



Peer pressure influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu county, Kenya

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Abstract

Education is widely valued across the world as a central factor in economic, political and social development of any nation. Students who make irrational career choices run the risk of experiencing severe consequences, such as low job performance, stress and anxiety relating to the job, and a lack of job satisfaction and happiness. The purpose of this study was to determine. Peer pressure influencing students' career decision making self-efficacy among public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The objectives of the study was to establish the peer pressure influencing students' career decision making self-efficacy among public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study was guided by the Social Cognitive Career theory and Systems theory. This study used cross sectional survey research design. The data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. The target population consisted of 29,682 form three students in Kiambu County. The sample size consisted of 380 form three students who were selected using stratified sampling techniques from the 285 secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The questionnaires were pilot tested with 30 students from three secondary schools (a boys' school, girls' school and a mixed school), comprising of 10 students from each category in Nairobi County, Kenya. Reliability was enhanced by test- retest method where a Cronbach co-efficient alpha of 0.79 was established. Content validity of the instruments was guided by the objectives and the experts in the Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations of Laikipia University. Data analysis was aided by SPSS (Version 26). The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which include percentages, means, and frequencies. Hypotheses were tested using t-test, Simple Regression and Analysis of Variance at .05 level of significance. The research found out that peer pressure ($F=2.116, p=0.001$) has statistically significant influence on students' career decision making self-efficacy of students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. Findings from the study might inform the Ministry of Education, policy makers, guidance and counseling teachers and also peer pressure could be limiting students' capacity to make the right career decisions. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that peer pressure had statistically significant influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study recommended that the Government of Kenya could carefully consider gender when deploying career teachers to various secondary schools in Kenya because the gender of the career teachers' does statistically influence career decision making self-efficacy. Career teachers should take precaution while undertaking career guidance and counseling to students since their peers has influence on career decision making self-efficacy.

Keywords: Career preference, social cognitive career theory, self-efficacy, peer pressure career choice

Introduction

Many of the students take control of stress, but with all of these activities, responsibility will take place. Parents should be aware of what their children is doing. Parents must be open minded when it comes to their children's needs, remind them for what is good and bad and how to value life. For this, teachers may help students by understanding how this could affect learning and should help the students in job decision making which could greatly affect their decisions as professionals in the future. It may be in the form of building students' emotional resilience that activates their level of cognition. Friends could also help when someone is struggling in choosing a career. It is important to know what's their strength and weaknesses. Training managers may assist them to recognize the staff demands needed to satisfy the socio-economic ambitions of all industries of the economy (Mosqueda *et al.*, 2020).

A study by Kiran (2012) on the association between levels of peer pressure and expectations for self-efficacy in making career decisions among teenagers revealed notable negative relationships between peer pressure and these expectations. Additionally, the results showed that teenagers with lower levels of peer pressure also had higher expectations for their

academic self-efficacy. In contrast to the previous study, which investigated the relationship between adolescent expectations of self-efficacy regarding career decisions and peer pressure, the current research examines at the influence of peer pressure on students in public secondary schools in developing countries when it comes to self-efficacy regarding career decisions. Adolescent academic achievement is significantly influenced by peer groups. Peers have a significant impact on one another, especially when it comes to attitudes toward education and goals in the classroom (Gara & Davis, 2006). The study findings agree with Farmer's (2010) who alluded that young people learn to evaluate themselves through judgment by their peers and learn to control their aggressive reactions in the interest of fitting with others. In contrast, Palmer (2008) argue that peer pressure helps to establish norms of behaviour and culture that manifests itself in aspects like language, dress, hairstyle, sports, and career choice.

Another study carried out in Pakistan by Arab *et al.* (2014) indicated that friends and peers play a more significant part in an individual's decision-making process when it comes to their job prospects. The study found that friends and peers have an important effect on students' decision-making

regarding their academic programs and careers. The study's findings illustrate the beneficial effects that friends and peers can have when selecting a class, subjects, lab, library, and literature. Additionally, that their friends and peers have a big influence on how well they facilitate their homework and co-curricular activities. The statistics regarding career decision making show that peers and friends help in career decision making, selection of job and employment opportunities. While the current study sample public secondary school students, the earlier study sampled university students. However, a study of career choice of Nigerian youth by Salami (2006) found that many youths make wrong career choices due to peer pressure and advice from friends. Furthermore, Shumba and Naong (2012); Oak (2009) discovered that teenagers were susceptible to peer pressure since they go to their friends for advice on professional choices. In a peer group, most peers would pick occupations that resembled those of their friends.

