



## THE ROLE OF PARENTS ON GUIDANCE AND CAREER CHOICE FOR CHILDREN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF NJOMBE, TANZANIA URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

**Leopard Jacob Mwalongo<sup>1</sup>**

The Northeast Normal University, 5268 Renmin Street,  
Changchung City, Post Code 130024,  
Jilin, China

### **Abstract:**

The aim of the study was to examine the contribution of parents on guidance and career choice for child future development. The study was done in urban Njombe region, specifically at Luponde Madobole and Mkela primary school. The targeted population was students and parents. The respondents included 6 parents and 6 students three from standard 6 and other three from standard seven. The study employed qualitative approach. Randomly and purposive sampling were used. Data were collected through structured and semi-structured interview. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that, most of the parents do not guide their children on their career choice and children do not have reasons for their career choice. The study recommended that, parents should guide their children on their career choice from the early stage of their education.

**Keywords:** guidance, career choice, future development, primary education

### **1. Introduction**

In Tanzania, sending children to school is mandatory by law. The education system consists of 1+6+4+2+3 and above. The basic and compulsory education starts from pre-primary school to ordinary secondary school levels in which every child ought to attend. According to the law, basic and compulsory education is free for every child in all public schools in Tanzania. Most of the parents obey this law by sending their children to school believing that school is a channel to career job. Finally, after final examinations some students are selected to join advanced secondary education, some join teaching training and other associated fields for certificate level while some remain home with their parents and being associated in different activities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence: email [leopardmwalongo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:leopardmwalongo@yahoo.co.uk)

With reference to free education programme in Tanzania, all children must attend pre-primary school to ordinary secondary school with different exams throughout. In this case, some students know the aim of schooling and what they want to be or to do after their completion of ordinary secondary school education. Those who know their education direction and destination they have ideas on which subjects they should concentrate more so as to reach their expected goals in future career life. It is not surprising that when a child is asked about what she or he wants to be after schooling the answers might be I will do any job, I want to be like father or Mother, I want to be a teacher, I want to be a Doctor I want to be like uncle of aunt, I want to be a Driver and other career depending on the interest of the child, experience and community environment. Yet apart from telling their future career choice, you find nothing on the indicator or preparation of being any expert of mentioned career choice. For instance, you might meet any ordinary secondary student telling her or his career choice is to become a doctor or an engineer yet she / he did not take even a single science subject which is a first criterion for being a doctor or an engineer.

Based on the above explanations, this study therefore, investigated the role of parents on guidance and career choice for children's future development in Njombe urban primary schools. The parents need to provide career education and guidance to build on children's knowledge of themselves their potential for development in order to increase their livelihood of making successful transitions from school to real life in terms of further studies, career choice and other educational opportunities for future sustainable life. Dworetzky, (1996) argues that, children should be monitored and managed in their educational and career plans particularly at the early stage. The study further asserts that children in collaboration with parents /guardians should be assisted in developing educational and career plans through assessment, advancement and identification of short and long goals for sustainable life. It is necessary for the parents to record, monitor, and up to date the children educational and career plans on systematic ways as they move on every step of their education system for their sustainable life.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

It becomes obviously now most people do change their career after completion of a certain career job education, some join another career job education after completion of a certain career job, some manage to start a new career course for a certain job education, some are just working at a certain career unhappy just because they want to survive or they have no other alternative. However, some are possessing more than five certificates of different career jobs. This revealed that they lacked guidance and career choice support from the beginning of their schooling process by not investing on the clear and interested career job for their sustainable future life. From this explanation, therefore the current study investigated on the roles of parents in supporting guidance and career choice development of their children in urban Njombe primary schools.

## **2. Objectives**

The study aimed at examining evaluating the parent roles on their children career choice development for future sustainable life among primary students in selected urban primary school in Njombe region, Tanzania.

### **2.1 Specific objectives**

- To examine the role of parents to guidance and career choice development for their children future sustainable life.
- To identify effect of parents' roles on guidance and career choice development for their children future sustainable life.

## **3. Literature review**

### **3.1 Definitions of operational terms**

#### **3.1.1 Guidance**

Guidance as a concept refers to planned and organized action to be followed in order to meet a certain goals required with the function of giving help where necessary. Naik (2004) asserts that guidance is associated with helping a child in maintaining a normal relationship between her/his abilities and the demand of environment with proper emphasis upon maturation of capacities for socialized self-directions. Naik further argues that, guidance is an ongoing process that aims to help an individual reorganize and use his/her inner resources to set goals, make plans and work on them. However, the guidance is helping an individual to understand and use educational, vocational and personal opportunities available to form an organized systematic assistance in achieving suitable adjustment from school to real life

Mutie et al, (1999) argues that, guidance can be done by making a systematic possibilities and opportunities for children to gain knowledge about themselves, their abilities, interest, needs, and the demands of the future world. Therefore, children need to know the opportunities and possibilities of transition of their education to work in their future life while they are still in early stage of their schooling and make a clear career choice. Indeed this will be possible if there is a chance for parental guidance on career choice for children's education process. This study therefore investigated the roles of parents on guidance and career choice development for their children future sustainable life.

#### **3.1.2 Career choice development**

Career under general conception refers to entirety of occupation one does in his or her life. It is a general chosen pursuit, a professional occupation someone acts in a certain area for the basis of being paid or unpaid depending on the prevailing situation. The general course of progress of one's working life or one's professional in a field for a pursuit of consecutive professional whereby one undergoes a special training and which is undertaken as a permanent professional.

