

Sources of Career Guidance on Choice of Study Programmes by Female Students in Institutions Under TEVETA in Lusaka Province, Zambia

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an extract from an ongoing doctoral study aimed at exploring sources of career guidance on the choices of study programmes by Female students in Institutions under TEVETA in Lusaka province, Zambia. The study used an intrinsic case study research design. The population of the study was all first-year female students at one of the TEVETA accredited institutions in Lusaka province. Typical case purposive sampling was used to select one institution out of the four in the province. A sample of 20 first year female students was used in the study and was selected using the typical case purposive sampling procedure. Semi structured interview and non-participant observation guides were used to collect data. Trustworthiness of the data collected was assured through rigorous adherence to credibility, transferability, dependability, confirm ability, and flexibility quality criteria of qualitative study. The findings indicate that the sources of career guidance on the choices of study programmes by female students at the TEVETA accredited institution included family, school and peers. Among the three, family was the leading source of career guidance in choices of study programmes by the first year female students. This was attributed to the fact that most of the students went into their senior grades at secondary school with predetermined career choices from interactions with their family members. The results imply that while schools are sources of career guidance for students in tertiary institutions, there are other sources including family. It is therefore recommended that apart from school career guidance, families and peers must be considered as sources of career guidance in students

Keywords: Sources of Career guidance, School career guidance, TEVETA

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore the sources of career guidance on choice of study programmes by female students at a public TEVETA accredited institution in Lusaka province, Zambia. These sources include family (bonding relations), school (education institution and peers).

Ndhlovu, (2015) indicates that career guidance aims at helping an individual to understand himself or herself and the environment. This is a clear indication that an individual is helped to understand his or her strength and weaknesses. Lapen (2014) discusses the purpose of career guidance as having significant influence on improving discipline problems, enhancing pupils' grades, strengthening school skills, helping pupils make wise decisions on career development and College choices and developing positive study habits and study skills. Pavel (2015) also discusses that career guidance is designed to promote the development of pupils and assist them move towards a realization of sound wholesome adjustment and maximum accomplishment according to their potentialities. Failure to give proper and sound career guidance to girls while at secondary school can lead to them facing numerous challenges regarding choosing of study programmes. In explaining the need for career guidance, Ndhlovu (2015) indicates that it helps learners choose, prepare, enter and make progress in a career. Career guidance therefore must be provided to assist learners so that they don't face challenges selecting careers in a highly complex and rapidly changing world of work, where job requirements continuously keep on changing and this makes selection of careers and other labor market trends complex.

Among the study programmes available in TEVETA accredited institutions are Automotive Electronics, Automotive Engineering, Water Supply and Sanitation and Electrical Engineering. According to Houtte (2014) females view such courses as suitable for males only. This is evident from the 2017 TEVETA annual report which shows that out of the 21645 candidates who enrolled in the TEVET system, only 6610 were females giving a proportion of 30.5 percent. It therefore became important to understand what motivated the first-year female students who are currently enrolled in the TEVETA institutions to choose the study programmes. The sources of career guidance on choice of study programmes by female students in institutions under TEVETA in Lusaka province were not known therefore necessitating this study.

Sources of career guidance either print, verbal or/and on line are necessary in order to help learners to keep focused on their careers. In the United States of America vast majority of schools stock comprised and non-comprised career guidance sources (Hughes & Karp, 2014). In many African countries the situation is different mainly due to lack of government policy and commitment (Rukwara, 2012). In many secondary schools for instance Kenya, even a newspaper is hard to come by. This is not different from Zambian scenario too. Watts (2010) commenting on this situation states that relevant reading materials on career guidance for both teachers and learners is lacking. Pupils therefore need to be guided in order to choose study programmes that are commensurate with their abilities and interest.

As outlined in the Paradigm used in the study, ontologically it is believed by authors that knowledge as reality is subjective. Further, authors also believe that knowledge is epistemologically constructed by respondents. In this case, to know the sources of career guidance on choice of study programmes by first-year female students, there was need to get out lived experiences of the respondents themselves since they were the ones that experienced it which were highly valued. All this was done by obtaining clearance from the University of Zambia under whose umbrella authors operate. To achieve the purpose of this study, qualitative methods were used. The study used the Intrinsic case study design which is in tandem with Yi-Hui (2013) to have an in depth knowledge and understanding of sources of career guidance on choice of study programmes by female students in their subjective experiences in their lives at secondary school.

