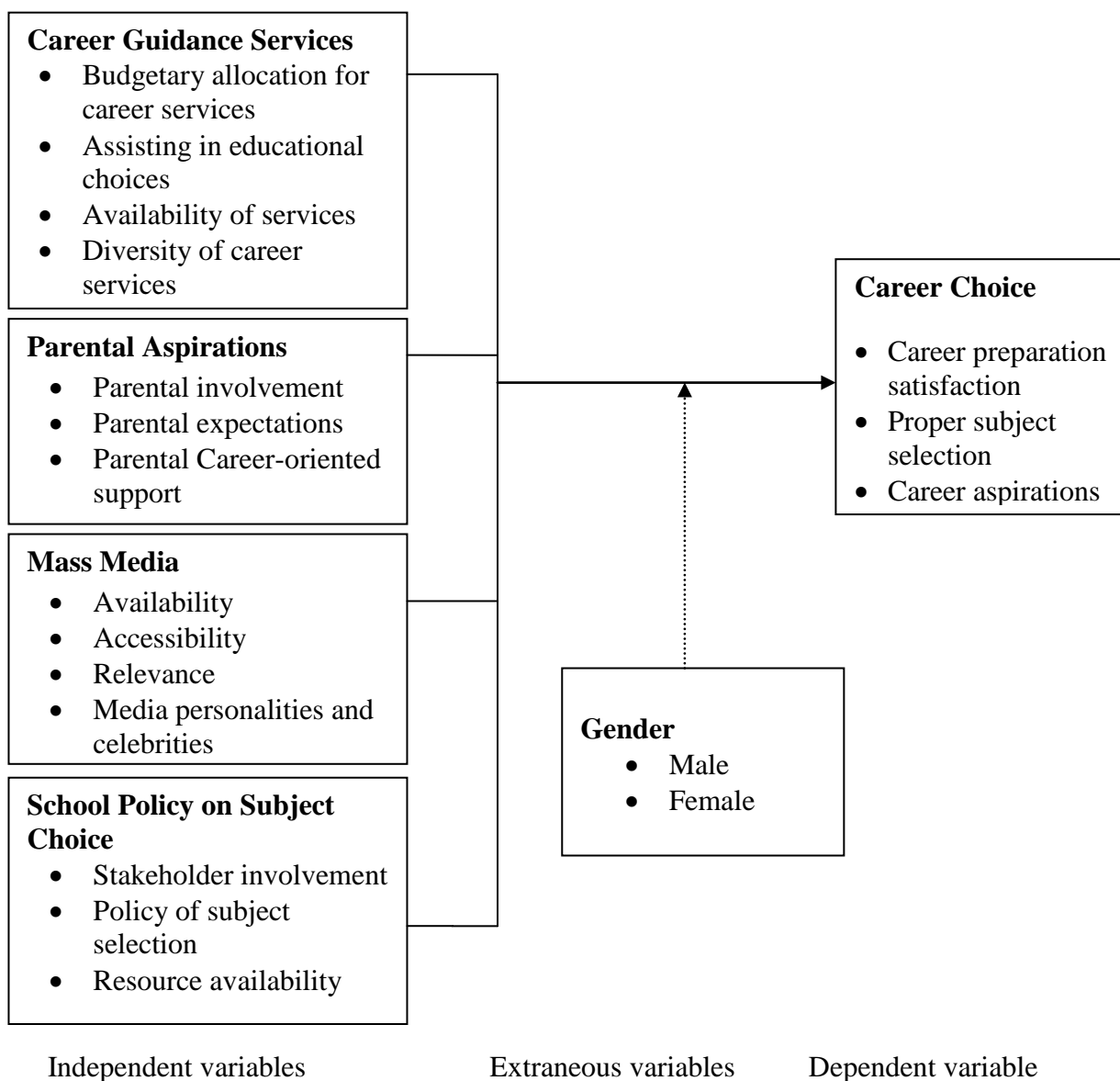


Figure 2.2. Conceptual framework

Source; Author, (2019)

Figure 2.1 above illustrates the relationship between various variables in this study.

The strategies used by public secondary school students may have an influence on their career choices. However, other factors may also be considered as having an influence on students' career choice. The independent variables have a direct influence on the students' future career choice as indicated in Figure 2.1. For

instance, a student could choose a particular career path due to the career information he or she was able to access through career booklets, resource persons and even the mass media. Parents may aspire to have their children choose traditional careers such as engineering, law, medicine and teaching. Career guidance through mentorship, career guidance services and career days may also influence students' career path. A school's policy on subject choice could also have an influence on students career choice since given careers have prescribed cluster subjects.

The gender of the student was the extraneous variable of this study. The students' gender may influence the dependent variable alongside the independent variables. For instance, girls are likely to pursue courses related to human resource, health science and agriculture, as compared to boys who are likely to take courses related to engineering and technology. This could be attributed to the fact that in most cases boys post better performance in mathematics than girls Ochieng (2015), and this gives the former a better chance of pursuing courses that have a bias for mathematics such as engineering and technology. However, the influence of gender was not a focus of this study and therefore its influence on the dependent variable was controlled as a covariate to enable measurement of influence of the four independent variables while confounding the effects of gender.

In an attempt to find out the nature of career guidance services provided to public secondary school students, indicators like financial budgets availed to support career services were examined. Professional training of the career guidance teachers; frequency of career service provision and school support given to the

guidance department in relation to career guidance was considered. Another indicator was determining whether career services were available and if they were how relevant they were in assisting students in educational choices and mitigating the challenging nature of career decisions within the context of a changing labour market is examined.

Parental aspirations were examined by considering their level of involvement in regard to career decision making. It was also necessary to find out whether the parents had career-oriented support that give them knowledge on creating occupation profiles that fit specific jobs for their children. The parents' levels of financial support, as well as parental expectations were other indicators to measure the parental influence on career choice.

Accessibility to mass media in terms of frequency on the use helped to measure the influence of mass media on students' career choice. The type of mass media to which students are exposed to may affect how they view themselves as individuals and further influence both the opportunities and the barriers they perceive to affect career decisions. The relevancy of mass media was also examined to assess the impact of role models and stereotypes.

Schools policy on subject selection as an independent variable was measured by finding out the extent of stakeholders' involvement in policy formulation. It was also important to examine whether there were adequate educational resources to cater for diverse

students' career prospects. A link between subjects selected by public secondary school students and their desired career choices was also assessed in this study.

Career choice is the dependent variable in this study. The level of career preparation satisfaction, proper subject selection by students and career aspirations were key indicators. Career preparation satisfaction helps remove confusion, anxiety and indecisiveness, while, proper subject selection results in preferred career choice.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the procedures that were used in carrying out the study. Specifically, the chapter focuses on the research philosophy and approach, the research design, study location, target population, sampling techniques and the sample size. Further, research instruments, pre-testing of the research instruments for reliability and validity; and the data collection procedures have been explained in this chapter. The chapter also covers data analysis, as well as, ethical values observed during the study.

3.2 Research philosophy and approach

A research study may be conceived in terms of research philosophy it subscribe to, the research strategies used, the type of research instruments employed, as well as the research objectives. Research philosophy therefore, can be viewed as a belief about how data on a particular phenomenon will be gathered, analyzed and used (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). This research study was guided by pragmatism philosophical paradigm. A research paradigm can be defined as a philosophical position that describes the basic set of beliefs that guide and dictates which scientists in a particular discipline influence the nature of the study, how it should be conducted and how the results are interpreted (Morgan, 2014; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, a research paradigm brings an understanding of a social phenomenon by examining and attempting to offer an explanation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). It helps to know how data from such phenomena should be gathered, analyzed and used because it influences reasoning by

putting together scientific arguments that allow for flexibility in data interpretation (Gichohi, 2016).

There are three paradigms that guide a research, namely, epistemology, ontology and methodology. Epistemology is one of the general assumptions of a paradigm that guide a research on how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated. Ontology, the second paradigm, is concerned with what constitute reality, while methodology is the description of how knowledge is acquired (Scotland, 2012; Le Roux, 2012). There are various models under ontological and epistemological assumptions that can be considered in research (Bryman, 2012; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009; Le Roux, 2012). For instance, positivists attempt to identify factors which influence outcomes, while positivity methodology aims at explaining relationships; hence, positivistic statements are descriptive and factual. Interpretivism holds that reality is subjective and meanings constructed by human beings differ from person to person. However, pragmatism, unlike other approaches described above, does not incline to any one system of philosophy, but it focuses on the research problem and uses all approaches available to solve it (Gichohi, 2016).

Three common research approaches can be used while carrying out a study. These are; qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches (Bryman, 2012; Mugenda, 2011; Kumar, 2011; Feilzer, 2010). However, guided by philosophical assumptions, the research problem, the kind of data to be collected, and the research design to be used, a researcher can opt to use any of these approaches (Creswell, 2009). Mixed methods approach was employed in this study as advocated by (Feilzer, 2010). Mixed method

allowed for the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in this study since when either was used independently, none was able to sufficiently answer the research questions.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Meru County. Meru County is located on the eastern side of Mt Kenya, covering 6,936 square kilometers (Appendix VII). It is strategically placed, bordering Isiolo County to the North, Nyeri County to the South West, Tharaka –Nithi to the East and Laikipia County to the West. The County has eleven Sub-Counties: Imenti South, Meru Central, Imenti North, Igembe South, Igembe North, Igembe Central, Tigania East, Tigania West, Tigania Central, Buuri west and Buuri East.

Meru County has several tertiary institutions. They include: two (2) universities, four (4) university campuses, two (2) teacher training colleges, one (1) national polytechnic, five (5) technical institutions and twenty nine (29) vocational training centers. These institutions can accommodate more than 93,200 secondary school graduates in a period of four years (Meru County Integrated Development Plan, (M-CIDP) 2018-2022). Further, information obtained from Meru County Education Office MoE, (2019) showed that 11.21% of the 23,180 candidates who sat the 2018 KCSE managed to get university entry grades, 31.93% qualified for courses in tertiary institutions and another 55.91% qualified to pursue certificate and artisan courses in vocational institutions. This was an indication that the county registered a high transition rate from secondary to institutions of higher learning. In other words, all the form four students (19,862) from public secondary schools in this county were eligible for a course in the institutions of higher learning within the county.

Based on these empirical facts, the researcher was concerned with how these students would arrive at their career of choice or what would inform their career choices. Thus, the researcher needed to raise awareness on the extent to which factors like career guidance services, parental aspirations, mass media and school policy on subject selection independently and jointly influenced career choice in public secondary school in Meru County. Studies that have been conducted in Meru County have mainly focused on the role of guidance and counseling in management of students' discipline Njogu and Kirema (2016); Kirema, (2016); factors affecting students' academic performance Muyalo (2017); Mutwiri (2015); Kimathi (2014), as well as factors associated with the choice of nursing profession among students. As a vital component for quality research, the researcher was familiar with the educational environment of Meru County, and the research area was accessible to her (Singleton & Straits, 2010).

3.4 Research Design

A research design is an overall strategy for conducting a research that helps to conceptualize an operational plan in a reasonable and logical manner so that the research problem is efficiently handled (Ranjit, 2011). This study adopted both descriptive survey and correlational research designs.

3.4.1 Descriptive Survey Design

Descriptive survey design involves collecting information about people's perceptions, attitudes and opinions of subjects in a variety of education or social issues without manipulation (Gill & Phil, 2011). The design was considered suitable for this study because of its capacity to yield valid and accurate answers to the research objectives

(Patton, 2015). The use of this design in the study was also anchored in the argument that descriptive survey as a study design is concerned with establishing the extent of a range of problems, issues and concerns within communities and it is appropriate in collecting information by conducting interviews or administering questionnaires (Ritchie & Lewis, 2012). The design yielded descriptive data which was presented through graphs and charts that aided the researcher in understanding the data distribution in response to the study objectives.

In this study, key constructs that included career guidance services, parental guidance, mass media and school policy were separately and jointly explored with a view to establishing the extent to which they influence the decision to select certain careers by students of secondary schools in Meru County. Underlying issues and concerns on each construct from the viewpoints of students, parents, teachers and principals were investigated and appropriate recommendations were made to school administration, Ministry of Education and other concerned stakeholders.

3.4.2 Correlational Research Design

According to Creswell (2014), correlational research designs are used by investigators to describe and measure the degree of correlation between two or more variables or sets of scores. There are two types of correlation research design: explanation and prediction designs (Whitley & Kite, 2013). Both explanation and prediction designs were used in this study. Explanation design was appropriate since the researcher was interested in finding out the extent to which the independent variables singly and jointly influenced career choice among public secondary school students. Hence, interpretations and

conclusions were drawn from the statistical results obtained (Whitley & Kite, 2013). In this study, each construct of independent variables, namely; career guidance services, parental guidance, mass media and school policy, was correlated with dependent variable, that is, career choice decision, where the Pearson correlation value indicated the strength of the relationship while the P-value obtained indicated whether the relationship was significant or otherwise.

The predictor design was used to anticipate outcomes by using certain variables as predictors. In this study, linear regression analysis helped to ascertain the prediction value of each independent variable while multiple linear regression analysis helped to assess the combined prediction value of all independent variables on career choice decision, and hence appropriate interpretation and conclusions were made. Correlational research design was therefore significant in addressing the research problem owing to the fact that the sample size in this study was adequate for hypothesis testing.

3.5 Target Population

Alvi (2016) defines target population as all the members who meet the particular criterion specified for a research investigation. The researcher obtained data about the target population from Meru County Director of Education office. The population was drawn from all the three hundred and sixty four (364) public secondary schools within Meru County who took part in the study. The three hundred and sixty four public secondary schools had a population of 19,862 form four students, 364 principals, 364 career guidance teachers and 364 form four parents' representatives. These participants were found to be fit in providing data required to address the research objectives. For example,

the school principals were included because they were expected to play a crucial role in subject choice, policy formulation and supervision of both human and financial resource utilization in their respective secondary schools. Through the principals, the researcher obtained data about the career guidance teachers.

The career guidance teachers were included for this study because they are directly involved in the implementation of the education policy on career guidance and provision of the much needed academic and career guidance to students. Parents play a key role in the provision of resources in the schools and support the children in secondary schools. The parents also provide financial support of the careers chosen by their children. Data about parents and students was obtained from the principals. The form four students were the key respondents since they were directly involved in career choice at their final year or after the national examinations results are out. Detailed information regarding different category of target population is given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1.
Target Population

Name of Sub County	Number of Schools	Students per Sub-County	Principals	Form Four PA representatives	Career guidance teachers
Imenti South	65	3,737	65	65	65
Meru Central	44	2,925	44	44	44
Imenti North	44	2,861	44	44	44
Tigania Central	22	1,064	22	22	22
Tigania West	38	1,921	38	38	38
Igembe North	30	1,581	30	30	30
Igembe central	35	2,614	35	35	35
Igembe South	30	1,459	30	30	30
Tigania East	24	1,486	24	24	24
Buuri East	20	907	20	20	20
Buuri west	12	766	12	12	12
Total	364	19,862	364	364	364

Source: Meru County Director of Education Records (2018)

3.6 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study from a given population in such a way that, the individuals selected represent the large group from which they were selected (Wilson, 2010; Kumar, 2012). It is a deliberate selection of a predetermined number of subjects from a given study for the purpose of representing the

entire group of the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing career choice of secondary school students and collect credible data, the researcher employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques in this study. Probability sampling is a technique where a sample is selected using random selection so that each element in the population has a known chance of being selected (Bryman, 2012). Probability sampling technique has less risk of bias and it enables one to make inferences from information about a random sample to the population from which it was selected (Cohen et al., 2011; Bryman, 2012). Probability sampling techniques that were employed in this study were stratified random and simple random sampling techniques.

Bryman (2012) describes non-probability sampling as a sampling technique where some units in a population are more likely to be selected than others. In non-probability sampling technique, the units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features within a sampled population and the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection (Ritche & Lewis, 2012). The non-probability sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. Stratified sampling technique was used to select public secondary schools that would take part in the study while non-probability sampling technique was used to select students, principals, career guidance teachers and parents from public secondary schools in Meru County. A detailed description of the specific sampling techniques used in this study across different categories of the population is provided in the sub-sections that follow.

3.6.1 Sampling of secondary schools in Meru County

Stratified random sampling is a form of random sampling in which the population is divided into two or more groups, also known as strata, according to one or more common attributes and then selecting subjects from each stratum in a proportionate manner (Gill & Phil, 2011; Bryman, 2012). In order to obtain the secondary school to participate in this study, the strata were in form of sub-counties, that is, South Imenti, Meru Central, North Imenti, Buuri West, Buuri East , Tigania East, Tigania Central, Tigania West, Igembe South, Igembe North and Igembe Central. The secondary schools in each sub-county were then categorized into sub-strata in form of girls' boarding schools, boys' boarding schools, mixed boarding schools and mixed day secondary schools. This stratification ensured that the resulting sample was distributed in the same way as the population in terms of the stratifying criterion (Bryman, 2012).The process of stratifying the population reduced the sampling error because it captured the diversity and ensured a greater level of representation (Dudovskiy, 2016; Alvi, 2016).However the method was costly and time consuming; hence, more effort was put to ensure credible data was collected.

Within a given stratum, simple random sampling technique was employed to select appropriate proportion of the subjects. That is, the researcher grouped all schools in each category from each sub-county and randomly selected one school per category. The researcher's choice of simple random sampling technique was based on the fact that each member had an equal chance of being included in the sample from the target population (Gill & Phil, 2011; Bryman, 2012).

3.6.2 Sampling of principals and career guidance teachers of secondary schools

All the principals and career guidance teachers of the sampled schools were purposively used as respondents in this study. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study (Mugenda, 2011). The principals would respond appropriately to questions in relation to objective one, namely: to examine the nature of career guidance services provided to students in secondary school in Meru County; objective three which required the researcher to investigate the impact of mass media on the choice of careers among students in secondary school in Meru County, and objective four on evaluation of the influence of school policies on subject selection on career choice among students in secondary school in Meru County. The career guidance teachers were found to be the most appropriate respondents in relation to objective one and three. The principal and the career guidance teacher from each sampled secondary school were therefore purposively included in this study.

3.6.3 Sampling of form four students

The researcher randomly selected form four students from the sampled schools using systematic random sampling method. In systematic random sampling subjects were selected directly from a class list in a systematic manner (Bryam, 2012). An element of randomness was introduced, and using random numbers, a unit was picked up to start the process of identifying the students who would participate in the study. The selection process started by identifying some random points in a list and then every n^{th} element was selected until the desired sample was obtained as advised by (Bryam, 2012; Cohen, et al., 2011). Systematic random sampling was appropriate because it was possible to identify

the participants before issuing the questionnaires to the respondents in the classroom. This also tended to minimize bias as the researcher would pick names from a list without prior knowledge of the bearer of the names.

3.6.4 Sampling of Parents Representatives

Based on the crucial role parents play in the education of their children, the researcher applied purposive sampling technique. Since interview was found appropriate for this category of target population, a form four parent representative from each sub-county was selected to take part in the study. Meru County has eleven sub-counties and as such eleven (11) parent representatives; one per sub-county was purposively sampled. In schools with one stream, the form four parent representatives were purposively sampled and in schools where the number of streams was more than one, the form four stream parent representatives was also purposively sampled to take part in the study.

3.6.5 Sample size

To determine the number of schools that took part in the study, the researcher took 10% of the three hundred and sixty four (364) public secondary schools. This was within the recommended range of 10% -30% of the population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This translated to a sample size of thirty-six (36) public secondary schools. All the principals (36) and career guidance teachers (36) of the sampled schools took part in this study. As noted in section 3.6.2, eleven (11) form four parents' representatives were also purposively selected to take part in this study. This sample size was found appropriate for qualitative study because it adequately answered the research questions (Marshall, 2009). In order to determine the number of form four respondents from the 36 public secondary

schools that participated in the study, the researcher used the formula below as provided by (Kathuri & Pals 1993).

S for a known population size N

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where S- is the required sample size.

N-is the given population size.

P –is the population proportion, assumed to be 0.50

d^2 - is the degree of accuracy whose value is 0.05

X^2 – is the table for chi-square for one degree of freedom which is 3.841

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Thus } S &= \frac{3.841 \times 19,862 \times 0.50 (1-0.50)}{0.05^2 (19,862-1) + 3.841 \times 0.50 (1-0.50)} \\ &= 377 \text{ Students} \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, 377 form four students were the respondents in the study.

Table 3.2 below illustrates overall sample size across all categories.

Table 3. 2.

Overall sample size across population categories

Population category	Population	Computed sample size
Principals	364	36
Career Guidance Teachers	364	36
Students	19,862	377
Parents	364	11
Totals	20,954	460

3.7 Research Instruments

The researcher aimed at collecting primary data since existing secondary data could not provide the information needed in this study. Wilson (2010) argues that primary data collection can be quite challenging in as far as establishing a suitable sample size and gathering the data can be time consuming and often frustrating, however, it generates an interesting set of findings that can make a significant contribution to overall research. Two instruments were used to collect primary data in the study. These were: a questionnaire and interview schedule whose items were formulated based on research objectives. The elements considered in coming up with specific questions were identified from review of literature.

3.7.1 Questionnaire

All questionnaires had five sections comprising both open-ended and close-ended questions. Most close-ended questions were in Likert Rating Scale. Section A of the questionnaire contained the demographic information of the respondents; section B dealt with nature of career guidance services offered in school and whether they were adequate and relevant; section C contained questions investigating mass media influence on career choice; section D was intended to find out the influence of parental aspiration on career choice of public secondary school students, and section E contained questions probing the influence of school policies on subject selection on career choice among public secondary school students. The questionnaire for students had an additional section, section F, which contained questions on career selection.

For the first three categories of respondents, namely: the principals, career guidance teachers, and the students, there were three different sets of questionnaires as shown in appendices VIII, IX, and X respectively.

3.7.2 Interview

Kumar (2012) defined an interview as any face to face interaction between one or more individuals, with a specific purpose in mind. Interviews have the ability to engage in verbal and non-verbal communication, provide accurate information and ensure greater flexibility in delivery of questions (Wilson, 2010). Their completion is immediate and straight forward as opposed to using a questionnaire. However, conducting a face to face interview can be problematic in terms of setting up the venue and actual administration of the interview and transcribing. Analyzing data from interview schedule is also time consuming and subjective (Grimshaw, 2016). This observation is supported by Bryman (2012) who argues that interview schedules are time consuming and the quality of data collected is determined by the quality of interaction. In order to minimize bias during the interview, the researcher employed structured interview that asked predetermined set of questions using the same wording in the interview schedule (Kumar, 2012). Therefore, only eleven (11) parents; one per sub-county, were interviewed using an interview schedule illustrated in appendix XI.

3.8 Pre-testing of the Research Instruments

Pre-testing of the research instruments was conducted to confirm that the questions worked as intended and the participants could respond appropriately (Hilton, 2015). In conducting a pre-test, a small number of respondents were used to test the appropriateness of the research instruments and check for clarity of the questions. A post-

questionnaire interview was then conducted to find out whether the respondents actually understood the questions. In consultation with the supervisors, the researcher used these responses to modify the instruments to enhance reliability and validity by ensuring expert judgment. The research instruments were tried out on a group that was selected on a convenience and that which was similar in make up to the one that ultimately was researched on. Therefore, prior to data collection, as recommended by Pernger, Courvoisier, Gayet-Ageron and Hudelson (2014), thirty (30) questionnaires were distributed to form four students in a secondary school within Meru County that was not sampled to take part in the study. The principal and the career guidance teacher of this school also responded to the questions in their respective questionnaires.