According to a study by Adeniyi and Kolawole (2015) investigating how peer pressure affects teenagers' social conduct in Lagos State, Nigeria, peer pressure has no discernible effect on social behavior, gender, or self-concept. This result was consistent with a previous study by (Kiran, 2012) on the connections between teenagers and their peers. A study by Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015) examined the influence of peer group on Nigerian secondary school students' academic achievement. The results demonstrated that students' academic performance in secondary school is significantly influenced by their peers' age cohort and gender. Peers' relationships and socialization patterns also have little bearing on secondary school students' academic achievement. Lastly, peers' religion membership has no bearing on young people's academic achievement in secondary school.

In Nigerian schools, Adesoji (2010) examined peer group pressure as a factor influencing teenagers' social adjustment. A descriptive survey design was utilized in the investigation. The study's sample, 120 students between the ages of 13 and 19, was representative of the senior secondary school student population. The study used stratified sampling technique and self-designed questionnaire. The results of the analysis showed that peer group pressure among adolescents was related to their social 46 adjustments. This notwithstanding, the present study made use of correlational research design. Student respondents were selected through stratified and simple random sampling technique that reduced biasness and gave every participant equal opportunity to participate in the study.

Some research findings have been inconsistent with the peer influence on career decision making. For instance, a descriptive research design study by Natalie (2006) in North Africa, the results showed that adolescents' career choices were influenced by their parents' aspirations and expectations. Similarly, Olando (2010) found out that undergraduate students in Liberia chose careers because of their parents' influence. Hewitt (2008) asserts that some students, rather than submitting to peer pressure, made career choices based on their passions. The current study investigated the relationship between peer pressure and professional decision-making in secondary school students using a correlational research approach.

Adeniyi and Kolawole (2015) conducted a descriptive study to investigate the impact of peer pressure on the social

behavior of adolescents in secondary school pupils in the Amuwo-Odofin local education district of Lagos State, Nigeria. A sample of 100 participants (50 male and 50 female) was randomly selected from five co-education secondary schools. They were aged between 12 and 18 years with a mean age of 15 years. Peer pressure on adolescents' behaviour questionnaire (PPABQ) with a 20-item questionnaire on a four point Likert-type scale was used to collect data. The test retest reliability was applied on the instrument. The findings of the study confirmed the hypothesis being tested that there is no significant influence of peer pressure on social behavior, self-concept and gender. This finding concurred with an earlier study on peer influence relationships in adolescents conducted by (Kiran, 2012). In the present study, data was collected using scales that were modified to suit the study population and sample size was large enough to reduce sampling errors that characterize small samples.

Kiran (2012) analyzed the relationship between levels of peer pressure and self-efficacy expectations among adolescents. Data obtained from 546 high school students using the self-efficacy expectation scale and peer pressure scale showed significantly negative relationships between peer pressure and academic self-efficacy among adolescents. Additionally, compared to teens with moderate and high levels of self-efficacy, teens with low levels of peer pressure had higher expectations for their academic self-efficacy. The purpose of this study was to ascertain how self-efficacy and peer pressure affected the choice of a career.

In a study of secondary school students in the Mombasa Sub-County, Kala (2015) discovered that peer pressure had an effect on career choices. Finding out how peers affect students' job decisions is the aim of this research. At a study on the issue of career choice, Kimiti and Mwova (2012) found that only 14.4% of females at girl schools chose their careers based on peer pressure, whereas 35.6% of them did so because they were interested in the fields. The students were from Kitui and Machakos counties. In boys' schools, 20% of boys were influenced by their friends, whereas 30% of boys made career decisions based only on their own interests.

Study on the relationship between levels of peer pressure and self-efficacy expectations among adolescents by Kiran (2012) with 546 high school students showed significantly negative relationships between peer pressure and academic self-efficacy expectations in adolescents. Moreover, findings also revealed that adolescents who were experiencing low levels of peer pressure had higher academic self-efficacy expectations. This study focused on the influence of peer pressure on professional selections made by secondary school students in developing countries, whereas the other study investigated the connection between peer pressure levels and expectations of self-efficacy among teens in wealthy countries. Peers have a big influence on how well teenagers do academically. Peers have a significant impact on one another, especially when it comes to attitudes toward education and goals in the classroom (Gara & Davis, 2006).

