

**PARENTS' ROLE IN CAREER GUIDANCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN KIKUYU SUB-COUNTY: A CASE OF KIAMBU COUNTY -  
KENYA**

**WANJIKU WANG'OMBE**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
MASTER OF EDUCATION IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING OF KENYA  
METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

**OCTOBER 2020**

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

**Wanjiku Wakera Wang'ombe**

**MEG-3-0317-1/2017**

### **Supervisors' Recommendation**

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the university supervisors.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

**Dr. Zipporah Kaaria**

**Department of Theology, Religious Studies and Counseling**

**Kenya Methodist University**

Signed: .....

Date: .....

**Dr. Winfred Kithinji**

**Department of Education**

**Kenya Methodist University**

© Wangombe Wanjiku Wakera

All rights reserved. No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronically, mechanically, by photocopying or otherwise, without prior written permission of the author or Kenya Methodist University, on that behalf.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis in memory of my mother, Abishag Wambui Wang'ombe, who had a vision for this study before I did and consistently encouraged me to begin. She inspired a spirit of lifelong learning as she pursued her own graduate studies even after retirement.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My humble appreciation to each person who contributed to the completion of this thesis. First, I am grateful to my supervisors, Dr. Zipporah Kaaria and Dr. Winfred Kithinji for their ever willing guidance, inspiration and encouragement.

My special thanks go to my lecturers Dr. Bernard Wamalwa and Ms. Doreen Katiba for being enthusiastic educators and my peers in the department of Theology, Religious Studies and Counseling for their moral support.

Thanks to my entire family, particularly my husband, James Kaniaru, for his dependable support and my sister, Wachuka Njoroge, for cheering me on. My gratitude goes to my colleague George Mburu for taking a personal interest in this study.

Finally, I am grateful to God for His favour, grace and provision as I pursued my further studies.

## ABSTRACT

Parents invest heavily in their children's education with career success as the desired outcome. Since the students' decision making ability is still developing, they need guidance from adults such as parents and teachers when making career decisions. The objectives of the study were to identify parent engagement strategies used in career guidance, assess parents' level of participation in career guidance programs, analyze parents' attitudes towards involvement in career guidance and examine counselling interventions that could enhance career guidance by parents in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County. The theoretical framework included Career Development and Social Cognitive Theories. The study involved mixed methods of social inquiry under a descriptive research design. Data collection methods used included questionnaire, focus group discussions and interview schedules. A sample of 207 parents was chosen from form three parents of the 17 secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County using stratified random sampling method. Data was also collected from 17 principals and 17 career counselors for triangulation. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively with the findings presented in the form of frequencies and percentages while qualitative findings were analysed thematically and presented in verbatim. The study established that circulars (65.2%) and newsletters (64.7%) were the most common methods used while career days / expos (55.1%) and parents meetings (79.7%) were the most common interactive programs offered by secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County to assist parents in providing career guidance to their children. The parents agreed that the information provided by the career counselors and the interactive sessions/events offered by the schools were useful in assisting them in providing career guidance to their children as indicated by mean values of 4.26 and 4.11 respectively. The study also established that most (84%) of the parents of Form 3 students in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County did attend career guidance programs to be informed and equipped as parents. One-on-one counseling and group counseling were the two major types of counseling offered to the parents to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. The parents shared the view that, as a result of their counseling on career guidance, they had acquired greater appreciation of the significant role that parents had on the career choices of their children and were able to learn on how best to guide their children about career choices. The study concluded that there was a fair level of participation of parents in career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County as most of the parents attended the career guidance programs/events with a view of being informed and equipped. In addition, most of the parents had a positive attitude towards their involvement in career guidance and an array of interventions could be adopted to help improve the effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County. The study recommended that there is need for awareness creation among parents of secondary school students in the country, in general, on their significant role in the career guidance of the students.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	ii
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	iv
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	v
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	vi
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	x
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	xi
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS &amp; ACRONYMS</b> .....	xii
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1.1 Background to the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	5
1.3 Purpose of the Study .....	6
1.4 Objectives of the Study .....	7
1.5 Research Questions .....	7
1.6 Justification of the Study .....	8
1.7 Limitations of the Study .....	8
1.8 Scope of the Study .....	9
1.9 Significance of the Study .....	9
1.10 Assumptions of the Study .....	10
1.11 Operational Definition of Terms .....	11
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	12
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	12
2.1 Introduction .....	12
2.2 Empirical Review .....	12

2.3 Theoretical Framework .....	26
2.4 Summary .....	29
2.5 Conceptual Framework .....	30
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>31</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	31
3.2 Research Design.....	31
3.3 Site of the Study .....	31
3.4 Target Population .....	32
3.5 Sampling Procedure .....	32
3.6 Data Collection Methods.....	34
3.7 Instrumentation .....	34
3.8 Validity of Research Instruments.....	36
3.9 Reliability of the Research Instruments .....	36
3.10 Data Collection Procedure .....	37
3.11 Data Analysis and Presentation.....	38
3.12 Ethical Considerations .....	38
<b>CHAPTER FOUR:</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>40</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	40
4.3 Demographic Findings .....	41
4.4 Career Guidance in the Schools .....	45
4.5 Parent Engagement Strategies and Career Guidance .....	47
4.6 Level of Parental Participation in Career Guidance.....	58
4.7 Parents' Attitude towards Involvement in Career Guidance.....	66



4.8 Counselling Interventions to Improve Effectiveness of Career Guidance by Parents in Secondary Schools .....	69
<b>CHAPTER FIVE:</b> .....	86
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	86
5.1 Introduction .....	86
5.2 Summary .....	86
5.3 Conclusions .....	89
5.4 Recommendations .....	90
5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research .....	91
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	92
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	98
APPENDIX 1: INTRODUCTION LETTER .....	98
APPENDIX II: INFORMED CONSENT OF THE PARTICIPANTS .....	99
APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS .....	100
APPENDIX IV: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS .....	105
APPENDIX V: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CAREER GUIDANCE COUNSELORS .....	105
APPENDIX VI: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS.....	107
APPENDIX VII: LIST OF KIKUYU SUB-COUNTY SECONDARY SCHOOLS ...	108
APPENDIX VIII: ETHICAL CLEARANCE BY KEMU .....	109
APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH PERMIT BY NACOSTI.....	111

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 The study participants .....	32
Table 3.2 The study population .....	33
Table 3.3 Sample of parent participants per category of schools .....	34
Table 4.4 Response rate .....	41
Table 4.5 Age distribution of the respondents .....	43
Table 4.6 Education level of the respondents .....	44
Table 4.7 Career guidance methods and interactive programs offered by the schools ..	46
Table 4.8 Parents' opinion regarding career guidance methods used (N=207).....	47
Table 4.9 Parents' opinion on interactive programs used (N=207).....	50
Table 4.10 Respondents level of agreement with parent engagement strategies used ...	54
Table 4.11 Most effective aspect of the parent engagement strategies .....	56
Table 4.12 Frequency of attendance to career guidance programs.....	59
Table 4.13 Reasons for attendance of the career guidance events (N = 181).....	61
Table 4.14 Reasons for non-attendance of the career guidance events .....	63
Table 4.15 Parents' attitude towards involvement in career guidance .....	66
Table 4.16 Outcomes of parents counseling on career guidance.....	75
Table 4.17 Challenges faced by schools in engaging parents for career guidance.....	79

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework .....	30
Figure 4.2 Gender distribution of the respondents .....	42
Figure 4.3 Distribution of the respondents by their occupation .....	45
Figure 4.4 Forms of counselling offered to the parents .....	72

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS**

CICA	Career Industry Council of Australia
FGD	Focus group discussions
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the background information to the research problem, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, justification and limitations of the study, scope, significance and assumptions of the study and operational definitions.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Parents invest heavily and make significant sacrifices to ensure their children get a good education. They see this as a gateway to the child's success in adult life. According to Rose et al (2017), household spending on educational materials in 12 African countries ranged between 27% and 56% of household expenditure.

“Parents want their children to find happiness and success in life and one factor which influences happiness and success is career choice” Qualifax (n.d.).

Morgan's (2012) evaluation of the 2008 Australia Family School Partnership Framework Initiatives found that partnership between families and schools “contribute to the building of social capital in the community”. Morgan laments that although many governments around the world, including USA, UK and Canada, have included parent involvement in education in their legislation and policy, “the extent to which this has had a clear and effective impact on the positive involvement of parents in young people's career development, is somewhat less than clear”. Parent involvement in the child's schooling and learning process is broadly evident but involvement in career guidance seems to be lagging behind.

Career guidance can be defined as a comprehensive, developmental program designed to assist individuals in making and implementing informed educational, training and

occupational choices (Zelloth, 2015). Career guidance is the guidance given to individuals to help them acquire the knowledge, information, skills, and experience necessary to identify career options, explore alternatives and narrow them down to make one career decision. This career decision then results in their current or future social, financial and emotional well-being throughout (Oomen, 2016). Current career guidance programs seek to better prepare individuals for the changing workplace of the 21st century through matching available training and employment opportunities (Farthing, 2014).

In the educational context, career guidance entails planned programme of learning activities and experiences aimed at assisting students in making informed decisions about their study and/or work options to enable their effective participation in working life (Supreeth & Aravind, 2015). Career guidance also helps the students to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities and equips them with independent thinking and life-long learning capabilities so that they can be better prepared to make informed and responsible career choices and thus be able to make the best of the opportunities ahead (Ngii, 2015). The essence of career guidance is to enable students understand their own career/academic aspirations and to prepare them to make informed choices for further study and future career and integrating their career/academic aspirations into whole-person development and life-long learning (Oye, et al., 2012).

A survey conducted in 2011 on parent engagement strategies in 54 schools in the Central Ranges, Victoria State, Australia, by the Local Learning and Employment Networks reported that 43% of the schools had parent involvement plans, 19% had plans in progress and 17% of the schools did not have a parent involvement plan.

Another survey conducted in 2011 on 33 schools across Australia by Miles Morgan in consultation with Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) provided evidence that schools are using “Band aid” or “Deficit” models of parental engagement in schools. The schools had “discrete one-off events or interventions typically targeted at points of potential stress in the schooling or transition process” (Morgan, 2012). The survey revealed that parents are only involved in “subject selection for university”. This limited parental engagement shows that the schools are underutilising the resource and input that parents could contribute to the student’s career development.

Supreeth and Aravind (2015) describe career counseling as an emerging area in India. They also highlight the challenge that many of the methods used in career counseling in India are adapted from Western theories which they describe as unsuitable and not culturally relevant for India. A case study on Sri Kumaran Children’s Home School in Bangalore, India, revealed that the Career Counselor periodically sent parents circulars and notes to inform them regarding the school career activities. Once a year, the school counselor conducts a two hour session to sensitise parents on the important part they play in their student’s career development and was available for voluntary one-on-one sessions. This is evidence that parent involvement is not a significant part of the school’s career counselling program. Career guidance as a department or function in schools has been described as “weakly professionalised” in most countries and either under-resourced or not provided for at all in schools (Byrne & Beavers, 1993).

Secondary school students are in a stage of life that is characterised by a quest for independence and unique identity. A study of Badagry Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria’s secondary schools to assess the extent to which parents influenced career choices of the students, whether it affected them positively or negatively, found that

parents influence did not significantly affect the students' career choices (Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014). Their career choice was significantly affected by the student's status expectations related to particular careers. The study revealed that although parents may wish to be included in their child's career decisions, the role of the parent is often not defined.

The decision-making ability of the student is developing intellectually and emotionally (Fouziah et al. 2010). In a study conducted by Maingi (2007) among 720 Kenyatta University students on certainty in career choice, 65.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that they "feel relieved" when someone makes decisions for them. Lack of proper guidance can lead to frustration of the student. According to Ngii (2015) frustration caused by lack of guidance among students causes them to seek all sorts of adjustment mechanisms such as aggression, compensation, identification, rationalisation, withdrawal or negativism. The parent is well placed to provide career decision guidance because they have more background information about the child's personality traits and interests than the institutions career counselor. The aim of this study was to assess parents' role in providing career guidance so that the students could make informed career decisions.

Orege (2011) outlines career guidance programs implemented in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya as motivation talks, peer education, career exhibitions, guided discussions and organised career trips. However, the extent to which parents are involved in these programs was not explored. Kibaara and Ndirangu (2014) revealed that 88.5% of parents in public secondary schools in Kieni West Sub-County, Nyeri County, were involved in career choice guidance but the study focused on the



impact of parental involvement on the child's academic achievement not on the impact on effective career guidance and career choice.

A review of school websites (Alliance Girls High School, 2019; Alliance High School, 2019) and alumni websites (Alliance Girls' High School Old Girls Association, 2019) in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County, revealed that career guidance programs include mentorship programs, career fairs, professional guest speakers and professionals attending a class to speak on that particular subject, connecting it to their profession. The Alliance Girls High School website (2019) contained an article that acknowledged that a collaborative relationship between the school, the child and the parent was vital for a child to develop and succeed in a career. However, the author opined that in most cases, the parents abdicated their role and entrusted the whole journey of academic and career development to the teachers as the experts. The calendars on the school websites indicated that parents were invited for open days which mainly focused on the child's academic progress. However, invitation of parents to career guidance programs was not evident. This study aimed to explore the extent to which the parent, who is a vital stake holder, played a role in providing career guidance to the secondary school students in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The parent is an underutilised resource in this area of education. Morgan (2012) states that "generally, there is a lack of definitive international research or data that demonstrates effective types of parental engagement strategies, and their positive impact on the transition outcomes of young people". He suggested that the few strategies used in schools may not be suitable for the parents' context and therefore parents are not motivated to participate. Parents are often the most influential actors in

their child's choice of career path. Research indicates that when students feel supported and loved by their parents, they tend to make more satisfying career choices later in life (Barnes et al., 2020). However, examples of parent-involved career guidance interventions in Kenyan secondary schools are limited, and most are not sustained, explaining why knowledge on involving parents in career guidance is underdeveloped (Kibaara & Ndirangu, 2014).

Several studies have evaluated the status of career guidance and counselling programmes for secondary school's students in Kenya, including Orange (2011) and Kibaara and Ndirangu (2014). However, these studies have limited research output on parents' role in career guidance and counselling among secondary school students. Parents' level of participation in career guidance programs as a means through which parents offer their students support has hardly been established. Their attitude towards involvement in career guidance has not adequately been determined. Consequently, the aim of this study was to assess parents' role in career guidance. This is necessary, to provide essential support to the students as they make this significant life decision. The study also determined the interventions that parents could engage in to enhance career guidance among their secondary school children.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

To determine parents' role in career guidance among secondary school students in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County. The study also determined interventions that could be used to improve effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the influence of parent engagement strategies in career guidance among students in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County;
2. To assess the contribution of parent participation in career guidance programs in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County;
3. To establish the influence of parents' attitudes towards involvement in career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County;
4. To explore parent-based counselling interventions that can be used to enhance effectiveness of career guidance programs among students in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the influence of parent engagement strategies on career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County?
2. What is the contribution of parental participation in career guidance programs in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub- County, Kiambu County?
3. How does parents' attitude towards involvement in career guidance influence career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County?
4. What counselling interventions can be used to improve effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County?

## **1.6 Justification of the Study**

Parents invest substantial resources on their children's education. The return that they expect from this investment is their child's success in career and adult life. This study was therefore important to the parents and the schools who aim to maximize effectiveness of the education offered to secondary school students. There was need for a study aimed at establishing effective types of parental engagement strategies in career guidance that would motivate parents to participate and have a positively support the transition of the form 3 students into adult work life. This study also endeavored to determine counseling interventions that could be used to improve effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools.

## **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

Study literature on parental involvement in career guidance in Kenya was found to be limited. To overcome this challenge literature was reviewed regarding parental involvement in education as a whole and extrapolated to the career guidance context.

Finance for undertaking the research work was a challenge as the researcher was self-sponsored. This limited the depth and width of the research work.

There was the risk that parents could wish to be seen in a positive light and may not be willing to provide accurate information about their involvement and attitude towards their child's educational endeavours. Parents who were already involved visited the schools and were included in the sample while parents who did not visit the schools, and therefore did not form part of this study, would have been a valuable source of information for this study.

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

The study was conducted in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County of Kiambu County in Kenya. It investigated secondary schools' parent career guidance strategies and the parents' involvement in these programs. It also investigated the parents' attitude towards involvement in career guidance and the counseling strategies available to increase effectiveness of parent involvement in career guidance. Focus of the study was parents of form three students in these secondary schools.

### **1.9 Significance of the Study**

Outcomes of the study may be useful to schools and career guidance departments or officers to develop appropriate engagements for parents and other significant adults so that they provide career guidance in a way that would benefit secondary school students. It may empower parents in performing their parental role more effectively as they guide their children to make effective career choices. It may also help the form 3 students resolve a significant life challenge, their career choice, as they balance between the conflicting need for independence and the need to depend on parents and family support.