In Zambia, career guidance is formally provided through guidance and counselling in secondary schools. The Ministry of Education has the mandate to provide career guidance. The Ministry is guided by the vision to provide quality lifelong education for all which is accessible, inclusive and relevant to each individual, national and global needs and value systems. Its mission is to facilitate the provision of career guidance for all Zambians so that they are able to pursue careers that are suitable and skills, manifest excellence in performance and moral up rightness.

However, the Ministry of Education has not had documents on career guidance provision in schools until recently in 2004 when it developed two modules one and two on the same. Under the guidelines, career guidance is not to be considered a subject with a specifically allocated slot on the time table, it is rather a comprehensive program meant to be integrated into the total school program and part of the curriculum. The Head Teacher is entrusted with the overall responsibility for making sure that career guidance program is established and two teachers designed as career guidance teachers depending on size of the school. It should however be noted that these career guidance teachers must also assume full responsibility of their own slots on the school time table (MOE, 2011). This has created negligence where provision of career guidance is concerned. Furthermore the Ministry of Education has suggested some methods to be used to provide career guidance to learners. These include: hosting career exhibitions, establishing career corners, conducting education tours, holding career talks and providing reading materials (MOE, 2011). Whether these methods have been implemented or have helped in the provision of career guidance is highly debatable or there are other sources of career guidance learners receive at secondary school.

Therefore, authors of this article strongly believed that apart from the school career guidance program which exist in secondary schools there were other sources of career guidance. It was therefore cardinal to explore the sources of career guidance on choice of study programmes by first-year female students at the TEVETA accredited institution in Lusaka province.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the Constructivist paradigm to explore the sources of career guidance on choice of study programmes by first-year female students at Lusaka Business and Technical College a TEVETA accredited institution in Lusaka province. The Intrinsic case study design was used to collect data. The use of an intrinsic case study design emanated from the conviction that it enables the researcher obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. An Intrinsic case study design enables the researcher to typically learn about a unique phenomenon (Yin, 2019). Case study can be used to explain desirable or explore events or phenomenon in the everyday contexts in which they occur (Yi-Hui, 2014). The study population was 20 first year female students from a public TEVET Institution in Lusaka province who had a five years secondary school out lived experience on career guidance. These were selected using a typical purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a technique that allows the researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study. Typical Purposive sampling was used to select the institution and the female students. The procedure for data generation in this study involved semi- structured interviews and non-participant observation. Lung, (2016) explains that Semi-structured interview enables and ensures obtaining responses either on the facts related to the respondents or the opinions of the respondents regarding the subjective or even the subjective matters. The collected data was analyzed thematically following steps by Braun & Clark (2006). This involved categorization of data following the six steps based on; familiarization, generation of initial codes, searching of themes, theme reviewing, defining and naming the themes and finally writing of the report under the subheadings of the themes..

FINDINGS

Sources of Career Guidance female students received while at secondary school.

The female participants were asked to state the sources of career guidance which led them to select study programmes they were pursuing. The findings indicate that the participants had similar sources of career guidance. The study established that the female students at the selected TEVETA accredited institution had family (bonding relations), school (education institutions) and peers as sources of career guidance.

The female participants were advised to choose study programmes by their parents and other family members. They indicated that both the nuclear family members which comprise the father, mother and other siblings were their sources. The extended family members were also mentioned. These include aunts, uncles, grandparents and other related family members. The immediate family members like father and mother were found to be a leading source of career guidance on choice of study programmes by female students at an Institution under TEVETA. The female students respected career choice advice coming from parents than any other source. Some verbatim were extracted to show support of the findings. One of the student female participant # 06 had this to say: *“ My father played a very big role for me to choose the career because he used to take me to the garage as he was repairing cars with his friends and this made me to develop interest in Auto mechanics ”*

School (Education Institutions): Findings from other participants indicate that school is one of the sources of career guidance the first-year female students had on their choice of study programmes. This is evident from one participant # 012 who said: *“During career days, pupils dramatized on the careers they wanted to choose and imitated on what is expected on the job. It is one of the days when pupils are allowed to dress according to what goes on in a particular occupations they wanted to join and others will admire, then decide on career to choose”*.

