

Family Influence on the Choice of Careers in Home Science Education Programme

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Abstract: Many at times students experience challenges when making decisions on the choice of programmes to study especially at the institutions of higher learning. The family may play a role in shaping the career aspirations of its members. This study sought to establish the level of family influence on choice of Home Science Education programme in Kenyan Universities. The study was guided by the Social Cognitive Career Theory that explores how career choices are made by self-efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals. This study adopted the Convergent Parallel mixed method design employing both quantitative and qualitative approach. The study was conducted in Uasin Gishu and Kiambu counties which have universities with programmes that train Home Science educators. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two universities offering the Home Science Education programmes where 2 Heads of Department/Chairs of Department were purposively selected while the 254 students were conveniently selected. Data for the study was obtained by using questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussion guides. Quantitative data was analyzed and then presented using distribution tables and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and then used to compare with that of quantitative data. The findings of this study revealed that the family influence was considered to have a minor consideration in the choice of careers in Home Science Education programme. Majority of the respondents made their career choices in Home Science Education programme with minimal family influence. The study recommends the need to sensitize the family on their role of guiding their children in making career choices based on their own interests and disregard the family's expectations on the society's most preferred profession.

Keywords: Family, influence, Home Science Education, Programme, Universities, Career

I. INTRODUCTION

Present day youths have more decisions to make as compared to the past. (Musset & Kurekova, 2018). The authors that the process of choosing an institution and the programme to study is one major decision that an individual has to make. Mtemeri (2017) posits that students will be able to acquire information of their preference and interests as a result of the interactions with many stakeholders within their surroundings. Choo, Norsiah and Tan (2012) opine that career provide a source of identity, creativity, status and social networking. In this sense, it can be viewed as a major component that forms part and parcel of our daily lives which has the ability of making lives more meaningful. Further, Fabea (2014) in a publication on educational factors of university of Cape Coast students attests that a person who

has chosen a career would be able to live a fulfilling life, where they are able to raise a healthy family.

In most cases, the first person that a child interacts with as soon as they are born are the parents and other family members. For instance, Owino and Odundo (2016) in their study of History students in the University of Nairobi found that, 24 (21.8%) of the chose their subject because of family influence. In support of this, Marinas et al., (2016) established that family was among the three important factors that influenced their BA students to choose their trajectories. In addition, Okiror and Otabong (2015) in their study on students of Agriculture attributed their choice to the influence by their parents. Still in Africa, Kumar (2016); Bakshi, Gandhi, Shah and Maru (2012); Argawala (2008) and Tynkkynen, Nurmi and Salmela-Aro (2010) found that parents have a greater influence on career choice among college entrants and that they were the main sources of inspiration. The authors further, confirmed that fathers in particular were the main players in career choices. Similarly, Lawer (2015) in a Ghanaian study on factors that inform students' choice of study and career found that despite the fact that respondents had chosen their own careers, fathers were the most influential persons.

Similarly, Mtemeri (2019) in his Zimbabwean study on family influence among High School Students revealed that families have a greater influence on the choice of careers. In his study, it was confirmed that as the students reported to school, they came with preset careers that arose from immediate family members and mothers were said to be the most influential in comparison to the other members. Further, the author acknowledged that family influence comes in varied ways like actions portrayed by the parents, their principles and their connectedness and hopes.

It seems that there exists a strong influence of the family on intentions of students to join a particular career as it plays a significant role of providing relevant information on the various careers one could venture into (Amani, 2013; Amani 2016). Aspects of career choice involve various factors that may be different in different professions, whereby one factor may be strongly affected in one profession and may be different in another. Once a child has the needed information or is made aware, they then opt to venture into their preferred field of choice. This aspect of the family should however not be left entirely to dictate what a student will venture into, but should only be viewed as a guide. As indicated earlier, the process of career choice is usually a difficult task on the mind

of a student. Therefore, parental guidance should be used as a springboard to preferred field.

Further, King (1993) in a publication on African American Teachers reported that parental behaviour had a strong connection on career choice, where specifically mothers were seen to be the most supportive persons in choosing a teaching career. In 1993, a study by Gensinde as cited by Fabea (2014) reported that a higher percentage of respondents had chosen their careers as a result of parental influence.