The study may be useful to the government which invests heavily in education and expects return on this investment by having a productive labour force contributing to economic growth. Effective career guidance should lead to effective career choice and high levels of productivity in the economy. It would also provide one avenue for reducing student frustration and unrest in Kenyan secondary schools.

### **1.10 Assumptions of the Study**

This study assumed that:

1. Secondary schools had a career guidance department or officer and conducted career guidance for their students.
2. Parents were overtly or covertly involved in their children's career guidance.
3. Parents would be available for data collection during the stipulated period.

### **1.11 Operational Definition of Terms**

Adolescent:	A person between the ages of 13 and 17 years.
Attitude:	How parents perceive career guidance in schools.
Career:	An occupation embarked on for a noteworthy period of a person's life.
Career guidance:	Services and activities aimed to assist persons make educational, training and occupational choices.
Counseling interventions:	Cognitive, affective, behavioural and systemic counseling strategies, techniques and methods implemented in the context of a therapeutic relationship.
Parent engagement:	Parents and school staff working together to support the learning and development of the child.
Parent participation:	When the parent involves himself in the schools parent engagement programs.
Strategies:	Ways in which the school can achieve its parent engagement goals.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives a summary of literature relevant to the research premise. The empirical review elaborated on studies done on parent engagement strategies in career guidance, parents' level of participation in career and other school programs, attitudes of parents towards involvement in their career guidance and counselling intervention strategies that could be used to support parents in career guidance. The theoretical framework elaborated on theories relating career development to parent guidance. The chapter also covered a conceptual frame work of the study.

#### **2.2 Empirical Review**

This section presents a review of literature on the research subject as guided by the study objectives. It includes segments on parent engagement strategies used in career guidance, level of parent participation in career guidance programs, parents' attitudes towards involvement in career guidance and counseling interventions to improve effectiveness of career guidance by parents.

#### **Parent Engagement Strategies Used In Career Guidance**

Various studies indicate that schools use a wide range of parent engagement strategies to support parents' role in their children's career development and career choice decisions. A study by Barnes et al. (2020) on the role of parents and carers in providing careers guidance in UK showed that schools offered parent orientation sessions as a mode to educate parents on their role in career guidance. As depicted in studies by Chifamba (2019) and Zafar (2019) having parents as career guest speakers, parents



offering students work experience opportunities and use of open days and workshops are also other common strategies employed to engage parents in career guidance in schools. On their part, Hegna and Smette (2017) identified organized career workshops, career exhibitions, print or digital career information and career information web sites as viable parent engagement strategies that can be used in career guidance while Oomen (2016) argued that parent engagement strategies in career guidance should incorporate active structured activities and interactive dialogues between parents, students and career counselors.

Morgan (2012) categorized parent engagement strategies in career development in young people in Australia into four typical types namely workshops, career exhibitions, print or digital career information and career information web sites. A survey he conducted in schools and universities in Australia reported use of parent information sessions, “information evenings”, schools newsletter and career information posted on the school or other websites. The interactive strategies reported were career related interviews by the careers trainer involving both parents and students, career expositions held in conjunction with local tertiary institutions, having parents as career guest speakers, parents offering work experience programs, workshops, open days and compulsory volunteering schemes.

The survey revealed that most schools rely on traditional information giving strategies which are passive while Morgan (2012) suggests that best practice should involve interactive strategies of parent engagement. Morgan describes career development, parent engagement strategies in Australia as being “in the early stages of development” and “behind the recognised standards of international best practice”. According to him, although schools are aware of the need to implement more comprehensive and holistic

parent engagement strategies, the schools do not have the time, resources or capacity to engage parents beyond conventional information giving strategies. He also laments that parent engagement strategies used in Australia are adopted from United States of American countries and Britain. Effectiveness of these strategies in the Australian context would need to be investigated.

Harackiewicz et al. (2012) carried out a field experiment to test whether 'theory based interventions' would help parents motivate their adolescent children take more mathematics and science courses in high school and pursue careers in science technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The two parent engagement strategies in the experiment were brochures mailed to parents and information available on a website. The result of the experiment was that students whose parents participated in the experiment took on average one semester more of science and mathematics courses in the last 2 years of high school compared to the control group. The results demonstrated that parent engagement strategies that involve providing parents with information can be effective. This contradicts Morgan (2012) view that this is not best practice and effective parent engagement strategies should involve active structured activities and interactive dialogue between parents and the school

that potentially assist one's child and the cohort similar to their child's placement.

The experiment indicates that information giving or theory-based parent engagement strategies can be effective if the information provided is motivating to both parent and child. The brochure in this experiment equipped the parent with skills on how to connect with his/her adolescent child and help the child make career choices. The website provided useful information links that parents were encouraged to share with their children via email. These theory-based strategies encouraged and equipped parents

to interact with their teens as they make career related decisions. Brochures and use of websites may be strategies that are appropriate for parents in Western countries where people have a reading culture. However, the study will aim to establish whether these strategies are appropriate for the Kenyan context.

Zelloth (2015) outlines 4 kinds of delivery models that can be used to provide career guidance. These are the curriculum model, where career guidance is taught to students as part of the regular school curriculum, the centre model, where the school has career guidance experts and materials available and individuals in need visit the centre, the individual model, where the career guidance expert offers face-to-face specialized services to the individual, and the virtual model, where web-based career information or interactive services are provided. Zelloth specifically relates the individual model to parent engagement but application of the other 3 models to parent engagement can also be explored.

Sri Kumaran Children's Home, a private school in Bangalore India offering Grade 1 to 12 education to over 2,500 students, has implemented the Jiva approach to career counselling. This is an Indian career counselling initiative through a 10 day intensive certificate course. However, the 10 day intensive program is offered to students once a year. The programme, however, only contains a 2 hour parent orientation session.

The school also organises a career day where speakers on different careers that the students are curious about conduct workshops. These speakers are selected from the school's parent body and also from the career counselor's database of professionals. This way, the parent is used as a resource not just to empower his own child but the whole cohort. The school reported that parents are occasionally informed about career guidance activities using notes or circulars. Parents can voluntarily have one-on-one

sessions with the counselor to discuss their child's career concerns. (Supreeth & Aravind, 2015)

A survey conducted on 32 students who had undergone the Jiva program at the Sri Kumaran Children's Home reported increased confidence in making decisions about their careers. They attributed this confidence to the increase in knowledge and awareness as a result of the workshops, career reports and career days. Given that parents are a resource in the career day, this indicates their effective engagement in career guidance. However, Sri Kumaran Children's Home's effort to provide comprehensive, India-appropriate career guidance focuses heavily on student engagement strategies. Parent engagement strategies have not been given significant emphasis.

In a study on parent guidance for career choice of secondary school students in Pakistan, Hassan (2014) outlined collaboration with parents as part of the counselling program at secondary schools. She stated that with the parents, the school counselor focuses on parent education, communication/networking, college/career awareness program, and interpretation of assessment results, academic matters, work experience opportunities and one-on-one meetings with parents. Hassan did not distinguish between parent engagement regarding academic progress and career guidance. She did not do an evaluative study of these strategies so as to distinguish between the effective and ineffective parent engagement strategies.

A study on guidance and counselling in Nigerian Secondary Schools, (Oye et al., 2012) suggests that parent engagement occurs through PTA (Parent Teacher Association) meetings. This provides a forum for dialogue between the teacher and the parent. The author uses parent attendance to PTA meetings as a yardstick to measure the progress of

guidance and counselling programs in schools. However, PTA meetings are general. This study does not address parent engagement strategies that are specific to career guidance.

In Kenya, studies have been conducted on parent involvement in their child's education in general. They do not refer specifically to parent engagement in career guidance. Kimu (2012) in his dissertation on parent involvement in public schools in Kenya suggested that parents in public primary schools have mainly been engaged in fundraising initiatives and that they do not participate actively in other aspects of their children's schooling. The author highlights that Kenya's educational policies advocate for parental management of schools through the PTA and the Board of Governors.

There was a research gap with regards to parent engagement strategies used by secondary schools in Kenya in career guidance, thus the need for this study.

### **Level of Parent Participation in Career Guidance Programs**

Various studies have explored the explored the subject of parents' participation in career guidance programs. In a study on career guidance in career planning among secondary school students, Zafar (2019) observed that, despite the appreciation of parents' significant influence on their children's career choice decisions, the level of their participation in career guidance programs was sub-optimal. Similar sentiments were espoused by Zeb et al. (2018) who in a study of the role of parents in career selection of secondary school students reported the level of parent participation in career guidance programs as being inadequate. As argued by Barnes et al. (2020), the significance of parental role in their sons' and daughters' career decisions can only realize its potential if parents adequately participate in organized career guidance programs.

Murray et al. (2014) conducted a survey on predominately African-American parents whose children attended urban public middle schools to explore barriers and facilitators to school-based parent involvement. Although this study was not specific to career guidance programs, it provided insight regarding parent participation in school programs. The authors acknowledged that parent engagement can be home-based or school-based. With regard to career guidance, home-based parent engagement can include the parents assisting children with assignments, decision making and career skill building opportunities. This study specifically focused on school-based parent engagement based on the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of the parent involvement process. This model posits that parent involvement is influenced by 3 motivational factors namely the parents' motivational beliefs, the parents' perceptions of invitations to become involved and the parents' personal life context.

The study revealed that although the parents knew it was important to engage, they only attended 1 or 2 school meetings or events. This was not as often as they would have liked to. However, the parents reported that these school invitations were not timely or organized. They learnt about the events too late for them to plan to attend. In some cases, the child failed to give the circular to the parent. Parents also reported that school engagements were set on work days so they could not attend.

Based on the third motivator in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model i.e. the parent life context, the Murray et al. (2014) survey revealed that African-American parents' main reason from not engaging in school-based programs was time. They were low-income workers likely to be working several jobs without flexible schedules or paid leave benefits. Being busy at work meant that they could not attend scheduled school meetings. Some parents reported that limited resources meant they could not meet

transport costs to attend school events as they were already struggling to meet the basic family needs. Feedback on African-American parents can be adapted somewhat to a Kenyan context where average incomes are low and unemployment rates are high.

Parents in the survey reported that teacher invitations to engage with the school were rare and mainly behaviour management related. A survey by Morgan (2012) in consultation with CICA on 33 schools across Australia revealed that schools focused on “one-off events” to address an area of concern, or facilitate the “transition process”. Morgan (2012) feedback from one school stated that although their career guidance program commenced in Year 7, parent were only involved from Year 10. The school assumed that this is when the parent begins to take an interest in the child’s career decisions. School invitations to parents to engage were few because the parents were labeled as “disinterested”. The study revealed that schools limit parent engagement in career guidance programs to subject selection necessary for university course choices. Morgan described this limited parent engagement as a band aid/deficit model.

In a study conducted by Maluleke (2014) investigating parental involvement at 3 schools in the Vhembe District, Limpopo South, Republic of South Africa, the school managers reported that less than one third of parents attend parent meetings. They reported that only parents of well performing children attend parent consultation meetings. These managers suggested that barriers to parent participation were fear due to limited education, low self-esteem and financial constraints.

In Kenya, findings of a study set to investigate the effects of parents’ involvement in their children’s academic achievement in twenty one public secondary schools in Kieni West Sub-location in Nyeri County indicated that 84.7% of the parents interviewed participated in school events (Kibaara & Ndirangu, 2014). This is in contrast to the

report by school managers in the Limpopo school, and the conclusion by Murray et al (2014) that African-American parents have lower than desired participation in school events because their work and socio-economic circumstances are a barrier. Parents in Kieni West Sub-location public secondary schools study on average are also from low socio-economic backgrounds however 84.7% participation may also include one-off attendance of school events. This report was also not specific to career guidance but school events in general.

### **Parents' Attitudes towards Involvement in Career Guidance**

Alfianto et al. (2019) expressed the view that parental attitudes towards involvement in career guidance played a significant part in successful engagement of parents in schools' career guidance activities. Studies by Mwalongo (2018) and Zeb et al. (2018) reported a higher level of parental engagement in career guidance and mentorship among parents with positive attitude towards their participation in career guidance while a reduced level of participation in career guidance activities was reported among parents that exhibited poor attitude towards parental involvement in career guidance. Similarly, Hegna and Smette (2017) in a review of parental influence in educational decisions did also emphasize on the need for parents to have a positive perception towards their participation in career guidance activities as a prerequisite for their meaningful engagement and contribution towards the cause, a view also supported by Chifamba (2019).

A study conducted by Murray on predominately African-American parents whose children attended urban public middle schools revealed that the parents considered it was "important" to engage in their child's educational programs (Murray et al., 2014). Although this study focused on school-based programs in general, this report can be



used to assume that parents believe it is important for them to engage in their children career guidance programs and process. The study also revealed that the parents' attitude varied depending on the source of invitation for participation. Parents perceived invitations from "the teacher" as mandatory while invitations from the child were less highly regarded. Parents believe that invitations from the school administration have authority to be respected, which indicates that their engagement is motivated by authoritarian factors rather than motivation to provide support to their children. Based on Murray et al. (2014) study parents' attitude towards involvement is also influenced by their attitude towards the teachers, other parents and student in their child's school. Half of the parents in the study viewed the teachers as hostile and unfriendly. Some were not motivated to engage in school programs because they did not wish to interact with 'other people's children' who are disrespectful. Some did not wish to meet other parents to avoid potential negative interaction but there were those who were motivated to attend so as to meet the parents of their children's friends. Such an attitude would limit a parents' participation in parent engagement programs in specifically career guidance programs.

Findings from a study by Maluleke (2014) on parent involvement in schools in Vhembe Limpopo revealed that low self-confidence was a barrier to involvement. She linked the low confidence to limited education and low economic status of parents. Based on these findings, parents may believe they are not equipped enough to provide effective career guidance to their children. They may relegate this responsibility to the teacher who they perceived to be equipped to provide effective guidance. This attitude would limit parents' participation in career guidance. Maluleke recommends that allowing parents to express their expectations and concerns at parent involvement workshops would help

address their fears and build their self-confidence as an educational resource and by extension in career guidance.

Oundo et al. (2014) describe the attitude of parents in day secondary schools in Samia District, Kenya towards educational involvement as “carefree” and apparently negative. They suggested a link between this attitude and poor academic performance among day secondary school students. The authors suggest these attitudes are governed by their inner beliefs about education and that parent’s attitudes can be effective, positively influencing their children’s reactions and education. Based on the conclusion of this study that parental attitude towards educational involvement affected student performance, it was important for this study to investigate parent’s attitude towards involvement in career guidance as this would affect the child’s effectiveness in career decision making.

## **Counseling Interventions to Improve Effectiveness of Career Guidance by Parents of Students**

### **Theory Based Interventions**

A study conducted by Harackiewicz et al. (2012) on parents of high school students of 188 schools in the State of Wisconsin, USA, concluded that information provided to parents can influence their values and motivate them to influence their children’s behaviour. This study was specific to parents influencing their children to take more Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses and pursue these careers. The parents were provided with brochures and given behaviour homework to share website links with their children (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy). This strategy encouraged parents to interact with their children and reported a 75% success rate. The intervention strategy can therefore be used to psycho-educate parents and influence

their values and beliefs regarding 21<sup>st</sup> century careers so as to interact effectively with their teens when offering career guidance.

Oomen (2016) conducted a study on the importance of parents in career decision making with a focus on Europe. She described three ways to categorize interventions to support parents of students in career guidance: -

a) Career information centres

The career information centres provide theory-based intervention through booklets, exercises and other materials to guide the parent involvement. This may be effective in Europe but not in Africa where the cultural context may influence effectiveness of written material provided to parents.

b) Family learning interventions

This involves psycho-educating parents in small group sessions facilitated by specialist staff. The parents attend a series of sessions following a career counseling manual. These forums allow parents to share experiences and support each other in this parenting task. The extent to which this strategy would be effective in a Kenyan context where many students attend boarding schools away from their parents would need to be investigated. Evidence is not available of a school in Kenya that provides a series of career related family learning sessions. However, there is evidence that both private and public secondary schools in Kenya offer parents talks and workshops to psycho-educate them and empower them to provide more effective career guidance to their teens. According to its website, Strathmore School in Nairobi, Kenya organises a Career Day where both parents and students are educated on how to make effective career choices.

Due to parents' busy schedules, schools tend offer these sessions in one-off group forums.

c) Family therapy interventions

i) Family Therapy

Oomen (2016) suggests that family group sessions can be offered by the school counselor where the parents and child are the client. They are offered several therapy sessions adapted to the specific family requirements aimed at improving the teens vocational choice. This would require the time commitment of the parties involved to make this strategy effective.

ii) Group Counseling

Oomen (2016) includes this strategy in the family therapy category. This method involves counseling a group of parents combining psycho-education on career choice with the techniques from family systems theory. The aim is to enhance effective communication and create a more supportive family environment for the teen to receive effective parental support when making career choice. Evidence is not available of this intervention strategy in use in the Kenyan context.

iii) One-on-one Counseling Sessions

The school counselor can provide one-on-one counseling sessions for parents who are finding it challenging to provide career guidance to their children. In Asia and Africa, parents have a conservative approach to career choice. They are also significantly influenced by the desire to gain the approval of the extended family and the community. This can cause them to compel the child to take a given career path such as medicine or

engineering. The counselor can use Carl Rogers person-centered approach to empower the parent to believe in his worth as an expert in guiding his child. The counselor should challenge the parent to shift focus from what other people would say to what the parent and child think and want.