However, some participants cited that although school has the potential to give reliable career guidance, they do not due to lack of seriousness and of teachers to do it. In support of this. One participant # 014 said: *“Career guidance is not taken seriously at secondary school as teachers are only interested in teaching other subjects as such, it didn't help me to choose a career because I was not given career guidance. As a result, secondary school career guidance had no effect on me to choose a career.”*

Peers: Further findings from the participants indicate that peers were a source of career guidance on choice of study programmes by female students. They revealed that during their interactions, they used to advise one

another on careers to choose. They availed to each other information necessary for particular occupations and advised each other on needed requirements for each career. Another issue that came out during the interviews was that they identified some role models that they could follow. In support of this, one participant #001 said: *“My friends encouraged me a lot to choose this career more especially after seeing some applying while others doing well in the same field. This made me realize that I can break stereotype.”*

DISCUSSION

Family (Bonding relations)

The study revealed that the immediate family where female students came from was a leading source of career guidance on choice of study programmes by first-year female students. This may be attributed to the fact the female students went into their senior grades at secondary school with predetermined career choices which may have been as a result of interaction with the immediate environment. In this case the parents that motivated them to choose their careers. The study findings on the family motivation or influence on female student's career choices is in line with previous literature. For instance, Tilliman (2015) in America, Marine et al (2016) in Romania, Balor (2014) in Pakistan, Uka (2015) in Albania, Ogunyewa (2015) in Nigeria, Fatoke (2014) in South Africa, Amani (2016) in Tanzania and Sinkombo (2016) in Zambia which revealed that family members as a major source of career guidance are influential on children's career choice.

Although children may have a say on a lot of issues concerning their life, it's almost unthinkable to overturn their parents' opinion on career choice. In most cases parents consider their experience and knowledge of career as starting point in choosing suitable careers for their children. They are likely to influence their children to choose certain careers through discussions which are biased towards careers they feel are good for their children. The study also confirms previous research findings that purported that parents have a strong influence on their children's career choice, for example, Bardick & Watko (2014) in Canada, Abiyio (2015) in Nigeria and Wambiyio & Aloka (2014) in Kenya.

This study also revealed that other family members like uncles, aunties' grandparents' were likely to be identified as sources of career guidance and role models by female students. As children are growing in families, they are likely to identify family members who inspire them also in their choices of career. This particular assertion is in line with previous studies such as those of Amani (2014) in Tanzania and Ogunyewa (2015) in Nigeria where relatives were found to be influential sources of students' career choices.

Young ones hold their parents and other family members in high regards and are likely to see them as role models mainly those who are doing exceptional well as well as other family members. Parents as sources of career guidance is in different forms like parental action, beliefs, excitations and connectedness. The way parents talk about careers is most likely to have a huge bearing on choice of career of their children. As parents are talking, they normally tilt towards certain careers even in their language and emphasis on certain careers over others could lead children to choose certain careers. This is in line with O'Shear and Kirrane (2012) who stated that children's career decisions are modelled by family members through their actions and psychological support.

This study also revealed that education level of parents has a positive motivation as a source of career guidance on children. This is consistent with a study carried out by Anovingo (2021) in America that revealed that education and occupations of parents are associated with academic achievement and eventually career choice of children and also indicated that education of parents is a determining factor in choice of career for children. Other studies also consistent with this and purported that parental education has a positive influence on children's career choice are Pfingsst (2015) in Australia, Uka (2015) in Albania and Abiola (2014) in Nigeria.

School (Education Institutions)

The study revealed that school as an education Institution has the potential to highly influence the career choices of students and stand out as a huge source of career guidance but had a minimum bearing on career decisions made by the female students. The school environment has all what it takes to share career issues

through career guidance and other school activities. Issues such as career guidance from both guidance teachers and subject teachers including head teachers and general workers at large. This finding is in tandem with early studies such as Zafar (2019) in India, Koech et al (2016) in Mexico and Eyo (2014) in Nigeria that established the importance of schools in preparing pupils for choice of career. Schools instil career knowledge through career guidance services that are offered in school.

The findings of this study show that school is a source of career guidance. Similar explanations of school as a source of career guidance were recorded in a study by Feller (2012) where school career guidance was found to influence students' career choices. Career guidance positively widens the horizons of students in secondary schools, helps in career decision making and the quality of teaching and school policies were critical in career choices. These observations are consistent with previous literature, for example Shumba and Naong (2013) in South Africa, Watts and Suttana (2014) in America which emphasised that the quality of teaching increases career horizons.

The study also revealed that career guidance in schools help students understand career issues such as the subjects to do in order to pursue certain careers. Career guidance in schools has the potential to communicate important career issues. The above findings concurred with previous studies for example Failer and Failer(2013) in America, Edward and Quiter (2013) in Kenya, Mghhweno (2014) in Tanzania and Shumba & Naong in South Africa that established that career guidance in schools helps students gain knowledge about careers.

Female students participants in this study underrated the pivotal role and potential the guidance teachers, head teachers and other mentors poses in their career choices. They didn't strongly indicate school as a source of career guidance. The possible reason as to why the participants didn't regard career guidance teachers, head teachers and other mentors as influential in career choice guidance could be that students didn't see seriousness in them spending and sparing time to guide them whilst at secondary school. According to the study findings, school authorities talked about career guidance as a by the way item where there were no activities taking place to really give career guidance to students. In this case, the students viewed career guidance as having no bearing on career choice. The students' perception about the influence of career guidance teachers is also consistent with a study by Durosaro (2014) in Nigeria that established that career guidance teachers had little influence on student's choice of career.

