

Social Factors Influencing First Year Students' Attitude Towards Studying of Physical Education at The University of Nairobi

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Abstract: This study purposed to explore the social factors influencing undergraduate students' attitudes towards studying physical education at the University of Nairobi. The study used cross-sectional survey design. A total of 273 students were profiled. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Both qualitative and quantitative data were generated by the study. The data was coded and entered into computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation. From the study, 32.7% of the students indicated that their parents' career did influence their career choice. Majority, 51.7% of the respondents agreed to have been influenced by family members' advice to pursue their careers. However, 37.5% of the students demonstrated that they were advised by their friends to choose the career they were pursuing while 44.1% were influenced by their teachers. About 64.5% agreed that they chose the career because it was prestigious while 14.7% agreed that they were influenced by their religious beliefs when it came to the choice of their career. The study recommended provision of quality equipment and resources in the university to improve the attitude of students towards studying PE, the ministry to organize seminars and workshops to create awareness on the importance of PE, further research to be done on the attitude of parents towards PE and the influence of socioeconomic background towards students' attitude in studying physical education and sports.

Keywords: Physical Education, University, Career subject, Influence, Undergraduate Students.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the major aims of physical education (PE) programs in institutions of learning is to promote lifelong physical activity (PA) and to provide learners with a chance to develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed to lead active healthy lifestyles (Lauren et al., 2010). One of the ways for students to participate in and have positive attitude towards physical activities is by enrolling in Physical Education classes. A research by Tom, Benedicte and Peter (2015), showed that when students transition from secondary school to university, they develop sedentary lifestyles and become physically inactive. Further, the research by Tom, Benedicte and Peter (2015) showed that on average university students spent eight hours daily on sedentary activities such as studying, watching television, gaming, computer activities, sitting and talking, shopping and hanging out with friends.

Attitudes towards and active participation in physical activities decrease as the grade levels and ages of students increase (Halil Evren, 2019).

According to United Nation Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization (2015) directive, physical education should be included in all education systems. Even so, a research by Gerald (2016), showed that Physical Education was sidelined in many schools due to negative attitudes and poor perceptions towards the subject. Baloka (2018) found out that lack of sufficiently qualified Physical Education professionals was one of the leading cause for the low status and poor attitude towards the subject. To increase the number of adequately trained physical education professionals thus raising its status, doing everything possible to increase the number of university students pursuing Physical education is an indisputable fact. Physical education teachers have the rare opportunity of educating those students in which they come in contact (Baloka, 2018).

According to Owino and Amolloh (2016), students who make erroneous career decisions due to lack of proper guidance often join vocations they are not interested in pursuing. Likewise, a person is unlikely to perform well in school and at work if they lack interest and aptitude in a given career due to lack of self-satisfaction (Owino & Amolloh, 2016). Unprecedented achievements have been seen in the early 21st Century in the development of Physical Education in Kenya. In the 21st Century, more universities have launched physical education academic programs including University of Nairobi, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Laikipia University, Moi University and University of Eldoret (Janet, Elijah & Francis, 2016). At Kenyatta University, there has been an increment of intake of students (Janet, Elijah & Francis, 2016).

According to Lauren et al (2010), the exploration of factors that influence the decisions to enroll in elective PE in the university is an area of study that has been investigated inadequately. Lauren et al (2010) further revealed that student's attitudes towards PE are developed while in secondary schools and these attitudes guide their choice to pursue PE as a career in college or not.

Understanding students' beliefs about physical education is a critical source for understanding their attitudes and choice of Physical Education as a career subject. Gitonga et al. (2011) showed that establishing the attitudes of teacher-trainees towards PE at the university level was paramount as the trainees upon becoming teachers may carry over their attitudes towards PE to the children who will be under their jurisdiction. Consonantly, Owino and Amolloh (2016) opined that teachers have a great impact on students' attitudes towards pursuing certain subjects.