Once the parent is empowered to be genuine, he can have an open discussion with the child using the tools modeled to him by the counselor. This provides the child with an environment that frees them to express themselves better. The parent will learn to be patient with the teen even when 'he is wrong'. Together, they can gather and analyse career related information (iDreamCareer.com, 2015).

As described in this section, it is evident that schools can adopt a wide range of interventions to support parents' role in their children's career choice decisions. To enrich parents' role in career guidance, schools may adopt a mix of the different interventions based on parents' preferences and the context (Lim & You, 2019).

### **Parents' Gender, Socio-Economic Status, Education Level, Age and Career Guidance Engagement.**

In this study, the intervening variables included the gender, age, education level and socio-economic status of the parents. On gender, studies by Kimu (2012) and Maluleke (2014) reported greater participation in children's school programs among parents of female gender compared to their male counterparts, a finding also supported by Ngii (2015) who noted that female parents tended to place greater emphasis in participating in their children's schools affairs than the male parents. On age, most of the studies report most of the parents of secondary school students as largely being middle-aged (Kibaara & Ndirangu, 2014; Orange, 2011). Further, a parent's education level has also been cited as one of the determinants that influence the level of their participation in

their children's schooling activities. Parents with higher education levels tend to have greater participation in the children's schooling activities compared to those with low education level and this has been attributed to their greater appreciation of the value of education (Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014; Oye et al., 2012). Similarly, a parent's social economic status, evidenced by their occupation or income level, has also been cited as one of the determinants that influence the level of their participation in their children's schooling activities. Parents of higher socio-economic status have been found to have greater participation in the children's schooling activities compared to those of low socio-economic status, which amplifies the role of parent's financial means in today's education sphere (Kibaara & Ndirangu, 2014; Oomen, 2016).

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

This section describes the theories that guided the study which were: the Donald Super career development theory and the social cognitive career theory.

#### **Donald Super Career Development Theory**

In 1980, Super presented that an individual's career process has stages which one must undergo and complete before moving to the next stage: -

0 - 14 years Growth stage: Development of self-concept, attitudes and beliefs about the world of work.

15 - 25 years Exploratory stage: People begin to understand different careers more clearly, envision themselves in different careers and are willing to try various options to see what suits them.

26 - 45 years Establishment stage: A person settles in a job and starts working. Being in the wrong job causes frustration and one seeks alternatives.

46 - 65 years Maintenance stage: People settle in the job or industry that suits them.

65+ years Disengage: This is the stage prior to retirement. Focus on work diminishes as focus shifts to other areas of life.

Rose (2018) highlights the complexities involved in the exploration stage. The school career guidance curriculum encourages students to gather information on a wide variety of possible occupations while at the same time the academic curriculum demands that they narrow down their subject choice and focus on a narrow range of career options. Super has a holistic definition of career which includes job, relationships, interests, spirituality, physical activity, community involvement, and personal space. The student's decision-making capabilities are still in the process of developing (Fouziah et al., 2010). They need adult guidance and in particular parental support to manoeuvre the complex career decisions in this exploratory stage.

Unlike Erik Erikson's theory that looks generally at the stages of personality development, Super's theory looks at the stages of an individual's development in the world of work. The exploration stage offers a parent opportunity to expose the child to a range of career opportunities through family community engagements, involving them in adult productive activities or engaging in career related discussions.

This theory is relevant, as the study seeks to establish the extent to which parent engagement strategies used in Secondary Schools in Kikuyu Sub- County enhance the students' exploratory stage and the counseling interventions that can be used to coach

parents on how to develop their children's self-concept and positive attitude towards being a productive citizen.

### **The Social Cognitive Career Theory**

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) was developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown and Gail Hackett in 1994 and is based on Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. It provides a detailed link between career self-efficacy and parental support. According to the SCCT interest model, students develop and interest in a given career based on what they have been exposed to in their family and cultural environment. Through on-going exposure, involvement and feedback, people develop skills and expectations about outcomes of activity engagements. The SCCT choice model proposes that many adolescents make a career choice not only based on interest but also on environmental influences such as the level of support (family, financial and emotional support) and barriers which create restrictive environmental conditions such as family economic need, family pressures, educational limitations and cultural values (Lent et al., 2002).

Based on this theory, the parents are crucial in determining the adolescent's career choice. Using this theory parents may be coached and motivated to offer support, build their children's career self-efficacy and help mitigate the environmental constraints that limit career choice.

This study seeks to establish the extent to which parents in Secondary Schools in Kikuyu Sub County actively engage in career guidance strategies that support their children to develop career efficacy. It assesses the role of parental participation in career guidance programs as a form of family support and identify barriers to participation that create restrictive environmental limitations to effective career



guidance and career choice. The study seeks to investigate the parents' attitude towards involvement in career guidance as this has an impact on the level of parental support when the adolescent is making career decisions. This theory can be used in the counselling interventions to coach parents on the link between family, financial and emotional support and career efficacy.

## **2.4 Summary**

Empirical review showed that there was a wide range of information-based and interactive strategies that had been used to involve parents in career guidance but the challenge had been that these strategies had not been appropriate for the parents' context. The level of parents' participation in school programmes was below the desired level due to factors such as time, and economic constraints. Parents' attitudes varied from the African American parents who considered parent engagement to be important to the parents in Samia District, Kenya, who were described as having a negative attitude towards parent involvement. The study linked this negative attitude to poor academic performance of students. Counselling interventions that could be used to improve the parents' role in career guidance included one-on-one, family and group therapy.

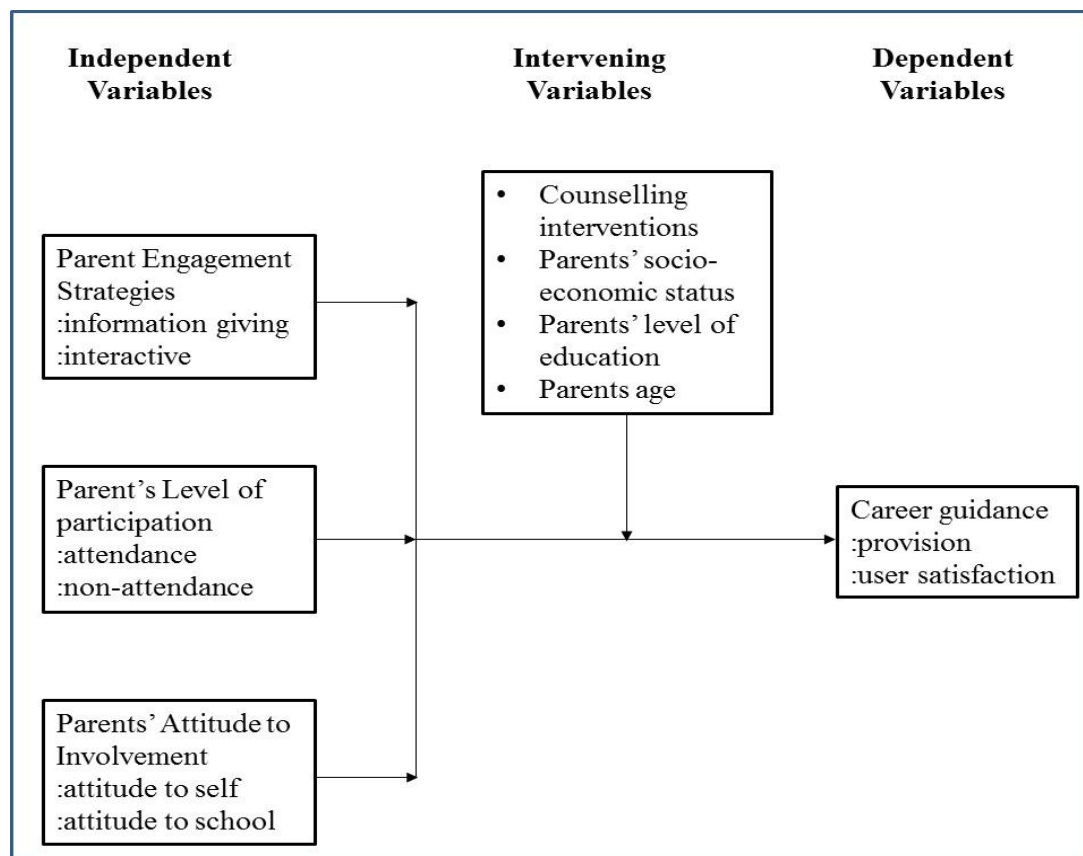
Theories such as Erik Erickson's theory of personality development and Donald Super's career development theory highlighted the adolescent development stage. The theories could be used to identify the support parents could provide to students to effectively manoeuvre this life stage with particular reference to career decision making.

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

In this study, the independent variables included parent engagement strategies and the level of parent participation in career guidance programmes, the parents' attitude towards involvement in career guidance and the counselling interventions used to support parents in career guidance. The dependent variable was the effectiveness of career guidance measured based on the students' level of satisfaction and the parents efficacy in providing career guidance. Intervening variables included the parents' gender, age, education level and socio-economic status.

**Figure 2.1**

*Conceptual framework*



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the research design, study area, population, sampling design, data collection and data analysis procedures were described.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study involved both a quantitative and qualitative mode of inquiry. Collecting quantitative data enhanced the objectivity and quantification of phenomena in the study (McMillian & Schumacher 2001) while qualitative data provided detailed in-depth research information regarding the phenomena.

In particular this study utilized a descriptive research design as it aimed at finding out “what is” and causal relationships. The study collected descriptive information about parent engagement strategies in career guidance, parent participation in career guidance programs, counseling interventions to support parents and parents’ attitudes towards their involvement in career guidance. The study aimed to establish the influence of these independent variables on career guidance.

#### **3.3 Site of the Study**

The study was conducted in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County of Kenya. Kikuyu Sub-County hosts 17 secondary schools with a student population of 8,131 (Ministry of Education (2018)). The study focused on secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County as opposed to primary or tertiary institutions. This was based on the assumption that subject choices in secondary school had a significant impact on

one's opportunity in tertiary institutions and by extension impacted on one's future career.

### 3.4 Target Population

Focus was on parents of the Form 3 students because by this time the subject choice process was complete and focus was on the impact that this subject choice would have on the child's national examination result, tertiary education and career. This parent was in a position to provide feedback on how the subject choice and career decision making process had been. The Form 3 student population in 2018 was 2,066 (Ministry of Education, (2018)). Focus on one parent per child standardized the single parent and two parent family units. For triangulation purposes, data was also collected from selected career guidance counselors and School Principals from each of the 17 secondary schools.

**Table 3.1**

*The study participants*

	<b>Total population</b>
Parents (key participants)	2,066
School Principals	17
Career counselors	17

### 3.5 Sampling Procedure

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommended 10% of the accessible population was sufficient as a sample size in a descriptive study. This study therefore used a 10% sample size. Stratified random sampling method was used to ensure representation of parents from each of the 17 schools ranked as National, County and Sub-County categories. Parents were the key participants in this study. However, for the purpose of

triangulation, data was also collected from the schools' career guidance counselors and principals of the three categories of schools.

**Table 3.2**

*The study population*

	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Parents (key participants)	2,066	207
School Principals	17	17
Career counselors	17	17
Total		241

*(Source: Department of Education, Kikuyu Sub-County, 2018)*

### **Sampling Technique**

Stratified random sampling technique was used to divide the population into three strata namely: national schools, county schools and sub-county schools categories.

### **Sampling of the Parents Population**

A sample of 10% of the parents' population of Form 3 students was chosen from each of the 17 secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggested that for descriptive studies, 10% of the accessible population was enough as a sample size. This study therefore used a 10% sample size. The parents studied were picked at random from all the 17 schools.

**Table 3.3**

*Sample of parent participants per category of schools*

<b>Category of schools (strata)</b>	<b>Total population of Form 3 parents (1 parent per child)</b>	<b>Sample (10% of the total population)</b>
National schools	832	83
County schools	438	44
Sub-County schools	796	80
Total	2,066	207

*(Source: Department of Education, Kikuyu Sub-County, 2018)*

The participants of the study were 207 parents of form three secondary school students from all the 17 schools in Kikuyu Sub-County. The study also included one career counselor and a principal from each of the schools. This gave a sample of 241 participants.

A sample of 241 participants was justified to allow for quantitative and in-depth qualitative data from the parents, career counselors and school principals participants.

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods**

The data collection methods used in the study included questionnaires and interviews to collect data from parents who were the key informants. For triangulation and collection of richer data, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from career counselors and school principals.

### **3.7 Instrumentation**

The study used questionnaires, focus group discussions and interview schedules for data collection.

## **Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is a research instrument containing a series of questions designed to gather information from respondents. (McLeod, 2018). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), questionnaires allow the researcher to obtain data about a population over a short time period, and are easy to dispense. In this study questionnaires were appropriate given that a representative sample of secondary school parents in Kikuyu Sub-County was included in the study with limited time and research resource. The Likert scale questions and open-ended questions in the questionnaire were created based on previous empirical studies. The closed end questions in the questionnaire were Likert scale so as to generate quantitative values for qualitative responses such as strongly agree, disagree, undecided (Dinet et al., 2003). The open-ended questions provided responses in the form of reactions, beliefs and attitudes of parents, with regards to parents' role and effectiveness in career guidance. A questionnaire was appropriate for a descriptive research design as it aimed at finding out "what is" and causal relationships. This study collected descriptive information about parent engagement strategies in career guidance, parent participation in career guidance programs, counseling interventions to support parents and parents' attitudes towards their involvement in career guidance.

## **Focus Group Discussion Guide**

A focus group discussion involves a researcher assembling a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic. The purpose being to obtain information about their experiences, beliefs and attitudes through a moderated discussion (Nyumba et al. 2017). This instrument was used to collect data from the parents so as to enrich data collected from the parents through the questionnaires. Focus group discussions were appropriate

for parents as they provided them with a social context and social support as they interacted with the researcher (Kimu, 2012).

### **Interview Schedule**

An interview is an verbal dispensation of a questionnaire or interview schedule (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This was used to collect data from school principals and career guidance counselors on parent engagement and effectiveness in career guidance. It allowed for in-depth research and enabled them to express their views easily discussing sensitive issues. (Keller & Conradin, 2017). They provided information on the programs, experiences, beliefs and challenges with regard to parents' role in career guidance through an adult conversation.

### **3.8 Validity of Research Instruments**

Validity is the degree to which the data obtained from the study represents the variables of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Content validity was used to measure the degree to which data collected using the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions represented indicators of career guidance by parents. Professionals (research supervisors) and colleagues in the field were used to assess the instruments' validity. They assessed what concept each instrument was trying to measure and whether the data to be collected accurately represented the concept being studied (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

### **3.9 Reliability of the Research Instruments**

Reliability measures the degree to which a research instrument generates consistent results or data after repeat trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of research instruments in a pilot study. The



instruments were pre-tested on a few similar respondents – who were excluded from the actual study to avoid bias. The data was collated manually, after which Spearman rank order correlation was used to compute the correlation coefficient. A correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.8 was considered good for the reliability of the study instruments (Noble, 2017). Qualitative data was tested for reliability through constant data comparison to establish consistency.

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher got a letter of introduction from the University which she presented to the Sub-County secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya, so as to be granted consent by the principals to conduct the study. The researcher explained the objective of the study to the principals, career guidance teachers and parents involved in the study. Questionnaires and focus group discussions were administered to parents participating in the study, while interview schedules were used to collect data from career counselors and principals.

Administration of the questionnaires entailed the researcher asking the parents the questions as contained in the research tool and noting down their responses while administration of the focus group discussions involved dividing the parents into groups of six to eight, and the researcher moderating the discussions on the research subject while noting down contributions being made by participating members.

Questionnaire and focus group discussions were administered to parents when they reported for academic parent forums as these meetings tended to attract high parent attendance. Although parents were the focus of the study, data from the principals and career counselors allowed for triangulation and collection of richer data for the study.

### **3.11 Data Analysis and Presentation**

The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data.

Coding of data was done before data analysis. For analysis, a computer package, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the quantitative data obtained. Analysed quantitative data was presented in the form of frequency tables, graphs and percentages.

Qualitative data was collected in the form of words or narratives derived from transcripts of the interviews. Analysis of qualitative data involved organizing the data into common categories, themes and patterns of thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and behavior change of the participants. The findings were presented in verbatim and helped enrich the quantitative outcomes of the study.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

Research approval was obtained from the Kenya Methodist University Research Regulation Board and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

The study also required consent from the school principals. The participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary.

Participants were asked to peruse and sign consent forms before taking part in the study. They were assured of confidentiality of their responses. They were not required to give their names as part of the data collection process to ensure they remain anonymous.