A related study in the Philippines on decision of Hospitality and Tourism students by Malubay, Mercado and Macasaet (2015) confirmed that parental influence on choice of a career was the top most factor among others as they have a critical role in making decisions. This is due to the fact that children will in most cases anchor their careers to those of the closest family members. Hearne (2009), on a study on parents and the college decisions put forth a claim that parents are intensely involved and very influential to their children's choice of programmes among other factors. It is further documented in Carrico et al., (2019); Edwin and James (2016); Koech, Bittok, Rutto, Koech, Onyango, Korir and Ngala (2016); Hina (2015); Kochung and Migunde (2011) that parents tend to have a countless influence in their children's career choice and that job stability/income level is the key expectation.

In Pakistan, a study of undergraduate students by Humayon, Raza, Khan and Ansari (2018) established that family had a very significant part of influencing students to choose their careers. Here, it was confirmed that the family played a key role in influencing students to choose the best careers. Closely related to the above study, Meddour, Abdo, Majid, Auf and Aman (2016) in their Indonesian study titled factors affecting career choice among undergraduate Students in Universities established that family influence played a positive significant role in their career choice.

Parents have greatly been known to be key players in career aspirations of students all over. For instance, Omari (2014) in a study titled strategic factors influencing students' career choice in Kenyan universities recognized that majority of the respondents acknowledged that parents and other family members as key persons that influenced them in their choice of careers. In contrast, the family may also hinder the process of career choice. For instance, Nepomuceno and Witter (2010) argued that the family may facilitate and complicate the process. According to their study, they believe that the family's hopes are mirrored on students as they pursue their misplaced wishes trying to make their children prosper. With this in mind, they argue that they turn the process of career choice into that of cultural reproductivity.

In contrast, family may not all the time have influence over their students' career choice. For example, Ndalichako and Komba (2014); Batterham and Levesley (2011) in their studies confirmed that majority of parents from the community schools had never made it to the secondary school education therefore they did not have a main influence on the

education of their kids and most likely had not played a role in the kind of subjects they chose. In addition, they established that the parents lacked sufficient information pertaining to the full range of options, unaware of diverse available jobs. Likewise, Oloasebikan and Olusakin (2014); Zotorvie (2016) and Canaga and Sempele (2019) established that family did not have an influence in students' career choices.

Walaba and Kiboss (2013) in their Kenyan study on undergraduate's choice of Christian Religious Education subject also confirmed that pressure from parents was least influential in career choice. Further, a Nigerian study by Odia (2014) on factors influencing students' enrolment in social studies in education at the post- secondary school level on family influence was rejected by her respondents in the choice of subjects. Further, Gacohi (2017) in her Kenyan study on selected factors influencing degree choice and placement established that the influence on degree choice programme was low among her respondents. Similarly, Cridland, English, Hayles, McDonald and McHugh (2014) in their study on parental influence on post-secondary major choice in Ontario also had contrary opinion on the family influence. They established that when students are forced to choose a degree programme by parents, they tend to feel restricted within their major. In addition, they assert that when family influence is negative, the student may make their choice out of necessity rather than desire and this may in the long run make students become less motivated in their career choices.

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that there is still no clear finding or an agreement on the role of family influence in the choice of careers. Therefore, this study intends to fill this knowledge gap as to whether family plays a role among the Home Science Education undergraduate in their choice of career.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was guided by the Social Cognitive Career Theory that explores how career choices are made by self-efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals. This study adopted the Convergent Parallel mixed method design employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches at the same time. The study was conducted in Uasin Gishu and Kiambu counties which have universities with programmes that train Home Science educators. This study adopted purposive sampling technique to select two universities offering the Home Science Education programmes where 2 Heads of Departments who took part in this study were purposively selected while the 254 students were conveniently selected.

