

ABSTRACT

Students' levels of decisiveness in career choices have generally been an issue of concern to many education stakeholders. Studies show that 63% of students who joined public universities in Kenya, through Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS), were hardly admitted to pursue degree programmes of their choices. This situation is even worse in Migori Sub-county where records at the sub-county's examination's office show that averagely, only 7.5% of students chose their careers by filling the KUCCPS form at the end of Form Four. This is indicative of low career self-efficacy belief among students in Migori sub-county. The purpose of this study was to establish the mediating role of career self-efficacy belief in the relationship between self-esteem and career choice behavior among secondary school students in Migori sub-county. The objectives were; to establish the level of self-esteem of students, to establish the level of career choice behavior of students across gender, to establish the level of career self-efficacy belief of students, to determine the relationship between self-esteem and career choice behavior and to determine the ability of career self-efficacy belief to mediate in the relationship between self-esteem and career choice behavior among secondary school students in Migori sub-county. The study used a mediation model borrowed from Baron and Kenny (1986) which describes that the relationship between the independent variable (self-esteem) and the dependent variable (career choice behavior) can be enhanced if a third variable (mediator-career self-efficacy belief) reduces the initial relationship. Descriptive Survey research design and Correlation research design were used. From a target population of 2010 Form 3 students from the 34 secondary schools in the sub-county, purposive sampling based on set parameters of mixed day school, boys boarding school and girls boarding school was used to select 10 schools. Due to their high proportion, 8 schools were purposively sampled from mixed day school with 1 school each being purposively sampled from girls boarding and boys boarding respectively. Fisher et al. (1986) formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 322 students who were selected using simple random sampling whereas the 10 career counselors from these 10 purposively sampled schools were all used. Questionnaires were used to collect data from students whereas interview schedules were used to collect data from career counselors. A pilot study was done to establish the reliability of the instruments by subjecting the instruments to 32 students using a test-re-test method that yielded a Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient of .82 for Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, .80 for Career Decision Scale and .84 for Career Decision Self Efficacy Scale-Short Form and were deemed to be reliable as the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of .70 and above was achieved for all the instruments. Experts from the department of Educational Psychology, Maseno University advised on content validity of instruments. Quantitative data was analyzed using Descriptive Statistics Correlation Analysis, and Structural Equation Model that included frequencies, means percentages, model fit estimates, correlations and regression estimates. Qualitative data from open ended questionnaire items and interviews were transcribed then reported. The study revealed that students in Migori sub-county had a high self-esteem, high career choice behavior and high career self-efficacy belief. It also revealed that self-esteem influences career choice behavior and that career self-efficacy belief mediates in the relationship between self-esteem and career choice behavior. It was concluded that self-esteem accounts for variation in career choice behavior and that this variation can be further enhanced with the introduction of career self-efficacy belief. It was however noted that career counselors had not been applying career self-efficacy belief in career counseling and therefore the study recommended organization of in-service training for career counselors to enlighten them on the role of career self-efficacy belief in the career choice process so that they can improve it to enhance students' career choice behavior. The findings are significant to the students, career counselors and government in improving on student career choice behavior for optimal human resource productivity.