This process ensured approval, consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and consideration of the research participants was maintained. The outcome was that the researcher gained co-operation, trust, openness and acceptance of the respondents during the data collection process. It provided necessary protection to the parties involved.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the study in accordance with the objectives of the study. The results are presented on the parents' role in career guidance among secondary school students in Kikuyu Sub-County of Kiambu County - Kenya.

Objectives of the study were:

1. To establish the influence of parent engagement strategies used in career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County.
2. To assess the role of parents' level of participation in career guidance programs in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County.
3. To establish the influence of parents' attitudes towards involvement in career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County.
4. To explore counselling interventions that can be used to improve effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County.

### **4.2 Response Rate**

The study targeted 207 parents of Form 3 students as well as 17 School Principals and 17 career counselors as participants. The response rates were as depicted in Table 4.4:

**Table 4.4***Response rate*

	Parents		Career counselors		School principals	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Responses received	207	100.0	17	100.0	15	88.2
Non-responses	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>

All the 207 questionnaires administered to the parents of Form 3 students were adequately filled and returned contributing to a response rate of 100%. In addition, 17 of the targeted career counselors and 15 of the School Principals responded to the study's interview schedules contributing to a response rate of 100% for the career counselors and 88.2% for the School Principals. This response rate was adequate and representative based on Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) stipulation that a response rate of 50% is sufficient for analysis and reporting, a rate of 60% is good and 70% plus, is excellent.

### **4.3 Demographic Findings**

The study sought to establish the demographic profile of the parents of the Form 3 students in Kikuyu Sub-County as the key participants of the study. The demographic characteristics considered included: gender, age, level of education and occupation. The findings were as presented in subsequent sub-sections.

#### **Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

The respondents were requested to indicate their gender. The findings were as shown in Figure 4.2: -

**Figure 4.2**

*Gender distribution of the respondents*

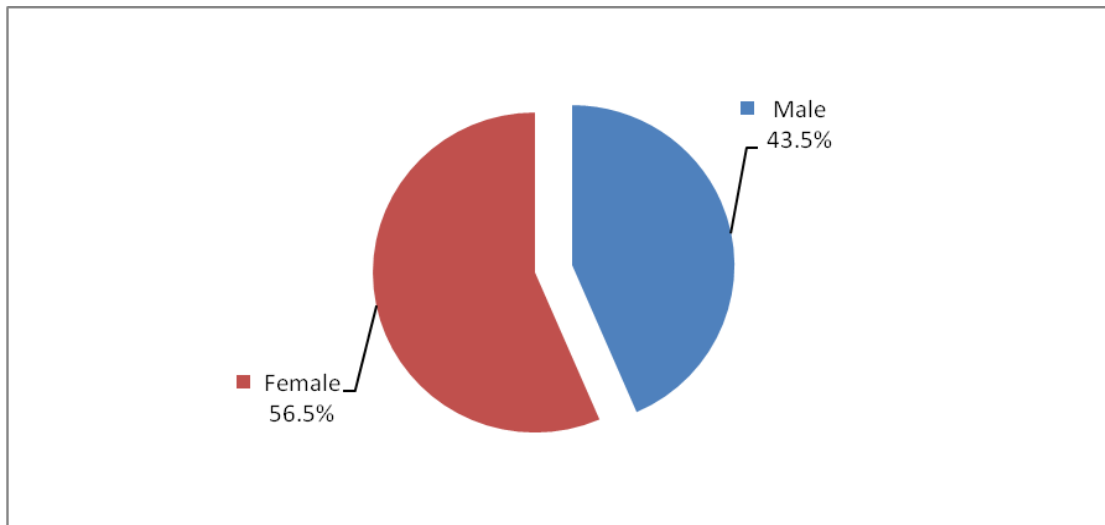


Figure 4.2 indicates that most (56.5%) of the parents were female while 43.5% were male, implying that the study did not exhibit gender bias as both genders were represented though more females took part than males. This could also imply that Form 3 parents of female gender had greater concern over their children's career guidance aspects compared to their male counterparts. This was similar to a study done by Kimu (2012) using 18 focus group discussions, who reported that majority of interviewed parents were female. This attributes greater interest in, and availability to, participate in school programs and a positive attitude towards involvement in the child's schooling and welfare to the female parent.

### **Distribution of Respondents by Age**

The respondents were asked to reveal their age bracket. The findings were as shown in Table 4.5: -

**Table 4.5**

*Age distribution of the respondents*

<b>Age categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
20-29 years	17	8.2
30-39 years	79	38.2
40-49 years	72	34.8
50-59 years	32	15.5
60 years& above	7	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.5 indicates that majority (73%) of the parents were between ages 30 and 49 years. This implied that the respondents were mature enough to appreciate the significance of their role in the children's career guidance particularly among the students in advanced stage of their Secondary school education in Kikuyu Sub-County. This corroborates with the findings of studies done by Kibaara and Ndirangu (2014) and Orenge (2011) in which a majority of the respondents were also aged between 30 and 50 years. This is relevant to this study as this is the age of economic productivity which can limit availability to participate in strategies the school puts in place to involve the parent in career guidance.

### **Education Level of the Respondents**

The respondents were requested to indicate their education level. The findings were as illustrated in Table 4.6: -

**Table 4.6***Education level of the respondents*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Primary	26	12.6
Secondary	58	28.0
Certificate	22	10.6
Diploma	35	16.9
Degree	36	17.4
Post graduate	30	14.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.6 indicates that 59.4% of the parents had tertiary level education (Certificate, Diploma, Degree and Post Graduate education) while 40.6% had basic education level (Primary and Secondary education). This implied that most of the study respondents had a significant education level and as such were in a position to appreciate the significance of their role in their children's career guidance. Similarly, Olaosebikan and Olusakin (2014) opined that social class has an impact on parents influence on their child's career choice. The assumption is that parents' education level has an influence on their social class and appreciation of the significance of career guidance on their children's future prospects. Parent's level of education would have an impact on the confidence to participate in career guidance programs and a positive attitude towards involvement in career guidance. The parents would have knowledge necessary for them to understand the counselors mentorship information that would allow them to be effective in providing career guidance to their children.

### **Distribution of Respondents by Occupation**

The respondents were requested to indicate their occupation. The findings were as shown in Figure 4.3: -



**Figure 4.3**

*Distribution of the respondents by their occupation*

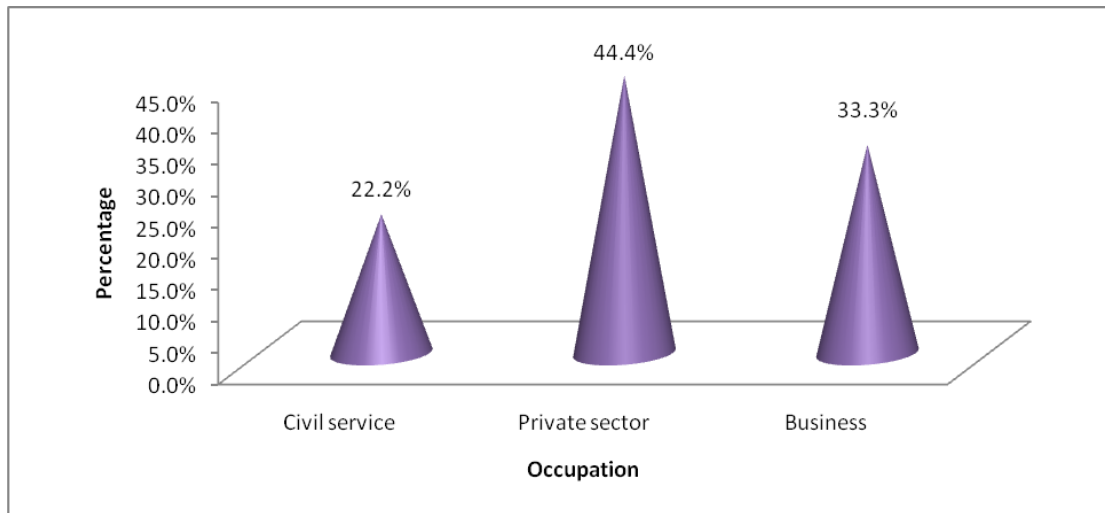


Figure 4.3 indicates that 44.4% of the parents worked/were employed in different capacities within the private sector; 33.3% were in business while 22.2% were civil servants. This implied that the study respondents were in a position to appreciate the significance of parents' role in their children's career guidance given the fact that they too were in different careers. This resonates with findings of studies by Kibaara and Ndirangu (2014) which established that 87% of their respondents, who were parents of public secondary school students in Kieni West, Nyeri-Kenya, worked more than 8 hours a day. This keeps the parents busy and can have an impact on their availability to participate in parent engagement programs for career guidance.

#### **4.4 Career Guidance in the Schools**

The study sought to establish whether secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County of Kiambu County offered career guidance to parents. According to the study findings, all the 207 parents indicated that the schools offered career guidance. This implied that parental counseling on career guidance was prevalent among the secondary schools in

Kikuyu Sub-County of Kiambu County. Similar findings were reported in studies by (Oomen 2016; Supreeth & Aravind, 2015).

Further, the parents were requested to indicate the career guidance methods and career guidance interactive programs that were offered in their children's schools. The findings were as shown in Table 4.7: -

**Table 4.7**

*Career guidance methods and interactive programs offered by the schools*

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Career guidance Methods used	Circular / Letter	122	58.8
	Newsletter	49	23.5
	Brochures	24	11.8
	Email & Websites	12	5.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Career guidance interactive programs offered	Career day / expo	85	41.2
	Parents meetings	73	35.3
	Parents workshop	24	11.8
	Parent guest speaker	12	5.9
	Parent offering students work experience	12	5.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The findings indicate that secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County utilized various career guidance methods in their counseling of parents on career guidance matters though the most prevalent methods used were circulars / letters and newsletters. Similarly, the schools offered a wide range of career guidance interactive programs to the parents with the most prevalent career guidance interactive programs offered being career days / expos and parent meetings. This resonated with findings of Morgan (2012) who also established that most schools utilized parent information documents including

circulars, letters and newsletters and offered various interactive programs such as career days / expos and parents’ meetings as avenues for counseling parents on career guidance matters.

#### 4.5 Parent Engagement Strategies and Career Guidance

The first objective of the study sought to establish the influence of parent engagement strategies used in career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County. The findings were as described in the subsequent subsections.

##### Parents’ Opinion on Career Guidance Methods Used

The parents of Form 3 students in Secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County were requested to indicate the extent to which a set of identified methods were used by their schools to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. The responses were rated using a scale of 1 – 4 where, 1 = yearly, 2 = termly, 3 = more than once a term and 4 = never. The findings were as shown in Table 4.8: -

**Table 4.8**

*Parents’ opinion regarding career guidance methods used (N=207)*

Methods	Yearly		Termly		> Once a term		Never	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Circular / Letter	48	23.2	75	36.2	12	5.8	72	34.8
Newsletter	33	15.9	91	44.0	10	4.8	73	35.3
Brochure	28	13.5	21	10.1	6	2.9	152	73.4
Email	15	7.2	23	11.1	12	5.8	157	75.8
Website	17	8.2	15	7.2	6	2.9	169	81.6

Table 4.8 indicates that 36.2% of the parents said that circulars / letters were used on a termly basis while 23.2% of the parents said that the circulars / letters were used on a

yearly basis. However, 34.8% of the parents said that the circulars / letters were never used at all. This implied that most of the parents did acknowledge that schools used circulars / letters to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. Similar findings were reported in studies by Morgan (2012) and Hassan (2014) where circulars were found to be commonly used, not only as a tool of informing parents about school events, but also as a method of counseling parents on various important subjects including their role in guiding their children in career choice matters.

Table 4.8 also indicates that 44% of the parents said that the newsletters were used on a termly basis while 15.9% of the parents said that the newsletters were used on a yearly basis. However, 35.3% of the parents said that the newsletters were never used. This implied that most of the parents did acknowledge that schools used newsletters to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. The findings agreed with those of Morgan (2012) where newsletters were reported to be commonly applied on a termly and yearly basis as a method of counseling parents on various important subjects including their role in mentoring their children in career choice matters. Similar observations were made by Maluleke (2014).

The findings further indicate that majority (73.4%) of the parents said that brochures were never used. However, 13.5% of the parents said that brochures were used on a yearly basis while 10.1% of the parents said that brochures were used on a termly basis. This implied that majority of the parents were of the opinion that schools never used brochures to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. The findings resonated with those of Morgan (2012) that also reported low use of brochures by schools as a method of offering guidance to parents on mentorship of their children in career choice matters. In contrast, a study by Harackiewicz et al. (2012) reported that

brochures were an effectively used method of counseling parents on career guidance matters.

The findings also indicated that majority (75.8%) of the parents said that emails were never used. However, 11.1% and 7.2% of the parents said that emails were used on a termly yearly basis respectively while 5.8% of the parents said that emails were used more than once a term. Similarly, majority (81.6%) of the parents said that websites were never used, with 8.2% and 7.2% indicating that websites were used on a yearly and termly basis respectively while 2.9% of the parents said that websites were used more than once a term. This implied that most of the parents were of the opinion that schools never used emails and websites to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. This could be attributed to low availability and affordability of computers among most of the parents and lack of computer literacy skills on use of emails and websites among most of the parents. In contrast Morgan (2012) and Zelloth (2015) reported on line communication to parents conveying career information as commonly used in Australia which is a developed economy.

### **Parents' Opinion on Career Guidance Interactive Programs Offered**

The parents were asked the extent to which a set of identified interactive programs were offered by their schools to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. The responses were rated using a scale of 1 – 4 where 1 = yearly, 2 = termly, 3 = more than once a term and 4 = never. The findings were as shown in Table 4.9: -

**Table 4.9***Parents' opinion on interactive programs used (N=207)*

Methods	Yearly		Termly		> once a term		Never	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Career day/ expo	64	30.9	43	20.8	7	3.4	93	44.9
Parents meetings	62	30.0	86	41.5	17	8.2	42	20.3
Parents workshop	46	22.2	27	13.0	10	4.8	124	59.9
Parent guest speaker	41	19.8	44	21.3	20	9.7	102	49.3
Parent offering students work experience	25	12.1	21	10.1	17	8.2	144	69.6

Table 4.9 indicates that 30.9% of the parents said that the career day / expo were used on a yearly basis; 20.8% of the parents said that the career day / expo were used on a termly basis while 3.4% of the parents said that the career day / expo were used more than once a term. However, 44.9% of the parents said that the career day / expo was never used. This implied that most of the parents did acknowledge that schools used career day / expo to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. Similar findings were reported in studies by Supreeth and Aravind (2015) which established career days / expos as one of the commonly used interactive programs to psycho-educate and counsel parents on career guidance matters.

Table 4.9 also indicates that 41.5% of the parents said that the parent meetings were used on a termly basis; 30% of the parents said that parent meetings were used on a yearly basis while 8.2% of the parents said that parent meetings were used more than once a term. However, 20.3% of the parents said that parent meetings were never used. This implied that most of the parents did acknowledge that schools used parent meetings to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. Similar

observations were made in studies by Kimu (2012) and Oye et al. (2012) where parent meetings were established as one of the most common and recommended interactive programs offered by schools to psycho-educate and counsel parents.

The findings also indicate that most (59.9%) of the parents said that parent workshops were never used. However, 22.2% of the parents said that parent workshops were used on a yearly basis; 13% of the parents said that parent workshops were used on a termly basis while 4.8% of the parents said that parent workshops were used more than once a term. This implied that most of the parents were of the opinion that schools barely used parent workshops to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. Similar observations were made by Morgan (2012). However, the findings were in contrast with those of Supreeth and Aravind (2015) whose studies identified parent workshops as one of the effective interactive programs to counsel parents on career guidance matters.

The results further indicated that 49.3% of the parents said that parent guest speakers were never used. However, 21.3% of the parents said that parent guest speakers were used on a termly basis; 19.8% of the parents said that parent guest speakers were used on a yearly basis while 9.7% of the parents said that parent guest speakers were used more than once a term. This implied that nearly half of the respondents never had had parent guest speakers to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. This resonated with Morgan (2012) who observed that in very rare instances did schools engage parent guest speakers to counsel and educate fellow parents on various educational matters including career guidance. Similarly, Maluleke (2014) also reported that barely did schools utilize parent guest speakers to psycho-educate parents on career guidance issues.

The findings in Table 4.9 also indicated that most (69.6%) of the parents said that parent offering students work experience were never used. However, 12.1% of the parents said that parent offering students work experience were used on a yearly basis; 10.1% of the parents said that parent offering students work experience were used on a termly basis while 8.2% of the parents said that parent offering students work experience were used more than once a term. This implied that most of the schools never used parent offering students work experience to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. Similar findings were reported by Hassan (2014) and Zelloth (2015) who also noted that barely did schools utilize parents offering students' work experience as a mechanism of assisting parents in providing career guidance to their children. However, the Super cognitive career theory recommends that students should be exposed to the world of work during the Exploratory stage so as to make effective career decisions. The Social cognitive career theory (Lent et al. 2002) also recommend students' exposure to the world of work to develop career self- efficacy.