3.8.1 Reliability

Reliability of the items in the research instruments was determined to confirm that they yielded consistent results (Wilson, 2010). Fitness of data for analysis was determined before conducting statistical analysis, by computing Cronbach's Alpha value for data that was collected from each category of respondents using SPSS (Version24). The resultant correlation coefficient, ($r=0.760$), was obtained as outlined in Table 4.1. This implied that there was consistency among the items in measuring the concept of interest; hence instruments were reliable (Bryman, 2012). A reliability coefficient indicates the goodness of the items in the data for carrying out statistical analysis. Bhattacharjee (2012) noted that a correlation coefficient above 0.7 shows good reliability of instruments of collecting data in social science research.

3.8.2 Validity

Validity of the instruments was assessed to ensure they gave accurate and relevant data for study (Kumar, 2012). It ensured that the results obtained from the analysis of the data accurately represented the phenomenon under study. Cohen et al. (2011) states that validity is a demonstration that a particular instrument measures what it purports to measure. Questionnaires were pre-tested to enable scrutiny and to identify items that were unclear or ambiguous to the respondents. For example, in the students' questionnaire, there was ambiguity in the way the school categorization was done. Mixed secondary schools can be a school with day and boarding wing or it can be a day school with both girls and boys. The parents' interview schedule required adequate space for responses to enable the interviewer write response on the same paper. This would save on time and avoid repetition of questions in a separate paper. Question 12 on the parents' questionnaire required to be rephrased for clarity. The ambiguous items were modified accordingly to improve face validity.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

A letter of introduction from Kenya Methodist University (Appendix II) was used to apply for a research permit from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI; Appendix IV). The County Commissioner and the County Director of Education of Meru County were informed of the intention to collect data for the study by presenting the research permit from NACOSTI. Authority to collect data was granted by both County Commissioner and the County Director of Education of Meru County (Appendix V &VI respectively). Letters of introduction were written to the principals of the sampled schools. The researcher then made visits to the sampled schools

for prior arrangements on how the instruments were to be administered and interviews conducted.

3.9.1 Procedure for administering questionnaires

A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection because, as Kumar (2012) and Wilson (2010) observes, it allowed the researcher to obtain accurate data and present an even stimulus potentially to large numbers of people simultaneously. It also enabled the researcher to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data in the most cost effective and reliable means. The questionnaires were identified with a code number to help in tracing them after completion. The codes were based on the nature of the school; such that a girls' boarding school in sub-county A was coded SCAGB₁ while a boys boarding in the same sub- county was coded as SCABB₁ and a mixed day would be coded as SCAMD₁ respectively. The instruments given to the same school were given the same code number.

3.9.2 Procedure for conducting interview

The researcher obtained telephone contacts of the sampled parent representatives from the principal and then contacted them to organize for date, venue and time for conducting the interview. On the dates of administering the interview, the researcher had a face to face interaction with the respondents guided by the predetermined set of questions in the interview schedule (Appendix XI). The responses were written down on the spaces provided in the interview schedule. The researcher requested for clarification of responses that were not clear before writing them down.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

This research study generated both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.10.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data

Data collected from the field was sorted out to identify any incomplete or inaccurate responses. The data was then coded by assigning different data sets with simple numbers to help in data analysis. This allowed for reduction of large quantities of information into a form that was handled more easily during data entry. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 24) and Microsoft excel were used to analyze the data.

The researcher analyzed quantitative data using descriptive statistics where mean, standard deviation and percentages were computed appropriately. In order to make inferences and predictions about the population based on the sample results, the researcher employed inferential statistics.

In this study, a Chi-square test was conducted in order to understand whether the answers on careers which form four students would want to pursue, and which differed significantly across various public secondary schools in Meru County. Secondary schools in Meru County were categorized in form of girls boarding, boys boarding, mixed boarding and mixed day secondary schools. The understanding of existence of any variation in these strata was important in informing the statistical approaches to data analysis in this study. The finding was also meant to confirm one of the assumptions of this study as stated in section 1.8.

One way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the confounding effects of gender among the independent variables. Pearson correlation analysis at a significance level of 0.05, and linear regression analysis were both used to assess the strength of association, that is, the extent of influence of the various independent variables on the dependent variable and to test the individual hypothesis. The beta (β) coefficients for each independent variable was generated from the linear regression model in order to test each of the hypotheses under study. Multiple regression analysis was specifically applied to analyze the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables, after the latter were combined together in one model. The overall regression model used in this study is shown below:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y= Career choice in secondary schools

β_0 =constant

$\beta_1 + \beta_4$ = weights crested from the variables (x_1, x_2, x_3) as shown below

X_1 = Nature of career services

X_2 = Parental inspirations

X_3 =Mass media influence

X_4 = School policy on selection of subjects

ε is the estimated error of the model that has a mean of zero at constant variance.

The results were then presented in tables, graphs, and logical explanations used for qualitative data.

3.10.1.1 Tests of Regression Assumptions

Prior to the use of regression analysis, diagnostic tests on underlying assumptions were carried out. The tests include: normality test, linearity test, heteroskedasticity test, autocorrelation test and multicollinearity tests. This study tested normality and ascertained that data was normally distributed (Figure 4.1).

Data was also tested for linearity. In this study, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compute linearity of data. Linearity means that the predictor variables in the regression have a straight line relationship with the outcome variable. Also tested was multicollinearity which determines whether variables are correlated or not. To test the assumption of multicollinearity, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and correlation coefficients values indices were used in regression analyses. A value of $VIF > 10$ indicates multicollinearity is present and the assumption is violated (Kumar, 2011).

3.10.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

In this study, a structured procedure was used in analyzing the qualitative data. This involved identifying and putting codes on similar categories as discussed by (Crang, 2005). The coding schemes used made the analysis more systematic. Other responses from interviewees that did not recur in the study were used without any codes. In many instances, narratives were transcribed and presented word for word from the respondents in order to capture actual responses and actions by parents on matters of career guidance and choices of their sons and daughters. This approach was particularly useful as it allowed varied experiences from respondents to be presented as primary raw data (Smith, 2001).

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The researcher presented the research proposal to KeMU university ethical clearance committee for clearance since the researcher proposed to use human participants as source of data. Ethical approval was granted and the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the university (Appendix II). The researcher then applied for a research permit to carry out the study from National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Using the research permit (Appendix IV), the researcher requested for permission to conduct the research from Meru County Commissioner (Appendix V), County Director of Education (Appendix VI) and principals of sampled schools. The researcher conformed to the principle of voluntary consent by first explaining the reason for carrying out the research, to the respondents as detailed in the informed consent cover letter (Appendix I).

The researcher ensured that she did not abuse the trust bestowed on her by the respondents by strictly asking the relevant questions for the study. Confidentiality was assured by assigning special codes to conceal the identity of respondents for interview sessions. The researcher also developed rapport with the interviewees in order to get them to disclose information and also tried to avoid intruding on their time, space and personal lives by conducting the interview at their convenient time and place. Protection of the privacy and anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed by asking the respondents not to write their names on the instruments.

The study instruments were stored in a safe lockable place during and after data analysis. The researcher also tried to maintain the highest level of objectivity in discussion and analysis of the results throughout the research. All sources of information consulted were cited appropriately inside the text and acknowledged in the reference list as guided by American Psychological Association (APA) referencing system.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides results of the study. The findings are interpreted and discussed according to published literature on the subject. The process of data analysis and interpretation involves categorizing, ordering, manipulating, summarizing, interpreting data and comparing results with previous studies in order to come up with solutions to the problem under investigation (Bryman, 2012). The purpose of the study was to analyze factors influencing career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County.

In the first instance, reliability of the collected data is presented, followed by a synopsis of the response rate. The profiles of different categories of respondents are also presented with the intention of showing their linkages to the outcomes of this study. Later, descriptive results on dependent variable, that is, choice of career among public secondary school students from Meru County, are presented. Finally, detailed results on each objective and correlation results are presented and discussed accordingly.

4.2 Reliability Statistics

Before conducting statistical analysis of the quantitative data that was collected from each category of respondent, fitness of data for analysis was determined by computing the Cronbach's Alpha value using SPSS. The results are in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.
Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Data collected from Principals	.794	35
Data collected from career guidance teachers	.776	37
Data collected from form four students	.712	87
Average Cronbach's Alpha value	0.760667	

A reliability coefficient indicates the goodness of the items in the data for carrying out statistical analysis. Bhattacharjee (2012) noted that a correlation coefficient above 0.7 shows good reliability of data in social science research.

4.3 Response Rate

Out of the 377 questionnaires that had been distributed to form four students of public secondary schools in Meru County, 348 valid ones were returned which indicates 92.0% response rate. Thirty six questionnaires were also distributed to targeted Principals of public secondary schools in Meru County, out of which 33 were returned. This indicates a valid response rate of 91.7%. For career guidance teachers, 32 questionnaires were returned out of 36 that had been distributed initially, representing a valid response rate of 88.9% while all the targeted form four parent representatives were interviewed as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2.

Overall Response Rate

Respondents category	Administered instruments	Returned	Response rate (%)
Principals	36	33	91.6%
Career Guidance Teachers	36	32	88.8%
Students	377	348	93.3%
Parents	11	11	100.0%
Total	460	424	92.1%

The results show an overall response rate of 92.1%. The researcher instituted effective data collection strategies and techniques, hence a good overall response rate. The key characteristics and profiles of each category of respondents are presented and discussed below.

4.4 Background Profiles of Respondents

Background information on all categories of respondents was analyzed and presented separately; starting with principals, career guidance teachers and students in that order.

4.4.1 Profiles of Principals of Public Secondary Schools in Meru County

This study was interested in understanding three kinds of profile regarding principals of public secondary school in Meru County; that is, gender, qualifications, and how long one had served as a principal. The information obtained was significant in informing this study considering that principals are key academic leaders in their respective schools. The findings were summarized as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3.***Profiles of Principals of Public Secondary Schools in Meru County***

Gender of the Principal			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	20	60.6	60.6
Female	13	39.4	100.0
Total	33	100.0	
Qualifications of the Principals			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Master degree	21	63.6	63.6
Bachelor Degree	12	36.4	100.0
Diploma	0	0	100.0
Total	33	100.0	
How long have you been a Principal?			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
11 – 20 years	15	45.5	45.5
1 – 10 years	14	42.4	87.9
Less than 1 year	3	9.1	97.0
Over 21 years	1	3.0	100.0
Total	33	100.0	

The results are showing that there are more male (60.6%) than female (39.4%) principals in public secondary schools in Meru County. The results indicate gender inequality of access to administrative positions and opportunities in Meru County. This finding is consistent with a study that was conducted by Wambua (2017) who found that 60% of the principals in Machakos County were males and 40% females. Although most mixed day secondary schools in Meru County can be headed by either male or female principals, the study revealed low representation of females by 21.2% in leadership

position, a reflection of disparity in leadership and management. The results contravene the Teachers' Service Commission guideline which envisages gender equality in staffing in all schools (TSC Act, 2015). The findings are further inconsistent with Kenya National Policy on Gender and Development (2000), which focus on the right of women, girls and boys to participate in and benefit adequately from the development processes where men and women enjoy equal rights, opportunities and high quality life. Having additional female principals in public secondary schools in Meru County would motivate the girl child and help prevent some retrogressive cultural practices and stereotypes.

63.6 % of principals, which represented twenty one (21) principals sampled, have master's degrees. Out of the twenty one principals with master's degrees, 66.7% are males, while 33.3% are females. The results further showed that the majority of principals working in public secondary schools in Meru County have had between 11 and 20 years working experience in the position of a principal. These findings correlates with Muyalo (2017) who observed that 25% of the principals in secondary schools in Igembe North Sub-County, Meru County had a master's degree and about 85% were aged above 40 years, an indication that they had a wealth of experience in school administration issues. This kind of experience together with education qualification shows that most principals have adequate experience and knowledge that is necessary in running a public secondary school. The experience and knowledge of principals was particularly necessary in this study where their responses on career choice among students were based on accumulated experience. Experienced principals were believed to have had better information on the nature of career choosing procedures and practices adopted in their

schools, and the actual careers pursued by students from their schools joining universities and tertiary colleges every year.

4.4.2 Profiles of Career Guidance Teachers (CGT) in Public Secondary Schools in Meru County

Career guidance teachers are at the center of this study due to the role they are expected to play in helping students make appropriate subjects selection and career choices that are commensurate to their abilities, talents, aspirations and that have prospects of getting jobs or creating jobs for themselves. Five profiles regarding career guidance teachers of public secondary school in Meru County were examined. They included gender, academic qualifications, how long one had served as a career guidance teacher, whether one had background training in career guidance profession, and how often one attends career guidance workshops. Results were summarized as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4.*Profiles of Career Guidance Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Meru County*

Gender	Principals		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	24	75.0	75.0
Female	8	25.0	100.0
Total	32	100.0	
Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Master degree	19	59.4	59.4
Bachelor Degree	8	25.0	84.4
Diploma	5	15.6	100.0
Total	32	100.0	
How long have you been a career guidance teacher?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 – 5 years	15	46.9	46.9
Less than 1 year	8	25.0	71.9
6 – 10 years	5	15.6	87.5
11 - 20 years	3	9.4	96.9
Over 21 years	1	3.1	100.0
Total	32	100.0	
At what level have you been trained as a career guidance teacher?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
I have no background training in career guidance	16	50.0	50.0
Workshops/Seminars	11	34.4	84.4
Degree	5	15.6	100.0
Total	32	100.0	
How often do you attend career guidance workshops?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never attended	21	65.6	65.6
Once a Year	8	25.0	90.6
Once in a term	3	9.4	100.0
Total	32	100.0	

The profile of career guidance teachers shown in Table 4.4 was not different from that of principals on matters of gender and education qualifications, where, the majorities are males as compared to female. However, on matters of experience, the majority of career guidance teachers, twenty three (23) teachers, that is, 71.9% have up to 5 years working

experience in this position. Approximately half of career guidance teachers had worked between 1 and 5 years. Only 9 teachers, representing 28.1% had over 5 years working experience in career guidance. This shows that most career guidance teachers have inadequate experience, knowledge and skills that are necessary for running career guidance department in secondary schools. The experience, knowledge and career guidance skills are particularly necessary in this study because career guidance services, that had a mean of 2.28, were the most commonly used strategies in guiding students' career choices.

Surprisingly, the information gathered showed that 50% of the career guidance teachers had no background training in career guiding or career counseling. Among the trained ones, eleven (11) teachers, that is 34.4%, had gained the training by attending workshops and seminars on career guidance, while five (5) representing 15.6%, had a degree in guidance and counseling. The findings further showed that workshops on careers guidance are held once a year. The findings correlates with the study by Wambu and Fisher (2015) who observed that career guidance teachers were subject teachers appointed to the position of guidance and counseling with no professional training. A study by Bitu (2015) revealed that a 41.2% of guidance and counseling teachers in Nyakach sub-county had no formal training while in Nyandarua Sub-County, approximately 50% of the guidance and counseling teachers had been in-serviced through seminar and workshops (Kahigi, 2003). Training of career guidance teachers is a key factor in the provision of career guidance services. Career counselors who are not well prepared are likely to encounter difficulties in crafting and implementing requisite policies and programs that enhance effective career guidance services to secondary

school students due to lack of conceptual knowledge. An elaborate policy on preparation and training of career counselors is therefore a prerequisite for effective career guidance in secondary schools in Meru County.

4.4.3 Profiles of Form Four Students in Meru County

This study regarded form four students as principal respondents. Understanding their background was therefore critical in informing the basis for the decisions they make on careers. In the first instance, the study was interested in understanding the school category of form four students. Gender of a student was also important in understanding whether it had a bearing in career decisions. Other aspects investigated were the course that a student would want to pursue upon finishing form four, and finding out in which class or form one was; as well as when they started thinking about a given career path. The information was summarized and presented in Tables 4.5, 4.6 (in the appendix XII) and 4.7.

Table 4.5.***Profile of Form Four Students in Meru County***

Category of public secondary school	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Girls boarding	115	33.0	33.0
Boys boarding	113	32.5	65.5
Mixed day	110	31.6	97.1
Mixed boarding	10	2.9	100.0
Total	348	100.0	
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	185	53.2	53.2
Male	163	46.8	100.0
Total	348	100.0	
After doing your KCSE which course would you want to pursue?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Courses related to Engineering and Technology	101	29.0	29.0
Courses related to Health Science	78	22.4	51.4
Courses related to Agriculture and veterinary science	64	18.4	69.8
Courses related to Education and External studies	28	8.0	77.9
Courses related to Humanity and Social science	27	7.8	85.6
Courses related to Pure and Applied Science	26	7.5	93.1
Courses related to Human Resource Development	24	6.9	100.0
Total	348	100.0	

The results are show that there are slightly more girls' than boys' public boarding secondary schools in Meru County. Also noted is that, there are very low enrolment, at 2.9%, in mixed public boarding secondary school in Meru County, and, to a great extent, the total enrolment in mixed day was lower than in boarding secondary schools although

there were more mixed day secondary schools than boarding schools. A major contributing factor to this scenario is the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in January, 2003 which resulted to an increased enrolment of 1.3 million primary school children in Kenya (Oxfam, 2003). Eight years later, that is, by 2011 there was a substantial increase in mixed day secondary schools to cater for the huge influx of form one student. A total enrolment of 110, representing 31.6%, in public mixed day secondary schools indicated more girls than boys. The results clearly show that the enrolment of girls is more than that of boys in public secondary schools in Meru County.

This pattern of enrolment is similar to that of Igembe North Sub- County in Meru County and Kirinyaga County where Muyalo (2017) and Mwangi (2017) observed that male enrolment in secondary schools was low as compared to that of girls. Yet, at primary school level, there was high male enrolment compared to females. Mwangi (2017) further observed that majority of the male student respondents, at 87.2 %, indicated that use of drugs, alcohol and substance abuse influenced male students' enrolment in secondary schools in Kirinyaga County. This was closely followed by availability of youth based economic activities such as boda boda business and miraa (khat) farming that gives quick economic returns, at 70.2%.

In the recent past the government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) have intensified campaigns, programs and interventions that focus on empowering and protecting the girl child in Kenya and this has led to the boy child being excluded in the gender debate (National Gender and Equality Commission, 2015). The results indicate

need for collaborative approach by all stakeholders to ensure that the boy child also benefit from programs and interventions that support empowering of the girl child.

Moreover, a cross-tabulation results in Table 4.6 show that most girls, at 29.7%, predominantly prefer to pursue courses related to health science as well as courses related to agriculture and veterinary science representing 22.7%; as compared to boys majority of whom prefer courses related to engineering and technology at 38.7%, and health science at 14.1% in that order. On overall, courses related to engineering and technology were the most preferred (101, 29.0%), while courses related to human resource development were the least preferred (24, 6.9%) by form four students in Meru County. These findings are reaffirmed by Koech et al.(2016)who observed a similar pattern on undergraduates shortly before finishing high school where majority of the respondents mentioned engineering and medicine as the leading career choices (17.1% and 14.3%) respectively.

Business management, education and computer science were the least preferred courses at 9.5%, 7.6% and 5.7% respectively. Courses related to human resource development are least liked by girls as compared to boys whose majority do not prefer courses related to education and external studies.

The findings correlate with an earlier study in the United States of America by Kloosterman (2008), who observed that fifth and sixth grade Hispanic girls had few appropriate role models they could emulate in careers that were traditionally male dominated, such as, engineering and science. Mutekwa et al. (2015) assert that girls were reluctant (20%) to choose science based courses in Zimbabwe. Otieno (2019) contends

that women are grossly under-represented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers. In terms of percentages, Otieno (2019) reported that only 35% of the doctors and dentists' registered with Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board (KMPDB) are women and 11-14% of the researchers in the natural sciences, engineering and technology are women.

From the foregoing discussion, gender bias is evident. It was noted that such bias was influenced by gender role socialization, gender-typing of school subjects and gendered occupational landscape in which girls exist (Mutekwa, et al., 2015). There is need therefore, for school management, teachers, parents and significant others to develop support system geared toward mentorship programs to minimize gender stereotypes in school subject selection and career choice in public secondary schools in Meru County.

A Chi-square test was further conducted in order to understand whether the answers on preferred careers by students differed significantly across various public secondary schools in Meru County. The findings are summarized in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7.

Chi-Square Test Results on school category against the course that students prefer to undertake after KCSE results

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	50.252 ^a	18	.000
Likelihood Ratio	54.408	18	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.854	1	.173
N of Valid Cases	348		

a. 7 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .69.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by	Phi	.380			.000
Nominal	Cramer's V	.219			.000
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.073	.052	1.363	.174 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.036	.052	.670	.503 ^c
N of Valid Cases		348			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

According to the findings in Table 4.7, the sample size requirement for the Chi-square test of independence was satisfied while the probability of the Chi-square test statistic; $P < 0.000$, was found to be less than the alpha level of significance (0.05). The Cramer's V value in this test is 0.219. According to Bryman (2012), the Cramer's V value issued to test the strength of the association and ranges between 0 and 1. The results show that the careers preferred by students, differed significantly across the four school categories in Meru County. This confirms the results presented in Table 4.5 and 4.6, that, choices of careers in public secondary school in Meru County differ according to gender of students which is also manifested in different categories of schools hence validity of the results.

Amunga and Musasia (2011) contends that there were disparities in the achievement in mathematics among the different categories of schools in Kenya with boys boarding schools scoring the highest mean of 5.691 over a period of five years, girls followed closely with a mean of 4.487 and mixed day school with a low mean of 2.278.

The results indicate that boys post better performance in mathematics than girls and this gives the former a better chance of pursuing courses that have a bias for mathematics such as engineering and technology. Most boys and girls in mixed day secondary schools post weak grades in mathematics and this limits their choice to science oriented courses. Some of the reasons cited for this state of affair are: poorly equipped schools in reference to infrastructure and human resource, negative attitude in mathematics especially by girls and students in mixed day secondary schools, boy –girl relationships by virtual of them being together and at a critical adolescence stage in life and lack of career guidance (Amunga & Musasia, 2011).

The foregoing discussion indicate a need to enhance career guidance services especially in girls boarding schools and mixed day schools to improve performance that will lead to more girls enrolling for science oriented courses.

The study was also interested in determining how early career information should be availed to students. Students were asked to state the class or form they were when one started thinking about career path whose responses were analyzed and presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8.

Class/form when Form Four Students in Meru County started thinking about career path

In which Class/Form did you start thinking about your career path?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Form Two	94	27.0	27.0
Form One	83	23.9	50.9
Form Three	40	11.5	62.4
Class Seven	29	8.3	70.7
Class Six	29	8.3	79.0
Class Eight	27	7.8	86.8
Class Four	18	5.2	92.0
Form Four	9	2.6	94.5
Class Five	7	2.0	96.6
Class One	3	.9	97.4
Class Three	3	.9	98.3
Class Two	3	.9	99.1
Nursery	3	.9	100.0
Total	348	100.0	

The majority of students, 94 (27.0%) said that they started thinking about career path when they were in form two, while 83 (23.9%) thought about it when they were in form one. According to results in Table 4.7, there was a majority of students 119 (34%) who said that they started thinking about career path when they were in primary school. This indicates a great need to provide career information to students as early as possible. Indeed, in countries like Singapore, the education system has integrated career guidance from primary to post-secondary school (MoE [Singapore], 2012).

A study carried out in England on determinants of aspirations among children between 3-7 years old, which are in primary school indicated that the school and family largely influenced their future career aspirations. This shows that ideally, children should start their career paths early in life. This argument is further supported by Rajinder (2010) who advocates for career guidance to start as early as the child enters school and records on the child evolution from the time he/she enters school up to time of exit, be kept electronically for future reference. Wambu and Fisher (2015), and Stan (2016) also recommended for early exposure of students to information on careers in order to promote career preparation and career management.