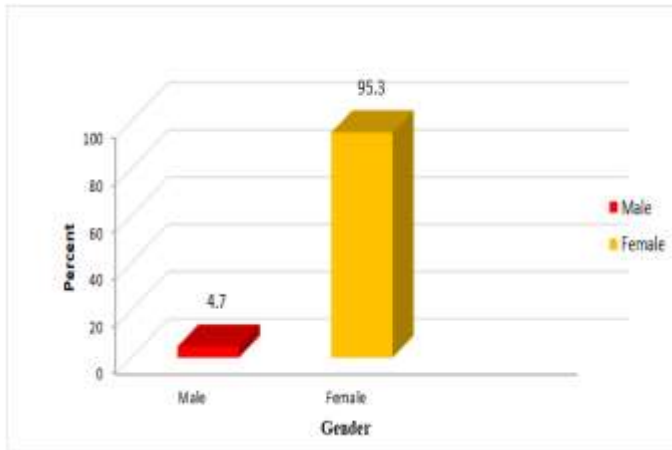
Data for the study was obtained by using questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussion guides. Quantitative data was analyzed and then presented using distribution tables and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and then used to compare with that of quantitative data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Gender of Respondents

A total of 254 students participated in this study. Twelve of them (4.7%) were male and two hundred and forty-two (95.3%) were female. The large number of females in Home Science Education programme shows that the programme is more popular among females.

Fig 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents by Gender

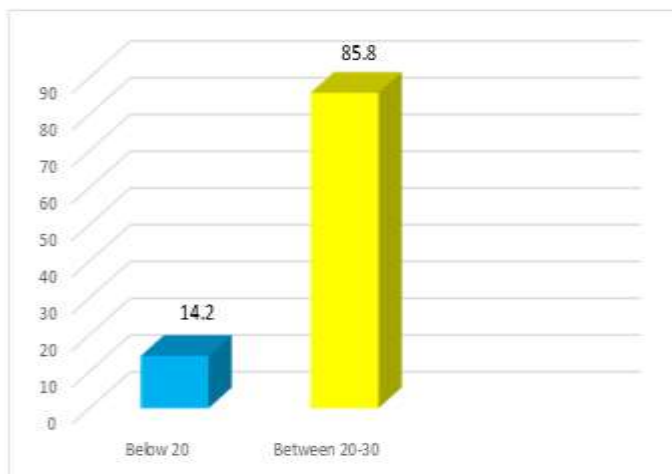


Source: Field data (2020/2021)

3.2 Age of respondents

The findings as indicated in Figure 2 shows that majority of the respondents were aged between 20 – 30 years, that is, 218 (85.8%). A few students 36 (14.2%) were aged below 20 years.

Fig 2: Age distribution of respondents



Source: Field data (2020/2021)

3.3 Parents’/Guardians’ Academic Qualification

The respondents were asked to indicate their parents’/guardians’ academic qualification. The findings are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Parents’/Guardians’ Academic Qualification

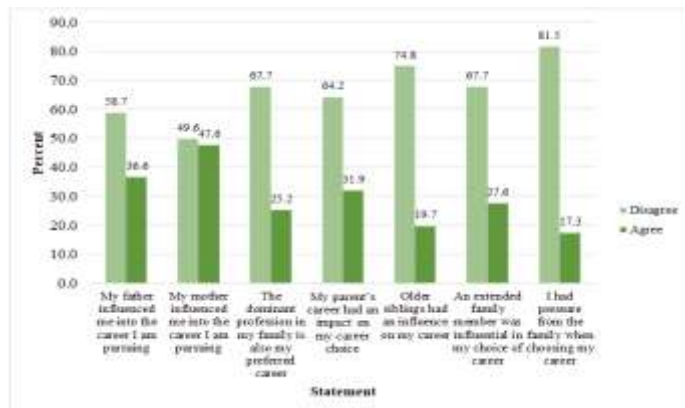
Parent	Post Graduate	Graduate	Diploma	Certificate	None	High School	Primary	Other
Father	42 (16.5%)	71 (28%)	67 (26.4%)	3 (1.2%)	49 (19.3%)	16 (6.3%)	5 (2%)	1 (0.4%)
Mother	15 (5.9%)	56 (22%)	101 (39.8%)	9 (3.5%)	41 (16.1%)	18 (7.1%)	13 (5.1%)	1 (0.4%)
Guardian	15 (5.9%)	20 (7.9%)	14 (5.5%)	1 (0.4%)	202 (79.5%)	1 (0.4%)		1 (0.4%)