From these findings it was evident that career days / expos and parent meetings were the most common interactive programs offered by secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County to assist parents in providing career guidance to their children. The importance of these interactive programs is that they allowed for one-on-one interactive sessions between the parents, students and the career counselors. This allowed the career counselors to not only mentor the parents on how best to conduct career guidance on their children but also to gain insights on their view point regarding their child's career decisions. As suggested by the Social Cognitive Career Theory, these interactive programs also aid in development of rapport between the parents and the teachers enabling closer collaborations in efforts to guide the students in their career choice decisions. This rationale was also espoused by Bregman and Killen (1999) who argued



that interactive counseling sessions on career guidance help enhance closer working relationships between career counselors and parents leading to better career guidance outcomes.

### **Respondents' Agreement with Parent Engagement Strategies Used**

The study evaluated respondents' level of agreement on various statements relating to parent engagement strategies used by the schools. The responses were rated using a scale of 1 – 5 where 5 - Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 2 - Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree. The findings were as illustrated in Table 4.10: -

The study results shown in Table 4.10 indicate that the parents were in agreement with the statements that the information provided by the career counselors was useful to assist them in providing career guidance to their children (mean = 4.26) and that the interactive sessions/events offered by the schools were useful to assist them in providing career guidance to their children (mean = 4.11). However, the parents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements that they were always informed about upcoming career guidance events that they were expected to attend (mean = 3.42) and that they were satisfied with the notice period given before a career guidance event (mean = 3.23). However, the parents disagreed with the statement that the number of events the schools organized for career guidance were enough (mean = 2.93).

**Table 4.10***Respondents level of agreement with parent engagement strategies used*

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
The information provided by the career counselor is useful to assist me in providing career guidance to my child	4.26	3.779
The interactive sessions/events offered by the school are useful to assist me in providing career guidance to my child	4.11	3.067
I am always informed about upcoming career guidance events that I am expected to attend	3.42	1.459
I am satisfied with the notice period given before a career guidance event	3.23	1.412
The number of events the school organizes for career guidance are enough	2.93	1.424

This implied that the parents acknowledged the significance of the information provided by the career counselors and the interactive sessions/events offered by the schools in helping them to provide career guidance to their child. However, the parents seemed dissatisfied with the manner in which the parent engagement strategies were executed. This is evidenced by their assertion that the notice periods given and the level of informing about upcoming career guidance events in the schools were inadequate.

This concurred with Hassan (2014) who in a study on career guidance and counselling programs in schools established that parents were largely appreciative of the career guidance interactive programs organized by the secondary schools in the country as they perceived them as being informative and provided useful information that the parents could use in guiding their children in career choice matters. This also agreed with Oomen (2016) who in a study on parental involvement in career education and guidance in secondary education observed that, in general, most of the parents of secondary school students did acknowledge that the information provided by career

guidance counselors during the career guidance events was both helpful and insightful in helping them better guide their children in making career choices.

Similarly, Supreeth and Aravind (2015) in a study focusing on delivering career guidance in Indian schools established that majority of the parents were in concurrence that the information shared by the career guidance counselors during the career guidance forums was useful in assisting them in providing career guidance to their children. In addition, Maluleke (2014) argued that though the interactive career guidance sessions offered by schools were useful in assisting parents in providing career guidance to their children, schools need to better manage how they inform the parents of the events and possibly also increase the number of career guidance events so as to achieve the desired impacts of the programs. The findings reveal inadequacy of career guidance events organized by schools which may render the programmes inefficient.

### **Most Effective Aspect of the Parent Engagement Strategies Used**

The parents were requested to indicate, based on their own opinion, the most effective aspect of the parent engagement strategies used by the schools for career guidance. The findings were as shown in Table 4.11: -

**Table 4.11***Most effective aspect of the parent engagement strategies*

<b>Most effective parent engagement strategies</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
The interactive sessions between the teacher, parent and the student on one on one basis	148	71.5
Regular feedback on the student's academic progress	29	14.0
Involvement of career guidance experts	16	7.7
None	14	6.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to Table 4.11, most (71.5%) of the respondents shared the view that the most effective aspect of the parent engagement strategies used by the schools for career guidance was the interactive sessions between the teacher, parent and the student done on one on one basis, 14% were of the view that the most effective aspect of the parent engagement strategies used by the schools for career guidance was the regular feedback on the student's academic progress while 7.7% were of the view that the most effective aspect of the parent engagement strategies used by the schools for career guidance was the involvement of career guidance experts. However, 6.8% of the parents were of the view that none of the parent engagement strategies aspects in use by the schools for career guidance was most effective. These findings revealed that most of the parents had a common view that the interactive sessions between the teacher, parent and the student done on one on one basis were the most effective aspects of the parent engagement strategies used by the schools for career guidance.

From the findings, it was apparent that the one on one interactions were viewed as the most effective parent engagement strategy in career guidance. This strategy conforms with the person-centred approach to counseling espoused by Carl Rogers in the 1950s.

As argued by Morgan (2012), one on one interactions allow application of person centred concepts in parents career guidance counseling including unconditional positive regard (UPR) where the counselor remains non-judgmental by accepting and supporting the parents exactly as they are, without evaluating or judging them. The one on one interactions also provide an opportunity for the career counselors to be empathic with the parents. Here the career counselors try to understand the parents' point of view with regard to their understanding of the form of guidance they should offer to their children. In addition, Hassan (2014) argued that one on one interactions in counseling also lead to congruence in which the career counselor is genuine with the parents as to what is their role with respect to guiding their children in career choice matters.

One of the reasons that makes the one on one interactive sessions a great strategy in parental counseling on career guidance matters, as espoused by the Social Cognitive Career Theory, is its ability to lead to development of cordial relationships between the career counselors, parents and students which makes these parties to be at ease with each other during the career guidance discussions. The one on one interactive session also provides an opportunity for active listening among the parties, allowing parents to seek clarification on career guidance psycho-education concepts. This in turn helps to enhance their confidence to support their children in making career choices. As pointed by Bregman and Killen (1999) the one on one interactions are integral to deepening collaboration between the schools and students on one hand and parents on the other which gives parents a voice in their children's career choices and lessens the difficulties that the students underwent in their career choice selections.

The findings agreed with those of Kibaara and Ndirangu (2014) who in a study of parental involvement in their children's academic achievement in public secondary

schools in Kieni-West Sub-County of Nyeri County-Kenya argued that the one on one interactive sessions between teachers, parents and their children held during the career days are one of the most effective parent engagement strategies that are instrumental in assisting parents to be able to effectively guide their children in career choice decisions. The findings also concurred with Zelloth (2015) who suggested that the best and most effective parent engagement strategies should involve active structured activities and interactive dialogues between parents, the school and the students and should focus on enabling the parents take an active role in the career guidance of their own children.

#### **4.6 Level of Parental Participation in Career Guidance**

The second objective of the study sought to assess the role of parents' level of participation in career guidance programs in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County. The findings were as described in the subsequent subsections.

##### **Attendance to Career Guidance Programs**

The study sought to establish how often parents of Form 3 students in Secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County attended career guidance programs. The findings were as shown in Table 4.12: -

**Table 4.12**

*Frequency of attendance to career guidance programs*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
All the time	63	30.4
Most of the time	64	30.9
Sometimes	47	22.7
Hardly ever	7	3.4
Never	26	12.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The findings indicate that most of the parents did attend the career guidance programs, either most of the time (30.9%); all the time (30.4%) or sometimes (22.7%). However, 12.6% of the parents said that they never attended the career guidance programs. This implied that most of the parents of Form 3 students in Secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County did attend career guidance programs.

During the FGDs, the parents were queried about the impact of attending the career guidance programmes. Their responses were as captured in the following verbatim;

1<sup>st</sup> parent: “Attendance of the career guidance forums have helped me build confidence. I now feel that I am at a better position to offer my child the support she needs even in career choice matters”.

2<sup>nd</sup> parent: “Attendance of the career guidance programs have helped me acquire new insights on mentoring my son in his career path journey”.

3<sup>rd</sup> parent: “It is through attendance of my daughter’s school-organized career guidance events that I have been able to understand my role as a parent in supporting and mentoring her in her career choice decisions”.

These sentiments were corroborated by career counselors as shown by their responses in the following verbatim;

1<sup>st</sup> career counselor: “I am always happy when parents attend our school’s career guidance events as we are able to enhance their

awareness regarding their part in guiding their children's decisions on career choice aspects”

Another career counselor said: “I have observed that our learners' confidence and self-esteem is positively impacted by their parents' support which tends to improve following the parents' participation in our career guidance counseling forums.”

Another career counselor said: “As a result of parents' attendance of our school's career guidance events, we, that is the teachers, parents and students, are able to work more closely in shaping the students' career choices”.

From the above discussions, it is clear that parents' attendance of the career guidance programmes was beneficial not only to the students and the schools but also to the parents themselves. Through attendance of the career guidance programmes, parents got mentored on how they can guide their children on career choice matters. This meant that parents got better prepared and acquired skills and knowledge on how to mentor their own children. The students enjoyed closer collaboration between teachers and the parents which helped enhance their confidence and self-esteem. The schools and the career guidance counselors benefitted through gaining the support of an important stakeholder – without whom, the broader goal of ensuring that the students succeeded would not be achieved.

This agreed with the findings of a study done by Kibaara and Ndirangu (2014) on the effects of parents' involvement in their children's academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kieni West Sub-location in Nyeri County that indicated that 84.7% of the parents interviewed participated in school events including career guidance ones. The findings were however in contrast with those of Murray et al. (2014) that observed that African-American parents in public middle level schools in the US had lower than desired participation in school events including career guidance ones largely because of their work and socio-economic circumstances which acted as a barrier for their participation.



## Reasons for Attendance of the Career Guidance Events

The study sought to establish the reasons for the parents' attendance of the career guidance events. The findings were as shown in Table 4.13: -

**Table 4.13**

*Reasons for attendance of the career guidance events (N = 181)*

	Frequency	Percent
To be informed	118	65.2
To be equipped as a parent	118	65.2
It is compulsory to attend	18	9.9
To meet other parents	12	6.6
To meet teachers	52	28.7

Table 4.13 indicates that, for the parents that attended the career guidance events, most (65.2%) said they attended so as to be informed and to be equipped as a parent; 28.7% attended so as to meet teachers; 9.9% attended because it was compulsory to attend while 6.6% of the parents said that they attended so as to meet other parents. This showed that there were diverse reasons as to why the parents attended career guidance events though most attended so as to be informed and to be equipped as parents.

Given that most parents attended the career guidance events to be informed and equipped, the implication of this is that the focus of parental career guidance programs in secondary schools in Kenya should be to psycho-educate the parents for them to become empowered with knowledge on career guidance. This in turn would help the parents to be able to offer more effective parental support to their children in relation to career choice decisions. This resonates with Maluleke (2014) who also argued that attendance of career guidance events provides an opportunity for the parents to be

nurtured, by career guidance counselors, on how to mentor their children in their career choice decisions.

As argued by one parent who is a counselor by profession:

There is nothing more important to a parent than knowing you are guiding your child from a point of knowledge.

The findings were in line with those of Kibaara and Ndirangu (2014) who in a study investigating the effects of parents' involvement in their children's academic achievement in public secondary schools indicated that parents participated in educational school events such as career guidance so as to be informed and enlightened on how best to guide their children in their academics including in important decisions such as career choice. Similar findings were reported by Murray et al. (2014) who pointed out that the main reasons for their attendance of school events was so as to learn and be equipped on how best to interact with their children on educational matters including on their role on their children's career choice decisions.

Therefore, the career guidance forums not only provide opportunities for parents to interact with the teachers and learn about their children's performance, but they also offer opportunities for parents to learn about how to guide their children as they make decisions on their future careers.

### **Reasons for Non-Attendance of the Career Guidance Events**

For the parents that did not attend the career guidance events, the study sought to establish the reasons for their non-attendance of all or some of the career guidance events. The responses were rated using a scale of 1 – 5 where 5 - Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 2 - Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree. The findings were as shown in Table 4.14: -

**Table 4.14***Reasons for non-attendance of the career guidance events*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
Attendance is not compulsory	2.97	2.215
It is not useful for me to attend	2.65	2.244
I am not treated well at the school	2.71	2.250
I cannot get time off work	3.79	2.012
Transport costs	3.43	2.139
I have never been invited to any	4.12	1.897

The study results shown in Table 4.14 indicate that the parents, who did not attend all the career guidance events, were in agreement that the reasons as to why they did not attend the career guidance events were: having never been invited to any (mean = 4.12) and not being able to get time off work (mean = 3.79). The parents also indicated that their non-attendance of the career guidance events was due to transport costs challenges (mean = 3.43). However, the parents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements that the reasons for their non-attendance of the career guidance events were: attendance being not compulsory (mean = 2.97); it was not useful for them to attend (mean = 2.65) and them being not treated well at the schools (mean = 2.71).

This showed that there were diverse reasons as to why some of the parents did not attend all the career guidance events with the most cited reasons being having never been invited to any and not being able to get time off work.

The implication of these two major reasons is that they likely to continue to contribute to parents' non-attendance of the career guidance events further derailing parents' role in their children's career guidance efforts. The implication of parental non-attendance of the career guidance forums is that there is a missed opportunity for the parents to be

empowered and enlightened on how they can support and guide their children in career choice decisions. This in turn means that a critical input to the students' mentoring process is lost as well as the opportunity to create rapport with an important stakeholder in the student's career choice.

As argued by Supreeth and Aravind (2015), it is hard for schools to incorporate parents into their children's nurturing, when the parents fail to participate in important schools events. Parental counseling on career guidance matters, as opined by Zelloth (2015), provides an opportunity for schools' career counselors to psycho-educate parents on their important role of nurturing the young minds as they navigate through their schooling life and as they make their career choice decisions. Consequently, to address the parental non-attendance of career guidance events challenge, it is critical that parents are informed, in time, of organized career guidance events and emphasis placed on why they should attend these forums. Critically, the career guidance events should be scheduled on weekends so as to make it easier for more parents to attend.

These observations were supported by the views of some of the career guidance counselors, school principal and parents as highlighted;

1<sup>st</sup> career counselor: "I think parents' attendance rates of career guidance events in our school could be greatly improved if they are notified of the events in good time and if the events can be held at more convenient days such as on weekends."

2<sup>nd</sup> career counselor: "For me, I think some parents fail to attend the career guidance events either due to lack of awareness about the happening of the events or the events being held at days when they are committed at work."

The school principal: "We acknowledge that some of our parents fail to attend the career guidance events not because they are uninterested or ignorant but because either they did not receive communication about the same or the events being held at a time when the parents are held up by work commitments. Consequently, to improve parents' attendance rates of career guidance forums, we will be trying to schedule the events

on weekends and ensure adequate notification of the parents about the events”.

1<sup>st</sup> parent: “I would really appreciate if the career guidance events are organized on weekends when I am available. The last one I missed as I was at work and didn’t get the permission to be out of work on that day”.

2<sup>nd</sup> parent: “I am here today, not just because I value my child’s education, but also because importantly, the school communicated about this event in good time”.

3<sup>rd</sup> parent: “For me, communication is everything. I am happy because the school communicated about this event in good time. Sometimes, as parents we are accused of ignoring important school events as this one but it all goes down to the question of whether the same was communicated in time. I am sure, most parents would honour such as invitation, as we all want the best for our kids”.

There is no doubt that when parents fail to attend the career guidance programs, they miss the opportunity to be coached on how to guide their children on matters career. This likely impairs their ability to offer effective support which is critical in building their children’s career self-efficacy. Further, schools too suffer, as they experience gaps in situations where not all the students are receiving family support necessary for career decision making.

The findings agreed with Murray et al. (2014) who in a survey of parents’ participation in their children’s educational affairs observed that the main reason for the parents not engaging in school-based programs was time. Being busy at work meant that they could not attend scheduled school meetings. He also attributed non-attendance to notifications about the events not reaching the parents due to individual students’ acts of omission or commission, or the events being set on week days when the parents were held up on work commitments. Similarly observations were made by Maluleke (2014) in a South African study. She found that the major reason for parents’ non-attendance of schools’ career guidance event in most cases was financial constraints and limited education.

The parent focused on earning a living and relegated education related matters to the school.