Additionally, Nong (2016) recommends for career guidance at early age so as to challenge self-concept to directly focus on academic success that will lead to perceived career paths. These studies correlate with a study by Otieno (2019), who argued that because of persisted biases and gender stereotypes in early stages of life, girls at age of six years were found less likely to join an activity that was said to be for “brilliant” children, in this case, the boys. Unless information of career choice is availed to children at early levels of development, such biases and gender stereotypes will continue to persist. The results in this current study have pointed out the need for career information to both students of primary and public secondary schools. This particular finding should inform policy and programs on career information at both primary and secondary schools in Kenya.

4.5 Diagnostic tests on the data

In the first instance, the researcher performed diagnostic analysis in order to determine the suitable statistical tests for the main data. Diagnostic analysis also enabled for testing of the assumptions of a regression analysis. The diagnostic tests carried out included: normality test, linearity test, heteroskedasticity test, auto-correlation test and multicollinearity tests. Both auto-correlation test using Durbin-Watson and multicollinearity test using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) are shown together with the regression analysis results under each independent variable, while results on the other diagnostic tests, such as normality, linearity and heteroskedasticity test, are shown in Table 4.9, 4.10, 4.11 and in Figure 4.1.

4.10.1 Normality Test

Most inferential statistical analysis usually assumes that data collected from the field is normally distributed (Athanasiou, Debas & Darzi, 2010). The testing of normality in this study was done using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test since the sample size was more than 50 respondents. In this test, the decision rule is that, data is normally distributed if the P value is more than the set alpha value, that is, $P > 0.05$. The result of normality test is shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9.*Normality test: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test*

N=348		Career-oriented services (X1)	Parental aspirations (X2)	Mass media influence (X3)	School policy on selection of subjects (X4)	Career choice (Y)
N		348	348	348	348	348
Normal	2.8381	2.8381	3.3534	2.8886	3.0690	3.5061
Parameters ^{a,b}	.51142	.51142	.54884	.76530	.55012	.34769
Most Extreme	.064	.064	.068	.049	.056	.065
Differences	.064	.064	.032	.041	.053	.044
	-.026	-.026	-.068	-.049	-.056	-.065
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.197	1.197	.919	1.053	1.221
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.114	.081	.367	.218	.102

a. Test distribution is

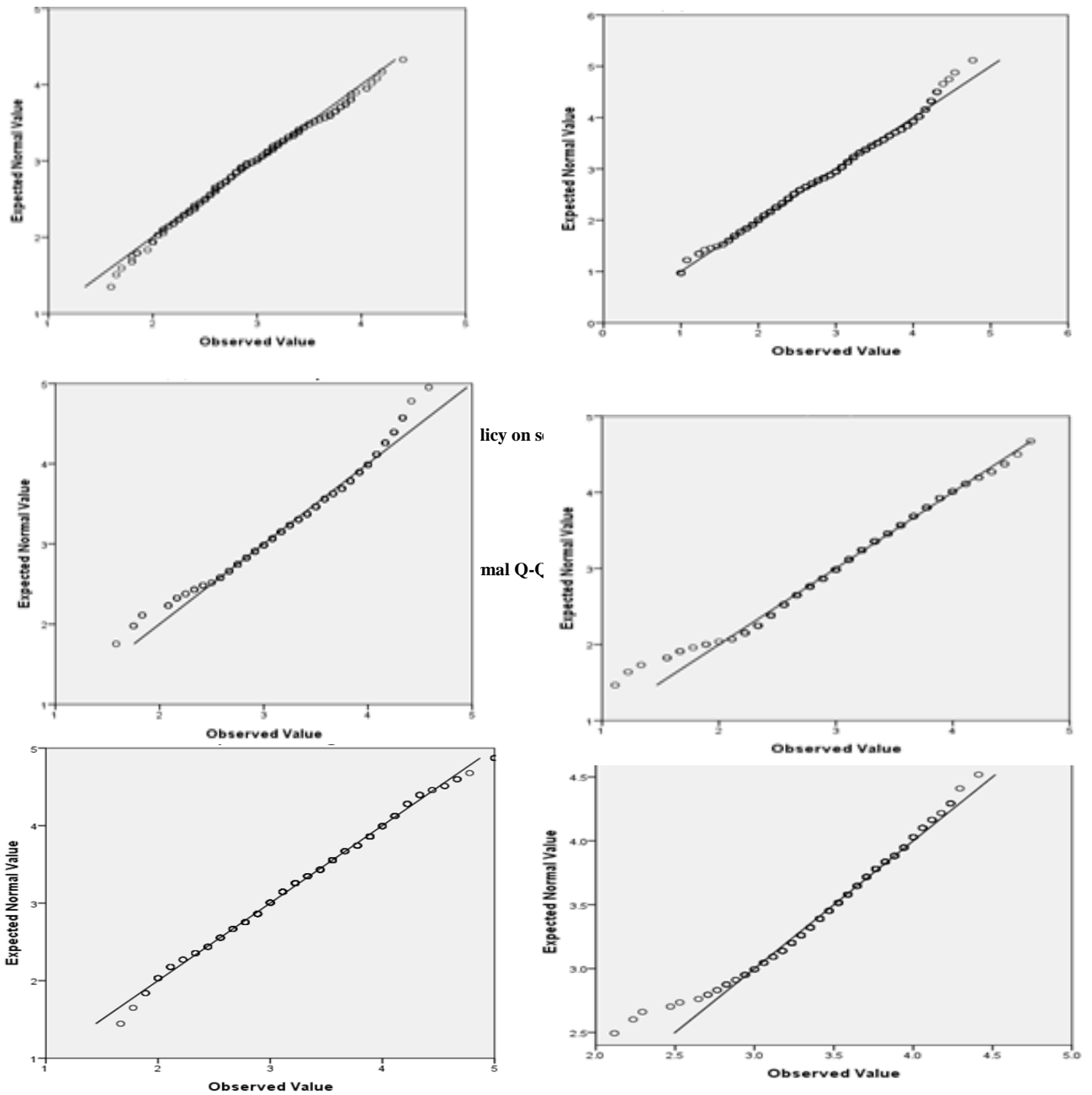
Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

Based on the output of one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the Asymptotic Significant value of all study variables (X1, $P=.114$; X2, $P=.081$; X3, $P=.367$; X4, $P=.218$ and Y $P=.102$) are greater than 0.05 which indicate that data was normally distributed. The same is demonstrated clearly using the Q-Q graph plot in Figure 4.1.

Normal Q-Q Plot of career guidance services

Normal Q-Q Plot of parental aspirations



licy on s
mal Q-Q

Figure 4.1. Q-Q plot for dependent and independent variables

The Q-Q plot shows that data collected fits closely along the line of best fit hence data on dependent and independent variables do not deviate from normal distribution.

4.10.2 Linearity Test

The linearity test between dependent and independent variables was done using Pearson's moment correlation coefficient. The results are summarized in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10.
Linearity Test: ANOVA Table

N=348			Sum of	df	Mean	F	Sig.
			Squares		Square		
Y – Careerchoice *		Linearity	.185	1	.185	1.591	.208
		Deviation from	9.137	65	.141	1.211	.149
Career-oriented services	Linearity						
	Y – Careerchoice *	Between	Linearity	.654	1	.654	5.488
Deviation from			3.776	31	.122	1.023	.437
Parental aspirations	Linearity						
	Y – Careerchoice * Mass	Between	Linearity	.830	1	.830	7.002
Deviation from			5.417	45	.120	1.015	.452
media influence	Linearity						
	Y – Careerchoice * School	Between	Linearity	.055	1	.055	.444
Deviation from			2.531	30	.084	.677	.901
policy on selection of	Linearity						
	subjects	Deviation from					
		Linearity					

According to the ANOVA output in Table 4.10, the P- value on deviation from linearity between the dependent variable and independent variables in each case was higher than 0.05; where, $Y * X1 = .0149$; $Y * X2 = .437$; $Y * X3 = .452$; $Y * X4 = .901$. It can therefore be concluded that there is a linear relationship between dependent and independent variables.

4.10.3 Test of Heteroskedasticity

Heteroskedasticity test was done by computing correlation coefficients values. Results are shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11.

Test of Heteroskedasticity: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta			
	(Constant)	.615	.374		1.646	.105
1	X1	-.052	.063	-.106	-.838	.405
	X2	-.036	.065	-.075	-.549	.585
	X3	-.030	.082	-.050	-.371	.712
	X4	.090	.060	.185	1.502	.138

a. Dependent Variable: AbsUt

Based on the coefficients shown in Table 4.11, the obtained values of Sig. X1 variable of .405, Sig. X2 variable of .585, Sig. X3 variable of .712, and Sig. X4 variable of .138, are all greater than 0.05, hence it is concluded that there is no heteroskedasticity problem in the data.

4.6 Descriptive statistics on career choice by students

The career choice by students of public secondary schools was the dependent variable in this study. The opinions gathered from form four students helped to gauge how public secondary school students in Meru County make career choices. Student respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the various statements on issues that influence the selection of subjects which lead to the choice of certain career paths. The assertions were in a 5-level likert rating scale (Strongly agree – 5; Agree – 4; Neutral – 3;

Disagree – 2; Strongly Disagree – 1). The statements largely focused on key issues that influence career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County. The results of specific aspects under investigation were summarized and arranged in descending order according to the mean score as shown in Table 4.12 in the appendix XIII.

The results in Table 4.12 indicate that the majority of form four students, (244, 70.1%), with a mean aggregate score of 3.50, agreed with the various assertions that aimed to investigate how students make career choices. The top most three issues that influence the selection of subjects that ultimately lead to choosing certain career paths were: personal interests and passion-influenced career choice (mean = 4.36), subjects selected being based on performance in examinations (mean = 4.22), and knowledge that a student has about career choice (mean = 4.04). Interview session with parents also agreed that individual performance of students in various subjects plays a central role in the selection of career. Some parents also appear to support the need to select subjects that one can easily pass the examination, and then choose career thereafter, while others help their children to analyze subjects' performance and arrive at a decision on the subjects to select. From interview data, a parent (SCEBB₁) confirmed his involvement in the process saying, *“I analyze the subject he is strong at hence guide him on a given career based on the strong subjects and field of interest”*. Another one (SCGGB₂) also agreed that *“my child selected subjects based on what she was good at”*.

It was surprising to note 282 (81%) students were in agreement that, students select careers that sound prestigious and superior (mean = 3.94); and that students select careers

that are regarded as famous and amazing (mean = 3.81). This indicates a serious misconception that is rampant among students of public secondary schools. The two issues with least influence were: students selecting subjects similar to those selected by their classmates (mean =2.51), and students wanting to pursue a career path similar to what their friends will pursue (mean = 2.26).

The findings show that the process of selecting subjects by form four students ultimately lead them to selecting certain careers. This process is largely influenced by several issues that include; student's personal interests, misconceptions, performance in examinations, knowledge that students have and contribution of career guidance teachers. The issues that have moderate influence include mass media, teachers who teach the subject, parents' aspirations, prospects of getting a job, and the influence of peers. Kimani, Kara and Njagi (2013) noted that some of the teacher factors that significantly influenced students' performance were teachers' workload, administration of students' classroom assignment and completion of form four syllabuses. It was observed that those teachers whose workload was below 25 lessons per week recorded better students' performance compared to those whose subject workload was 26 and above per week. Likewise those teachers that administrated classroom assignments regularly and strictly monitored them had their students performing well in their examinations.

In addition, a study by Ahmed et al. (2017) revealed that interest in subject was the most significant factor influencing career choices in business students ($r=.307$, $p=.001$) as compared to personal factors like ease of subject and future job opportunities that had minor impact ($r=.07$, $p=.665$,: $r=.092$, $p=.319$ respectively). It was further noted that

interest in the subject had some linkage with personality type. Mishra, Ismail and Al Hadabi (2017) concurs that school or academic advisors at secondary or college level and availability of career information may also influence career choice. Availability and utilization of media by secondary school students may also play a role in career decision making since seeing or interacting with media personalities may influence them to take or change their dream careers.

4.7 Nature of career guidance services that influence career choice among students of public secondary school in Meru County

Career guidance services in public secondary schools are meant to help students succeed in their careers after finishing O-level education. The knowledge that students acquires through career offices should therefore help them to remove confusion, anxiety, indecisiveness, and should empower them with information on clear career paths; relevant occupations in the context of their talents, academic abilities and market trends. It was therefore necessary to first find out whether schools had established career offices. Also important was need to ascertain the cadre of personnel who are entrusted with this crucial support service as well as determine the nature of career guidance services that are offered to students. Information gathered from principals, career guidance teachers and students was analyzed and synthesized under given themes as discussed below.

4.7.1 Descriptive statistics on career-oriented services

Principals of public secondary schools were asked whether they had professionally qualified career guidance teachers to which only 7 (21.2%) principals answered in affirmative as shown in Figure 4.2.

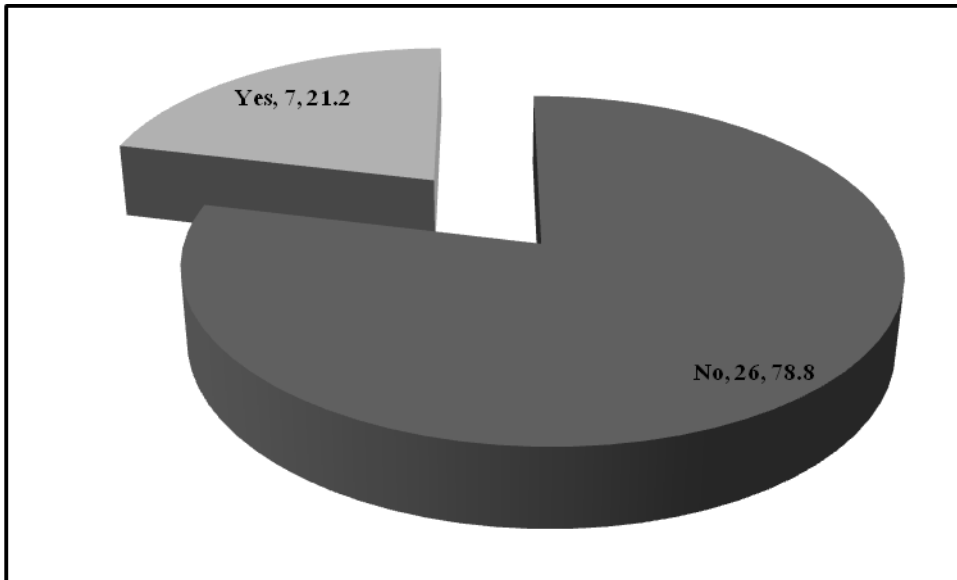


Figure 4.2. Responses on whether they had professionally qualified career guidance teachers

An overwhelming majority (26, 78.8%) of public secondary schools don't have professionally qualified career guidance teachers. Yet a study by Mporananayo and Andala, 2018 observed that 58.7 % of the student in higher learning institutions in Rwanda noted that career guidance services assisted them in educational choices and exploring job opportunities. The results are indicating a serious professional gap as far as career guidance services in secondary schools are concerned. As earlier indicated, Wambu and Fisher (2015) observed that career guidance teachers were subject teachers appointed to the position of guidance and counseling with no professional training. In addition, a study by Gitonga (2013) revealed that 87% of guidance and counseling teachers were found inadequately prepared and knowledgeable to run the guidance and counseling programs in secondary schools.

With such variability in training qualification as indicated in Figure 4.2, school counselors are not well prepared to help with academic, career and personal issues

affecting students. It is important to note here that career counselors require not just expansive career knowledge but well trained teachers with clinical skills (Mann & Huddleston, 2016; Gichuki, 2015). Therefore, first, a career guidance policy that redefines the school career counselor’s role and the needed preparation and training that will meet the needs of the 21st century secondary school students is needed. Secondly, empowered practitioners who are well informed of the pedagogical and entrepreneurial challenges that they are likely to face and formulate ways of mitigating them are more likely to be efficient in handling career guidance services (Gough, 2017). When asked to indicate how career services are offered at their secondary schools, most, 12 principals (36.4%) said that they are offered during career days. Information presented in Table 4.13 shows that such careers days are held once a year.

Table 4.13.
Career oriented services and duration

How are career oriented services programmed for students in your school?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Done during career days	12	36.4	36.4
Done during free time	9	27.3	63.6
Done during academic clinics	8	24.2	87.9
Done within the lessons	4	12.1	100.0
Total	33	100.0	
How often do you hold career days in your school?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
One’s a Year	18	54.5	54.5
Never	8	24.2	78.8
Once a Term	6	18.2	97.0
Every Two Years	1	3.0	100.0
Total	33	100.0	

It was surprising to note that some schools don’t have career days as indicated by 8 (24.2%) in Table 4.13. This implies that the majority of incumbent career guidance teachers are not aggressive in initiating career-oriented activities in their public secondary

schools. This could be attributed to the lack of knowledge in career guiding services as confirmed by information presented in Table 4.4 where, 16 (50.0%) career guidance teachers said that they had no background training in career guidance/career counseling. The lack of teachers who are professionally trained in career guidance may explain the scanty and non-vibrant career oriented services in public secondary schools.

In addition, lack of a clear definition of roles has greatly hindered the delivery of career guidance and counseling services by secondary school teachers (Wambu & Fisher, 2015). Gitonga (2013) also observed that 87% of guidance and counseling teachers in public secondary schools in Kiambu west Sub-County were found inadequately prepared and knowledgeable to run the guidance and counseling programs in secondary schools. From the results 24.2% of schools had never held career days, while 36.4% of the schools were offering career oriented services during career days. Countries like Canada and Botswana have set aside some substantial class hours for career guidance services (Mekgwe, 2010; Hooley et al., 2013). Botswana, for example, has set aside about 40 minutes per week for career education and personal planning (Mekgwe, 2010). This ensures that students career needs are adequately meet by career guidance personnel.

Inadequate facilities and resources in career guidance departments also contributed to lack of aggressiveness in initiating career-oriented activities in public secondary schools. Similarly a study by Bitu (2015) revealed that 72% of the career guidance offices had inadequate furniture while 67.6% of the departments had below average functionality of services index.

This scenario is likely to cause some frustrations in career guidance services considering that the services of career guidance teachers are the most commonly used strategies by many schools (mean = 2.28) in helping students make informed career decisions. Parents also seemed to have bought into this idea. The majority of parents said that learners are guided by career teachers in selecting subjects while some parents seemed to have held interactive discussions with teachers on career issues regarding their children. One parent (SCJMD₁) said, *“I discussed with career guidance teacher together with the child and came up with a career”*.

The study further sought to understand the kind of strategies that are employed by public secondary schools to help students make informed career decisions. Responses from career guidance teachers were ranked as shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14.

Strategies employed by public secondary schools to help students make informed career decisions

Strategies(N=33)	Never	Sometimes	All the time	Mean	SD
Use of career guidance teachers	1(3.1%)	21(65.6%)	10(31.3%)	2.28	.523
Students make their own choices	2(6.3%)	21(65.6%)	9(28.1%)	2.22	.553
Provision of mass media (TV, Radio Newspaper and Internet)	4(12.5%)	19(59.4%)	9(28.1%)	2.16	.628
Involving parents	3(9.4%)	25(78.1%)	4(12.5%)	2.03	.474
Organizing career education days	13(40.6%)	18(56.3%)	1(3.1%)	1.63	.554
Engaging career guidance consultants	15(46.9%)	16(50.0%)	1(3.1%)	1.56	.564

The second most famous strategy according to Table 4.14 is where students are allowed to make their own choices without any intervention program. Surprisingly, interview data indicated that some parents support the idea of allowing the child to choose careers without interferences. This raises questions on the kind of knowledge that students possesses that would sufficiently help in making appropriate career choices.

The findings in Table 4.13 further show that engaging career guidance consultants is the least used strategy (mean = 1.56) in helping student make career decision in public secondary schools in Meru County.

In a bid to confirm the above information from career guidance teachers, the students' respondents were asked to indicate how often they were able to access each of the given strategy in their school. Responses from students were summarized and ranked in descending order based on mean scores as shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15.

Utilization of strategies employed by public secondary schools to help students make informed career decisions

Means Used (N=348)	Very Rarely	Rarely	Neutral	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean	SD
Allowing students to make their own choices without interventions	58(16.7%)	52(14.9%)	79(22.7%)	67(19.3%)	92(26.4%)	3.24	1.420
Use of print media like newspapers	64(18.4%)	64(18.4%)	87(25.0%)	81(23.3%)	52(14.9%)	2.98	1.325
Use of career guidance department	70(20.1%)	71(20.4%)	79(22.7%)	67(19.3%)	61(17.5%)	2.94	1.380
Use of internet	88(25.3%)	54(15.5%)	63(18.1%)	79(22.7%)	64(18.4%)	2.93	1.460
Inviting guest speakers / consultants on career guidance	49(14.1%)	65(18.7%)	126(36.2%)	78(22.4%)	30(8.6%)	2.93	1.148
Use of TV	70(20.1%)	81(23.3%)	73(21.0%)	73(21.0%)	51(14.7%)	2.87	1.349
Involving parents in career advising and selection	74(21.3%)	87(25.0%)	79(22.7%)	61(17.5%)	47(13.5%)	2.77	1.330
Use of Radio	95(27.3%)	89(25.6%)	76(21.8%)	53(15.2%)	35(10.1%)	2.55	1.306
Displayed information on the notice board	108(31.0%)	74(21.3%)	77(22.1%)	53(15.2%)	36(10.3%)	2.53	1.342
Holding school talent / education days	133(38.2%)	78(22.4%)	95(27.3%)	28(8.0%)	14(4.0%)	2.17	1.146

The frequently used strategy according to Table 4.15 is that of allowing students to make their own choices without interventions (mean = 3.24). These findings correlate with those of Gungozar (2016) in Turbat, Pakistan where 35% and 34% of secondary school

students strongly agreed and agreed respectively to have made career decisions on their own. Results further show that some strategies were used occasionally. These include, use of print media like newspapers (mean = 2.98), use of career guidance department (mean = 2.94), use of internet (mean = 2.93) and inviting guest speakers or consultants on career guidance (mean 2.93). This particular response also agreed with information gathered from a parent (SCDGB₁) who said that, “*sometimes speakers are invited to give career guidance speeches in secondary schools*”. The findings are exposing weaknesses in handling of career choices in public secondary schools in Meru County. A major factor contributing to this scenario is the lack of qualified personnel to man the career guidance department. Information gathered during interview session with parent confirmed that parents are occasionally involved in the process. Several parents (SCAMD₁, SCBMB₁, SCGGB₁, and SCFMD₁ & SCCBB₁) indicated that they were invited and attended academic clinic day for their children where performance in relation to career was discussed.

It is clear that many schools allow students to make their own career choices without intervention measures. This observation correlates with a study conducted by Bitu (2015) who noted that 67.6% of students in Nyakacha district had never sought guidance and counseling service while in secondary school. This indicates that the students resolved their academic and personal issues by themselves, despite availability of intervention measures such as career guidance department and guest speakers. When asked to give reasons why they never sought guidance and counseling services, the students indicated negative attitude towards guidance and counseling. According to them, guidance and counseling was meant to handle discipline related issues only. Therefore, a student would not find it necessary to seek career related advice. Other reasons included peer pressure

and stigmatization. Career counseling is part of guidance and counseling, however, for effective implementation of career guidance services, the results imply the need for students to be made aware of the programs and activities that take place in guidance and counseling department. The results further point out implications relationship management and need for a good rapport between career guidance department and students. This is hoped to encourage secondary school students to seek guidance and counseling services in their schools.

When asked to indicate the extent to which the current career guidance services addresses students' career needs in their schools, more than half of career guidance teachers (17, 53.1%) chose the option of moderate extent. This is shown in Figure 4.3.