A research by McGaha and David (2014) showed that former teachers, coaches and family members are people who influence college students' choice of teaching profession and career subject. However, a study by Getange and Sagwe (2016) indicated that many students make ignorant career choices due to lack of guidance from teachers and parents; the students, by themselves, try to find out what career opportunities exist and those that are compatible to their talents. Further, Getange and Sagwe (2016) concluded that socio-economic and cultural backgrounds dictated career aspirations of students, for example, students from families where there was a tradition for further education tended to follow the footsteps of their family members. According to Rono and Cheruiyot (2016), family members especially parents have a powerful influence on the development of students' attitudes towards various subjects.

Likewise, Jones (2012) argued that parents affected their children's level of education, their training, their knowledge about occupations and their beliefs and attitudes they had about work and occupations. Jones (2012) also showed that peer group influence is an important factor in influencing students' career choice. Similarly, Kilonzo (2010), found that there was significant relationship between father's education and educational aspirations of their children. Parents make contributions to decisions made by their children in their pursuit of PE studies at universities in Kenya. Parental role and influence contributes greatly towards adoption and promotion of teaching of PE for their children in institutions of education in many countries of the world (Andanje & Elijah, 2013). This could be attributable to the fact that due to their vast experience in life and having gone through formal education themselves, parents are well-placed to advise their children on the importance of PE. Home environment plays an important role as a dominant source of career related attitudes (Raby & Walford, 2011).

Societal values play an important role of influencing students' career choices; and careers that may undermine such values are unlikely to be pursued (Owino & Amolloh, 2016). Similarly, Ogidan, Onifade and Ologele (2013) showed that cultural beliefs and religious beliefs have significant influence on student participation in and choice of PE and sports as a career subject. The purpose of this review was thus to explore the social factors influencing first year student's attitudes towards studying of Physical Education and sports at the University of Nairobi.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A study of grade 10 students using focus group interviews to identify factors influencing enrollment intention in elective PE among female and male students by Lauren et al (2010) revealed that the value that the parents placed on PE programs was the greatest determinant of lack of or support from parents towards enrollment in Physical Education programs by their children. The study further revealed that past experiences in PE is a major factor that creates positive or negative attitude towards PE. Students' attitudes towards PE are developed years before transition to colleges, and these attitudes may guide their choice of whether to pursue PE as a career path or not.

A study by Tom et al. (2015) on determinants of participation in physical education and sedentary behavior in Belgian university students was carried out. The study employed snowball sampling to collect data. The study used a semi-structured question guide to conduct seven focus group discussions consisting of 17 male and 29 female from a variety of study disciplines, with a mean age of 20.7 ± 1.6 yrs. Inductive content analysis was used to analyze data. The study disclosed that social support from friends influenced participation in Physical Education classes. The study demonstrated that the social environment influencing students' participation in physical education classes included parental control, modelling and peer pressure. Aside influencing participation in PE, the factors were also found to influence students' sedentary lifestyle as well.

Andanje and Elijah (2013) investigated parental role and influence in the teaching-learning of Physical Education and perceptions of physical education by undergraduate students in Kenya's two public Universities that offer Physical Education as an academic discipline at degree level. The study had 103 PE students-teachers in Kenya's universities fill validated questionnaires information on their perception of their parents' role and influence in the teaching and learning of PE. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study indicated PE to be the most favorite subject for 87% of the respondents. Moreover, 65% of the respondents revealed that they were encouraged by their parents and friends to pursue the subject. The study concluded that parents and significant other play a major influence on decisions made by their children in their choice of PE as a career path in the university.