#### **4.7 Parents' Attitude towards Involvement in Career Guidance**

The third objective of the study sought to establish the influence of parents' attitude towards involvement in career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County. The study evaluated the parents' level of agreement with various statements depicting their attitude towards involvement in career guidance. The responses were rated using a scale of 1 – 5 where 5 - Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 2 - Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree. The findings were as shown in Table 4.15:

**Table 4.15**

*Parents' attitude towards involvement in career guidance*

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
I have a significant influence on my child's career choice	3.89	1.293
I am in a position to provide career guidance to my child	4.05	1.069
My child needs me to be involved in his/ her career decisions	4.41	0.831
The school needs me to be involved in career guidance	3.98	1.066
The school provides a friendly environment for career guidance involvement	3.94	1.277

The study results presented in Table 4.15 indicate that the parents were in agreement that their children needed them to be involved in their career decisions (mean = 4.41). The parents also agreed that they were in a position to provide career guidance to their children (mean = 4.05) and that the school needed them to be involved in career guidance (mean = 3.98). The parents also concurred that the school provided a friendly environment for career guidance involvement (mean = 3.94). They also agreed that they had a significant influence on their children's career choices (mean = 3.89). This

showed that the parents had a positive attitude towards involvement in career guidance in the said schools.

These observations on the parents' positive attitude towards career guidance activities were also espoused in the following verbatim from the parents' FGDs;

1<sup>st</sup> parent: "I am very eager to participate in career guidance events as I get equipped on how to mentor my son in his career choice decision making."

2<sup>nd</sup> parent: "I find the career guidance events quite informative. As a matter of fact, I have learned quite a lot and feel confident now that I can make meaningful contribution to my daughter's career decision."

3<sup>rd</sup> parent: "The career guidance forums have helped me change the way I view my role in my child's education. Initially, I thought my responsibility was just to keep my child in school through ensuring fees is paid. However, I am now more eager to learn about how my child is doing in school in all spheres. I am also keen on learning on how I can guide the child in relation to career choice decisions".

4<sup>th</sup> parent: "I am eager to participate in the career guidance forums. I see them as an opportunity to actively participate in my child's future career direction".

5<sup>th</sup> parent: "I am interested in the wholesome development of my child be it academically, spiritually, socially, emotionally and in all other ways. Participation in career guidance is my pathway to fulfilling this life-long call".

6<sup>th</sup> parent: "I do not mind going out of my way to attend the career guidance events. For me, they are one way of becoming a better parent. I have no doubt that, parents who care about their children's education appreciate the importance of these events in shaping their children's future".

The implications of the parents' positive attitude towards career guidance activities are that the parents were receptive to the counsel offered on how they can better play their role of guiding their children in academic and career affairs. As outlined by Super in the Donald Super career development theory, it is while in secondary schools that students develop self-concept, attitudes and beliefs about their working life, and begin to envision themselves in different careers. This is therefore a crucial phase in the

students' life that has huge implications on their future. Parents being the immediate cares of their children need therefore to provide counsel and share their wisdom with their children particularly with regard to making good career choices.

The positive attitude towards career guidance activities also implies that parents are enthusiastic in making a meaningful contribution towards their children's career choice decisions. It could also imply that parents were more empathic in helping their children cope with challenges of making the right career choice and that they were eager to learn more about how to guide their children regarding career choice. Given that the students' decision-making capability is still developing, and as such they require adult guidance, the positive attitude of parents towards career guidance activities meant that the students were likely to benefit from parental support when making career decisions during this exploratory stage.

The findings were in line with Donald Super Career Development theory which focuses on stages of an individual's development in the world of work. The theory espouses that the exploration stage, which corresponds to the period when individuals are in high school, offers parents an opportunity to expose their children to a wide range of career opportunities through family community engagements or engaging them in career related discussions. During this stage, children need their parents' guidance and support to manoeuvre complex career choice decisions that are made during this exploratory stage. Parents' attitude towards offering this guidance is thus critical and it shows their willingness to support their children as they make decisions that will shape their future direction.

The findings also agreed with Murray et al. (2014) who observed that parents in US considered it "important" to engage in their child's educational programs. This was



attributed to their belief that parental guidance was essential in shaping their children's future career paths. In contrast, findings from a study by Maluleke (2014) showed that parents had a negative attitude towards involvement in career guidance affairs in schools in Vhembe Limpopo – South Africa. This was attributed to their low confidence due to their limited education and low economic status. Similarly, Oundo et al. (2014) described the attitude of parents in day secondary schools in Samia District – Kenya towards involvement in educational matters as “carefree” and apparently negative.

#### **4.8 Counselling Interventions to Improve Effectiveness of Career Guidance by Parents in Secondary Schools**

The last objective of the study explored the counselling interventions that could be used to improve effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County. The findings were described in the subsequent sub sections.

##### **Counseling of Parents to Assist Them in Career Guidance**

The study sought to establish whether the schools offered counseling to parents to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. According to the findings, all the 17 careers counselors and 15 principals said they the schools counseled parents on career guidance. This sentiment was corroborated by parents who participated in the FGDs as captured in the following verbatim:

1st parent: “Personally, I have attended several career guidance events in my son's school and we were counseled on how to provide career guidance to our children”.

Another parent: “In few of the career guidance forums I have attended, in my daughter's school, the school's career guidance counselor always

takes the time to coach us on our role in our children's career guidance and how we can perform it".

Another parent said: "I am glad the school is keen on equipping us parents on career guidance aspects".

Another parent indicated: "I can affirm that we as parents have been counseled on several occasions on how we can provide career guidance to our children".

The outcome of parents counseling by schools, as reported by the career counselors, was empowered parents who better equipped to listen to their children and help them cope with the challenge of career choice.

This was as highlighted by career guidance counselors during the interview schedule discussions as highlighted in the following verbatim:

One career counselor said: "I have noted that students are happier due to better parental support following our counseling of the parents on how they can support their children career wise".

Another career counselor indicated that: "I have noted that most of the parents have gained appreciation of their role in helping their children in career choice decisions".

Another career counselor said: "Parents are able to learn from the career counselors and invited career experts about the critical role that parents have in shaping the career decisions of their children at such an early age".

These outcomes were affirmed by some of the parents' responses during the FGDs as captured hereunder;

One parent: "I am now well equipped and informed on how to guide my child in regard to career choice decision making".

Another parent: "I now appreciate my role as a parent in the education of my child and particularly on career choice matters".

Another parent: "I feel confident that I can now make a meaningful contribution to my child's career choice decision from knowledge and wisdom acquired from participating in the career guidance forums".

The findings showed that secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County of Kiambu County offered counseling to parents on career guidance. It was evident from the findings that the counseling that the parents received on career guidance helped them to be better equipped and informed on how to guide their children on career choice decisions. Parental counseling on career guidance thus provided an opportunity for parents to be psycho-educated on their critical role with regard to their children's career choice decisions.

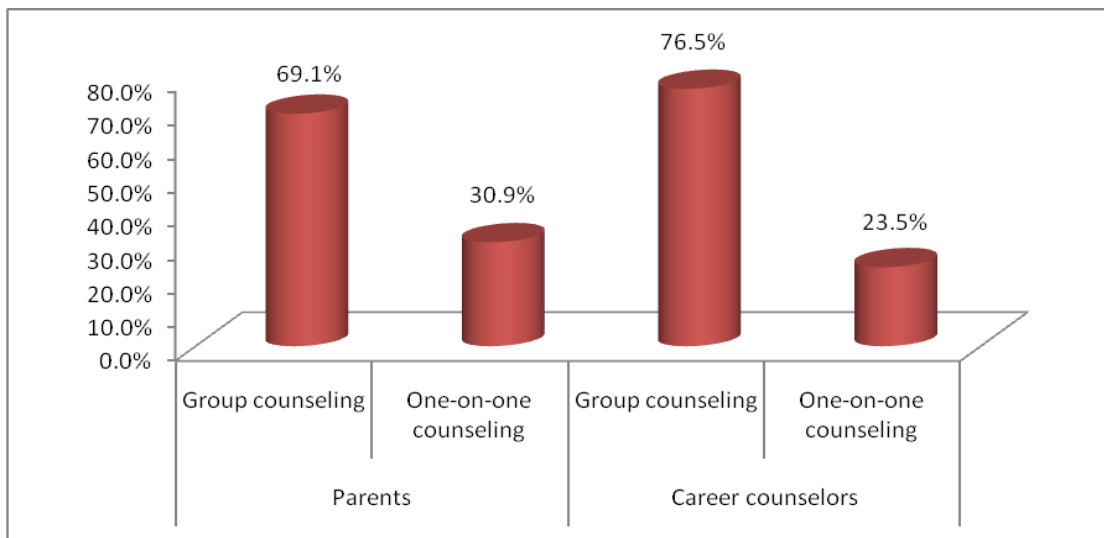
The findings were supported by the Social Cognitive Career Theory which holds that parents have a crucial role in shaping their children's career choices. The theory supports the view that parents may be coached on career guidance to build their skills and expertise in shaping their children's career choices. The findings also agreed with those of Murray et al. (2014) and Zelloth (2015) who reported that most of the middle level high schools in US and Italy offered counseling to parents to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. In contrast, Maluleke (2014) established that majority of the secondary schools in Vhembe district of Limpopo province in South Africa did not offer counseling to parents on career guidance aspects.

### **Counseling Strategies Applied in Career Guidance**

The parents and career counselors were requested to indicate the types of counselling that were offered to assist parents in providing career guidance to their children. The findings were as presented in Figure 4.4: -

**Figure 4.4**

*Forms of counselling offered to the parents*



The findings indicates that group counseling was the most common form of counseling on career guidance of the students offered to the parents as cited by 69.1% and 76.5% of parents and career counselors respectively. The other form of counseling offered was one-on-one counseling as cited by 30.9% and 23.5% of parents and career counselors respectively.

This was corroborated by responses from the career counselors' interview schedules as captured in these verbatim;

One of the career counselors said: "For me, group counseling is great for creating general awareness among parents on why it is vital for them to participate in their children's education including on career choice decisions. However, one on one counseling technique allows me to discuss specific cases that touch on individual students with the concerned parent".

Another career counselor said: "I find group counseling to be effective for gathering parents' views about their involvement in career guidance activities. On the other hand, one-on-one counseling sessions allow me to discuss in detail career related questions touching on individual students".

Another career counselor added: “in most of the cases, I apply group counselling to guide the parents on their role as far as the sons and daughters career journey is concerned. However, occasionally I resort to one-on-one counseling sessions to discuss with concerned parents about specific issues affecting an individual student”.

This was also corroborated by responses from the parents’ FGDs as captured in these verbatim;

One of the parents said: “I find both group and one-on-one counseling sessions helpful as I gain insights on how other parents are faring with their children and I am able to get advice on how to guide my child in his career choice decisions”.

Another parent said: “I find both group and one-on-one counseling quite empowering with shared knowledge and wisdom of dealing and mentoring my beloved child”.

Another parent pointed that: “one on one counseling by the career guidance counselor has helped me to be able to address specific concerns I had regarding my child’s performance and also touching on subject selection”.

This showed that the most prevalent method used to counsel parents in secondary schools in Kikuyu County was group counseling.

The benefits of group counseling as espoused by the career guidance counselors were that it was effective in psycho-education of the parents regarding the significance of their role in the career choices of their children and that it was also effective in gathering views about parents’ perception of their involvement in career guidance activities. The benefits of group counseling as espoused by the parents were that it allowed parents and career counselors to share common experiences and challenges on career guidance of children hence learning from each other; it allowed parents to gain support from fellow parents with regard to guiding of the children on matters career and that it was also time saving without losing the intended objective(s).

The benefits of one on one counseling as espoused by the career guidance counselors were that it was effective in addressing specific cases or issues touching on individual students where the career guidance counselors would take the opportunity to have one-on-one sessions with parents and their children to discuss in detail on matters relating to their career choices/decisions. The one on one counseling sessions also allowed the career guidance counselors the opportunity to address any individualized concerns that parents and/or students had with respect to the career choice decisions. The benefits of one on one counseling as espoused by the parents were that it helped the parents, under the guide of the career counselors, to address specific concerns touching on their children; it empowered the parents to offer appropriate attention and support to their children and it helped to reduce tensions between parents and their children hence helping to create rapport that in turn helped the students do better in class.

The findings agreed with those of Barnes et al. (2020) who found that group counseling and one-on-one counseling, were commonly applied counseling strategies in the UK to assist parents in the career guidance of their children. These two counseling strategies were used to psycho-educate parents and influence their values and beliefs hence enabling them to interact effectively with their teens when offering career guidance. Similarly, Oomen (2016) reported that these two counseling approaches were effective in fostering a strong parental-child working relationship in career choice decisions.

### **Outcomes and Feedback on Parental Counseling in Career Guidance**

The parents were requested to comment on their experience and outcomes of the career guidance counseling offered to them. The findings were as summarised in Table 4.16: -

**Table 4.16***Outcomes of parents counseling on career guidance*

	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Acquired greater appreciation of the significant role that I have on my child's career choice	54	26.1
Learnt on how best to guide my child about career choices	38	18.4
Observed significant improvements in my child's academic performance	19	9.2
Got enlightened on changing dynamics in the job market	27	13.0
Got enlightened on current marketable careers	14	6.8
Was able to appreciate the need to let my child have a voice about the career he/she would wish to pursue	8	3.9
Gained an appreciation of the need to match my child's career choice with his/her talents and abilities	30	14.5
Was able to appreciate the fact that careers can be changed at any point depending on one's preferences and life outlook	17	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The findings indicate that parents' counseling on career guidance yielded numerous positive outcomes. These included parents acquiring greater appreciation of their significant role on their children's career choices. The parents were also able to learn on how best to guide their children about career choices. In addition, parents also gained an appreciation of the need to match their children's career choices with their talents and abilities. Another outcome was that parents were enlightened on changing dynamics in the job market and how this would affect their children's careers in future. Further, parents also got to be enlightened on current marketable careers and on the need to let their children have a voice about the career they would wish to pursue. It was also observed that parents began to appreciate that careers could be changed at any point in one's life and there was observed significant improvements in the students' academic performance.

These observations were also supported by responses from the career counselors interviews as in the verbatim that follows:

One of the career counselors said: “I have seen lots of improvements in the students’ social and general behaviour following the parental counseling on career guidance”.

Another career counselor said: “Following parental counseling on career guidance, I have observed that some of the students are doing better academically”.

Another career counselor said: “I am happy because my counseling of the parents on career guidance has occasioned improvements in the school’s interactions with the parents”.

Another career counselor said: “I believe that it is parental counseling on career guidance that has helped more parents in this school to be cognizant of the significant role that parents have on their children’s education success”.

Another career counselor said: “I am confident that more parents are enlightened and empowered on how best to guide their children academically following their participation in our regular parental counseling programs”.

These observations were also supported by responses from the School Principals interviews as in the verbatim that follows:

One of the school principals also asserted: “I feel our parents are better prepared to help their children in their education and particularly on career choice decision making following our school’s regular parental counseling on the subject”.

Another school principal noted: “We do parental counseling on career guidance to enlighten our parents on their important role in guiding and helping the kids, to not only do better in class but also make good career choice decisions”.

Another school principal said: “I have noted there is now increased parental involvement in the childrens’ education. There is also closer and better collaboration between the parents and the school as we work together to improve our students’ academic performances”.

From the parents FGDs, their career guidance counseling experiences were as captured in the following verbatim;



One of the parents said: “For me, were it not for the career guidance counseling offered, I would not have realized the significant role that we parents have with respect to my child’s career choice”.

Another parent said: “The career guidance counseling has been really helpful to me. Through it, I have learnt how to guide my child on his career choices”.

Another parent said: “I commend my daughter’s school for the career guidance counseling I together with other parents have received. I now understand how critical it is that my child’s career choice is matched to her talents and abilities”.

Another parent said: “For me, what I have learnt most from the career guidance counseling is about the changing dynamics in the job markets. I am now more open to whatever possibilities that will present themselves for my son. I will support him through and through”.

Another parent noted: “Not only have I been enlightened about parents’ significant role in their child’s career choices but I have also observed remarkable improvements in my daughter’s academic performance, from the moment I started actively participating in various school activities including the career guidance events”.

These findings imply that parental counseling on career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County of Kiambu County yielded numerous positive outcomes. One of the implications of these positive outcomes from parents’ career guidance counseling is that parents become conscious of their vital function in their children’s career decision making and hence are likely to be more enthusiastic in making their contribution towards their children’s career choices. Another implication is that parents are equipped with skills of how to guide their children on career choices. Parents are also likely to get more enlightened about current jobs markets dynamics and are thus likely to guide their children from an informed point. The career guidance counseling offered to the parents is also instrumental to creation of rapport between parents and their children as well as between parents and the teaching staff. Consequently, efforts to constructively shape the students’ behaviour, performance and career path are much more likely to get to fruition.

This agreed with Middleton and Loughead (1993) and Morgan (2012) who also reported a wide range of positive outcomes resulting from parents' counseling on career guidance. These included parents gaining greater appreciation of their role in their children's career guidance, parents' gaining better knowledge of current marketable courses and emerging changes in the workplace, parents' gaining greater appreciation of the need to have their children have a voice about their career choices, among others. Similar findings were reported by Barnes et al. (2020); Byrne and Beavers (1993) who concluded that parental counseling on career guidance in schools led to their appreciation of the significant role that they ought to play in guiding their children in career choice decisions.