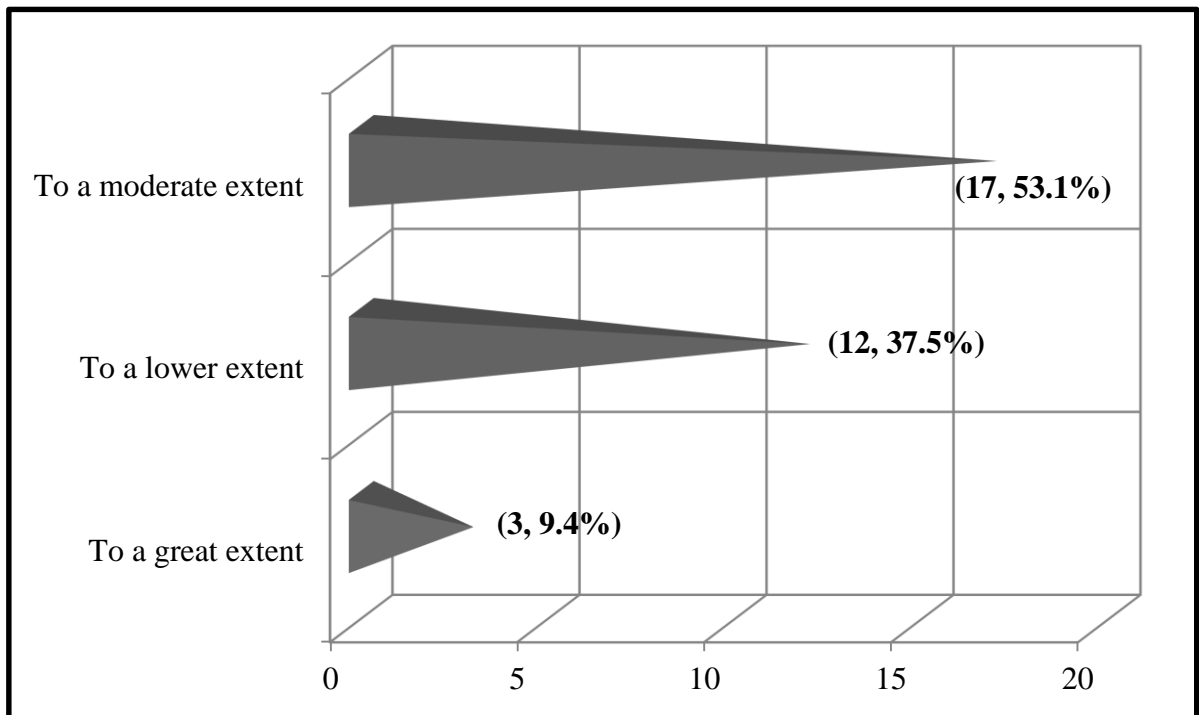


Figure 4.3. Career guidance opinion on whether the current career guidance services address students' career needs in their schools

The findings shows that only 3 (9.4%) described the career guidance services as capable of addressing students' career needs in their schools to a great extent. When parents were asked during interview session to comment on effectiveness of career guidance services in the secondary schools, the majority termed them as not effective. One parent (SCHMD₁) said, *“information on career doesn't start early in school life, it is done at the final year hence not very effective”*. Two parents (SCDGB₁ & SCCBB₁) attributed the ineffectiveness to *“lack of seriousness among students”*; while another parent (SCBMB₁) recommended *“need for more career guidance sessions”*. This shows the reality on the ground and further indicates deficiency in career guidance services in achieving its expected objectives in public secondary schools in Meru County despite its significance as shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16.***Significance of various strategies in helping students select a career in public secondary schools***

Strategies (N=32)	Very insignificant	Insignificant	Neutral	Significant	Very significant	Mean	SD
Use of career guidance teachers	0	0	0	6(18.8%)	26(81.2%)	4.81	.397
Students make their own choices	2(6.3%)	2(6.3%)	5(15.6%)	18(56.3%)	5(15.6%)	3.69	1.030
Involving parents	2(6.3%)	4(12.5%)	5(15.6%)	13(40.6%)	8(25.0%)	3.66	1.181
Organizing career education days		5(15.6%)	8(25.0%)	13(40.6%)	6(18.8%)	3.63	.976
Engaging career guidance consultants	0	9(28.1%)	6(18.8%)	13(40.6%)	4(12.5%)	3.38	1.040
Provision of mass media (TV, Radio Newspaper and Internet)		12(37.5%)	11(34.4%)	3(9.4%)	2(6.3%)	2.22	1.362

From the results in Table 4.16, the use of career guidance teachers, students making their own choices, involving parents and organizing career education days, were all ranked as the most significant strategies in helping students select careers in public secondary schools in Meru County; while the provision of mass media (TV, Radio Newspaper and Internet) was termed as the least significant strategy, (mean =2.22). This attests the significance of career guidance teachers in helping students make career decisions in public secondary schools. In agreement with the result, Chin, Blackburn and Horah

(2018), observed that sessions with career advisors were the most frequently used (71%) among institutional factors that provided source of career information and Tejedor, Mangas and Sierra (2016) noted that there was a significant positive relationship ($r=0.4$, $p<0.01$) between career satisfaction and career path counseling process.

In addition, Kuria, Muola, Kithuka and Mwani (2015) observed that in schools where comprehensive career guidance programs were available, there was a high number of students joining university while those that did not embrace career counseling services had low university entry. In the latter category, 90% of the schools were found to have had no specific time allocated in the school time table for career guidance despite having a career guidance teacher and a room for career guidance services. A study by Stan (2016) observed that only 16.21% of the respondents in an investigation to find out the relationship between career counseling, professional practice and desirable labour market integration in Babes-Bolyai University, Romania, had ability to analyze career information and evaluate career options in order to choose best career alternatives. Thus career guidance is important if students are to make any meaningful career choices. Since the use of career guidance teachers was rated significant (mean =4.81) in influencing students career choice, the policy makers should increase contact hours between the career teachers and students by reducing the subject workload per week for such teachers.

The foregoing results are showing indispensable need for career guidance teacher, career services, and the nature of career guidance strategies that should be employed in public secondary schools in order to guide students in making career decisions. The success of

such undertakings requires sufficient support from the school management. This study therefore wanted to know the financial commitments in career oriented activities in public secondary schools in Meru County.

Principals of public secondary schools were asked to indicate the percentage of the schools' operational budget that is allocated to cater for career oriented activities in their schools. Their responses are presented in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17.

Percentage of the schools' operational budget allocated to cater for career oriented activities

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5%	19	57.6	57.6
Zero %	9	27.3	84.8
10%	2	6.1	90.9
15%	2	6.1	97.0
More than 15%	1	3.0	100.0
Total	33	100.0	

The results in Table 4.17 reveal that most schools (19, 57.6%) allocate less than 5% of operational budget to cater for career oriented activities. Surprisingly, quarter of the schools (9, 27.3%) do not allocate any budget to cater for career oriented activities. When consulted on the same, 17, (53.1%) career guidance teacher said that the budget allocated by their secondary schools to career-oriented activities and services is not adequate. As shown in Figure 4.4, only 5 (15.2%) public secondary schools allocate from 10% and above of the operational budget to cater for career oriented activities.

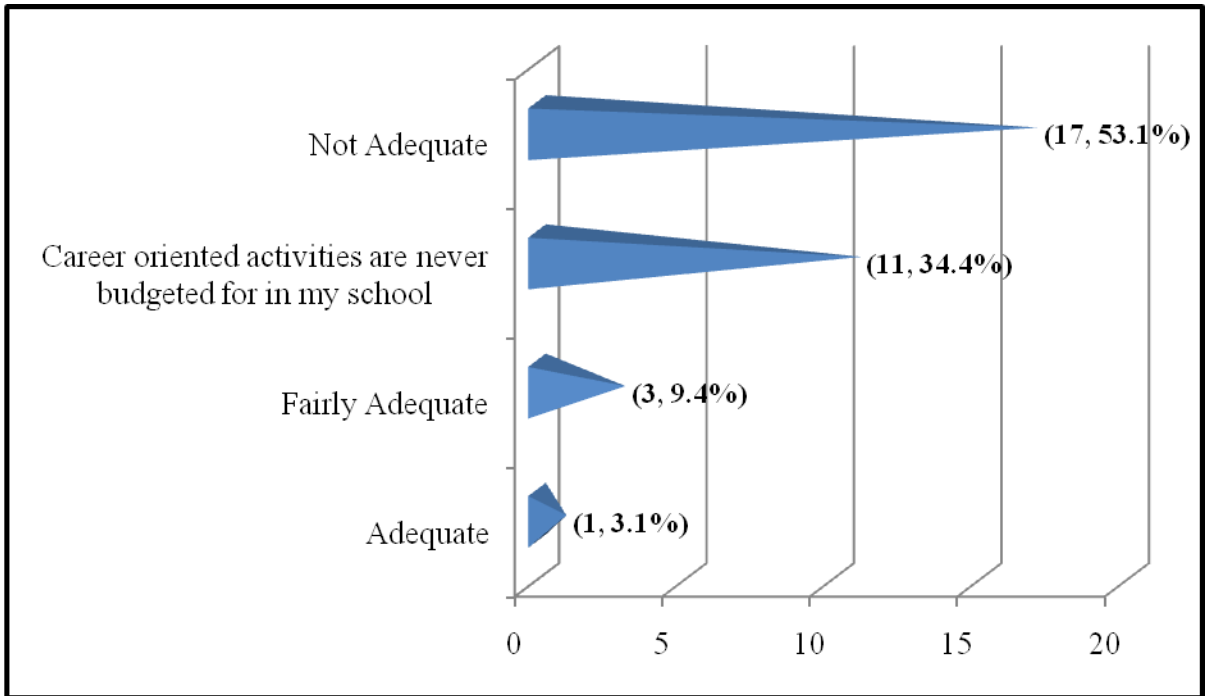


Figure 4.4. Adequacy of budget allocated to career oriented activities in public secondary school

The results in Figure 4.4 indicate that majority of the public secondary schools in Meru County have not prioritized career oriented activities as evidenced by either insufficient or lack of budget allocation. The study by Mudulia et al. (2017) also had a similar observation, that is, despite availability of career guidance department in secondary schools in Vihiga County, it was unfortunate that most of them were not equipped with necessary resources for career guidance. Capacity building in career matters is a noble investment that requires sufficient budget allocation. A below 50% rating of availability of such resources like videos, computers, internet, career books, journals and magazines was also observed in most of the schools, which could also be attributed to insufficient budget. Career guidance is essential, yet many schools had inadequately funded, equipped and staffed their career guidance department (Mudulia et al., 2017). The

spillover effect of such a situation will be a high number of students enrolling for courses that are not consistent with their original career aspirations; something that can also lead to waste of good brains. Other consequences of such decisions are job dissatisfaction, lack motivation, negative attitude towards work, poor job performance, low employee-job engagement and high absenteeism. The result implies need for deliberate efforts in prioritizing adequate budget allocation in career programs and activities by all the school stakeholders.

Budget deficiency may curtail effective implementation of career oriented activities in public secondary schools in Meru County. It was clear that finances allocated have potentials to affect the implementation of career-oriented activities and services in public secondary schools in Meru County.

4.7.2 Challenges faced by career guidance teachers when offering career guidance to students

The career guidance teachers were asked in an open-ended question to state other challenges that derail implementation of career services in their secondary schools. Several challenges were highlighted, key of which are discussed below.

- a). Lack of career guidance materials and facilities, such as guidance and counseling room. The career guidance teachers indicated that most departments were inadequately equipped. Lack of essential office materials may hinder provision of career guidance services, the reason why career guidance teachers indicates that career guidance services address students career needs to a moderate extent (17; 53.1%) .

b). Lack of training on career guidance. Most of the career guidance teachers indicated to have not had any formal training on careers guidance. This curtailed their ability to provide effective career guidance services. These sentiments were also echoed by Nong (2016) who observed that in order to improve career guidance services in schools in South Africa, in-service training for career educators and organizing workshops were paramount.

c). There was little time allocated for guidance and counseling. The career guidance teachers lamented that in most cases there was no stipulated time for students to seek career guidance hence more often than not students career needs were not addressed.

d). Most students settled on a particular career after KCSE results are out as some career guidance teachers observed that majority of the students were not keen on future career paths while in school. Their priority was first to pass in their KCSE examination, and there after decide on the career to pursue based on the grades obtained. This made it difficult for career teachers to provide career services effectively.

e). Some career guidance teachers opines that a number of public secondary school students have formed opinion concerning certain careers despite them not performing well in related subjects and as such it was difficult to advice on possible career paths.

f). Some career guidance teachers indicated to have unsupportive administrators. For example, some were not being facilitated to attend workshops and seminars even when opportunities arose. This made them feel less motivated and thus their

work output with reference to career guidance services was low. This revelation confirms why the career guidance teachers rated the extent to which career guidance services address students career need as moderate. These sentiments are echoed by Nong (2016) who noted that 8% of principals of secondary schools in South Africa did not fully support career guidance activities.

The researcher with the aim of finding out the level of commitment of career guidance teachers in their responsibilities asked them to suggest solutions to the aforementioned challenges. The career guidance teachers gave the following remedies.

4.7.3 Suggested remedies for overcoming challenges when offering career guidance to students in public secondary schools in Meru County

- a. The career guidance teachers stated that career guidance information to students should be provided early enough if it has to bring meaningful results. The success in career choice in countries like Singapore and Australia, may be attributed to early career guidance in a child's life which is based on suitable student events from primary to post-secondary school level, while in Britain, career guidance is comprehensive and is a compulsory part of the education curriculum (MoE [Singapore], 2012; Mudulia, 2017).
- b. They also indicated that career guidance activities be allocated adequate time to allow public secondary school students maximize on the career guidance services available. A case in point is that of Botswana secondary school curriculum that has assigned a 40 minutes session in a week for career counselling may come in handy to solve this problem (Mekgwe, 2010).

- c. The career guidance teacher noted with concern the need for public secondary school administration to allocate sufficient funds for supporting career guidance activities. This concern was also echoed by Mudulia et al. (2017) in Vihiga County. Sufficient budgetary allocation would enhance provision of necessary equipped in the career guidance departments and capacity building in career matters.
- d. School administrators were urged to support career guidance teachers to attend regular career guidance training and workshops and also provide career guidance materials and facilities. By doing so career guidance teachers would gain clinical skills and knowledge to disseminate career information. Similar suggestions were forwarded by career teachers in South Africa as indicated by Nong (2016) where they suggested that they should be exposed to more career workshops and the parents should also be included as participants in such workshops.
- e. The Ministry of Education in its endeavour to promote career guidance in schools may need to develop and regularly update career guidance manual and provide well-structured career guidance services policies.
- f. Through career guidance offices, creation of careers awareness by inviting resource persons / professionals where students are involved in the planning in order to create a good rapport would enhance full participation.
- g. There was also a suggestion that universities, colleges and TVETs to be sending their representatives to various schools to orient students on various courses offered in their institutions.

Note: All the above measures were found to be some of the remedies public secondary schools can employ to enhance provision of career guidance services by career guidance teachers in Meru County.

4.7.4 Testing of hypothesis one

The first null hypothesis (H_{01}) predicted that nature of career guidance services provided does not significantly influence choice of career among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. To test this hypothesis, linear regression analysis was conducted and the results are shown in Tables 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20.

Table 4.18.

Influence of career guidance services on career choice: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.466 ^a	.217	.191	.47405	1.347

a. Predictors: (Constant), X1Career guidance services

b. Dependent Variable: Y Career choice

Table 4.18 shows the hypothesized predictor, that is, career guidance services, for career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County. It further shows the percentage of variation on career choice that is accounted (R-Square) by career guidance services. The results also show the Durbin-Watson value for the independent variable, which was more than 1. This indicates that no autocorrelation was found hence the model was relevant in the analysis. Table 4.19 helps to understand the significance of the shown prediction.

Table 4.19.***Influence of career guidance services on career choice: ANOVA results***

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	1.871	1	1.871	8.324	.007 ^b
X1	Residual	6.742	346	.225		
	Total	8.612	347			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), X1

The ANOVA Table 4.19 shows the significance of career guidance services in predicting the variations in the dependent variable (career choice). The effect of predictor variable is regarded significant if $P < 0.05$. Results show that career-oriented services (X1), is statistically significant ($F_{(1,346)} = 8.324$; $P = .007$) in predicting the variations in the dependent variable (Y, career choice) among public secondary school students in Meru County. The same is attested in Table 4.20 which shows the actual regression weight for this variable.

Table 4.20.***Influence of career guidance services on Career Choice: Regression Weights***

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized		Collinearity		
		Coefficients		Coefficients	t	Sig.	Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.485	.591		4.202	.000		
	X1	.474	.164	.466	2.885	.007	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Table 4.20 shows a VIF value of 1, which helps to rule out multicollinearity among the study variables hence the model was fit for data analysis and interpretations (Salmerón

Gómez, García Pérez, López Martín & García, 2016). The results also show the coefficient values (regression weight) of predictor variable and the corresponding level of significance. The unstandardized B-coefficients value rather than the beta coefficients value was used in interpreting data for this model because the constant value for the predictor was significant. The regression weights results in Table 4.20 further confirm the ANOVA results in Table 4.19.

In testing hypothesis one, reference is made to the results in Table 4.18 which shows $r = .466^{**}$ while ANOVA Table 4.19 shows $P = .007$ which is less than the alpha value of 0.05; $F_{(1,346)} = 8.324$, hence we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a positive and significant relationship between career guidance services and the career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County.

The results in Table 4.18 shows a prediction value where $R^2 = .217$. This implies that career guidance services provided account for 21.7% of influence on career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County. The regression weights in Table 4.20 further confirm this finding where it shows that the influence of career guidance services on career choice among students of public secondary school will always exist at significant minimum ($\beta_1 = .474, P = .007$). Similar results were obtained by Mudulia et al. (2017) who were investigating the impact of career counselors on career choice among secondary school girls in Vihiga County, Kenya. They found that there was a relationship between career guidance services and career choice ($r = .51; p < .05$). The regression model by Mudulia et al. (2017), showed an R value $= 0.756$ which indicated great influence on the dependent variable (career choice) by the predictor variables (forms of career

guidance, professional training of career guidance teachers and career guidance structures). The findings show need for revamping career guidance in secondary schools owing to its great influence on learners' career choice.

4.8 Influence of parental aspirations on career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County

Many parents would want their children to pursue certain career paths. The second objective of the study therefore examined the influence of parental aspirations on career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. Students respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the various statements which were presented in a 5-level Likert rating scale (Strongly agree – 5; Agree – 4; Neutral – 3; Disagree – 2; Strongly Disagree – 1). The statements focused on various incidences and ways on how parents can influence the selection of certain careers of their daughters and sons in public secondary schools. Results are summarized in Table 4.21 in the appendix XIV.

The results in Table 4.21 show moderate influence of parental aspirations on careers selected by public secondary school students in Meru County where aggregate mean score is 3.35. This represents 67% overall agreement level on influence of parental aspirations on career choice. It is noted that most parents provide moral support which ignites good performance (mean = 4.41); are invited by school management to discuss academic progress of students (mean = 4.05); encourage their children to seek information on careers (mean = 4.00), and also reward them, when they perform well in school (mean = 3.91). It was also clear that many students do not choose careers like that of their parents (mean = 3.91), and that choosing a career for a child does not necessary

put pressure on a student to perform (mean = 1.61). The influence of parental aspirations in career choice among secondary school students was confirmed by majority of parents. To some parents, the influence starts early where parents get deeply involved in following up child's performance in schools. One parent (SCDGB₁) said, "*I discuss the performance of my child in each subject with individual teacher during academic clinic days; that way, I am able to influence and encourage pursuance of some subjects*".

During the interview, parents were asked to describe how they influenced the career path of their children. One parent (SCIGB₂) narrated how she spotted outstanding public speaking ability in her child and hence started building and growing the identified talent. Similarly, another parent (SCIGB₁) said that she noticed that her daughter was good in languages and hence the parent convinced the child to take journalism course; the parent further said, "*I bought lot of books for my child to read and also looked for opportunities for her to make speeches in various gatherings in order to build confidence*". Other responses regarding how parents were involved in influencing careers of their children were discussed as follows:

- i.) Giving advice on why some careers are better than others. A majority of the parents asserted that they were involved in discussing with their children on the most marketable and possible careers that they should consider pursuing.
- ii.) Allowing the child to choose the career that is going to help in securing a good paying job. Most parents were more concerned with their children's socio-economic life rather than career satisfaction, hence they were found to encourage them choose the careers with high economic returns.

- iii.) Provided information on the job opportunities available in given careers. Some parents stated that they sourced for information from various sources like newspaper, career books, TV, mobile phones and radios and discussed with their children what such careers entails and what it takes to pursue them.
- iv.) A majority of the parents also guided children on career choice based on their strong subjects in high school because subject selection was the foundation on preferred career choice.
- v.) Some parents agreed to have discussed with their children and provided advice on career path according to their performance in the subjects they were studying.
- vi.) Some parents argued that students perform well if they have a clear career path. To have an idea of what their career paths entailed most parents admitted to have shown and connected their children with mentors.

From the results, it emerged that parental aspirations play a key role in influencing career choice among public secondary school students. This is manifested through the provision of moral support, discussing and monitoring academic progress of students at school and at home; encouraging children to seek information on careers, and rewarding students when they perform well in school. These findings correlate with Kisuli, Kimani and Kombo (2012) who observed that 75.8% of the girls' respondents affirmed that their occupational choices were influenced by their mothers. A study on parental factors that influence career choice among high school students in Nairobi County by Mwaa (2016) also reported that 74.4% of the respondents agreed that their parents had provided the relevant educational opportunities, encouragement and resources for their educational development while 37.3% were certain that their parents were able to finance their

vocational aspirations regardless of career chosen. However, 68.7% agreed that the parents encouraged them to consider many different educational and career options. Earlier, on, Hairston (2000) noted that children often indicated that their career choice apprehensions were eased when parents approved their decisions to prepare for a certain career and that parental support indicated career choice approval and elicited expressions of pride and satisfaction among students. Further, Clutter (2010) and Kingi (2013) noted that young adults understanding of their parents' expectations will influence their own career decisions, depending on whether the adolescent feels the need to go along with their parents' views or to rebel against them.

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that parental aspirations exert substantial influence on career choice of their children. This implies the need for parents to deliberately communicate their expectations to their children without being overly persuasive. Also the strength of the parental influence can be harnessed by educating the parents on career choice. Through this, parents can stir students to areas that align with one's interest based on the career information that is available to the parents.

In this study, the parental influence in career choice was noted to be beyond the subject selection. The social-economic status was reported by majority of the parents as having substantial influence on some students. This was evidenced by comments received from parents during interview session on the question that sought their opinion on whether the availability of finances in the family influences career paths of their children. Parents' responses were discussed as follows:

- a) Availability of financial resources makes it possible for parents to pay for whatever career a child wants or is interested in despite its cost. Similar observations were made by Muyalo (2017) who indicated that the ability of the family to finance education of their children was also found to influence academic performance of students hence, provide a student better chance to choose appropriate career paths.
- b) With stable finances, a family can focus and fund career path of a child rather than allowing her /him to take any career that comes on their way. Tejedor et al. (2016) concur with these sentiments and noted that students had difficulties in career decision making with those at risk of poverty and social exclusion being highly affected.
- c) In many cases, a child may be having the potential to take up certain course; for example medicine course, but family finances inability deter him/her to do it. Hence, one ends up taking up a course that favors the family's financial ability. Watson et al. (2016) asserts that students from disadvantaged socio-economic background where less likely to enroll in university education compared with those from higher socioeconomic background.
- d) The availability of finances influences the career paths because some careers are too costly hence poor family may not afford. Muyalo (2017) argued that students from such poor backgrounds often lack resources to go beyond secondary education unlike their counterparts from higher socioeconomic background.