Table 1 indicated that majority of the fathers 42 (16.5%) had a post-graduate, while a few mothers 15 (5.9%) and guardians 15 (5.9%) had a post-graduate. The same was seen in the graduate qualification where 71 (28%) of the fathers had a graduate compared to 56 (22%) of the mothers and 20 (7.9%) of the guardians. A different trajectory on qualification was presented in regards to the diploma qualification. Herein mothers were the majority 101 (39.8%), fathers were 67 (26.4%) while guardians were few 14 (5.5%).

In regards to certificates qualification, there were more mothers 9 (3.5%) than fathers 3 (1.2%) and guardians 1 (0.4%) who had this. Table 1 further indicated that majority of the guardians 202 (79.5%) had no qualification at all, 49 (19.3%) fathers did not have any qualification compared to 41 (16.1%) mothers who did not have any qualification. This may imply that probably the guardians may have been aged thus did not have a chance of going to school during their school days when education wasn’t compulsory.

In regard to high school qualification finding in Table 1 indicated that 18 (7.1%) of the mothers had only attained the form four KCSE certificate, 18 (7.1%) fathers had attained the same while only 1 (0.4%) guardians had attained the same KCSE. Lastly, majority of the mothers 13 (5.1%) had a primary school level of qualification, 5 (2%) fathers had a similar qualification while none of the guardians had such a qualification. The general trends indicate that majority of the fathers had a higher qualification than the mothers and guardians. Though overall, the fathers, mothers and guardians had a certain level of qualification which can be considered significant to offer an informed decision. Cano and Baxter (2019) established that enabling paternal involvement in their children’s upbringing brings moderate to high gains to their children’s cognitive functioning, if paternal involvement is directed at educational activities. Thus, fathers may be the key people who should be involved in the upbringing of children.

Fig 3: Family Influence on Choice of Career in Home Science Education Programme



Source: Field data (2020/2021)

Item 1 on Figure 3 showed that 58.7% of the respondents disagreed that their father influenced them into the career that they were pursuing while 36.6% agreed. From the results it can be seen that majority of the students perceived that their fathers did not influence them in choosing their careers. It is important to note that regardless of the fact that fathers had a higher education level and probably in careers not associated or associated with Home Science they did not influence career choices of the respondents.

The second item showed that 49.6% of the respondents disagreed that their mother influenced them into the career that they were pursuing, while 47.6% agreed. From the results it can be seen that majority of the respondents perceived that their mothers did not influence them into choosing their careers. It is important to note that regardless of the fact that mothers may have had a lower qualification they did not influence career choice of the respondents. The focus group discussion with the students, implied that their parents especially the mother influenced them to pursue Home Science education programme. The excerpts were;

I wanted to take Home Science and still my mum encouraged me to take Home Science in high school. At the university level, she talked to me about the job opportunities, so I decided to take the Home Science course. (FGD 2, Respondent 3, 3/12/2020)

First of all, I was admitted for Education Arts but I transferred. The motive for transferring was my mum, she desires Home Science so much, so I chose Home Science course so as to help me satisfy her expectations to attain whatever she wanted (FGD 3, Respondent 2, 18/12/2020)

Family plays an important role because most high school students, don't know what the outside world entails. They don't know how to choose marketable courses. Our parents have experiences and can guide students to choose a course. (FGD 3, Respondent 3, 18/12/2020)

It is critical to mention that the results in this study indicated a higher number of respondents, 84 (47.6%), as shown in Figure

3 who agreed that their mothers influenced them to choose Home Science Education programme. Despite the fact that the mothers had a lower qualification in comparison to that of the fathers, mothers played a critical role in them choosing Home Science education programme. This may have been possible if some of them studied Home Science in school and were informed pertaining to what the subject was all about and all the benefits derived in it.