### **Challenges Faced by Schools in Involving Parents in Career Guidance**

The career guidance counselors and the School Principals were requested to cite some of the challenges that the schools faced in their effort to involve parents in career guidance. The findings were as summarized in Table 4.17: -

**Table 4.17***Challenges faced by schools in engaging parents for career guidance*

	<b>Career counselors (N = 17)</b>		<b>School principals (N = 15)</b>	
	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
Parents' non-attendance of the career guidance events/forums	11	64.7	6	40.0
Undue parents' interference on their children's subject choices	3	17.6	0	0.0
Parents imposing their own choices of careers to their children	5	29.4	3	20.0
General lack of interest and enthusiasm among some of the parents on career guidance issues	14	82.4	10	66.7
Parents lack an appreciation of the significant role they play in their children's career choices	9	52.9	8	53.3
Parents lack knowledge on career development aspects	12	70.6	4	26.7
Parents being economically challenged hence lacking fare to attend the organized career guidance events	7	41.2	4	26.7
Some parents having a very low education background and hence are unable to understand the essence of career guidance	5	29.4	2	13.3
Some parents being unsupportive, uncooperative or just unwilling to attend to such important events	10	58.8	7	46.7
A packed curriculum schedule making it difficult for schools to organize many career guidance events	14	82.4	12	80.0
Lack of feedback from the parents on whether the career guidance was helpful	8	47.1	8	53.3

The findings indicate that there were various challenges faced by the schools in their effort to engage parents in career guidance. The most frequent challenges were parents' non-attendance of the career guidance forums, parents' undue interference on their children's subject choices and general lack of interest and enthusiasm among some of

the parents on career guidance issues. In addition, some parents lacked appreciation of the significant role they had in their children's career choices, among others.

These findings are collaborated by responses from career counselors' interviews as captured in the following verbatim;

One of the career counselors argued that: "From my experience, I think the greatest challenge we have faced in trying to involving parents in career guidance is their non-attendance of these important events. I only wish they could all attend so we can guide them on how they can guide their children as they make their career choices".

Another career counselor said: "Honestly, we face quite a number of challenges as we try to incorporate parents in their children's career guidance. However, I would single out parents' general lack of interest and enthusiasm on career guidance issues and a tight curriculum schedule that does not make it any easier for us to organize as many career guidance events, as the leading the challenges".

Another suggested that: "Some parents think only us, career guidance counselors, should provide career guidance to the students. I strongly believe that this parents' lack of appreciation and/or knowledge on their role in their children's career choices/decisions is the most serious impediment to their effective involvement in career guidance".

Another suggested that: "There are many challenges we face in trying to engage parents in their children's career guidance. For instance, some parents unduly interfere with their children's subject choices, most parents lack knowledge on career guidance aspects and others either due to economic challenges or work commitments are unable to attend to these forums. However, I would say, parents' non-attendance of these events is the most significant challenge we face".

Another stated that: "of all the challenges we face, I am particularly concerned with lack of feedback from the parents on whether the career guidance was helpful".

The findings were also collaborated by responses from school principals' interviews as captured in the following verbatim;

One school principals commented that: "Sometimes I feel that some parents either lack commitment or are just not fully supportive and cooperative. We do our best to inform and invite them for career guidance forums, yet most barely attend".

Another school principal suggested that: “While it is frustrating that some parents fail to attend the career guidance forums, sometimes I understand that we are dealing with parents who have a very low education background. Hence they may lack understanding of the essence of their participation in their children’s career guidance”.

Another school principal pointed that: “I have taken note of two major challenges we face as we strive to engage parents in their children’s career guidance: Parents lack an appreciation of the significant role they play in their children’s career choices and parents’ non-attendance of the career guidance events/forums”.

Another school principal indicated that: “I find it disturbing that parents impose their own choices of careers to their children without regard to the children’s own interests and talents”.

Another school principal said: “Of the various challenges we encounter as we make efforts to engage parents in their children’s career guidance, parents’ non-attendance of the career guidance forums is the most prevalent. Others include, parents not giving feedback on whether the career guidance sessions are helpful, parents not knowing of the significant role they should play in their children’s career choices and a general lack of concern among some of the parents on matters of their children’s career guidance, among others”.

The implications of these challenges on career guidance among parents are that parents miss out on opportunities to be empowered on how they can meaningfully contribute to their children’s career guidance. This in turn implies that parents miss out on an opportunity to provide input in their children’s career choices. Shaping a student’s future should be a collaborative effort between parents and teachers. By failing to attend the career guidance events, for whatever reason(s), it means parents are not fulfilling their part in this shared responsibility. With some of the leading challenges cited being parents’ lack knowledge on career development and of the significant role they ought to play in their children’s career choices which could partly explain their non-attendance of the career guidance forums, firm action on the part of the parents and the schools is needed. While the parents must take their responsibility of actively taking part in their children’s career choices, the schools must do their part of ensuring that they

incorporate the parents in the organization, execution and evaluation of their career guidance programs.

The findings concurred with those of Barnes et al. (2020) who also established that there were numerous challenges that impeded effective involvement of parents in career guidance in schools which included parents' excessive interference in their children's career selection; work commitments leading to parents' non-attendance of the career guidance events; ignorance on the part of parents about the significance of career guidance and parents' lack of knowledge on career development and progression matters. This is especially so in areas of poverty and high unemployment where parents have limited career experience.

Murray et al. (2014), on their part, cited parents' general lack of appreciation of their role in their children's career choices which they attributed to their low education. This made them unable to discern the essence of career guidance on their children's future well-being. This was affirmed by Maluleke (2014) who argued that some of the barriers to parent participation in career guidance were their limited education, low self-esteem and financial constraints while Olaosebikan and Olusakin (2014) cited tight curriculum schedules, lack of feedback from parents as to the value of the career guidance sessions offered and non-attendance of the events, as the leading challenges.

### **Suggestions on How to Overcome Challenges Encountered in Involving Parents in Career Guidance**

The study participants were requested to provide suggestions for overcoming the identified challenges encountered in involving parents in career guidance as well as courses of actions that could be taken to improve the effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County.

From the parents FGDs, the responses were as captured in the following verbatim;

One of the parents said: “I think career guidance by parents in schools could be enhanced by increasing the number of career guidance forums/sessions held”.

Another parent argued that: “There is need for schools to use a combination of various modes of career guidance counseling for the parents such as one-on-one interactive sessions, group counseling sessions, use of exhibitions, parental workshops and mentorship programs. This will no doubt enrich the parents’ career guidance counselling experience in turn making them better prepared to play their role of guiding their children in career choice decisions”.

Another parent observed that: “Effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools can be improved through encouraging parents who are in diverse fields to offer insights to other parents on current requirements for such careers. In addition, if possible, students should be engaged in career related environments”.

Another parent argued that: “My take is that there is need for early communication and regular reminders on upcoming career guidance events to allow parents ample time to prepare to attend”.

Another pointed that: “We are living in the digital era. Therefore, I think schools could also tap into existing innovative information and communication technologies to foster parental role in their children’s career guidance such as formation of WhatsApp groups for parents where they can share their thoughts and exchange ideas on matters important to their children’s education including career guidance”.

From the career guidance counselors’ interviews, the responses were as captured in the following verbatim;

One of the career counselors argued that: “Teachers have a role to sensitize parents on the need for them to be active participants in their children’s education including on matters career guidance”.

Another career counselor recommended that: “There is need for our efforts to be collaborated by engagement of career experts/professionals by schools to educate the parents on career guidance”.

Another suggested that: “Career guidance forums should begin early, if possible from Form 1. This would give us ample time to impart knowledge on career guidance meaningfully on parents as well as giving parents sufficient time to interact with us and the school on their children’s education matters”.

Another suggested that: “The Ministry through the school administrators should ensure that the guidance and counseling departments are adequately equipped with necessary career guidance materials and expertise”.

From the school principals’ interviews, the responses were as captured in the following verbatim;

One of the school principals opined that: “There is need to sensitize parents on the merits of providing career guidance to their children”.

Another school principal suggested that: “We should ensure that the guidance and counseling departments in the school are adequately equipped with necessary career guidance materials and expertise”.

Another school principal suggested that: “Effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools can be improved through increased interactions between secondary schools and their tertiary level counterparts. This would avail latest information to parents on various courses available in the universities and their requirements enabling parents to be able to base guidance to their children from a point of current knowledge”.

This showed that the parents, career counselors and the school principals were cognizant that more could be done to enhance the effectiveness of career guidance by parents in the schools. By enhancing parents’ career guidance experience, parents would be in a position to make more meaningful impact on their children’s career journey. This could be achieved through increasing the number of career guidance forums, more use of individual counseling, incorporating career guidance experts, among others. Through parents’ continued exposure to career guidance, they would be able to develop and refine their career guidance skills. Consequently, parents would be able to provide effective support to their children enabling them to make good career choices.

The findings agreed with the observations of Fouziah et al. (2010) and Harackiewicz et al. (2012) who argued that the surest way to improve the effectiveness of parents’ role in career guidance in schools is to sensitize the parents on the importance and value of



their involvement in the career guidance of their children. Parents need to know that it is paramount for them to take an active role in their children's education including on matters career guidance. The findings also agree with the social cognitive career theory's assertion that when empowered on career guidance matters, parents can play a crucial role in shaping their children's career choices.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The study sought to establish the parents' role in career guidance among secondary school students in Kikuyu Sub-County of Kiambu County - Kenya. This chapter presents summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The chapter also highlights suggested areas for further research.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The findings are presented according to the study objectives;

##### **Parent Engagement Strategies and Career Guidance in Secondary Schools**

The study results exposed that a wide range of methods that included circulars/letters, newsletters, brochures, emails and websites were used by secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County to assist parents in providing career guidance to their children. However, it was the circulars and newsletters that were the commonly used methods. Similarly, among the wide range of interactive programs used which included career days/expos, parents meetings, parents workshops, parent guest speakers and student offers for work experience from parents, the study established that career days / expos and parents' meetings were the most commonly used.

The study results also revealed that the parents agreed that the information provided by the career counselors was useful to assist them in providing career guidance to their children and that the interactive sessions/events offered by the schools were useful to assist them in providing career guidance to their children. However, they neither agreed

nor disagreed that they were always informed in time about upcoming career guidance events. The parents, however, disagreed with the notion that the number of events the schools organized for career guidance was enough.

### **Level of Parental Participation in Career Guidance and Effective Career Guidance in Secondary Schools**

Regarding the level of parental participation in career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub County, the study results established that most of the parents did attend the career guidance programs although few attended all the times. The major reasons cited by their parents for their attendance of the career guidance events were so as to be informed and to be equipped as parents.

In addition, among the parents that did not attend all the career guidance events, the major reasons that they cited for their non-attendance of all or some of the career guidance events were having never/not been invited to the events, not being able to get time off work and transport costs challenges. The results also showed that the parents disagreed with the view that they failed to attend the career guidance events because attendance was not compulsory, they were not treated well at the schools or because they perceived the events as not useful to them.

### **Parents' Attitude towards Involvement in Career Guidance**

The study results revealed that majority of the parents of Form 3 students in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County had a positive attitude towards their involvement in career guidance. This was evidenced by their agreement with the statements that their children needed them to be involved in their career decisions; they

were in a position to provide career guidance to their children; they had a significant influence on their children's career choices, among others.

### **Counselling Interventions to Improve Effectiveness of Career Guidance by Parents**

The study established that one-on-one counseling and group counseling were the two major types of counseling that were offered to the parents to assist them in providing career guidance to their children though group counseling was more commonly used than individual counseling.

The career counselors elaborated that they deemed group counseling to be effective in creating general awareness among the parents regarding the significance of the parent's role in the career choices of their children. Individual counseling method was deemed to be effective in addressing specific cases or issues touching on individual students.

Through participation in career guidance, the parents acknowledged that they had acquired greater appreciation of the significant role that parents had on the career choices of their children. In addition, they were able to learn how best to guide their children about choices career.

The career guidance counselors and the school principals acknowledged that parental counseling on career guidance yielded numerous positive outcomes such as improved communication and better interactions with the parents, parents becoming more involved and supportive of their children's education, among others.

Some of the leading challenges relating to involvement of parents in their children's career guidance, as pointed out by the career counselors and the school principals, were

parents' non-attendance of the career guidance forums; ignorance on career guidance issues among some parents; parents' lack of appreciation of the significant role they play in their children's career choices, among others.

Some of the counseling interventions that could be used to improve effectiveness of career guidance by parents in secondary schools included: sensitizing the parents on the need for them to engage actively in their children's education including career guidance matters; increasing the number of career guidance forums/sessions; ensuring regular and timely communication with the parents on upcoming career guidance events, among others.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions were drawn;

The parents were dissatisfied with the number of organized career guidance events and the sufficiency of the notice period given about the events.

This showed that the parents acknowledged that they had an important role to play in their children's career guidance.

Individual counseling and group counseling were the two major forms of counseling offered to the parents to assist them in providing career guidance to their children though group counseling was more prevalent than individual counseling. Though individual counseling was not prevalently used it has the advantage of allowing the career counselors the opportunity to have one-on-one interactive sessions with the parents and the students to discuss in detail matters relating to the students' personal career choices/decisions something not possible with group counselling.

There was general lack of use of modern interactive tools such as emails, SMSs, WhatsApp groups and phone calls in career guidance programmes.

There was need for parents' sensitization on the need for them to have a functional role in their children's education including on career guidance matters.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study recommends that;

1. Career guidance counsellors, with the support of the school principals, should diversify parent engagement strategies being employed by secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County. This can be by incorporating use modern interactive tools such as emails, SMSs, WhatsApp groups and phone calls to parents to ensure they keep abreast of all career guidance events planned in the schools which would in turn enhance their level of engagement in these important events.
2. To further enhance the level of parents' participation in career guidance in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, there is need to ensure that all concerned parents are communicated to, about upcoming career guidance events and their required participation, in time and on regular basis.
3. There is need for continued awareness creation among parents of secondary school students in Kikuyu Sub-County in particular, and in the whole country in general, on the significance of parents' role in the career guidance of their children.
4. Secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County of Kiambu County – Kenya should increase their use of individual counseling as it has the advantage of allowing

career counselors the opportunity to have one-on-one interactive sessions with the parents and the students to discuss in detail matters relating to the students' personal career choices/decisions something not possible with group counselling.

### **5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research**

1. The study recommends that; A similar study in Kikuyu Sub-County that will investigate the use of digital technology to support parents in providing career guidance to their secondary school children. This will shed light on adapting a modern approach to parent involvement in career guidance.
2. Another study involving primary schools in Kikuyu sub-county. This will facilitate a comparison of the study findings to parent involvement in career guidance at the foundation levels of education. This could in turn inform enhancement of education policy on the role of parents in career guidance at both the primary and secondary school's levels.

## REFERENCES

- Akhtar, M. (2008, August 11). *What is Self-Efficacy? Bandura's 4 Sources of Efficacy Beliefs*. <http://positivepsychology.org.uk/self-efficacy-definition-bandura-meaning/>
- Alfianto, I., Kamdi, W., & Isnandar, A. D. (2019). Parental support and career guidance as an effort to improve the career adaptability of vocational high school students. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 8(1), 163-173. [https://www.ijicc.net/images/vol8iss1/8114\\_Alfianto\\_2019\\_E\\_R.pdf](https://www.ijicc.net/images/vol8iss1/8114_Alfianto_2019_E_R.pdf)
- Alliance Girls' High School Old Girls Association (n.d) *Professionals for Alliance*. <https://alliancegirlsalumni.weeblysite.com/initiatives-and-events>
- Alliance High School (n.d). *Mentorship Conference*. <http://alliancehighschool.sc.ke/>
- Asatsa, S. (n.d.), *The Role of Parents in Career Guidance*. <https://www.alliancegirlshigh.sc.ke/>
- Barnes, S-A., Bimrose, J., Brown, A., Gough, J. & Wright, S. (2020). *The role of parents and careers in providing careers guidance and how they can be better supported*. [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/careerguidanceparents/ier\\_gatsby\\_jpm\\_parents\\_carers\\_final\\_report\\_v8\\_final.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/careerguidanceparents/ier_gatsby_jpm_parents_carers_final_report_v8_final.pdf).
- Bregman, G. & Killen, M. (1999) Students' and young adults' reasoning about career choice and the role of parental influence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 9(3), 253-275. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327795jra0903\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327795jra0903_2)
- Byrne, E.M. & Beavers, W.S. (1993). Career education, career guidance and curricula choice: A research review. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 2(3), 23-6. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F103841629300200309>
- Cherry, K. (2018, March 5). *Sample Types and Sampling Errors in Research*. Very Well Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-sample-2795877>
- Chifamba, C. (2019). An Analysis of how Parents Influence their Children's Career Decisions. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 4 (12), 1207-1213. <https://ijisrt.com/assets/upload/files/IJISRT19DEC520.pdf>
- Dinet, J., Marquet, P. & Nissen, E. (2003) An exploratory study of students perception of the web. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 19 (4), 538-



545. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0266-4909.2003.00056.x>

Farthing, J. (2014) Book Review: Career guidance and public policy: Bridging the gap. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 13 (3), 71-72. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F103841620401300316>

Fouziah, M., Amla, M. S., & Ramlee, M. (2010). The influence of contextual aspects on career decision making of Malaysian technical students. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 7(C), 369-375. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.10.050>

Gitonga, F.N. (2013) *Decisiveness in career choices among secondary school students in Kiambu West District - Kiambu County, Kenya*. [Masters dissertation, Kenyatta University]. <http://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle/123456789/8965>

Harackiewicz, J. M., Rozek, C.S., Hulleman, C.S., & Hyde, J.S. (2012). Helping parents to motivate students in mathematics and science: An experimental test of a utility-value intervention. *Psychological Science*, 23(8), 899–906. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0956797611435530>

Hassan, M. (2014). *Parental guidance for career choice of secondary school students in the opinion of educational counselor*. [Masters Research Report, University of Karachi]. <https://likedoc.org/thesis-on-parental-guidance>

Hegna, K., & Smette, I. (2017). Parental influence in educational decisions: young people's perspectives. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 38(8), 1111-1124. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2016.1245130>.

iDreamCareer.com (2015, August). *Role of parents in career selection*. <https://idreamcareer.com/blog/role-of-parents-in-career-planning>

Joseph, L.L. (2012). *The impact of family influence and involvement on career development* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Central Florida]. <http://stars.library.ucf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3209&context=etd>

Keller, S. & Conradin, K. (2017). *Semi-Structured Interviews*. <https://www.sswm.info/planning-and-programming/decision-making/gathering-ideas/semi-structured-interviews>

Kibaara, T. M. & Ndirangu, L. M. (2014). Parental Involvement in Their Children's

Academic Achievement in Public Secondary Schools: A Case of Kieni-West Sub-County, Nyeri County- Kenya. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 2(11), 411-422. <http://www.ijern.com/journal/2014/November-2014/33.pdf>

Kimu, A.M. (2012). *Parent involvement in public primary schools in Kenya*. [Doctoral Dissertation, University of South Africa]. <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/6031>

Kodero, H.M.N., Misigo, B.L., Owino, E.A. & Simiyu, C.K. (2011). *The salient characteristics of trained ineffective teachers in secondary schools in Kenya*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244011434102>

Lent, R.W., Brown, S.D. & Hackett, G. (2002). Social cognitive career theory. In: Brown, D, *Career Choice and Development* (4th ed., pp.255-311). Jossey-Bass.