The study further noted that the education level of parents played a crucial role in assisting their children make informed career choices. Many described parental education as critical in providing informed guidance to the child. A parent (SCKBB₁) said, “*When the parents are educated, they can tell the requirements for students to pursue certain careers and intentionally encourage them to work on those areas*”. It was also clear that educated parents are able to notice talents in their children in early stages in life, and hence use their knowledge and exposure to help them make better career choices.

4.8.1 Testing of hypothesis two

The second null hypothesis ($H0_2$) predicted that parental aspirations do not significantly influence choice of career among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. Linear regression was used to test this hypothesis whose results are shown in Tables 4.22, 4.23 and 4.24. The results in Table 4.22 show summary of the model.

Table 4.22.

Influence of parental aspirations on career choice: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
X2	.125 ^a	.016	.013	.34547	1.862

a. Predictor: (Constant), X2,

b. Dependent Variable: Y

Table 4.22 shows the hypothesized predictor (parental aspirations) for career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County. It further shows the percentage of variation that is accounted (R-Square) by the independent variable (parental aspirations). The results also show the Durbin-Watson value for parental aspirations,

which was more than 1. This indicates that no autocorrelation was found, hence, the model was relevant in the analysis. Table 4.23 shows goodness fit of the model.

Table 4.23.

Influence of parental aspirations on career choice: ANOVA results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	.654	1	.654	5.477	.020 ^b
X2	Residual	41.295	346	.119		
	Total	41.949	347			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictor: (Constant), X2

The ANOVA Table 4.23 shows the significance of parental aspirations in predicting the variations in the dependent variable (career choice). The effect of predictor variable is regarded significant if $P < 0.05$. Results show that parental aspirations (X2), is statistically significant in accounting for the variations in the dependent variable (Y, career choice) among public secondary school students in Meru County. The results in Table 4.24 show the regression weight for this variable.

Table 4.24.

Influence of parental aspirations on Career Choice: Regression Weights

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized		Collinearity	
		Coefficients		Coefficients	t	Sig.	Statistics
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance VIF
2	(Constant)	3.241	.115		28.226	.000	
	X2	.079	.034	.125	2.340	.020	1.000 1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Table 4.24 shows a VIF value of 1 for the predictor variable, which helps to rule out multicollinearity among the study variables hence the model was fit for data analysis and

interpretations. The results also show the coefficient values (regression weights) of the predictor and the corresponding level of significance. The unstandardized B-coefficients values rather than the beta coefficients values were used in interpreting data because the constant value for the predictor was significant. The regression weights results in Table 4.24 further confirm the ANOVA results in Table 4.23.

Hypothesis two was hence tested where, the results in Table 4.22 shows $r = .125^*$ while ANOVA Table 4.23 shows $P = .020$ which is less than the alpha value of 0.05; $F_{(1,346)} = 5.477$, hence we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a positive and significant relationship between parental aspirations and the career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County.

The results in Table 4.22 shows a prediction value of parental aspirations where $R^2 = .016$. This implies that parental aspirations account for 16% of influence on career choice of public secondary school students in Meru County. The regression weights in Table 4.24 further confirm this finding where it shows that the influence of parental aspirations on career choice among public secondary school students will always exist at significant minimum ($\beta_2 = .079, P = .020$).

These results corroborate with the findings by Ehigbor and Akinlosotu (2016) who observed that there was a direct significant relationship ($r=0.947; p<0.01$) between parents occupation and students career in public secondary schools in Ekpoma Metropolis, Nigeria. Similarly, a study by Kisilu et al. (2012) concluded that the major factor influencing secondary school girls' occupational aspirations can be traced to their

family settings, parenting, siblings and other relatives. In addition, a study by Abdo (2016) showed that self-efficacy, family, personal interests and economic considerations exerted great influence on the career choice among undergraduate students in Universities in Indonesia. The role of parents in the socialization process of a child is very crucial and hence need to strengthen the relationship between parents and children.

4.9 The influence of mass media on choice of career among students in public secondary schools in Meru County

Mass media is basically known to contribute to character development, language and habit formation, hence, resulting to major transformation in the way people think and make decisions. This study aimed at determining whether mass media affect choice of careers among students in public secondary schools in Meru County. The results on descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.25.

Notably, public secondary schools usually provide various mass media to their students. A list of such mass media was provided to principals of public secondary schools in Meru County requiring them to indicate how each was likely to influence career choice of students in their schools. Responses from principals were summarized and arranged in a descending order based on mean score as shown in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25.

Principals' responses on likelihood of mass media influencing career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County

Types of Mass Media (N=33)	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Mean	SD
TV	3(9.1%)	17(51.5%)	13(39.4%)	2.30	.637
Career books	4(12.1%)	16(48.5%)	13(39.4%)	2.27	.674
Newspapers and magazines	4(12.1%)	19(57.6%)	10(30.3%)	2.18	.635
Mobile phones	8(24.2%)	11(33.3%)	14(42.4%)	2.18	.808
Internet	8(24.2%)	12(36.4%)	13(39.4%)	2.15	.795
Radio	4(12.1%)	24(72.7%)	5(15.2%)	2.03	.529
Aggregate mean				2.19	

The results in Table 4.25 indicate that the majority of principals of public secondary schools in Meru County, (24, 72.8%), with a mean aggregate score of 2.19, agreed with the various assertions that aimed to investigate how each stated mass media to likely influence career choice of students. TV with a mean of 2.30 and career books (mean = 2.27) were the top most influential mass media in influencing career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County. It was also clear that radio with a mean of 2.15, and internet (mean = 2.03) were least influential mass media on matters of career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. Interview data from parents indicated that students also access TV, mobile phones, radio, and prints media (newspapers) while at home, to which they rarely monitor. Rosempta (2013) had also observed that secondary school students in Mukaa Sub-County Makueni County had access to mobile phones and radio (38% and 36.7%) respectively.

However, the students indicated that only 21% used the media devices to seek education information. These findings were also consistent with Denniston et al. (2017) who noted TV, Computer and Video games as the most accessed media by high school students. This information reveals a situation where students' environment both at school and at home, is different and avail forms of mass media which can be useful and harmful at the same time. Therefore, the school management, teachers, parents and policy makers should put strict measures to monitor and regulate students' interactions with the available form of mass media.

The study was further interested in knowing whether the career path of student is also influenced by media personalities or celebrities to which many answered in affirmative as shown in Figure 4.5.

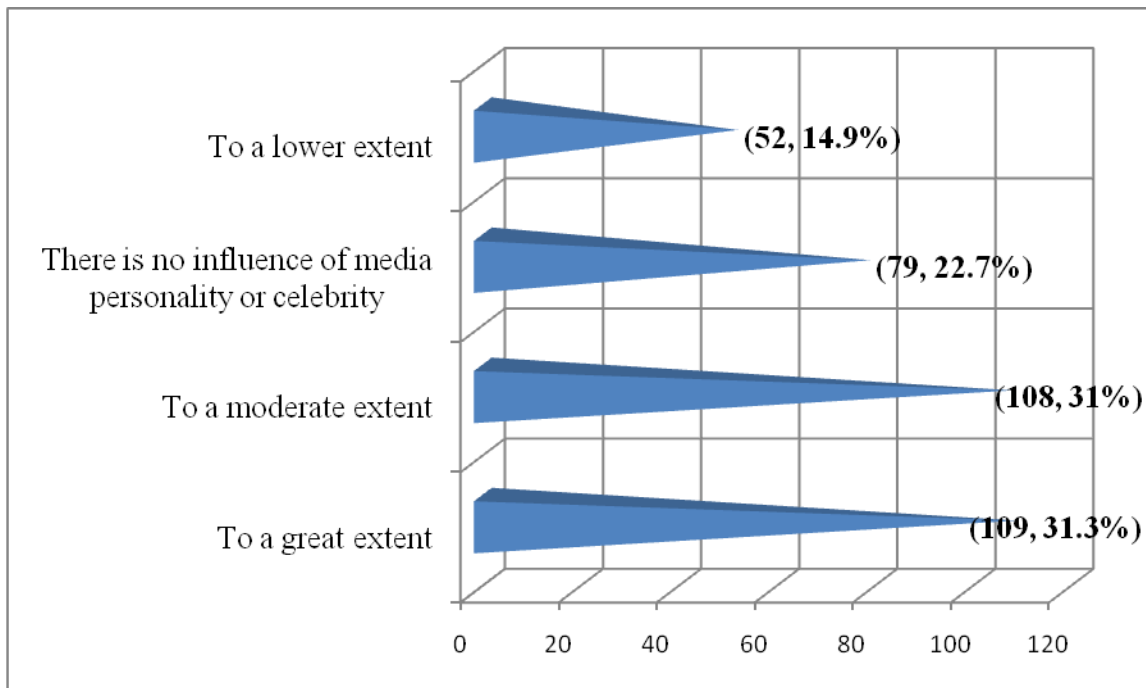


Figure 4.5. Response on whether media personalities or celebrities influence future career path of public secondary school students

Information gathered from students indicated that media personalities and celebrities influences career path to a great extent (109, 31.3%). Slightly above a quarter of students respondents (108, 31%) also said that media personality and celebrities have a moderate influence on their future career path. This solidifies the notion that what people see and hear has capacity to influence ones attitudes and perception. These findings are consistent with Adedeji et al. (2017) who observed that notable personalities in a certain profession had a significant influence (mean =4.03) on career decision of secondary school students in Nigeria. Media personalities and celebrities are involved in programs such as music, plays and movies and as such these programs had a high rating.

Moreover, the study investigated the influence of other people in selection of subjects by students of public secondary schools in Meru County. Such people included: key persons in the community, self, parents, career guidance teacher, pastor / reverend, relatives, peers, and other teachers. Students were asked to rate the importance of each listed person in influencing the choice of subjects that one is currently taking. The responses from students were summarized and arranged in a descending order based on mean score as shown in Table 4.26.

Table 4.26.***Rating of people that influence the choice of subjects that student had taken***

Person (N=348)	Not important at all	Unimportant	Average	Important	Very Important	Mean	SD
Self	2(6%)	2(6%)	12(3.4%)	53(15.2%)	279(80.2%)	4.74	.605
Parents	12(3.4%)	29(8.3%)	55(15.8%)	125(35.9%)	127(36.5%)	3.94	1.080
Career guidance teacher	24(6.9%)	32(9.2%)	62(17.8%)	121(34.8%)	109(31.3%)	3.74	1.191
A key person in the community	34(9.8%)	55(15.8%)	105(30.2%)	100(28.7%)	54(15.5%)	3.24	1.184
Pastor / Reverend	33(9.5%)	63(18.1%)	102(29.3%)	91(26.1%)	59(17.0%)	3.23	1.205
Media personality	55(15.8%)	63(18.1%)	95(27.3%)	81(23.3%)	54(15.5%)	3.05	1.292
Relatives	65(18.7%)	65(18.7%)	110(31.6%)	84(24.1%)	24(6.9%)	2.82	1.193
Other teachers	75(21.6%)	42(12.1%)	119(34.2%)	97(27.9%)	15(4.3%)	2.81	1.185
Peers	79(22.7%)	69(19.8%)	118(33.9%)	67(19.3%)	15(4.3%)	2.63	1.156

From the results presented in Table 4.26, it emerged that the choice of subjects that students were pursuing had largely been influenced by oneself (mean = 4.74), parents (mean = 3.94); and career guidance teacher (mean = 3.74). Peers and other teachers were least influential in the choice of the current subjects. These findings show that the majority of students were influenced by self, parents and career guidance teachers. Adedeji et al. (2017) reaffirms that parents, students' reading through books and magazines, and career talks in schools (mean=4.33, mean= 3.74, mean =3.51 respectively) influenced career choice of secondary school students.

The study was further interested in evaluating the famous TV programs that are usually accessed by public secondary school students. As heads of academic leaders in public secondary schools, principals were asked to rate the importance of various TV programs where, 1=Not Important 2=Of Little Importance 3=Of Average Importance 4=Very Important 5=Absolutely Essential. Their responses were summarized and arranged in a descending order based on mean score as shown in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27.

Principals' responses on importance of programmes aired on television set (TV) to public secondary school students in Meru County

Programmes	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
(N=33)							
Sports	2(6.1%)	2(6.1%)	7(21.2%)	15(45.5%)	7(21.2%)	3.70	1.075
Drama	1(3.0%)	2(6.1%)	14(42.4%)	13(39.4%)	3(9.1%)	3.45	.869
Game shows	0	7(21.2%)	10(30.3%)	10(30.3%)	6(18.2%)	3.45	1.034
Reality shows	1(3.0%)	4(12.1%)	13(39.4%)	10(30.3%)	5(15.2%)	3.42	1.001
Music	3(9.1%)	6(18.2%)	8(24.2%)	7(21.2%)	9(27.3%)	3.39	1.321
News Bulletin	1(3.0%)	9(27.3%)	10(30.3%)	6(18.2%)	7(21.2%)	3.27	1.180
Comedies	1(3.0%)	6(18.2%)	10(30.3%)	16(48.5%)	0	3.24	.867
Soap Operas	7(21.2%)	7(21.2%)	5(15.2%)	6(18.2%)	8(24.2%)	3.03	1.510
Documentaries	4(12.1%)	10(30.3%)	8(24.2%)	8(24.2%)	3(9.1%)	2.88	1.193
Movies and series	5(15.2%)	8(24.2%)	11(33.3%)	9(27.3%)	0	2.73	1.039
Aggregate means score						3.26	

According to the majority of the principals of public secondary schools (21, 65.0%), the TV programs that are usually accessed by students were termed as moderately important (mean = 3.26). The most important program according to principals were sports (mean =

3.70) followed by drama (mean = 3.45), game shows (mean = 3.45), and reality shows (mean = 3.42) in that order. Documentaries with a mean of 2.88, and movies & series (mean = 2.73) were the least important TV programs.

The results in Table 4.27 show that although TV is the most accessed and influential mass media in public secondary schools, its programs are moderately important to students. This implies that most programs that are aired via TV are not completely essential to public secondary school students and hence their influential role on career choice and their reliability as sources of information on careers may not be appropriate to secondary school students. A similar study by Rosempta (2013), revealed that TV was highly available to students at 65% and available at 35% while in school, yet a majority of the students used it for music and plays, movies and news bulletins (76.7 %, 67.3%, and 32.3% respectively). The news bulletins scored lowest according to this study while music and play had highest score, yet these were least essential as far as career guidance matter is concern. However, in programs such as music, plays and movies, there are media personalities and celebrities involved and this explains the reason why these programs drew a high rating. This observation relates with Kershwa (2018) in UK who noted that children aspirations were based on gender stereotyping or what they had seen in the media, TV and films.

Apart from the aforementioned mass media, the use of mobile phones was also noted to have gained popularity among students of public secondary schools; either at schools or at home. This study took cognizance that mobile phones are nowadays used as a medium of accessing all other mass media. Consequently, the influence of mobile phones on

career choice could not be under estimated. In this study, students were asked to indicate how much time they spend on mobile phones in carrying out each activity that was provided. Their responses were summarized and arranged in a descending order based on mean score as shown in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28.*Uses of mobile phones by public secondary school students in Meru County*

Activities (N=348)	Not much	Little	Neutral	Much	Very much	Mean	SD
Listening to music	33(9.5%)	62(17.8%)	45(12.9%)	100(28.7%)	108(31.0%)	3.79	1.242
Chatting on WhatsApp	25(7.2%)	61(17.5%)	43(12.4%)	102(29.3%)	117(33.6%)	3.65	1.299
Taking pictures / photos	49(14.1%)	63(18.1%)	35(10.1%)	90(25.9%)	111(31.9%)	3.43	1.448
Chatting on Facebook	77(22.1%)	68(19.5%)	57(16.4%)	69(19.8%)	77(22.1%)	3.00	1.473
Making calls	67(19.3%)	99(28.2%)	43(12.9%)	77(22.1%)	62(17.8%)	2.91	1.429
Betting	81(23.3%)	85(24.4%)	45(12.9%)	80(23.0%)	57(16.4%)	2.85	1.429
Accessing you-tube and videos	99(28.4%)	73(21.0%)	50(14.4%)	59(17.0%)	67(19.3%)	2.78	1.498
Playing games / gaming	94(27.0%)	93(26.7%)	43(12.4%)	56(16.1%)	62(17.8%)	2.71	1.464
Recording videos	97(27.9%)	92(26.4%)	59(17.0%)	58(16.7%)	42(12.1%)	2.59	1.365
Listening to the radio	111(31.9%)	67(19.3%)	60(17.2%)	77(22.1%)	33(9.5%)	2.58	1.378
Surfing the Internet	131(37.6%)	65(18.7%)	58(16.7%)	57(16.4%)	37(10.6%)	2.44	1.404
Searching information on careers	118(33.9%)	113(32.5%)	54(15.5%)	29(8.3%)	34(9.8%)	2.28	1.121
Doing School Assignment	140(40.2%)	75(21.6%)	55(15.8%)	56(16.1%)	22(6.3%)	2.27	1.306
Chatting on Twitter	160(46.0%)	83(23.9%)	57(16.4%)	21(6.0%)	27(7.8%)	2.06	1.251

The results in Table 4.28 are showing top three priority uses of mobile phones among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. These are: listening to music with a mean of 3.79, chatting on WhatsApp with a mean of 3.65, and taking pictures / photos with a mean of 3.43. It was clear that many students moderately use mobile phones for chatting on Facebook (mean = 3.00), making calls (mean = 2.91), and betting (mean = 2.85). The least uses of mobile phones among students of public secondary schools are in searching information on careers (mean = 2.28), doing school assignment (mean = 2.27), and chatting on Twitter (mean = 2.06). These results agreed with David, Brickman, Ran, and Curtis (2015) and Kuznekoff, and Titsworth (2013) who observed that mobile phones have become distractive devices to learners.

The study noted the growing trends of betting among students of public secondary schools in Meru County, where, approximately half (198, 57%) use mobile phones for betting. Similar observations were made by Kershaw (2018) in UK who noted that the place of TV and movie stars have been replaced by online celebrities and you-tube gaming bloggers. Betting is purely non-academic and may lead to a hard-to-abandon behavior among students; something that may give rise to other social problems such as stealing of money, using school fees for betting among others. A study by Mwadime (2017) revealed that 35.5% participants used mobile phones for betting, where, over 72.4% were young adults below 30 years of age. From the same study, 50% were betting once a week and the motivation behind betting were for money, enjoyment and as a way of leisure (70%, 15% & 3%) respectively. However, over 90% lost in the gambling games yet 55% indicated that they had borrowed money and another 26% had stolen from parents and relatives. Further, 58% respondents in the study concurred that the

money obtained through betting was used for alcohol, smoking and having fun (Mwadime, 2017). Survey findings reported by Kershaw on the independent newspaper on 19th January, 2018 in UK indicated that social media and gaming was ranked 4th most popular career choice for children since children are influenced by what they see in the media. Going by the figures above, there is a worrying trend that needs urgent intervention to save current and future generations from social and economic problems. This calls for curriculum developers to promote media literacy so that students can critically analyze type of content they expose themselves to.

It stood out clearly that the majority of students of public secondary schools use their mobile phones for entertainment (music) and social media activities (chatting on WhatsApp and Facebook). All these uses are non-academic. The results further provide undisputable evidence that students of public secondary school rarely use their mobile phones on education matters such as doing assignments or even searching for information on careers. Similar findings were obtained by Rosempta (2013) where majority of students in Makueni County accessed their mobile phones for non-academic information, such as information on sex, violence and drugs, which attracted 51.9%, 40.7% & 33.7% respectively; while only 26% used the device for educational information and 34% for information on essential life skills. Additionally, Levine, Waite and Bowman (2007) observed that students who spend more time on electronic media are significantly more distracted from their academic work. In contrast, results obtained by Nong (2016) indicated that about 33% of students in secondary schools in South Africa used internet to search career information. However, the above findings have implications on moral and

psychosocial aspects of the youth; hence it is imperative that some monitoring on how children interact with these electronic media at school and at home is done.

4.9.1 Testing of Hypothesis three

The third null hypothesis (H_{03}) predicted that mass media does not significantly influence choice of career among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. Linear regression was used to test this hypothesis whose results are shown in Tables 4.29, 4.30 and 4.31. The results in Table 4.29 show summary of the model.

Table 4.29.

Influence of mass media on career choice: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
X3	.141 ^a	.020	.017	.34473	1.890

a. Predictor: (Constant), X3

b. Dependent Variable: Y

Table 4.29 shows the hypothesized predictor (mass media) for career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County. It further shows the percentage of variation that is accounted (R-Square) by the independent variable. The results also show the Durbin-Watson value for mass media, which was more than 1. This indicates that no autocorrelation was found hence the model was relevant in the analysis. Table 4.30 shows the significance of mass media in predicting the variations in career choice.

Table 4.30.***Influence of mass media on career choice: ANOVA results***

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	.830	1	.830	6.988	.009 ^b
X3	Residual	41.119	346	.119		
	Total	41.949	347			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictor: (Constant) X3

The ANOVA Table 4.30 shows the significance of the model in predicting the variations in the dependent variable. The effect of predictor variable is regarded significant if $P < 0.05$. Results show that mass media (X3) is statistically significant in accounting for the variations in the dependent variable (Y, career choice) among public secondary school students in Meru County. The output on regression weight shown in Table 4.31 further confirms the findings.

Table 4.31.***Influence of mass media on Career Choice: Regression Weights***

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized		Collinearity		
		Coefficients		Coefficients	t	Sig.	Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
	(Constant)	3.321	.072		45.969	.000		
1	X3	.064	.024	.141	2.644	.009	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Table 4.31 shows a VIF value of 1 for the predictor, which helps to rule out multicollinearity among the study variables hence each model was fit for data analysis and interpretations. The results also show the coefficient values (regression weights) of the predictor and the corresponding level of significance. The unstandardized B-

coefficients values rather than the beta coefficients values was used in interpreting data for the model because the constant value for each predictor was significant.

The foregoing results in Table 4.27 shows $r = .141^*$ and ANOVA Table 4.29 shows $P = .009$ which is less than the alpha value of 0.05; $F_{(1,346)} = 6.988$. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a positive and significant relationship between mass media and the career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County.

The results in Table 4.29 shows a prediction value of mass media where $R^2 = .020$. This implies that mass media account for 20% of influence on career choice of public secondary schools students in Meru County. The regression weights in Table 4.31 further confirm this finding where it shows that the influence of mass media on career choice among public secondary school students will always exist at significant minimum ($\beta_2 = .064, P = .009$).

These findings correlates with those of Noshina, Ahmed, Irfan and Rao (2014) that indicated mass media significantly (6.331, $p < 0.05$) influenced career choice by shaping personal choices. Similarly, Mishra et al. (2017) observed that availability and utilization of media by secondary school students statistically and significantly influenced their career paths. A major contributing factor to this influence is the massive transformation in the world of education as a result of digital revolution (Collins & Halverson, 2009). This revolution has altered not just the lives of students but the entirety of modern society.

Growing accessibility of television, computers and mobile phones allows the students to quickly and easily increase their knowledge about career choice. Media personalities alongside the programs aired on TV, information obtained from magazines, newspapers and information browsed from internet, all have a positive correlation to career choice (Borchert, 2010). However, potential risks of using these devices especially the mobile phone are an issue of concern. Specifically, there is an increase in betting and gambling games that can result to psychosocial problems especially to secondary school students.

4.10 Influence of school policy on career choice among students in public secondary school in Meru County

Each public secondary school has a laid down policy on subjects' choice where criteria on selection of subjects is pre-determined. The combination of subjects adopted in a given secondary school dictates certain career paths for students. A public secondary school can involve various stakeholders in formulating the school policy on subject choices. Principals of public secondary schools were presented with a list of people who can be involved in the formulation of a school policy on selection of subjects. They were required to indicate the extent of involvement for each person in formulating the school policy on subject choice in their schools. Their responses were summarized and arranged in a descending order based on mean score as shown in Table 4.32.