An investigation by Owino and Amolloh (2016) of factors influencing Bachelor of Education Arts students' selection of History as career subject was done at the University of Nairobi. The study population comprised 110 third and fourth year students of Bachelor of Education Arts for the academic year 2014/2015. The study used cross-sectional survey design and structured questionnaire to collect data from 110 students. The findings of the study showed that influence of lecturers, parental guidance and career guidance, all had an impact on students' choice of career. According to the study's findings, children who have grown up in a harmonious family

environment are more likely to pursue their parent’s careers. The study showed that parents have more influence on their children’s career choices than the guidance and counselling teachers. It also indicated that family members are more influential in student’s choice of subjects compared to teachers. Further, the study revealed that societal values plays a paramount role in impacting students’ choice of career; any career that undermines the society’s values is less likely to be pursued.

III. METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this study. The sample was comprised of 273 respondents which included 269 first year undergraduate Bachelor of education male and female students of the academic year 2020/2021 in the Faculty of Education (15 female and 75 male students from Kenya Science and 85 male and 94 female students from Kikuyu Campus) and 2 lecturers and 2 dean of students from the University of Nairobi. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. To ascertain reliability, pre-testing was done using 20 first year students from Kenya Science campus who had been selected randomly. Split-half reliability test was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data. The data was coded and entered into computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

IV. RESULTS

IV.1 Demographic Data of the Respondents

Out of the 273 respondents, majority, 57.1% of the students were Male while 42.9% were Female. Majority 72.7% were below 20 years, 25.5% were between the age group of 21-25 and 1.6% were between the age group of 26-30. The grade attained by the students in secondary school were: majority 46.9% of the students attained grade B, 24.9% attained grade B+ and 15.5% had grade B- respectively in secondary school. The categories of the level of education of their male parents were: university level (25.7%), middle level college (19.2%), and secondary school level (16.3%). The categories of the level of education of their female parents were: middle level college (23.7%), university level (20.4%), and secondary school level (17.6%). The categories of the subject combinations of the students were: Business and PE (6.5%), Mathematics and PE (4.1%), Geography and P.E (4.1%), English and Literature (24.9%), Mathematics and Chemistry (13.1%) and Mathematics and Physics (10.2%). This findings show that the majority of the respondents were young and less experienced in career matters. As such, they required some guidance to make informed subject choices. The study also did indicate that few students were pursuing Physical Education compared to other subjects combinations.

IV.2 Participants’ responses on social factors influencing first year undergraduate students’ attitudes towards studying Physical Education.

The participants’ responses on social factors influencing first year undergraduate students’ attitudes towards studying Physical Education and sports at the university of Nairobi is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Social factors that influence student attitudes towards studying physical education and Sports.

	SD f %	D f %	N f %	A f %	SA f %	Mean	Sd
My parent’s career influenced my career choice	87 35.5	63 25.7	15 6.1	33 13.5	47 19.2	2.55	1.545
A family member’s advice influenced my career choice	44 18.0	58 23.7	16 6.5	56 22.9	71 29.0	3.21	1.519
I was advised by a friend to choose the career I’m pursuing	72 29.4	67 27.3	14 5.7	52 21.2	40 16.3	2.68	1.490
My secondary school teacher influenced my career choice	67 27.3	58 23.7	12 4.9	48 19.6	60 24.5	2.90	1.583
I chose my teaching subject because it is Prestigious	36 14.7	35 14.3	16 6.5	39 15.9	119 48.6	3.69	1.537
I chose the career because my friend was doing it	166 67.8	46 18.8	5 2.0	12 4.9	16 6.5	1.64	1.164
My religious believes influenced my choice of career	154 62.9	39 15.9	16 6.5	17 6.9	19 7.8	1.81	1.280
My parents cannot allow me to take PE as a career subject	136 55.5	43 17.6	18 7.3	20 8.2	28 11.4	2.02	1.411
Average Mean						2.56	1.441

Table 1 shows majority 61.2% of the students indicated that their parent’s career did not influence their career choice. On the other hand, 32.7% indicated that their parents’ career did influence their career choice. As indicated in the table 1, majority 51.7% of the respondents agreed to have been

influenced by family members’ advice to pursue their careers compared to 41.7% who indicated that no family member advised them to choose the career they were pursuing. Majority 56.7% of the students indicated that their friends didn’t play an influential role when it came to choice of career

they have pursuing. However, 37.5% of the students admitted that they were advised by their friends to choose the career they were pursuing. Similarly, 11.4% of the students admitted that they decided to pursue the career because their friends were also choosing the same career. However, 86.6% disagreed to have chosen the career because it was their friends' choice.