Lim, S. A., & You, S. (2019). Long-term effect of parents' support on adolescents' career maturity. *Journal of Career Development*, 46(1), 48-61. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0894845317731866>

Maingi, L.W. (2007). *Certainty in career choice among Kenyatta University students: Implications for career counseling* [Master's thesis, Kenyatta University]. <http://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/>

Maluleke, S.G. (2014). *Parent involvement in their children's education in the Vhembe district, Limpopo*. [Masters Thesis, University of South Africa]. <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/18814>

McLeod, S.A. (2016). *Bandura - Social Learning Theory*. [www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html)

McLeod, S.A. (2018). *Questionnaire*. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/questionnaires.html>

McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2001). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction* (5<sup>th</sup> ed). Longman.

- Middleton, E.B., & Loughead, T.A. (1993). Parental influence on career development: an integrative framework for adolescent career counseling. *Journal of Career Development*, 19(3), 161–173. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F089484539301900302>
- Ministry of Education (2018). *Enrolment and teachers establishment in learning institutions data collection template: Enrollment on public secondary schools*. <https://www.education.go.ke/images/NESSP/MOE-NESSP.pdf>
- Morgan, M. (2012). *Engaging Parents in the Career Development of Young People. A Research Report for the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA)*, Melbourne, Victoria. <https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Parental-Engagement-Report-March-2012-FINAL.pdf>
- Mugenda, O. M. & Mugenda, A.G. (2003). *Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Acts Press.
- Murray K.W., Finigan-Carr N., Jones V., Copeland-Linder, N., Haynie, D.L. & Cheng, T.L. (2014). Barriers and facilitators to school-based parent involvement for parents of urban public middle school students. *SAGE Open* 4(4), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014558030>
- Mwalongo, L. J. (2018). The role of parents on guidance and career choice for children future development: A case study of Njombe, Tanzania urban primary schools. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 19(3), 44-49. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1245232>
- Nasta, K.A. (2007). *Influence of career self-efficacy beliefs on career exploration behavior*. [Master's thesis, State University of New York] New Paltz. <http://hdl.handle.net/1951/42318>
- Ngii, M.T. (2015). *The role of effective guidance and counselling in curbing students unrest in secondary schools: A case study of Kangundo Sub-county, Machakos County, Kenya*. [Masters, thesis, University of Nairobi]. <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream>
- Noble, S. (2017, November 13). *Test-Retest Reliability Repeatability*. Statistics How To. <http://www.statisticshowto.com/test-retest-reliability/>
- Nyumba, T. O., Wilson, K.A., Derrick, C.J. & Mukherjee, N. (2018). The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of

application in conservation. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*. 9(1), 20–32.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.12860>

Olaosebikan, O. I. & Olusakin, A. M. (2014). Effects of Parental Influence on Students' Career Choice in Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*. 4(4), 44-57.  
<http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jrme/papers/Vol-4%20Issue-4/Version-3/G04434457.pdf>

Oomen, A. (2016). Parental involvement in career education and guidance in secondary education. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*. 37(1), 39-46(8). <https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.3707>

Oreng, E. N. (2011). *Status of Career Guidance and Counselling Programme for Students in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi Province, Kenya*. [Master's thesis, Kenyatta University]. <http://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/=1>

Oundo, E.N., Poipoi, M.W. & Were, D.S. (2014). Relationship between Parents' Attitude towards Educational Involvement and Academic Performance of Day Secondary School Students in Samia - Kenya. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 4(3), 147-157.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v4i3.5964>

Oye, N.D., Obi. M.C., Mohd T.N. & Bernice, A. (2012). Guidance and Counseling in Nigerian Secondary Schools: The Role of ICT. *International Journal Modern Education and Computer Science*. 4(8), 26-33.  
<https://doi.org/10.5815/ijmecs.2012.08.04>

Qualifax (n.d.). The Parent's Role in Career Selection: How important is the role of the parent in the career guidance process? *Qualifax: The National Learners Database*.  
[http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=179&Itemid=207](http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=179&Itemid=207)

Rose, P. (2018, April 23) *Follow the money: Tracking education spending to reinforce accountability*. Global Partnership for Education.  
<https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/follow-money-tracking-education-spending-reinforce-accountability>

Supreeth, S. & Aravind, S. (2015). Delivering Career Guidance: Case Study of a School-Based Method from India. *Indian Journal of Career and Livelihood Planning*. 4(1), 24-37.  
[http://www.iaclp.org/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/4\\_Supreeth\\_and\\_Aravin](http://www.iaclp.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/4_Supreeth_and_Aravin)

d.73115323.pdf

- Xu, H., Hou, Z.J. & Tracey, T.J.G. (2014). Relation of Environmental and Self-Career Exploration With Career Decision-Making Difficulties in Chinese Students. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 22(4), 654-665. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1069072713515628>
- Zafar, M. (2019). Career Guidance in Career Planning among Secondary School Students. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 7(2), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2019/v5i130133>
- Zeb, A., Ali, A., & Reba, A. (2018). The role of parents in career selection of secondary school students. *Journal of Education and Research*, 14(2), 9-18. <https://doi.org/10.2117/s11618-089-0095>
- Zelloth, H. (2015, June 2 - 6). *Career guidance policy and practice: A strategic tool for planners and policy makers*. [Paper presentation] ILO-ITC training programme, Turin, Italy. [http://www.iaclp.org/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/4\\_Supreeth\\_and\\_Aravind.73115323.pdf](http://www.iaclp.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/4_Supreeth_and_Aravind.73115323.pdf)

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER**

Wanjiku W. Wang’ombe  
(MEG-3-0317-1/2017)  
Kenya Methodist University  
P.O. Box 267-60200,  
**Meru.**

Date: 15/07/2019

The Principal,

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH**

This is to kindly introduce myself for the above referenced purposes.

I am a second year Masters of Education in Guidance and Counseling student at the Kenya Methodist University. As part of the fulfillment of the requirements towards the award of the degree, I am undertaking a survey on career guidance issues with parents, students and career counselors entitled “**Parents’ Role in Career Guidance among Secondary School Students in Kikuyu Sub County, Kiambu County- Kenya**”.

The findings of this study are meant for purely academic purposes and will involve a few parents and students from each Form and one career guidance teacher at your school.

Kindly allow me to carry out the study in your institution.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Wanjiku Wang’ombe

## **APPENDIX II: INFORMED CONSENT OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

I understand that the purpose of this study is to investigate parents' role in career guidance among secondary school students in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County.

I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and I may discontinue my participation at any time without prejudice. I further understand that any information about me that is collected during this study will be anonymously processed and that the results and interpretation of the study will be used only for the purpose of the study.

Signature of Participant: ..... Date: .....

### APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Instructions

This questionnaire has 4 sections. Please answer all the questions.

Please tick (✓) or fill the appropriate answers in the gaps provided.

#### SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender:

Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age:

20 -29 [ ] 30-39 [ ]

40- 49 [ ] 50- 59 [ ]

60 and above [ ]

3. Level of Education:

Primary [ ] Secondary [ ]

Certificate [ ] Diploma [ ]

Degree [ ] Post graduate [ ]

Not applicable [ ]

4. Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

#### SECTION B: CAREER GUIDANCE IN THE SCHOOLS

1. Does your child's school offer career guidance?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

2. If, Yes, tick the career guidance methods and interactive programs offered by your child's school from the following list;

	Tick (whichever that applies)
<b>Career guidance methods</b>	
Circular / Letter	
Newsletter	
Brochures	
Email	
Websites	
<b>Career guidance interactive programs</b>	
Career day / expo	



Parents meetings	
Parents workshop	
Parent guest speaker	
Parent offering students work experience	

### SECTION C: PARENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

This section has a list of question statements regarding parent engagement strategies used by the school to enhance career guidance.

Please tick (✓) or provide the answer that best suits you.

- The following information giving methods are used by the school to assist me in providing career guidance to my child: -

	Yearly	Termly	More than once a term	Never
Circular / Letter				
Newsletter				
Brochure				
Email				
Website				

- The following interactive programs are offered by the school to assist me in providing career guidance to my child: -

	Yearly	Termly	More than once a term	Never
Career day/ expo				
Parents meeting				
Parents workshop				
Parent guest speaker				
Parent offers students work experience				

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: -

(Key: 5 - Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 2 - Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree)

	5	4	3	2	1
The information provided by the career counselor is useful to assist me in providing career guidance to my child					
The interactive sessions/events offered by the school are useful to assist me in providing career guidance to my child					
I am always informed about upcoming career guidance events that I am expected to attend					
I am satisfied with the notice period given before a career guidance event					
The number of events the school organises for career guidance are enough					

4. What do you see as the most successful or effective aspect of the parent engagement strategies that the school uses for career guidance?

---



---



---



---



---

5. Please explain your choice in question

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

**SECTION C: PARENTS LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN CAREER GUIDANCE PROGRAMS**

This section has a list of question statements regarding parents’ level of participation in career guidance programs.

Please tick (✓) or provide the answer that best suits you.

1. How often do you attend career guidance programs you are invited to?
 

All the time	[ ]	Most of the time	[ ]
Sometimes	[ ]	Hardly ever	[ ]
Never	[ ]		
  
2. Please tick (✓) to indicate the main reason(s) why you attend career guidance events.

To be informed	
To be equipped as a parent	
It is compulsory to attend	
To meet other parents	
To meet teachers	

3. Please specify any other reason(s) not mentioned above.

---



---



---

4. If you do not attend all career guidance events (Question 12 above), please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following reasons for your non-attendance.  
(Key: 5 - Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 2 - Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree)

	5	4	3	2	1
Attendance is not compulsory					
It is not useful for me to attend					
I am not treated well at the school					
I cannot get time off work					
Transport costs					

5. Please specify any other reason(s) not mentioned above.

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

**SECTION D: PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS INVOLVEMENT IN CAREER GUIDANCE**

1. This section has a list of question statements regarding parents' attitude towards involvement in career guidance.

Please tick (✓) or provide the answer that best suits you.

(Key: 5 - Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 2 - Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree)

	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
I have a significant influence on my child's career choice					
I am in apposition to provide career guidance to my child					
My child needs me to be involved in his/ her career decisions					
The school need me to be involved in career guidance					
The school provides a friendly environment for career guidance involvement					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

## **APPENDIX IV: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

General questions:

1. Does the school offer counseling to parents to assist them in providing career guidance to their children?
2. If yes, is it one-on-one, family or group counseling?

Probing questions:

3. Have you had the opportunity to attend any counseling to assist in career guidance?
4. If yes, comment on your experience and outcomes.
5. If you have not been offered any counseling suggest possible reasons why.
6. How, in your opinion does counseling assist a parent who is offering career counseling to their child?

Concluding question:

7. What in your opinion is the best way for the school to offer counseling to parents to assist in career guidance?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## **APPENDIX V: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CAREER GUIDANCE**

### **COUNSELORS**

1. Do you involve parents in career guidance?
2. What strategies do you use?
3. Do you focus more on information giving or interactive parent engagement strategies?
4. Give reasons for your answer above.
5. How often do you involve parents in career guidance programs?
6. Comment on attendance rates of parents in career guidance programs.
7. Do you offer counseling to parents to assist them in career guidance?
8. If yes, expound on the types of therapy you offer and the reasons for your choice.

9. What outcomes have you observed as a result of the counseling?
10. Have you observed any improvement in career guidance to the students as a result of parent engagement?
11. What feedback (both positive and negative) have you received from parents regarding their involvement in career guidance?
12. What challenges do you face in your effort to involve parents in career guidance?
13. How do you suggest that these challenges can be overcome?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

## **APPENDIX VI: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS**

1. Do you involve parents in career guidance?
2. What strategies do you use to involve parents in career guidance?
3. How often do you involve parents in career guidance programs?
4. Comment on attendance rates of parents in career guidance programs
5. Have you observed any improvement in career guidance to the students as a result of parent engagement?
6. What feedback (both positive and negative) have you received from parents regarding their involvement in career guidance?
7. What challenges does the school face in your effort to involve parents in career guidance?
8. How do you suggest that these challenges can be overcome?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

**APPENDIX VII: LIST OF KIKUYU SUB-COUNTY SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Category of schools	Name of school	Total population of Form 3 students
National	Alliance Girls High School	402
National	Alliance High School	430
County	Kikuyu Boys Secondary School	60
County	Kikuyu Day Secondary School	118
County	Moi Girls Kamangu Secondary School	150
County	Musa Gitau Secondary School	110
Sub-County	Fr. Kevin Kelly Secondary School	71
Sub-County	Gichuru Memorial Secondary School	92
Sub-County	Karai Mixed Secondary School	104
Sub-County	Kerwa Secondary School	85
Sub-County	Lusigetti Senior Secondary School.	64
Sub-County	Mai-A-Ihii Secondary School	56
Sub-County	Mama Ngina Senior Secondary School	42
Sub-County	Muhu Secondary School	90
Sub-County	Nachu Secondary School.	74
Sub-County	Nderi Secondary School	54
Sub-County	Renguti Secondary School.	64
Total 17 Schools		2,066



## APPENDIX VIII: ETHICAL CLEARANCE BY KEMU



### 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](mailto:INFO@KEMU.AC.KE)

23<sup>RD</sup> MAY, 2019

KeMU/SERC/MEG/44/2019

Wanjiku Wang'ombe  
MEG-3-0317-1/2017

Kenya Methodist University

Dear Wanjiku,

#### SUBJECT: ETHICAL CLEARANCE OF A MASTERS' DEGREE RESEARCH THESIS

Your request for ethical clearance for your **Masters' Degree Research Thesis** titled "**Parents' Role in Career Guidance among Secondary School Students in Kikuyu Sub-County: A Case of Kiambu County Kenya.**" has been provisionally granted to you in accordance with the content of your research thesis subject to tabling it in the full Board of Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (SERC) for ratification.

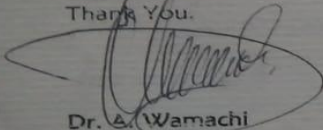
As Principal Investigator, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the thesis.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the SERC for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes. The Thesis number assigned to the thesis should be cited in any correspondence.
3. Adverse events should be reported to the SERC. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for SERC review. The SERC and outside agencies must review the information to determine if the protocol should be modified, discontinued, or continued as originally approved.

4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The SERC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. SERC regulations require review of an approved study not less than once per 12-month period. **Therefore, a continuing review application must be submitted to the SERC in order to continue the study beyond the approved period.** Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion will result in termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must be taken off the study.

Please note that any substantial changes on the scope of your research will require an approval.

Thank You.



Dr. A. Wamachi  
Chair, SERC

Cc: Dean, RD&PGS

**APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH PERMIT BY NACOSTI**