In a study conducted by Gitonga (2013) ^[7] on the decisiveness of secondary school students in Kiambu County, Kenya when making career decisions, the results showed that approximately half of the students (56%) said their parents and guardians had influenced them, 10% said

their school teachers had, and 10% said other family members, like siblings, had influenced them. Only 8% of the students who responded said they had been influenced by individuals in the social forum, such as professions, clergy, and well-known media figures. Peer group and academic performance were shown to be statistically significantly correlated in a different study conducted by Misanya (2013) to determine the impact of peer group on students' academic performances in the Kanduyi constituency of Bungoma County. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how peer pressure might affect secondary school students in Kiambu County's self-efficacy in developing career choices.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the peer pressure influence on career decision making self-efficacy among public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following research objective: To establish whether peer pressure has influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

To achieve the research objectives for this study, the following null hypothesis was posited and tested at .05 level of significance:

H₀1: Peer pressure has no statistically significant influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used to carry out the study. The chapter outlines the research design, target population of the study, sampling procedure and sample size, instrumentation, validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis for the study. The research design chosen for this study is descriptive research design (quantitative and qualitative research designs), which uses survey method for data collection. This type of research design was used to document the prevalence of particular characteristics in a population.

Population, sample size and sampling procedures

The target population in this study included all Form three students and career teachers in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. Form three class were targeted because this is the class where students choose subjects which are informed by their career decision-making abilities. Form 3 was included because it was thought that students were old enough to choose their examinable topics, which in turn determined what vocations they would likely pursue. Because they are the ones who deal with students' career-related concerns in secondary schools, career teachers are the ones who are targeted. In this sense, it is argued that their three years of student engagement have given them the necessary knowledge of career decision-making self-efficacy. The study anticipated that career teachers were the best placed respondents to report on the level of students' career decision making self-efficacy since

they dealt with career guidance and counselling in their respective secondary schools. There were 285 public secondary schools, 285 career teachers in Kiambu County and 29,682 form three students comprising of 14,361 boys and 15,321 girls who were the target population of this study.

The simple random sampling method was used to select 162 secondary schools in Kiambu County from the strata. Student respondents were also selected through simple random sampling method. This exercise involved writing stars in each secondary school Form three class on small pieces of papers. The papers were folded, put in a basket, the students were required to pick the folded papers. Those students who happened to pick the paper with stars were automatically included in the study. This exercise was repeated in all the sampled 162 public secondary school Form three classes to select 380 students and purposively select 162 career teachers in the sampled public secondary schools in Kiambu County. The total number of respondents will therefore be 542 that is 380 students and 162 career teachers.

Research instruments

Self-administered questionnaires were employed in this study. There had two questionnaires, used: one for students and one for teachers. The use of questionnaires was recommended since they are an efficient use of time and money that can be used to create the CDS and measure the self-efficacy of professional decision-making according to Questionnaires were administered to the students in the sampled schools with the intention of capturing their views on the different variables in the study. The respondents were expected to give an insight into the current indicators of the same in Kiambu County. The scale was available in a 25-item short form and the scale is strongly linked to positive educational and career decision outcomes. Each of the other subsections have several items designed to capture the other various variables. The questionnaires were administered personally to the selected respondents to ensure a high return rate. Career teachers were required to fill the questionnaire to provide their demographic information and also information about their perception on students' career decision self-efficacy.

Validity of the study instruments

Validity of instruments for this study was established by Counselling Psychology experts from Laikipia University. Validation included determination of content and construct validity of the instrument, which was based on the adequacy to which the statements, questions and indicators of the research instrument measures the attributes of the study. The experts looked at the contents and construction of items among other issues of validation. The experts in the School of Education were similarly asked to offer their advice on the accuracy of the items and whether or not they adequately represent the universe or domain under investigation, that is whether they accurately measured the degree to which students' background factors such as gender, career teacher perception, peer pressure, parental occupation and parental level of education and school type influence career decision making self-efficacy among public secondary schools.

Reliability of the instruments

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which research results yield consistent results or data after repeated trials. The internal consistency, or how closely related a group of objects is to one another, was measured using Cronbach's alpha. According to Marczyk *et al.* (2004), reliability must be ensured by using a predefined threshold of 0.7 and above. That is, values above 0.7 indicated presence of high reliability while values below signified lower reliability. The researcher conducted a pilot study in Nairobi County to pre-test the data collection instruments to ascertain their reliability. For this purpose, three (3) secondary schools with similar characteristics to those under study but not included in the sample were selected. These included a boys' school, girls' school and mixed school. Thirty students (30), ten from each category were randomly selected. Three career teachers, one from each category of schools were purposively selected to participate in the pilot study. Reliability of the research instruments was determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient method. This was founded on the fact that test items in relation to study constructs were on a Likert scale. The reliability threshold was Cronbach's alpha coefficient equal to or greater than 0.7 ($\alpha \geq 0.7$). Analysis of the pilot survey gave a Cronbach's alpha of 0.79, thus the tools met the threshold.