The study also revealed that student's former schoolmates and favourite subjects had a bearing on their career choices. Students are likely to follow other students from the same school if they find that those are doing well. And emulate those students by taking similar courses done by former school mates. Findings for this study are in line with those of Naz et al (2014) in Pakistan which established that former students career were influential in choice of career. An issue worth mentioning in a school setup is that of field trips. Though not cited as a source of career choice guidance, have an influence on choice of career. This observation is in line with a study by Higgins et al (2013) in the United States of America which found that field trips are critical to the students' choices of careers. The absence of field trips as a source in the study came as a surprise given the influence field trips have in the literature. Possibly this is as a result that schools where the female student in the study were, poorly managed field trips to the extent that students found them unappealing with regards to the impact in career choice.

Career guidance teachers, head teachers and subject teachers were indicated by student participants as having little or no bearing on their career choices. These findings are contradictory to those of the earlier researchers like Aguado et al (2015) and Kimiti & Mwovu (2013) that cited the huge positive role career guidance teachers and class teachers' play. This contradiction between literature and this study findings may be attributed to the way career guidance is executed in Zambia at secondary school is not up to date. Another issue may be is that those entrusted to give career guidance have no technical knowhow. Teachers are supposed to exhibit knowledge of the subject area to the satisfaction of the students. In the absence of such knowledge, students are not inspired by the teachers.

Peers

This study that peers are a source of career guidance. This is consistent with previous studies done by Failer &

Faiter (2014) in America, Mtemberi (2020) in Zimbabwe, Otabong (2015) in Kenya which purports that peers are a source of career choice guidance as they have the great potential to influence each other. Other students and friends were seen as providing career education likely to influence their peers. This assertion is in line with earlier studies such as Kiuru (2013) in America and Kimiti (2013) who established that career education emanates from peers.

The study findings indicate that career education which comes from peers and friends had a bearing in the student's career choices. As interaction are going on among the peers, important information is shared on career choices. In addition, career advice from peers was influential to female students' career choices. The finding is consistent with Naz et al (2015) in Pakistan and Otabong (2015) in Uganda that purported that friends and peers influence students' choices of careers.

Student interactions with peers was a powerful tool in their quest to choosing of careers as they were likely to share important information during the interactions. The study findings that student's interaction with peers was a powerful tool in career choice is in line with the previous studies such as Mushapha & Selvaraju (2015), Njeri (2015) in Kenya, Kiuru (2013) and Embong (2015) that revealed that peer interaction influenced student's choice of careers.

Study findings in this study also revealed that students rely on encouragements from each other as these encouragements may influence students to choose careers. These findings are in line with previous studies such as Shumba & Naong (2013) in South Africa which purported that students in schools rely heavily on their peers' encouragements on career choice and likely to have a bearing on student's choice of career. The findings of this study revealed that peer advice on career guidance was helpful in their choices of career. Students are more likely to accept career advice from peers they trust than any other sources. Peer advice may clarify certain issues regarding careers. The above revelations about peer advice confirms previous studies such as Faiter & Faiter (2014) in America and Shumba & Naong (2014) in South Africa which revealed that students embrace career decisions that come from their friends.

Further findings in this study were that students may have chosen careers that are similar to those of their friends. On the other hand, entrepreneurship information is more influential if it comes from peers and the decision to become an entrepreneur most likely may be guided by expectations and wishes of peers. The above observation is consistent with Kacperexky (2013) in America who purported that entrepreneurship action hinge on having access to information about entrepreneurial opportunities and influential peers enhance entrepreneurial roles by providing information to identify such opportunities. Peers encourage each other to choose entrepreneurship as their careers

CONCLUSION

The study established that the first-year female students at Lusaka Business & Technical College had three sources of career guidance on choice of their study programmes. These are family (bonding relations), school and peers. Among these three, family was the leading source. This may be attributed to the fact that they went into senior grades with some predetermined career choices after interaction with their family members. The study has shown how influential family members are in the choice of career by children. Parents play a huge role in career decision making of their children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations have been developed:

- i) Vigorous training of career guidance teachers on regular basis to equip them with necessary skills that enhance professional provision of career guidance.
- ii) There is need to give at least first degree training for individuals to give career guidance to pupils at secondary school level.
- iii) Families and peers to be considered as sources of career guidance for students.

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