Table 4.32.***Principals' responses on involvement of the listed stakeholders in the formulation policy on selection of subjects in public secondary schools in Meru County***

Persons involved in policy formulation (N=33)		Never	Seldom	Neutral	Most of the time	Always	Mean	SD
Heads of departments (HODs')	of	0	1(3.0%)	3(9.1%)	13(39.4%)	16(48.5%)	4.33	.777
Teachers		0	3(9.1%)	6(18.2%)	10(30.3%)	14(42.4%)	4.06	.998
Students		4(12.1%)	9(27.3%)	13(39.4%)	5(15.2%)	2(6.1%)	2.76	1.062
Board of management (BOM)	of	8(24.2%)	6(18.2%)	10(30.3%)	5(15.2%)	4(12.1%)	2.73	1.329
Parents		10(30.3%)	10(30.3%)	5(15.2%)	4(12.1%)	4(12.1%)	2.45	1.371
Ministry of education	of	1(3.0%)	4(12.1%)	7(21.2%)	12(36.4%)	9(27.3%)	2.18	1.098
Aggregate mean							3.08	

According to information gathered from principals (Table 4.32), the most consulted stakeholders when making policy on selection of subjects in public secondary schools in Meru County are heads of departments (HODs') with a mean of 4.33 and the teachers (mean = 4.06). The least consulted stakeholders are parents with of 1.371 and the Ministry of Education (mean = 1.098). Many parents who were interviewed also indicated that they were not involved in identifying the subjects taken by their children. However some said they were involved indirectly where a parent (SCJMD₁) said, *"I discussed with my child at home and agreed on subjects for the purpose of passing exams and ones that would help in getting a good career"*. A study by Ijaz (2011) showed that 50% of the parents did not have an understanding of their role, though 90% of heads of

secondary schools recognized PTA as partners in the teaching and learning process. The PTA members who were interviewed revealed lack of training, lack of clear guidelines, lack of appropriate induction programs and lack of confidence as some of the challenges encountered while carrying out this mandate. These findings have substantial implication for school managers and other educational leaders regarding involvement of parents associations (PA) in subject policy formulation. Apart from the need to involve parents in school subject policy formulation, school managers need to sensitize the parents on the effect of such policies on career choice of their children.

The results generally show moderate involvement of stakeholders (at aggregate mean of 3.08) in the formulation of school policy on subject choices in public secondary schools in Meru County. Mudulia (2012) observed that high performing secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality had adequate physical and human resources while low performing schools had inadequate physical and human resources. Mudulia noted that the availability of resources positively correlates with stakeholders' involvement.

The low involvement of the Ministry of Education could be attributed to the fact that the Ministry has already provided general guidelines on compulsory and elective subjects in all public secondary schools in Kenya. These guidelines are so general that gaps exist on how to handle the elective subjects. Some schools offer all the electives and students are free to select any from the various categories, while, a majority of the schools opt to select the subjects to offer from these categories. Though subjects in groups 2, 3, 4 and 5 are electives, some schools offered some as compulsory Mwangi, 2002 while others did not at all offer some optional subjects Mudulia (2017) due to the nature of school, lack

of adequate teachers, teaching resources or the argument that the subjects are too difficult and would compromise the school mean score.

Principals of public secondary schools were further asked to rank given factors that are considered when determining subjects to be offered in a given public secondary school. Responses on the ranking were summarized and presented in descending order based on mean value as shown in Table 4.33.

Table 4.33.

Ranking of factors considered in determining subjects offered in public secondary school in Meru County

Factors considered in subjects to be offered (N=33)	Not important	Slightly important	Neutral	Important	Very important	Mean	SD
Availability of teachers	1(3.0%)	1(3.0%)	3(9.1%)	10(30.3%)	18(54.5%)	4.30	.984
Availability of infrastructure	1(3.0%)	3(9.1%)	4(12.1%)	9(27.3%)	16(48.5%)	4.09	1.128
Subject performance of the students	3(9.1%)	3(9.1%)	15(45.5%)	7(21.2%)	5(15.2%)	3.24	1.119
Students interests	2(6.1%)	4(12.1%)	16(48.5%)	8(24.2%)	3(9.1%)	3.18	.983
Parents interests	12(36.4%)	12(36.4%)	6(18.2%)	2(6.1%)	1(3.0%)	2.03	1.045

According to findings in Table 4.33, the availability of teachers (mean = 4.30) and availability of infrastructure (mean = 4.09) were ranked as the most important factors in determining subjects to be offered in a given public secondary school in Meru County. Results show that the interests of parents and that of students were ranked as least important. This further confirms the findings reported in Table 4.32.

As a matter of policy, the study went further to find out the level at which students select subjects in their schools. Information gathered from career guidance teachers showed that nearly all public secondary schools in Meru County (90.6%) allow their students to select subjects while in form two. A year has three terms but this study did not gather information on the term when the selection happens. In the efforts of interrogating this information, the study asked students respondents the relevancy of information on subject selection at given levels, that is, at form one, form two, form three and at form four. The responses from students were summarized and presented in descending order based on mean value as shown in Table 4.34.

Table 4.34.

Relevancy of information on subject selection when availed to public secondary school students at different levels

How relevant is information on careers when availed to:(N=348)	Very irrelevant	irrelevant	Neutral	Relevant	Very relevant	Mean	SD
Form Two	24(6.9%)	51(14.7%)	56(16.1%)	125(35.9%)	92(26.4%)	3.60	1.216
Form Three	30(8.6%)	58(16.7%)	66(19.0%)	109(31.3%)	85(24.4%)	3.46	1.262
Form One	33(9.5%)	126(36.2%)	129(37.1%)	39(11.2%)	21(6.0%)	2.68	.998
Form Four	121(34.8%)	87(25.0%)	105(30.2%)	27(7.8%)	8(2.3%)	2.18	1.067

According to students of public secondary schools (Table 4.34), information on subject selection is most relevant when availed to form two students (mean = 3.6), and is least important to form four students. These findings correlate with the practices that are common in many secondary schools in Kenya (Mutwiri, 2015; Mwangi, 2002; Mudulia, 2017). It is likely that as students' progress from form one to form four they get exposed

and become more aware of their capabilities and interests. Certainly, decisions on subject selection are done in form two while choice of degree program is done in form four based on performance of subjects selected while in form two. This however, contradicts with Wambu and Fisher (2015) who advocate for early exposure of students to information on careers. In addition Otieno (2019) noted that persisting biases and gender stereotypes start in early stages of life. These biases can be eliminated if policy and programs on career information start from primary through secondary school level as is the case in Singapore (MoE [Singapore], 2012).

In order to capture the opinions of students on the influence of school policy on selection of subjects, ten statements were availed to student respondents requiring them to provide a rating against each of them, where, Strongly agree = 5; Agree = 4; Neutral = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1). The responses from students were summarized and presented in descending order based on mean value as shown in Table 4.35.

Table 4.35.***Students' opinions regarding school policy on selection of subjects***

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding your school policy on selection of subjects.

Statements regarding school policy on selection of subjects(N=348)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Our school policy on selection of subjects is guided by available facilities	20(5.7%)	38(10.9%)	59(17.0%)	128(36.8%)	101(29.0%)	3.75	1.186
Our school policy on selection of subjects is not flexible	22(6.3%)	39(11.2%)	72(20.7%)	120(34.5%)	95(27.3%)	3.65	1.175
Our school policy on selection of subjects depends on availability of teachers in given subjects	20(5.7%)	28(8.0%)	135(38.8%)	97(27.9%)	68(19.5%)	3.47	1.072
Our school policy on selection of subjects allows students to have many career options	20(5.7%)	28(8.0%)	189(54.3%)	42(12.1%)	69(19.8%)	3.32	1.060
Our school policy on selection of subjects is guided by board of management	20(5.7%)	91(26.1%)	154(44.3%)	14(4.0%)	69(19.8%)	3.06	1.151
I am happy with our school policy on selection of subjects	49(14.1%)	82(23.6%)	116(33.3%)	62(17.8%)	39(11.2%)	2.89	1.190
Our school policy on selection of subjects help students gets careers that have job opportunities	69(19.8%)	121(34.8%)	61(17.5%)	66(19.0%)	31(8.9%)	2.62	1.245
Our school policy on selection of subjects help students gets careers that match their abilities	75(21.6%)	131(37.6%)	51(14.7%)	49(14.1%)	42(12.1%)	2.57	1.298
Students participate in formulation of policy on selection of subjects in our school	127(36.5%)	98(28.2%)	51(14.7%)	42(12.1%)	30(8.6%)	2.28	1.302
Aggregate mean						3.07	

The students' opinions on school policy on the selection of subjects agree with the information that was provided by principals on availability of facilities and teachers in Table 4.35. However, the majority of students (254, 73%) with a mean score of 3.07 said that school policy on selection of subjects was not flexible. Yet, a study by Gungozar (2016) showed that school policies can influence career choice as indicated by over 74% respondents in secondary schools in Turbat, Pakistan. Lack of flexibility in subjects' combination may impede selection of desired careers. Results show a moderate influence of school policy on selection of subjects (mean = 3.07). Indeed, the policy of selection of subjects dictates an array of career options that are available to students of public secondary schools.

In a study to investigate the factors influencing students' performance in chemistry examination in KCSE in Makueni County, principals and teachers strongly agreed (at 41.7% & 50% respectively) that students choose chemistry subject because it was compulsory in their schools (Kyalo, 2016). Among reasons cited for such school policies were inadequate school facilities, shortage of subject teachers especially in science subjects and posting of poor KCSE results in alternative subjects. This implies need for a collaborative approach from Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Ministry of Education (MOE), parents and Board of Management (BOM) to make required education resources available so that students are given an opportunity to choose subjects of their choice. This will expand the students' ability to choose the desired career in future.

4.10.1 Testing of hypothesis four

The fourth null hypothesis (H_{04}) predicted that school policy on subject selection does not significantly influence choice of career among students of public secondary school in

Meru County. Linear regression was used to test this hypothesis whose results are shown in Tables 4.36, 4.37 and 4.38. The results in Table 4.36 show summary of the model.

Table 4.36.

Influence of school policy on subject selection on career choice: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
X4	.036 ^a	.001	-.002	.34797	1.877

a. Predictor: (Constant), X4

b. Dependent Variable: Y

Table 4.36 shows the hypothesized predictor (school policy on subject selection) for career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County. It further shows the percentage of variation that is accounted (R-Square) by the independent variable. The results also show the Durbin-Watson value for the independent (school policy on subject selection) which was more than 1 in this case. This indicates that no autocorrelation was found hence the model was relevant in the analysis. Table 4.37 presents results on significance of this model in predicting the dependent variable.

Table 4.37.

Influence of school policy on subject selection on career choice: ANOVA results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	.055	1	.055	.457	.500 ^b
X4	Residual	41.894	346	.121		
	Total	41.949	347			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictor: (Constant), X4

The ANOVA Table 4.37 shows the significance of each model in predicting the variations in the dependent variable. The effect of predictor variable is regarded significant if $P < 0.05$. Results show that the school policy on selection of subjects (X4) was found being statistically insignificant in predicting career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County because, $P = .500$ which is more than the alpha value of 0.05. Hence the model is not fit for predicting career choice. Table 4.38 provides results on regression weights on the same.

Table 4.38.

Influence of school policy on subject selection on Career Choice: Regression Weights

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig.	Collinearity	
	Coefficients		Coefficients				Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta				Tolerance	VIF
4	(Constant)	3.436	.106		32.453	.000		
	X4	.023	.034	.036	.676	.500	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Table 4.38 shows a VIF value of 1 for the predictor, which helps to rule out multicollinearity among the study variables hence the model was fit for data analysis and interpretations. The results also show the coefficient values (regression weights) of the predictor and the corresponding level of significance. The unstandardized B-coefficients values rather than the beta coefficients value was used in interpreting data for the model because the constant value for the predictor was significant. The regression weight results in Table 4.38 further confirm the ANOVA results in Table 4.37 hence the model was not reliable in interpreting data.

In testing the fourth hypothesis, reference is made to results in Table 4.36 shows $r = .036$ while ANOVA Table 4.37 shows $P = .500$ which is more than the alpha value of 0.05, hence we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant relationship between school policy on subject selection and career choice among students of public secondary school in Meru County ($r = .036$, $P = .500$).

These findings contradict those of Ajidagba (2010) who observed that the correct choice of subjects is a key step in the attainment of educational objectives of career placement. Similarly in Malaysia, Bangladesh and USA education systems are characterized by optional subjects that students have to choose based on pre-vocational skills and technical education (Shash et al., 2011; Gazi, 2008; Mustapha & Greenan, 2007). However, Hughes and Mechur (2004) recognized that young people usually have high ambitions of a good and highly educative career despite the differences in school policies on subject selection. As observed earlier, the students who should be the key stakeholders in formulation of school policy on subject selection were the least consulted (Table 4.35). This implies that they are expected to fit in the subjects being offered by the respective schools despite their career orientation and aspirations.

With interest to confirm the significance of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, a Pearson correlations analysis was carried out. The results are shown in Table 4.39.

Table 4.39.***Pearson Correlations Results of dependent and independent variables***

		Y	X1	X2	X3	X4
Y	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	348				
X1	Pearson Correlation	.466**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007				
	N	348	348			
X2	Pearson Correlation	.125*	.072	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.183			
	N	348	348	348		
X3	Pearson Correlation	.141**	-.041	.035	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.446	.521		
	N	348	348	348	348	
X4	Pearson Correlation	.036	.002	-.001	-.044	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.500	.968	.981	.414	
	N	348	348	348	348	348

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

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

The results indicate a positive and significant relationship between dependent variable and three independent variables where, X1 [career guidance services] ($r = .466^{**}$, $P=.007$) X2 [parental aspirations] ($r = .125^*$, $P=.020$) and X3 [mass media] ($r = .141^{**}$, $P=.009$). The school policy on selection of subjects (X4) was found having a

weak and insignificant relationship [X_4 ($r = .036, P = .500$)] with dependent variable (Y). These findings confirm the linear regression results that are presented under each independent variable.

From the foregoing results and subsequent discussion, three independent variables (career guidance services, parental aspirations and mass media) were found to be independently statistically significant in influencing the choice of careers among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. The school policy however, was found to be independently statistically insignificant in influencing the choice of careers among students of public secondary schools in Meru County.

4.11 Overall model of predictors for choice of careers among students of public secondary schools in Meru County

The purpose of this study was to analyze factors influencing career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County with a view of determining their individual and combined effects on career choices. Consequently, an investigation on their influence on the dependent variable upon combining all the four independent variables under study was carried out. The dependent variable (career choice) was therefore regressed on the entire four predictor variables in a combined model to determine the nature of relationship and prediction value. The results of a multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 4.40, 4.41 and 4.42. Table 4.40 shows results on the overall model summary.

Tables 4.40.

Combined effects of independent variables: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.200 ^a	.040	.029	.34264	1.885

a. Predictors: (Constant), X4 School policy on selection of subjects, X2 Parental aspirations, X3 Mass media, X1 Nature of career guidance services

b. Dependent Variable: Y Career Choice

The results in Table 4.40 show Durbin-Watson value of 1.885 which is more than 1. This indicates that no autocorrelation was found hence the model was relevant in the analysis. The results further show that the four predictors, namely; nature of career guidance, parental aspirations, mass media and school policy on selection of subjects; jointly account for 40% of variation of the career choice ($R^2 = .040$).

Tables 4.41.

Combined effects of independent variables: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.680	4	.420	3.578	.007 ^b
	Residual	40.269	343	.117		
	Total	41.949	347			

a. Dependent Variable: Y Career Choice

b. Predictors: (Constant), X4 School policy on selection of subjects, X2 Parental aspirations, X3 Mass media, X1 Nature of career guidance services

The regression ANOVA output in Table 4.41 containing all the independent variables in a single model was found to be valid (a good fit of the data), ($F_{(4,343)} = 3.578, P < .001$);

meaning all the four predictors, when combined together, form a model that is statistically significant in explaining the variations in career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. Table 4.42 shows result on regression weights for each predictor in the model.

Tables 4.42.

Combined effects of independent variables: regression weights / coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.870	.195		14.743	.000		
X1natureofcareerguidanceservices	.043	.036	.064	1.202	.230	.993	1.007
1 X2Parental aspirations	.073	.034	.115	2.175	.030	.993	1.007
X3Massmedia	.064	.024	.141	2.662	.008	.995	1.005
X4Schoolpolicyonselection	.027	.033	.043	.803	.423	.998	1.002

a. Dependent Variable: Y Careerchoice

Table 4.42 shows a VIF value of 1.000 for each predictor variables, which helps to rule out multicollinearity in the variables under study. Hence, the regression model was fit for data analysis and interpretations. The results also show the coefficient values (regression weights) of each predictor and corresponding level of significance. The unstandardized B-coefficients value rather than the beta coefficients value was used in interpreting data in this model because the constant value for each predictor variable was significant ($\beta = 2.870, P = .000$;).

The hypothesized model for this study; ($Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + B_5X_5 + e$) now reckons the strength of the relationships presumed in this study. Precisely, the model shows that choice of careers among students of public secondary schools in Meru County = $((0.043x_1$ nature of career guidance services) + $(0.073x_2$ parental aspirations) + $(0.064x_3$ mass media) + $(0.027x_4$ school policy on selection of subjects) + 2.870)). In this model, 2.870 is a baseline score that is unrelated to any other variables; which means that it is the same 2.870 points for each variable. For example, on average; 1 point higher on parental aspirations scores 0.073 points higher on choice of career among students of public secondary schools in Meru County.

The results indicate that all the four variables: nature of career guidance services; parental aspirations, mass media, and school policy on selection of subjects are jointly significant in determining the career choice among students in public secondary schools in Meru County. The resulting regression model is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \varepsilon$$

$$Y = 2.870 + 0.043X_1 + 0.073X_2 + 0.064X_3 + 0.027X_4 + e$$

Where:

Y= Career choice in secondary schools

β_0 = constant

$\beta_1 + \beta_4$ = weights crested from the variables (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4) as shown below

X_1 = Nature of career guidance services

X_2 = Parental inspirations

X_3 = Mass media influence

X_4 = School policy on selection of subjects

ε = is the estimated error of the model that has a mean of zero at constant variance.

The overall results of this study as shown in the above model largely agree with studies conducted in Korea by Kim, Ahn and Fouad (2016) in Nigeria by Fareo and Garkuwa (2018) in Zimbabwe by Mtemeri (2017) and in Kenya by Chege and Kariba (2012) who observed that school or academic advisors, career teachers and other teachers, family and society, mass media as well as curriculum structure significantly influenced career choice among secondary school students. These independent variables are similar to the five variables under study.

However, the multiple regressions results of coefficients in Table 4.42 indicate that, when combined, only mass media (X3), ($\beta_3 = 0.064$, $P = .008$); and parental aspirations (X2), ($\beta_5 = 0.073$, $P = .030$) are statistically significant in predicting career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. This implies that, although all the four predictors are relevant in influencing the choice of career among students of public secondary schools in Meru County, it is the mass media and the parental aspirations that largely shape and characterize and influence the career that a student ultimately chooses. Media personalities alongside programs aired on TV, information obtained from magazines, newspapers and information browsed from internet, all have a positive correlation to career choice (Borchert, 2010). Koech et al. (2016) also observed that parents, mentors, role models, teachers and peers independently/jointly significantly influenced students' career choice.

Results indicate that the effect of all the predictors is paramount in determining the career choices among public secondary schools. However, when all the variables are in action, it

is the influence of mass media and parental aspirations that matters most. This study identified the most prominent form of mass media that influence choice of careers in Table 4.25. They included: TV, career books, newspapers and magazines; mobile phones, and Internet in that order. The study further noted in Table 4.28 how mobile phone devices have taken a central role in influencing student's career life.

As noted earlier, mobile phones are nowadays used as a point of access to all other mass media hence need for attention in their usage among students of secondary schools. These results correlate with results of a study conducted by Victoria, Ulla and Donald (2010) in America on media in the lives of 8-18 year olds. They observed that within a span of 5 years (2004-2009), about 66% of the children owned mobile phones up from 39% in 2004. Further the study indicated that most children spend an average of 49 minutes a day listening to, playing or watching other media on their phones (Victoria et al., 2010). Understanding the role of media in young peoples' lives is essential to parents, educators, children's advocates and policy makers because they are directly concerned about promoting healthy development of children.

Moreover, the parental aspirations stood out strongly as having great influence on career choice. This underscores the role of a parent, hence raises questions on preparedness, awareness, and level of knowledge that parents have on careers in order to execute their mandate effectively. These results corroborate those by Watson et al. (2016) in Australia which revealed that secondary school students who discussed with their parents about university aspirations recorded a higher aspiration and expectation to attend university.

Similarly, a study by Naong and Shumba (2012) among first and second year students in the faculty of education in South Africa revealed that family, parents and guardians in particular played a significant role (represented by 30.8%) in occupational aspiration and career goals development of their children

4.12 People who influence the selection of subjects among students of public secondary school in Meru County

With reference to the main purpose of this study which aimed to analyze factors influencing career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County, with a view of determining their individual and combined effects on career choices, this study noted a high rating on people who influence the selection of subjects that students were taking and decided to further interrogate these findings which are shown in Table 4.26. The purpose was to ascertain whether these people shown in Table 4.26 were also significantly affecting career choice of students, and ascertain the extent of their influence. Therefore, career choice as dependent variable was regressed on construct; ‘people who influence the selection of subjects among students of public secondary school in Meru County’. The linear regression results are presented in Tables 4.43, 4.44 and 4.45. Table 4.40 provides summary of the hypothesized predictor.

Tables 4.43.

People who influence the selection of subjects among students of public secondary school in Meru County: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.194 ^a	.038	.035	.34159	1.896

a. Predictors: (Constant), People influencing career selection among public secondary school students

b. Dependent Variable: Y-Career choice

Table 4.43 shows the percentage of variation that is accounted (R-Square) by people influencing selection of subjects among public secondary school students, that is, 38%. The results also show Durbin-Watson value of 1.896 which is more than 1. This indicates that no autocorrelation was found hence the model was relevant in the analysis. Table 4.44 shows whether the hypothesized model was fit for predicting career choice.

Tables 4.44.

People who influence the selection of subjects among students of public secondary school in Meru County: ANOVA results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1.577	1	1.577	13.519	.000 ^b
Residual	40.372	346	.117		
Total	41.949	347			

a. Dependent Variable: Y-Career choice

b. Predictors: (Constant), People influencing career selection among public secondary school students

The ANOVA Table 4.44 shows the significance of the model in predicting the variations in the dependent variable. The effect of predictor variable (people influencing career selection among public secondary school students) is regarded significant if $P < 0.001$. In this case, the P value is .000, $F_{(1,346)} = 13.519$, hence the regression model is fit for data interpretation. Results show that, people influencing selection of subjects among students of public secondary schools are statistically significant ($r = .194$; $P = .000$) in accounting for the variations in the dependent variable (Y, career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County). Table 4.45 shows corresponding regression weight for this predictor.

Tables 4.45.

People who influence the selection of subjects among students of public secondary school in Meru County: Regression Weights / Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.161	.096	33.082	.000		
	People influencing career selection among public secondary school students	.103	.028	.194	3.677	.000	1.000 1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y-Career choice

Table 4.45 shows a VIF value of 1.000 for the predictor variable, which helps to rule out multicollinearity hence the model, was fit for data analysis and interpretations. The results also show the coefficient values (regression weights) of the predictor (people influencing selection of subjects among students of public secondary schools in Meru County) and the corresponding level of significance. The unstandardized B-coefficients value rather than the beta coefficients value was used in interpreting data in this model because the constant value for the predictor variable was significant ($\beta = .103, P = .000$). It can therefore be concluded that people influencing selection of subjects among students of public secondary school are separately/independently, statistically significant in influencing the choice of careers among students of public secondary schools in Meru County.