The third item in Figure 3 showed that 67.7% of the respondents disagreed that the dominant profession in their family was also their preferred career, whereas 25.2% agreed. From the results it can be seen that majority of the students perceived that the dominant profession in their family was their preferred career. From the focused group discussion, it was noted that some student's choice of a career may have been influenced by a career of a family member. Example of extracts were;

Family plays a very important role because I had a family member, my cousin who did a Home Science related course, catering. She was the one who motivated me to take a Home Science education programme at the university. (FGD 3, Respondent 3, 18/12/2020)

My mum encouraged me to take Home Science because she had done it and she knew the benefits that Home Science has. She encouraged me to choose, among the four courses she insisted that Home Science was to be my first choice. (FGD 2, Respondent 7, 3/12/2020)

Being raised by a single mother who did Home Science in high school, made us to spend most time cooking and washing. I think that created interest. I'm the first born in the family and being the first born I could do most of the household chores (FGD 2 Respondent 1, 3/12/2020)

My mother is a Home Science high school teacher and she encouraged me to be like her, to take Home Science programme (laughter). As much as she encouraged me, I decided to follow my own aspirations as well and chose Home Science (FGD 2, Respondent 2, 3/12/2020)

This implies that the profession within the family was not a major factor as they chose the Home Science Education programme but certainly may have played a role in some isolated cases.

The fourth item showed that 64.2% of the respondents disagreed that their parents' career had an impact on their career choice while 31.9% agreed. This finding therefore indicates that the majority of the students perceived that their parents' career did not have an impact on their career choice.

Item five in Figure 3 showed that 74.8% of the respondents disagreed that the older siblings had an influence on their careers while 19.7% agreed. From the results it can be seen that majority of the students perceived that the older siblings did not influence their career choice.

The sixth item showed that 67.7% of the respondents disagreed that an extended family member was influential in my choice of career while 27.6% agreed. From the results it can be seen that majority of the students perceived that the older siblings did not influence their career choice.

Results in this study imply that the family may have played a minimal role in the choice of career among students in Home Science Education programme. Findings of this study conform to those of Zotorvie (2016); Oloasebikan and Olusakin (2014); Ndlichako and Komba (2014); Batterham and Levesley (2011) that family may not have played a role in the kind of subjects they chose and that they established that parents lacked sufficient information pertaining to the full range of options, unaware of diverse available jobs. This therefore means that family did not have an influence on students' career choices. Further, Canaga and Sempele (2019) established that 58% of their respondents disagreed that the opinion of others like parents motivated students to pursue Hospitality Education. They thus believed that students were aware of their desired area of professionalism in their programme of study thus were able to make their own choices.

Further, Gacohi (2017); Odia (2014); Cridland, et al. (2014); Walaba and Kiboss (2013) also confirmed that pressure from parents was least influential in career choice. They established that when students are forced to choose a degree programme by parents, they tend to feel restricted within the programme they have majored in. In addition, they assert that when family influence is negative, the student may make their choice out of necessity rather than desire and this may in the long run make students become less motivated in their career choices.

Item 7 showed that 81.5% disagreed that they had pressure from the family, while 17.3% agreed that they had pressure from the family when choosing their career. It can therefore be concluded that majority of the respondents did not have any pressure from the family as they chose Home Science education programme and that they may have chosen it out of their personal interest or the parents may have influenced them as a result of the availability of job opportunities.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study sought to establish whether family had an influence on choice of careers in Home Science Education programme. Findings in this study established that the family did not play a major role in the choice of Home Science Education programme. Majority of the respondents disagreed to most of the items in the study pertaining to the person within the family who may have had an influence on them as they made their choices. However, there were cases of parents influencing their children as they made their choices that may have been necessitated by other factors. Of particular interest were the fathers although mothers may have also played a role. The extended family did not play a key role simply because of the disintegration of family set up that may have been occasioned by economic factors that have seen a change

of family structures. Majority of the respondents made their career choices in Home Science Education programme with minimal family influence. As much as some family members may have had a say, the respondents in this study were not majorly influenced.

There is need to sensitize the family on their role in guiding their children to make career choices based on their own interests and not on the family's expectations. Their children should be guided without enforcing the family's most preferred career aspirations on them and once guided, the family should leave them to make their preferred decisions.

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