Data collection procedure

Before collecting data, the researcher sought for a letter of data collection from the Graduate School of Laikipia University. The researcher further got clearance from the ethics committee of the research project. Afterwards the researcher sought for research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). This was followed by sending a letter to Principals of the selected schools in Kiambu County. A copy of the letter was sent to the Sub County Education offices and Sub County Commissioners' offices in the county for purposes of information. This was done three weeks before the date of data collection. The purpose was to enable the principals of these schools to inform the respondents to prepare for the visit. On the day of the data collection the researcher requested the respondents to fill and return the questionnaires the same day. The respondents were assured that strict confidentiality was maintained in dealing with the responses. To triangulate the findings from these instruments, the researcher reviewed selected textbooks and other scholarly documents to establish current status of career decision making self-efficacy among secondary school students in public schools.

Data analysis

Data was cleaned for processing and analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed as presented by the objectives of the study. Data analysis was conducted at intervals throughout the data collection process and finally at the end of this exercise. Quantitative data was coded in the computers then analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation in Statistical

Packages for Social Science version 27. The findings were presented using percentages and frequency tables. Frequency counts of the responses was obtained to generate information about informants who had participated in the study and to illustrate the general trend of findings on the various variables that were under investigation. The study utilized t-test, simple regression and ANOVA to establish the relationship among the study variables. Simple regression tests the percentage of the variance in each of the dependent variable that can be attributed to the independent variable.

Results and discussions

Along with 380 Form 3 students from the sampled public secondary schools in Kiambu County, the study's sample consisted of 162 career teachers. Consequently, 542 respondents total responded. As the data collection session came to an end, form three student respondents had returned 380 (100%) of the 162 (100%) career teacher questionnaires that had been collected. This indicated a 100% response rate, which is appropriate for social science research, according Creswell (2012) and Dillman (2000).

Influence of peer pressure on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

The objective of the study was to establish whether peer pressure has influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

To achieve the objective, the hypothesis was formulated:

H₀₁: Peer pressure has no statistically significant influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

The hypothesis presumed that peer pressure has no influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

To establish the truth of this assumption, Correlation test and ANOVA test were carried out. The results of the analysis were as presented in Tables 1 and 2

Peer pressure was conceptualized in terms of the following:- career guidance and counselling teacher encourages individual student during career talks, students consider career talk on career decision making, students participate with friends in activities at school that build their career, students would take different career paths to their peer friends, majority of the students choose similar careers in class, peer friends influence students' career decision making, students go out with friends for career exploration and mentorship, students consult their peers in school for career guidance and whether students sought career guidance in a group of peers.

Table 1 presents the correlation test of Peer pressure and its influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Table 1: Correlation test of peer pressure influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.962 ^a	.925	.9261	2.245363	.925	942.334	1	378	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Peer pressure Influence Your Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy

Source: (Field data, 2023)

Table 31 presents Simple Regression Analysis of peer pressure and its influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

Table 2: Simple Regression analysis of peer pressure on career decision making of Peer Pressure Influence on Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

ANOVA					
Career Decision Scale Totals					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4774.491	30	159.150	2.116	.001
Within Groups	26247.940	349	75.209		
Total	31022.432	379			

Source: (Field data, 2023)

From Table 2 the F value was found to be significant ($F(30, 349) = 2.116, p = .001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_03) that peer pressure has no statistically significant influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya was rejected at .05 significance level. It was therefore concluded peer pressure has statistically significant influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

From Tables 1, the Correlation test of Correlation test of peer pressure influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya indicates that the correlation coefficient was statistically significant at .05 level of significance ($r = .962, p = 0.000$). The r squared was found to be 0.925. This indicates that 92.5% of the variance in career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya could be attributed to peer pressure influence on career decision making self-efficacy in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study agrees with Clark & Loheac (2007) that changes in the family roles and structures have greatly reduced the quality of time families spend together thus making peer groups a viable alternative for the youth interaction. It also concurs a study by Schneider (2010) that peer groups affect adolescent decisions on many issues including career decision making.

Summary of the findings

This chapter covers the summary of the findings of the study as derived from the analysis of the ten research objectives and ten hypotheses, conclusions made, recommendations and suggestions for Further Research.

Summary of the findings

The objective of the study was to establish whether peer pressure has influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

To achieve the objective, the hypothesis was formulated:

H₀₁: Peer pressure has no statistically significant influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested using ANOVA test. The ANOVA test showed that;

1. The F value was found not to be significant ($F(30, 349) = 2.116, p = .001$).
2. The null hypothesis (H_03), was rejected.
3. Peer pressure does influence career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that peer pressure has statistically significant influence on career decision making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, it was recommended that students should be well guided on what to take or let go when it comes to peer pressure influence so as to make the right when it comes career decision making.

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