A study by Mtemeri (2017) revealed that family members both nuclear and extended, as well as career teachers and other teachers significantly influenced career choice in high school students in Zimbabwe. Similarly a study by Koech et al. (2016) found that there was a positive correlation of multiple factors (family, peer, role model, teachers, mentors and career benefits) with career choice among undergraduate students in public

universities in Kenya. The results by Koech et al. (2016) are also in line with the results of this study which also revealed that the majority of students were influenced by career guidance teachers, key persons in the community, pastors, media personalities other relatives and peers. There is a clear indication that interaction at all social set ups greatly influence ones career choice. The findings have implications on collaborative effort from all the aforementioned persons towards improving career choice among public secondary students in Meru County.

4.13 Confounding Effects of Gender as Extraneous variable on all Independent variables

In this study, gender of the student was the extraneous variable hence was not part of phenomenon under investigation but was postulated to having influence on the dependent variable. This variable was therefore controlled as a covariate to enable measurement of the influence of the four independent variables while confounding the effects of gender. Consequently, one way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. Data from the resulting outputs were summarized in Table 4.46 which shows the effect of the independent variable after the effects of the covariates were removed/ accounted for.

Table 4.46.*Effect of the independent variable after the effects of the covariates have been removed*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
X1, nature of career guidance services	9.344	66	.142	1.216	.143	.223
X2, Parent aspirations	4.458	32	.139	1.167	.251	.106
X3, Mass media influence	6.253	46	.136	1.143	.255	.149
X4, School policy on selection of careers	2.603	31	.084	.672	.909	.062
X5, People influencing subject selection	5.692	29	.196	1.716	.014	.136

Results in Table 4.37 show that there was no significant difference in career choice and the nature of career guidance services, parent aspirations, mass media influence, and school policy on selection of subjects whilst adjusting for gender [F(1,66)= 1.216, p=0.143; F(1,32)= 1.167, p=0.251; F(1,46)= 1.143, p=0.255; F(1,31)= 0.672, p=0.909].

This indicates that when gender variable was controlled, the influence of four independent variables (nature of career guidance services; parent aspirations; mass media influence; and school policy on selection of subjects) did not have influence on career choice. The finding implies that the effects of four independent variables observed in the regression analysis were real and free of the influence of gender. This shows that the observations made on the relationship between the four independent variables and the dependent variable had no influence of gender.

The results however shows that there was a significant difference in career choice and the people influencing subject selection [F (1, 29) = 1.716, p=0.014 whilst adjusting for

gender. This indicates that the impact of the ‘people influencing subject selection’ varied with gender of the student, meaning that magnitude of the influence varied between male and female students. These findings correlates with observation made by Behred, Thompson, Deade, Grayson and Dale (2007) that, women more than men valued opportunities to provide comprehensive care when choosing a specialty. A post hoc test analysis to know where the specific differences lied was not conducted since gender was an extraneous variable in this study.

4.14 Summary of the Chapter

The overall response rate in this study was 92.1%.Data analysis was done with the help of SPSS and Microsoft excel. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentages), and inferential statistics (Chi-square test, ANOVA, correlation and regression analysis). Results show that career that students of public secondary schools in Meru County choose are statistically and significantly influenced by a combination of four factors that include nature of career guidance services, parental aspirations, mass media and school policy on selection of subjects.

However, when all these factors are in action, it is the mass media and parental aspirations that exert great influence on career selection among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. The results have underscored the essence of career guidance services in public secondary schools in Meru County. However, the implementation of such services and activities is hampered by various factors that include: lack of career guidance materials and facilities, teacher lacking training on career guidance, little time allocation to guidance and counseling activities and programs;

inadequate allocation of funds to career guiding activities, limited information on career guidance course, and misconceptions of careers due to external influence.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of summary of the study; conclusions arrived at, and the recommendations made based on the research findings. The purpose of this study was to analyze factors that influence career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County. The following were the objectives of the study; to examine the nature of career guidance services provided to students; to assess the influence of parental aspirations on career choice; to investigate the impact of mass media on the choice of careers among students; and to evaluate the influence of school policy on subject selection on career choice among students in secondary school in Meru County.

The literature review described the factors influencing students' career choice. Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making by John Krumboltz and Contingency Theory of Management by Joan Woodward were adopted in this study while the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable were represented through a conceptual framework.

The study used descriptive and correlational research designs. It was conducted in Meru County with a target population of 19,862 form four students, 364 principals, 364 career guidance teachers and 364 form four PA representatives. Through stratified, systemic and purposive sampling, 460 participants were selected from 364 schools respectively. A questionnaire and interview schedule whose items were formulated from the research objectives were used to collect primary data. Pre-testing of the research instruments was

conducted to ensure reliability and validity of data collected. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviations, as well as inferential statistics, ANOVA, Chi-square, correlation and regression analysis were used. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. An introduction letter from KeMU was used to obtain research permit from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and permission sought to collect data from Meru County Commissioner and Meru County Director of Education. The researcher upheld ethical principles and values during the study period.

5.2 Summary of Major Findings

In this study, an overall reliability coefficient of 0.760 was obtained for all the collected data. The result showed an overall response rate of 92.1%. Summary of key findings are presented in subsequent sub-sections.

5.2.1 Summary of Background Profiles of the Respondents

The background profiles of the respondents indicated more male (60.6%) than female (39.4%) principals in public secondary schools in Meru County. It was also clear that majority of career guidance teachers (23, 71.9%) had less than 5 years working experience in the position of career guidance which meant that most career guidance teachers had inadequate experience, knowledge and clinical skills that were necessary in running career guidance department in public secondary schools. The results have further shown more girls enrolment than boys in public secondary schools in Meru County. Moreover, most girls predominantly prefer to pursue courses related to health science as compared to boys, majority of who prefer courses related to engineering and technology.

A cross-tabulation revealed that the careers preferred by students, differed significantly across the four school categories in Meru County.

5.2.2 Summary on Information on Career Choice

Information gathered from form four students revealed that the top most three issues that influence the selection of subjects that ultimately lead to choosing certain career paths were: personal interests and passion (mean = 4.36), subjects selected being based on performance in examinations (mean = 4.22), and knowledge that students have (mean = 4.04). Also 81% of the students agreed that, students selected careers that sounded prestigious and superior (mean = 3.94); and that students selected careers that were regarded as famous (mean = 3.81). This indicated a serious misconception that is rampant among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. The subsequent subsections provide a summary of key findings based on each research objective.

5.2.3 Nature of career guidance services and their influence on career choice among students of public secondary school in Meru County

The first objective of the study examined the nature of career guidance services provided to students in public secondary schools in Meru County. Information gathered from principals revealed that an overwhelming majority, that is, 26 respondents, representing 78.8% of public secondary schools did not have professionally qualified career guidance teachers and that some schools didn't have "career" days. The use of career guidance teachers (mean =4.81), students making their own choices (mean=3.69), involving parents (mean=3.66) and organizing career education days (mean =3.63) were ranked as the most significant strategies in helping students select careers in public secondary schools in Meru County. The results indicated that majority of the public secondary

schools in Meru County had not prioritized career oriented activities as indicated by either insufficient (53.1%) or lack (34.4%) of budget allocation.

Career counselors highlighted several challenges they face when offering career guidance to students in public secondary schools in Meru County which included and not limited to, lack of career guidance materials and facilities, lack of training on career guidance, little time allocated for guidance and counseling, inadequate funds allocation to career guiding activities and limited information on career guidance course. The parents also indicated that career guidance was not effective because it was done towards the end of secondary education. In other instances, some students were found to be reluctant on issues related to career choice, while others noted that the career guidance sessions were inadequate to cater for diverse career needs of students.

The career counselors suggested remedies for overcoming those challenges which included; start providing career guidance information to students early enough; ensure adequate time allocation to career guidance activities; allocate sufficient funds for supporting career guiding activities; school administration to support teachers concerned to attend regular career guidance training and workshops; provide career guidance materials and facilities; and the Ministry of Education to employ career guidance professionals/ counselors among other remedies. The null hypothesis emanating from the above objective stated that the nature of career guidance services provided does not significantly influence choice of career among public secondary school students in Meru County.

Results in Table 4.18 showed $r = .466^{**}$ while ANOVA Table 4.19 showed $P = .007$ which was less than the alpha value of 0.05; $F_{(1,346)} = 8.324$, hence the null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that there was a positive and significant relationship between career guidance services and the career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County. The results in Table 4.18 also indicated a prediction value, where $R^2 = .217$. This implied that career guidance services that are provided in public secondary schools account for 21.7% of influence on career choice of students. The regression weights in Table 4.20, that is ($\beta_1 = .474, P = .007$) further confirmed this findings.

5.2.4 Influence of parental aspirations on career choice among students of public secondary school in Meru County.

On research objective two, the results showed moderate influence of parental aspirations on careers selected by public secondary school students in Meru County. This represented 67% overall agreement level on influence of parental aspirations on career choice. It was noted that most parents provide moral support which ignited good performance (mean = 4.41). They were also invited by school management to discuss academic progress of students (mean = 4.05); encouraged their children to seek information on careers (mean = 4.00), and also rewarded them when they performed well in school (mean = 3.91). It was also clear that many students do not choose careers like those of their parents (mean = 3.91), and that choosing a career for a child did not necessary put pressure on a student to perform (mean = 1.61).

The null hypothesis emanating from this objective stated that parental aspirations did not significantly influence choice of career among students in secondary schools in Meru

County. The results in Table 4.22 showed $r = .125^*$ while ANOVA Table 4.23 showed $P = .020$ which was less than the alpha value of 0.05; $F_{(1,346)} = 5.477$, hence null hypothesis was rejected and conclude that there is a positive and significant relationship between parental aspirations and the career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County. The results in Table 4.22 showed a prediction value of $R^2 = .016$. This implied that parental aspirations accounted for 16% of influence on career choice of public secondary school students in Meru County. The regression weights in Table 4.24 further confirmed this finding where it showed that the influence of parental aspirations on career choice among public secondary school students will always exist at significant minimum ($\beta_2 = .079, P = .020$).

5.2.5 The influence of mass media on choice of career among students in public secondary schools in Meru County.

The third research objective investigated the impact of mass media on the choice of careers among students in secondary school in Meru County. Information gathered from principals indicated that TV with a mean of 2.30 and career books (mean = 2.27) were the top most influential mass media in influencing career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County. However the results indicated that although TV was the most accessed mass media in public secondary schools, its programs were moderately important to students. Interview data from parents indicated that student's also accessed TV, mobile phones, radio, and print media (newspapers) while at home to which they rarely monitor. Students further indicated that media personalities and celebrities influenced career path to a great extent (109, 31.3%).

The use of mobile phones was also noted to have gained popularity among students both at school and home. This study took cognizance that mobile phones were nowadays used as a medium of accessing all other mass media. However, mobile phones were least used (mean=2.28) in searching information on career among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. The study noted the growing trends of betting among students of public secondary schools in Meru County, where, approximately half (198, 57%) of the respondents used mobile phones for betting.

The null hypothesis related to this objective stated that mass media does not significantly influence choice of career among students in secondary schools in Meru County. The results in Table 4.29 showed $r = .141^*$ while ANOVA Table 4.30 showed $P = .009$ which was less than the alpha value of 0.05; $F_{(1,346)} = 6.988$. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded that there was a positive and significant relationship between mass media and the career choice of students of public secondary schools in Meru County ($r = .141^*$, Table 4.29). The results in Table 4.29 showed a prediction value of $R^2 = .020$. This implied that mass media accounted for 20% of influence on career choice of public secondary schools students in Meru County. The regression weights in Table 4.31 further confirmed this finding where it showed that the influence of mass media on career choice among public secondary school students will always exist at significant minimum ($\beta_2 = .064, P = .009$).

5.2.6 Influence of school policy on career choice among students in public secondary school in Meru County

The fourth, and last, research objective assessed the influence of school policies on subject selection on career choice among students in secondary school in Meru County. According to information gathered from principals, the most consulted stakeholders when making policy on selection of subjects in public secondary schools in Meru County were heads of departments (HODs') with a mean of 4.33 and the teachers (mean = 4.06). The least consulted stakeholders were students (2.76), parents (2.45) and the Ministry of Education with a mean of 2.18, in that order. Many parents who were interviewed also indicated that they were not involved in identifying the subjects taken by their children. The results generally show moderate involvement of stakeholders (aggregate mean = 3.08) in the formulation of school policy on subjects choices in public secondary schools in Meru County.

The null hypothesis related to research objective four stated that school policy on subject selection does not significantly influence choice of career among students in public secondary school in Meru County. The results in Table 4.36 showed $r = .036$ while ANOVA Table 4.37 showed $P = .500$ which was more than the alpha value of 0.05. Hence, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded that there was no significant relationship between school policy on subject selection and career choice among students of public secondary school in Meru County.

5.2.7 Influence of combined independent variables on choice of careers among students of public secondary schools in Meru County.

The results from correlation and liner regression analysis based on combination of all predictor variables indicated that the four predictors, that is, X1 nature of career guidance services; X2 parental aspirations, X3 mass media and X4 school policy on selection of subjects; jointly account for 40% of variation of the career choice ($R^2 = .040$). The regression ANOVA output in Table 4.41 containing all the independent variables in a single model was found to be valid (a good fit of the data), ($F_{(4,343)} = 3.578, P < .001$); meaning all the four predictors, when combined together, formed a model that was statistically significant in explaining the variations in career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. The results indicated that all the four variables: nature of career guidance services; parental aspirations, mass media and school policy on selection of subjects were jointly significant in determining the career that a student chooses in public secondary schools in Meru County. However, when all predictors are in action, it is the mass media and the people that influence the selection of subjects in students that exert greatest influence.

The study further investigated data on the people who are reported in Table 4.26 as having influence on the choice of subjects that student were taking. The purpose was to ascertain whether these people were also significantly affecting career choice of students. The results from correlation and liner regression analysis indicated that, people influencing selection of subjects among students of public secondary schools are statistically significant ($r = .194; P = .000$) in accounting for the variations in the dependent variable (Y, career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County).

5.3 Conclusion

Considering the findings of this study, it was clear that many schools allow students to make their own career choices without intervention measures. It has also emerged that career guidance teachers play a crucial role in advising students, not only in subjects' selection but also in choosing careers. This underscores the need for engaging trained career guidance teachers and the need to provide career information services and programmes in secondary schools. It was also noted the need to engage career guidance consultants who can bring a different feel and point out the emerging and changing trends in career selection. Establishment of fully fledged career guidance office will therefore enable introduction of appropriate career-oriented activities, services in secondary schools. Such initiative further calls for adequate allocation of budget in order to achieve the planned career-oriented activities and support professional development of career guidance teachers.

Parents were found to provide moral support which ignited good academic performance and most secondary schools were noted to have invited parents to discuss academic progress of their students. It was also clear that many students do not choose careers like that of their parents and that choosing a career for a child did not necessary put pressure on a student to perform. The influence of parental aspirations in career choice among secondary school students was confirmed by majority of parents. To some parents, the influence started early where parents got deeply involved in following up their children's performance in schools. The study concluded that parental aspirations exert substantial influence on career choice of their children and as such parents ought to deliberately communicate their expectations to their children without being overly persuasive.

Educating the parents can also help to harness the strength of the parental influence on career choice.

Mode of delivery of career-oriented activities is also very significant. While at home students had access to TV, mobile phones, radio, and prints media (newspapers), to which parents and guardians rarely monitored. The use of mobile phones was to access other mass media peripherals were noted in this study as very influential. However, the study noted the growing trends of betting among students of public secondary schools in Meru County. Betting is purely non-academic and may lead a hard-to-abandon behavior among students; something that may give rise to other social problems such as stealing of money, using school fees for betting among others. With knowledge that mobiles phones can also impede academic performance, all stakeholders should cautiously be aware of the distracting power of mass media and persuasion power thereof which finally influence career choice among students of secondary schools. The awareness should lead to adoption of measures for directing and guiding students appropriately.

Selection of subjects was found to be very crucial in leading students to given careers. It emerged that the secondary school policy on subject selection was equally important as well as the people involved in formulating such policies. The study concluded that subject selection was a process whose success relied on concerted efforts from all stakeholders. These included principals, parents, career guidance teachers, key persons in the community, ministry of education, Pastors/Reverends, media personality, relatives, and other teachers. The study concluded that most secondary schools in Meru County lacked flexibility in subjects' combinations and this hindered selection of desired careers.

A collaborative approach from Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Ministry of Education (MOE), parents and Board of Management (BOM) would be needed to make required education resources available so that students are given an opportunity to choose subjects of their choice. This would expand the students' ability to choose the desired careers in future.

5.4 Recommendations

The findings of this study formed the basis on which recommendations were made.

5.4.1 Recommendations based on the profiles of the respondents

Total student enrolment indicated that there were more girls than boys in public secondary schools in Meru County. In the recent past, the government and NGO has put a lot of emphasis on the girl child in terms of programs and interventions to empower the girl child. There are persistent campaigns that focus on the protection of the girl child in Kenya and this has led to the boy child being excluded in the gender debate. In order to bridge this gap the researcher recommends a collaborative approach by all stakeholders to ensure that the boy child also benefit from programs and interventions that support empowering of the girl child. It is necessary for teachers and administrators to be empowered with relevant knowledge and skills that would enhance their capabilities to respond to gender issues in their schools. Gender bias is evident and there is need to also develop systemic support geared toward mentorship programs in public secondary schools in Meru County

Teachers' Service Commission provides for equal access to administrative position and opportunities for deployment to all teaching staffs both males and females, however

gender bias was evident in this study where there are more male principals as compared to their female counterparts in public secondary schools in Meru County. The Teachers Service Commission should consider increasing the number of female principals in public secondary schools in Meru County in order to motivate the girl child and help prevent some retrogressive cultural practices.

5.4.2 Recommendations based on career choice

Career choice is a critical but complicated task that involves a difficult process of decision making and affects all students. Results of this study have indicated that the effect of all the five variables is paramount in determining the career choices among public secondary schools in Meru County. This study therefore recommends a collaborative approach by all education stakeholders to support public secondary school students in career decision making.

5.4.3 Recommendations based on the Nature of career guidance services that affect career choice among students of public secondary schools in Meru County

Based on the findings of this study, it was noted that career guidance services were rated highly as determinants of career choice. Despite the high ratings, most career guidance departments in public secondary schools in Meru County were inadequately funded. In order to enhance timely and effective implementation of career-oriented activities in public secondary schools the principals, parents and BOM should prioritize career activities by allocating sufficient finances to this department. This can only be achieved by organizing public awareness campaigns through seminars, public lectures and workshops to sensitize students, parents, government agents and the general public on the need for career guidance services in order to secure support.

The school program should also be adjusted to provide adequate time for career counseling sessions. Career guidance interactions especially to students should start in the early years of schooling as they begin their career choice process. This calls for establishment of mechanisms that promote student career development from early schooling through high school and possibly amendment of education curriculum that will exhaustively explore student's career path.

The career guidance teachers were found to play major role in helping students make appropriate subjects selection and career choices that were commensurate to their abilities, talents and that which raised prospects of getting jobs or creating jobs for themselves. Likewise, students expected career guidance teachers to assist them in applying knowledge and skills, in educational choices, in giving information about career pathways and in exploring future job prospects. Qualified career guidance teachers are able to take into account the context in which the students are living, level of career awareness, clarify issues related to career aspirations and provide integrative cognitive structures and social support. This study recommends for employment of professionally qualified guidance and counseling teachers to carry out this crucial service to primary and secondary school students. Such teachers will be able to conduct career assessment tests to the learners and give appropriate guidance regarding careers.

Practicing career counselors who are not well prepared cannot implement well thought policies and programs that enhance effective career guidance services in secondary schools. An elaborate policy on preparation and training of career counselors is indispensable in secondary schools in Meru County. This study also recommends the

formulation of a career guidance policy that redefines the school career counselors' role and the needed preparation and training that will meet the needs of the 21st century secondary school students. Such a policy will empower the career teachers to provide well guided services that are geared towards helping students' have an insight on available career opportunities, progression pathways, and subjects' requirements for specific career fields, emerging careers and education and training needs for various careers. The career guidance policies at school level, therefore, may need to be revised to allow helpful career guidance programs and activities.

5.4.4 Recommendations based on the influence of parental aspirations on career choice among students in public secondary schools in Meru County

The influence of parental aspirations in career choice among secondary school student cannot be over emphasized. Parents play a key role in influencing career choice among public secondary school students through the provision of moral support, discussing and monitoring academic progress of students at school and at home; encouraging children to seek information on careers, and rewarding students when they perform well in school. In that connection, the study recommends that parents should deliberately communicate their expectations to their children without being overly persuasive. Also the gainful strength of the parental influence can be harnessed by educating the parents on career choice so that they can stir students to areas that align with the areas of interest based on the career information that is available to the parents. This will bring an understanding that parents should guide and not dictate what their children wish to pursue. They will also support their children's decision and encourage them pursue careers of their interests. Parents can actively be involved in career oriented activities and programs by

adopting a Parent Associations (PA) policy that enhance their participation on matters of career choice of their children. Since students may possess unique set of skills, aptitudes and abilities from those of their parents, they should be encouraged to seek advice from other significant people like role models, mentors, opinion leaders and relatives.

5.4.5 Recommendations based on the impact of mass media on the choice of career among secondary school students in Meru County.

In this study, mass media was found to have a lot of influence on career decisions made by students of secondary schools in Meru County. The mass media with most influence were TV and mobile phones. This could be attributed to the fact that students are more than ever before, exposed to information they gather through exposure to these media. Children start to rule out career options from early age and their choices are often influenced by what they see in the media. There is a pressing need to link employers and schools so that children have access to role models that can demystify stereotyping in media roles.

It is undisputed that through mobile phones, one can access internet, watch TV, listen to music, engage in betting, and other non-academic activities. This study found the use of mobile phones by secondary school students to be gaining popularity in Meru County. One of the most frequented sites in this garget was gaming that has seen many students especially the boys' lose money, waste time and misuse school fees. The public should be made aware of this latest development through rigorous campaigns so as to caution the young generation against this vice. The school management, teachers, parents and policy makers could also put strict measures that monitored and regulated use of electronic media by students of secondary schools. This further calls for need to promote media

literacy so that students can be knowledgeable about the harmful effects of media usage and critically analyze the type of content they expose themselves to. Also with the emergence of online information and social network schools should consider adopting and maximizing both traditional and online approaches to bring new ideas and world views that can influence students understanding of themselves and their world of work and hence help them in their career decision making.

5.4.6 Recommendations based on the influence of school policies on subject selection on career choice among students in secondary schools in Meru County

Both the availability of teachers and infrastructure were found to be the most important factors in determining subjects to be offered in a given public secondary school in Meru County. This was because it allowed students to select different subject combinations. It was also clear that the lack of flexibility in subjects' combination impeded selection of desired careers by secondary school students in Meru County. A collaborative approach from Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Ministry of Education (MOE), Board of Management (BOM) and parents to make available infrastructural and human resources is hence recommended. This will ensure that requisite education resources are available which will consequently afford wide opportunity to students' choices on subjects. Apart from the need to involve parents in school's subject policy formulation, managers of secondary schools (BOM) and PA should sensitize and educate parents on the effect of such policies on career choice of their children. When all possible stakeholders are involved in policy formulation, the resultant policy document will be acceptable to the consumers of the policy. While acknowledging the step taken by the Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) to make available "The Essential

Career Guide handbook’’, there is a need to ensure that it is available to all relevant stakeholders. Public secondary schools should also adhere to the ministry of education policy on subject selection in form two and specify when it would be done bearing in mind that each year has three terms.