A similarly high number of the respondents (51%) reported that they were not influenced by their secondary school teacher to pursue the career they were pursuing while 44.1% were influenced by their teacher when it came career choice. About 64.5% agreed that they chose the career because it was prestigious while 29.0% disagreed. A combined majority 78.8% disagreed to having been influenced by their religious beliefs while choosing their career; however, few (14.7%) agreed that they were influenced by their religious beliefs when it came to the choice of their career.

V. DISCUSSION

This study purposed to explore the social factors influencing undergraduate students' attitudes towards studying physical education at the University of Nairobi. The literature review has demonstrated that social factors including family, friends, culture, teachers, prestige and religion play an influential role towards students' attitudes towards and choice of career subjects.

More than a half of the students (51.7%) admitted to have been influenced by family members' when it came to choice of their careers include Physical Education. This finding seems to be in line with the conclusion by Getangwe & Sagwe (2016) which demonstrated that siblings and friends influence students' choice of careers.

In the review findings, majority 56.7% of the students indicated that their friends didn't not play an influential role when it came to choice of career they were pursuing. However, 37.5% of the students demonstrated that they were advised by their friends to choose the career they were pursuing. The role of friends when it comes to choice of career subjects in the university cannot be downplayed. This is in consonance with Andanje and Elijah (2013) who opined that social support from friends influences participation in physical education classes.

In comparison with the study by Owino and Amolloh (2016) which concluded that teachers have great impact on students' attitudes towards choice of certain subjects, teachers still appears to have the influence. The review indicated 44.1% of the students were influenced by their teachers when it came to choice of career. Students spend a lot of time with their teachers in school; and many of them look up to their teachers as role models.

More than a half of the students 64.5% indicated that they chose the career subject they were currently pursuing including Physical Education because of prestige. Many graduates in Physical Education have had a chance to teach in international schools. Consequently, students who choose PE

as a career subject in the university do so owing to the desire to teach in international schools. However, minority 14.7% indicated that their religious beliefs influenced their choice of career subject. Societal values plays an important role in influencing students' career choices; and careers that may undermine such values are unlikely to be pursued (Owino & Amolloh, 2016). This is also consistent with the results of the study by Ogidan, Onifade and Ologele (2013) which showed that cultural beliefs and religious beliefs had significant influence on student participation in and choice of PE and sports as a career subject.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The findings of this study have pointed out that the prestige of a subject is the main determinant of students' selection of the subject. Other social factors such as family members including parents, teachers including lecturers, friends and peer and religious beliefs also had an impact on student's choice of physical education as a career subject. Family was found to be the second major influence as far as choice of career is concerned. Parents and family members make contributions to decisions made by their children in their choice of PE as a career in universities in Kenya. This could be attributable to the fact that owing to their advanced age and experience in life, their less-experienced children look upon them for guidance in matters related to careers. Since most parents have gone through formal education, they are well-positioned to advise their children on importance of PE. Similarly, teachers, friends and religious beliefs have a great influence on students' attitude towards studying physical education and sports.

The following were the recommendations of the study:

- a) Universities should offer proper career guidance and counselling to first year undergraduate students to enable them make informed decisions on selection of career subjects especially in the first few days upon admission in first year. Many first year students make ignorant career subject decisions.
- b) Higher learning institutions should regularly carry out research on job market trends and dispense this information to students during career guidance.
- c) Higher institutions of learning should improve and promote positive attitude towards Physical Education in the university students by ensuring there is availability of quality equipment and facilities for Physical Education and Sports.
- d) The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should organize seminars and workshops to create awareness on the importance and benefits of studying Physical education and sports.

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