5.4.7 Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings reported in this study, the researcher recommends further research on:

- a) Examining causal relations among variables considering alternative strategies to those in the study, for example, it would be interesting to investigate whether improving school policy on selection of subjects would influence career choice.
- b) A comparative study on factors influencing career choice between public and private secondary schools.
- c) A comparative study on parental influence on career choice between boarding and day secondary schools.
- d) Investigate how social network sites could be used as resource tools for career education and planning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Informed Consent Cover Letter

Informed Consent Cover Letter

September, 2018

Dear

My name is Sarah Wambeti Njogu and I am a PhD candidate at Kenya Methodist University. I am conducting a research titled “A critical analysis of the key factors guiding career choice among secondary school students in Meru County. The objectives of the study are: to examine the nature of career guidance services provided to students, to assess the influence of parental aspirations on career choice, to investigate impact of mass media on career choice and to evaluate the influence of school policies on subject selection in career choice by secondary school students. Therefore, I am inviting you/your students to participate in this study. The research tools will be a questionnaire that will take no more than 10 minutes to complete while the interview for PA will take about 45 minutes.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there is no known risk in participating. You may choose to participate in this study and you are also allowed to withdraw from the study anytime. I assure you that all data collected in this study will be treated in the strictest of confidence. However, it may be published in a journal or a book. Your identity and that of the school will not be revealed since codes will be used instead of your name or that of the school.

Due to the nature of this study there is no direct benefit to the participant, however, by participating you have an opportunity to share your experience and to give opinion as pertains to career choice. I would be grateful if you could please complete the questionnaire/respond to the questions asked by the interviewer.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah W. Njogu

MobileNo.0722231028

Email address: swambeti@yahoo.com

Appendix II: Introduction Letter from Kenya Methodist University



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

P. O. Box 267 Meru - 60200, Kenya
Tel: 254-064-30301/31229/30367/31171

Fax: 254-64-30162
Email: info@kemu.ac.ke

Our ref: NAC/PHD/6/2018/1

25TH JUNE 2018

Commission Secretary,
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations,
P.O. Box 30623-00100,
NAIROBI.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

RE: NJOGU W. SARAH (EDU-4-0298-1/2014)

This is to confirm that the above named is a bona fide student of Kenya Methodist University, undertaking Ph.D. in Education Leadership and Management. She is conducting a research titled "A Critical Analysis of the Key Factors that Guide Career Choice among Public Secondary School Students in Meru County, Kenya."

We confirm that her thesis proposal has been defended and approved by the university.

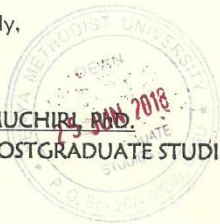
In this regard, we are requesting your office to issue a permit to enable her collect data for her Ph.D. dissertation.

Any assistance accorded to her will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,



DR. JOHN MUCHIRI
DIRECTOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES



End.

Appendix III: Authorization Letter from NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/18/98199/23797**

Date: **24th July, 2018**

Sarah Wambeti Njogu
Kenya Methodist University
P.O. Box 267- 60200
MERU.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*A critical analysis of the key factors that guide career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County, Kenya*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Meru County** for the period ending **24th July, 2019**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Meru County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

**BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Meru County.

The County Director of Education
Meru County.

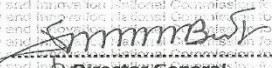

Appendix IV: Research Permit

Permit No.: **NACOSTI/P/18/98199/23797**
Date Of Issue: **24th July, 2018**
Fee Received: **Ksh. 2000**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT: MS SARAH WAMBETI NJOGU of KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY, 0-60200, MERU, has been permitted to conduct research in Meru County on the topic: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE KEY FACTORS THAT GUIDE CAREER CHOICE AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MERU COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending: 24th July, 2019

Applicant's Signature

**Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation**



Appendix V: Research Authorization from County Commissioner



**THE PRESIDENCY
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND COORDINATION OF NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT**

Telegrams:
Telephone:
Email: ccmeru@yahoo.com
Fax:

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MERU COUNTY
P.O. BOX 703-60200
MERU.

When replying please quote
Ref: *ED.12/3 VOL.III/48*

Date: 5th September 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – SARAH WAMBETI NJOGU

This is to inform you that **Sarah Wambeti Njogu** of **Kenya Methodist University** has reported to this office as directed by Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation and will be carrying out Research on “**A critical analysis of the key factors that guide career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County, Kenya**”.

Since authority has been granted by the said Commission, and the above named student has reported to this office, she can embark on her research project for the period ending **24th July, 2019**.

Kindly accord her any necessary assistance she may require.

W. K. Katonon
For: County Commissioner
MERU

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MERU COUNTY
P. O. Box 703 -60200, MERU

Appendix VI: Research Authorization from County Director of Education



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education

Telegrams: "ELIMU" Meru
EMAIL: cdemerucounty@gmail.com
When Replying please quote

County Director Of Education
Meru County
P.O. Box 61
MERU

Ref: MRU/C/EDU/11/1/208

5th September, 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATON – SARAH WAMBETI NJOGU

Reference is made to letters Ref: NACOSTI/P/18/98199/23797 dated 24th July, 2018,

Authority is hereby granted to Sarah Wambeti Njogu to carry out research on "*A critical analysis of the key factors that guide career choice among public secondary school students in Meru County, Kenya*, for the period ending 24th July, 2019.

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nkonge J. E.', written over a circular stamp or mark.

Nkonge J. E.

For: County Director of Education
MERU

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
MERU COUNTY
P. O. Box 61-60200
TEL: 064-32372 MERU

Appendix VIII: Questionnaire for Principals

Introduction

This questionnaire is for the purpose of the research only and the information you give will be treated confidentially. Please answer all the questions provided as honestly as possible and to the best of your knowledge. Answer the questions by ticking (√) or by providing the required information on the spaces provided.

Section A: Demographic Information

Instruction: Please place a tick (√) on the items that apply to you unless a different direction is given).

1. Gender

Male []

Female []

2. Academic qualification

Diploma []

Bachelor Degree []

Master degree []

PhD []

3. How long have you been a principal?

Less than 1 year []

1 – 10 years []

11 – 20 years []

Over 21 years []

Section B: The Nature of Career Guidance Services Provided to Students in Preparation for Career Choice.

4. Do you have a professionally qualified career guidance teacher?

Yes []

No []

5. How are career oriented services programmed for students in your school?

Done within the lessons []

Done during free time []

Done during career days []

Done during academic clinics []

Any other, specify.....

6. How often do you hold career days in your school?

Once a Term []

Once a Year []

Every Two Years []

Never []

7. What percentage of the schools' operational budget is allocated to cater for career oriented activities?

Zero % []

Less than 5% []

10% []

15% []

More than 15% []

Section C: Mass Media Influence on Career Choice

8. Below are types of mass media available for use by secondary school students.

How is each type likely to influence career choice of students in your school?

Types of Mass Media	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
TV			
Career books			
Radio			
Computers			
Resource person			
Newspapers and magazines			
Mobile Phones			

9. On a scale of 1-5, rate the importance of each of the following programs aired on television set (TV) to secondary school students? 1=Not Important 2=Of Little Importance 3=Of Average Importance 4=Very Important 5=Absolutely Essential

Programmes	1	2	3	4	5
News Bulletin					
Comedies					
Drama					
Game Shows					
Music					
Reality Shows					
Sports					
Soap Opera					
Documentary					
Series					

Section D: School Policy on Subject Choice and its Influence on Career Choice

10. The following are the key persons involved in formulating the school policy on subject choice in secondary schools. Indicate how often is each person involved in formulating the school policy on subject choice in your schools?

Persons involved in policy formulation	Never	Seldom	Neutral	Most of the time
Students				
Teachers				
Heads of departments (HODs')				
Board of management (BOM)				
Ministry of education				
Parents				

11. There are some factors considered in determining the subjects to be offered in secondary school. Please rank each factor in reference to its importance

Factors considered in subjects to be offered	Not important	Slightly important	Neutral	Important	Very important
Availability of Infrastructure					
Availability of teachers					
Students Interests					
Parents Interests					
Knowledge and skills of the students					

12. What is the relationship between the subject cluster a student selects and the right career choice?

Appendix IX: Questionnaire for Career Guidance Teachers

Introduction

This questionnaire is for the purpose of the research only and the information you give will be treated confidentially. Please answer all the questions provided as honestly as possible, to the best of your knowledge. Answer the questions by ticking (√) or by providing the required information on the spaces provided.

Section A: Demographic Information

Instruction: Please place a tick (√) on the items that apply to you unless a different direction is given).

1. Gender

Male []

Female []

2. Academic qualification

Diploma []

Bachelor Degree []

Master degree []

PhD []

3. How long have you been a career guidance teacher?

Less than 1 year []

1 –10 year []

11-20 years []

Over 21 years []

Section B: Nature of Career Guidance Services Provided to Students in

Preparation for Career Choice

4. At what level have you been trained as a career guidance teacher?

I have never received any training []

Certificate

Diploma

Degree

Workshops/Seminars

5. How often do you attend career guidance workshops? (Tick appropriately)

Once in a term

Once a year

Never attended

6. Below is a list of strategies that secondary schools can employ to help students make informed career decisions. Indicate how often students in your school access each of these strategies.

Strategies	Never	Sometimes	All the time
Use of career guidance teachers			
Students make their own choices			
Involving parents			
Engaging career guidance consultants			
Organizing career education days			
Provision of mass media (TV, Radio and Newspaper)			

7. Implementation of career oriented activities requires a financial budget. How adequate is this budget allocated in your school? (Tick appropriately.)

Career oriented activities are never budgeted for in my school

Not Adequate

Adequate

Fairly Adequate

Very Adequate

8. In your own opinion to what extent does the current career guidance service address students career needs in your school?

To a lower extent

To a moderate extent

To a great extent

Section C: School Policy on Subject Choice and its influence on Career Choice

9. At what level do students in your school select subjects?

Form 1

Form 2

Form 3

Form 4

10. What challenges do you face in offering career guidance to your students?

.....
.....
.....

11. Suggest possible remedies for the above stated challenges.

.....
.....

Appendix X: Questionnaire for Students

Introduction

This questionnaire is designed to gather general information about career choice among secondary school students. Please respond to the questions honestly and diligently following the instructions given. All the responses will be treated with outmost confidence. Answer the questions by ticking (√) or by providing the required information on the spaces provided.

SECTION A: STUDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. School Category

Girls boarding]

Boys boarding]

Mixed boarding]

Mixed Day]

2. Gender

Male]

Female]

SECTION B: Nature of Career Guidance Services Provided to Students in Preparation for Career Choice.

3. Below is a list of some of the courses offered in universities and colleges? After doing your KCSE which course would you want to pursue? (Tick √ appropriately)

] Courses related to Engineering and Technology

] Courses related to Health Science

] Courses related to Pure and Applied Science

] Courses related to Agriculture and veterinary science

] Courses related to Human Resource Development

] Courses related to Education and External studies

] Courses related to Humanity and Social science

Any other specify.....

3. In which Class/Form did you start thinking about your career path? Tick in the appropriate box.

Class/Form	Answer
Form Four	
Form Three	
Form One	
Class Eight	
Class Seven	
Class Six	
Class Five	
Class Four	
Class Three	
Class Two	
Class One	
Nursery	

4. Below are some means that may sensitize students on matters related to career choice. Indicate how often you are able to access each of them.

Means Used	Very Rarely	Rarely	Neutral	Frequently	Very Frequently
Use of TV					
Use of Radio					
Use of print media like newspapers					
Use of internet					
Displaying information on the notice board					
Holding school talent day					
Inviting guest speakers					
Use of career guidance department					

SECTION C: Parental Aspirations and their Influence on Career Choice

5. Many parents would want their children to pursue certain career paths. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please tick (√) appropriately.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My parents encourage me to seek information about career					
Am rewarded by my parents when I perform well in school					
Am punished by my parents when I perform poorly in class					
I feel pressured to perform because my parents have chosen a career for me					
I perform well because my parents give me moral support					
I perform well because my parents monitor my academic progress					
I discuss my end term results with my father					
I discuss my end term results with my mother					
I discuss my end term results with both parents					
The school management invite parents to discuss academic progress of students					
I choose a career like that of my parents					
My parents provide a lot of information on various careers that has enabled me make a choice					

SECTION D: Mass Media Influence on Career Choice

6. The use of mobile phones has gained popularity among secondary school students.

How much time do you spend on your mobile phone to carry out each of the following activities?

Activities	Not much	Little	neutral	Much	Very much
Surfing the Web					
Doing School Assignment					
Chatting on WhatsApp					
Chatting on Face book					
Chatting on Twitter					
Accessing you- tube					
Making calls					
Gaming					
Chatting on Twitter					
Betting					
Searching Career information					
Listening to music					
Listening to the radio					
Taking videos					
Taking pictures					

7. Has any media personality or celebrity influenced your future career path? Answer this question by indicating the extent of the influence.

There is no influence of media personality or celebrity

To a lower extent

To a moderate extent

To a great extent

SECTION E: School policy on Subject Choice and its influence on Career Choice

8. Information on subject selection is availed to students at different levels in secondary schools. In your own opinion, how relevant is this information to you at the levels indicated below?

Form	Poor	Somewhat	Excellent
Form 1			
Form 2			
Form 3			
Form 4			

9. What is the relationship between the subject cluster a student selects and the right career choice?

10. How important was each of the following persons in, influencing your choice on subjects you are taking?

	Unimportant	Of Little Importance	Average	Important	Very Important
Self					
Parents					
Peers					
Career Guidance Teacher					
Media Personality					
A key person in the community					
Pastor /Revered					
Other teachers					

Reasons why students select certain subjects and why they pursue certain career paths	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students select subjects based on their performance in examinations					
Parents aspirations influence students decision to select certain subjects					
Career guidance teachers help students to select subjects.					
Career guidance teachers help students to make career choice					
Personal interests influence students career choice					
I want to pursue a career path similar to what my friend will pursue					
Knowledge and skills influence career choice					
Mass media influence career choice of students					
Students select subjects that can make it easy for them to obtain required cut off points for college and university courses.					
Students select subjects similar to those selected by their classmates					
Students discuss the careers to pursue with their peers					
Interaction with role models /mentors influenced students' choice career.					
The Subjects offered in the school influence career choice of students.					
The prospects of getting a job in a particular field					

influence students' career choice.					
Students select subjects based on the teachers who teach the subject.					

SECTION F: Subject choice and subsequent Career Choice among Secondary School Students.

11. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?

12. Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding your school policy on selection of subjects.

Statements regarding school policy on selection of subjects	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Our school policy on selection of subjects is guided by available facilities					
Our school policy on selection of subjects help students gets careers that have job opportunities					
Our school policy on selection of subjects is not flexible					
Our school policy on selection of subjects help students gets careers that match their abilities					
Our school policy on selection of subjects depends on availability of teachers in given subjects					
Students participate in formulation of policy on selection of subjects in our school					
Our school policy on selection of subjects allows students to have many career options					
Our school policy on selection of subjects is guided by board of management					
I am happy with our school policy on selection of subjects					

Appendix XI: Interview Guide for Form Four PA Representatives

Introduction

This interview guide is designed to gather general information on career choice among secondary school students. The information obtained through this questionnaire will be treated with maximum confidentiality. Please respond to the questions honestly and diligently following the instructions given.

SECTION A: Nature of Career Guidance Services Provided to Secondary School Students.

1. As a parent have you been involved in career guidance of your child? If yes, how?
2. Comment on how effective career guidance is done in your school?

SECTION B: Parental Aspirations and their Influence on Career Choice.

3. How does the education level of parents contribute to their ability to guide their children in career choice?
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. As a parent, explain how you influenced the career path your child choose?

6. What formed the basis of your preference for that particular career for your child?

7. In your own opinion, how does availability of finances in the family influence career paths of students?

SECTION C: Mass Media Influence on Career Choice

8. What type of mass media (TV, Radio, print media like newspapers, mobile phones) is availed to your child at home?

9. How often do you monitor their use?

Section D: School Policy on Subject Selection and its Influence on Career Choice

10. As a parent have you been involved in identifying the subjects that your child selected? If yes what criteria was used to arrive at these subjects?

Table 4.6.

Cross tabulation of school category against the course that students prefer to undertake after KCSE results

School Category * After doing your KCSE which course would you want to pursue? Cross tabulation (N=348)		After doing your KCSE which course would you want to pursue?									
		Courses related to Engineering and Technology	Courses related to Health Science	Courses related to Pure and Applied Science	Courses related to Agriculture and veterinary science	Courses related to Human Resource Development	Courses related to Education and External studies	Courses related to Humanity and Social science	Total		
School Category	Girls boarding	Count	21	42	8	30	1	6	7	115	
		% within School Category	18.3%	36.5%	7.0%	26.1%	0.9%	5.2%	6.1%	100.0%	
		% within After doing your KCSE which course would you want to pursue?	20.8%	53.8%	30.8%	46.9%	4.2%	21.4%	25.9%	33.0%	
		% of Total	6.0%	12.1%	2.3%	8.6%	0.3%	1.7%	2.0%	33.0%	
		Boys boarding	Count	44	17	5	17	11	9	10	113
		% within School Category	38.9%	15.0%	4.4%	15.0%	9.7%	8.0%	8.8%	100.0%	
		% within After doing your KCSE which course would you want to pursue?	43.6%	21.8%	19.2%	26.6%	45.8%	32.1%	37.0%	32.5%	
		% of Total	12.6%	4.9%	1.4%	4.9%	3.2%	2.6%	2.9%	32.5%	
		Mixed boarding	Count	5	1	2	0	1	0	1	10
		% within School Category	50.0%	10.0%	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	100.0%	
		% within After doing your KCSE which course would you want to pursue?	5.0%	1.3%	7.7%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	3.7%	2.9%	
		% of Total	1.4%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	2.9%	
		Mixed day	Count	31	18	11	17	11	13	9	110
		% within School Category	28.2%	16.4%	10.0%	15.5%	10.0%	11.8%	8.2%	100.0%	
		% within After doing your KCSE which course would you want to pursue?	30.7%	23.1%	42.3%	26.6%	45.8%	46.4%	33.3%	31.6%	
		% of Total	8.9%	5.2%	3.2%	4.9%	3.2%	3.7%	2.6%	31.6%	
Total		Count	101	78	26	64	24	28	27	348	
	% within School Category	29.0%	22.4%	7.5%	18.4%	6.9%	8.0%	7.8%	100.0%		

% within After doing your KCSE which course would you want to pursue?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %
% of Total	29.0%	22.4%	7.5%	18.4%	6.9%	8.0%	7.8%		100.0 %

Table 4.12.*Descriptive statistics on career choice by form four students*

Statement on issues that influence selection of subjects that lead to choice of certain career paths(N=348)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
My personal interests and passion influenced my career choice	7(2.0%)	14(4.0%)	29(8.3%)	93(26.7%)	205(58.9%)	4.36	.940
I selected subjects based on my performance in examinations	8(2.3%)	23(6.6%)	20(5.7%)	130(37.4%)	167(48.0%)	4.22	.981
Knowledge that student has influence career choice	9(2.6%)	14(4.0%)	54(15.5%)	149(42.8%)	122(35.1%)	4.04	.949
Students select careers that sound prestigious and superior	11(3.2%)	13(3.7%)	42(12.1%)	201(57.8%)	81(23.3%)	3.94	.887
Interaction with role models /mentors influences students' choice career	15(4.3%)	23(6.6%)	53(15.2%)	151(46.4%)	106(30.5%)	3.89	1.049
I selected subjects that can make it easy for me to obtain required cut off points for college and university courses.	22(6.3%)	25(7.2%)	42(12.1%)	142(40.8%)	117(33.6%)	3.88	1.142
Students select careers that are regarded famous	15(4.3%)	14(4.0%)	55(15.8%)	202(58.0%)	62(17.8%)	3.81	.923
The subjects offered in the school influence career choice of students	13(3.7%)	27(7.8%)	58(16.7%)	170(48.9%)	80(23.0%)	3.80	1.002

Career guidance teachers help students to select subjects	20(5.7%)	24(6.9%)	60(17.2%)	169(48.6%)	75(21.6%)	3.73	1.055
Career guidance teachers help students to make career choice	22(6.3%)	43(12.4%)	81(23.3%)	148(42.5%)	54(15.5%)	3.49	1.091
Students discuss the careers to pursue with their peers	34(9.8%)	55(15.8%)	77(22.1%)	151(43.4%)	31(8.9%)	3.26	1.130
Mass media influence career choice of students	29(8.3%)	50(14.4%)	119(34.2%)	113(32.5%)	37(10.6%)	3.23	1.086
I selected subjects based on the teachers who teach the subject	53(53%)	60(17.2%)	70(20.1%)	111(31.9%)	54(15.5%)	3.15	1.305
Parents aspirations influence students decision to select certain subjects	34(9.8%)	80(23.0%)	98(28.2%)	100(28.7%)	36(10.3%)	3.07	1.149
The prospects of getting a job in a particular field influence students' career choice	27(7.8%)	131(37.6%)	67(19.3%)	74(21.3%)	49(14.1%)	2.96	1.211
I selected subjects similar to those selected by their classmates	100(28.7%)	88(25.3%)	62(17.8%)	77(22.1%)	21(6.0%)	2.51	1.278
I want to pursue a career path similar to what their friends will pursue	120(34.5%)	84(24.1%)	88(25.3%)	47(13.5%)	9(2.6%)	2.26	1.144
Aggregate mean score						3.50	

Table 4.21.***Influence of parents' aspirations on pursuance of certain career paths by their children***

Statements (N=348)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
I perform well because my parents give me moral support	6(1.7%)	7(2.0%)	20(5.7%)	120(34.5%)	195(56.0%)	4.41	.829
The school management invite parents to discuss academic progress of students	16(4.6%)	18(5.2%)	40(11.5%)	131(37.6%)	143(41.1%)	4.05	1.071
My parents encourage me to seek information about career	14(4.0%)	25(7.2%)	36(10.3%)	145(41.7%)	128(36.8%)	4.00	1.060
Am rewarded by my parents when I perform well in school	17(4.9%)	25(7.2%)	57(16.4%)	123(35.3%)	126(36.2%)	3.91	1.117
I discuss my end term results with my mother	23(6.6%)	30(8.6%)	54(15.5%)	118(33.9%)	123(35.3%)	3.83	1.193
I discuss my end term results with both parents	30(8.6%)	31(8.9%)	66(19.0%)	93(26.7%)	128(36.8%)	3.74	1.276
I perform well because my parents	27(7.8%)	42(12.1%)	59(17.0%)	112(32.2%)	108(31.0%)	3.67	1.247

monitor my academic progress								
I discuss my end term results with my father	34(9.8%)	32(9.2%)	62(17.8%)	120(34.5%)	100(28.7%)	3.63	1.258	
My parents provide a lot of information on various careers that has enabled me make a choice	51(14.7%)	58(16.7%)	56(16.1%)	102(29.3%)	81(23.3%)	3.30	1.376	
Am punished by my parents when I perform poorly in class	113(32.5%)	89(25.6%)	70(20.1%)	56(16.1%)	20(5.7%)	2.37	1.247	
I feel pressured to perform because my parents have chosen a career for me	191(54.9%)	98(28.2%)	33(9.5%)	16(4.6%)	10(2.9%)	1.72	1.006	
I choose a career like that of my parents	220(63.2%)	77(22.1%)	27(7.8%)	16(4.6%)	8(2.3%)	1.61	.974	
Aggregate mean score						3.35		