Career choice development refers to the total systematic process from collected psychological, educational, physical, economic, sociological and other chances from all spheres of life that combined to influence the nature and significant of a certain occupation in the total future life span of a given individual. Career choice development needs to be known to children at early stage of their education which will helps them to raise awareness on the whole process of career choice in making decision, plan and seeking support and advise from different options of their career choice to fit in the real future life they want. Career choice development is an ongoing process from schooling system to occupation system; children need to understand blacks and whites of their career choice and the whole transitional from school to occupation. Therefore, the current study investigated how parents can facilitate the whole process of career choice development for their children's future sustainable life.

### **3.1.3 The relationship between education and career choice development**

Education plays an important role in the overall development of a country and the world in general thus education is a means and a process of transmitting the knowledge and civilization of the person to present and future generations with the views of facilitating the continuity of the society (Biao and Dipholo, 2013). Education is also a key strategy for investment in human resources, for improving people's lives and enabling them fight against poverty, ignorance and disease Penn, (2004). As a matter of fact, education has been part of human life for a long time. Each generation has been concerned with the socialization of its children with its norms, value and attitude; each generation seeks to pass on its knowledge and technology and this has been the concern of many parents throughout the time (Peters at el, 1985). In this case, therefore, there is direct relationship between education and career choice development for the children future life and parents are the key stakeholders in monitoring, maintaining and evaluating this relationship to their children.

Mutie and Ndambuki (1999) emphasize that, the choice of school subjects have a direct influence on the children future in determining the kind of career that will fit after successful completion of their studies. For that reason, children need to be provided with all information on various educational and vocational possibilities together with the help on directives on how to reach the goals depending on their capabilities of doing a particular career choice in their future right from the early stage of their educational levels. This can be facilitated by parents or family members by making a clear systematic guide and assistance on career choice and the process of transition from education to occupation.

The Tanzanian ministry of education science and vocational training policy (2014) supported the elementary and secondary school to form affiliation with parents in various activities to widen the children awareness on career choice for the future life during their schooling period. For instance; making a class work which will enable each student to acquire a positive set of work values and attitude, reinforcing productive work both at school and at home which will make the children participate in problem solving, creative thinking and finally develop their ideas on career choice. Moreover,

helping children to understand career subject matter for their occupational areas choice, together with involving children on various community occupations around the school might help children to be aware with the potential and possibilities of the careers available in their community for their future life.

### **3.1.4 Career development theories**

There are various theories that are related to career development some are as follows;

#### **A. Holland's theory**

Holland's theory (1997) is based on human trait with assumption that, an individual's personality is a primary factor in vocational choice, also the interest reflects the personality, individual develop stereotype views on a certain occupation and a person choose occupation that is matching with one's personality. The theory explained further that personality is the result of an interaction between the inherited characteristics with the prevailing environment which are key to develop specific interest and other activities. Holland reorganizes that the interaction finally leads to the emergence of the individuality. The theory can be categorized into six types namely; Realistic, Investigative Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. The theory expresses that there are three possible codes that can indicate one's career interest; the first code is a person's primary interest type, which would likely play a major role in career choice and satisfaction. The second and third codes are secondary interest themes, and they would likely play a lesser but still significant role in the career choice process. The theory is related direct with the study that, it deals with personality and vocational choice of the career in the society whereas the study investigated the role of parents on guidance and career choice development.

#### **B. Person-Environment Fit (P: E Fit) Theories (1909)**

Person- environment fit theories are essentially a career matching approach to career's guidance. Every person has a unique set of interests and skills: different jobs (and specialties) have different requirements for skills and personalities. If a person with particular interests and skills can find a job with requirements that fit those interests and needs his skills, it would seem likely that the individual would well match to the occupation (Parsons 1909). The idea of Person has been used by several philosophers to develop theories on guidance and career choice development.

#### **C. Self-concept Theory of Career Development**

This is a theory among various theories of career choice and development which was propounded by Super in 1990s.. This theory has received much attention almost all over the world. Super (1969, 1980, 1990) suggested that career choice and development is essentially a process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept. According to Super (1990), self-concept is a product of complex interactions among a number of factors available, including physical and mental growth, personal experiences, and environmental characteristics and stimulation. Whereas the theory

assumed that, there is organic mechanism acting behind the process of development and maturation. Current the theory puts more emphasis on the effects of social context and the reciprocal influence between the person and the environment on career choice and development.

The theory proposed a life stage developmental framework with the following stages: growth (ages 4 to 14), exploration (ages 14 to 24), establishment (ages 24 to 44), maintenance (ages 45 to 65), and disengagement (ages-over 65). In each stage one has to successfully manage the vocational developmental tasks that are socially expected of persons in the given chronological age range. The theory attempts to relate age of a person and the activities done as the expression of career development of an individual, since it is fact that the age and activities done by a certain person plays an important role in one's career choice and development. The theory did not give explanation on the role of family on the career choice in each age, this study therefore investigated the role of parents on the guidance and career choice for young people belongs to the growth group aged 4 to 14 and their parents.

#### **D. Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise**

Gottfredson theory (1981, 1996, 2002, and 2005) assumed that career choice is a process requiring a high level of cognitive proficiency. A child's ability to synthesize and organize complex occupational information is a function of chronological age progression as well as general intelligence. Cognitive growth and development is instrumental to the development of a cognitive map of occupation and conceptions of self that are used to evaluate the appropriateness of various occupational alternatives. In recent revisions of her theory, current Gottfredson's theory (2002, 2005) elaborated on the dynamic interplay between genetic makeup and the environment. Genetic characteristics play a crucial role in shaping the basic characteristics of a person such as interests, skills, and values, yet their expression is moderated by the environment that one is exposed to. Even though genetic makeup and environment play a crucial role in shaping the person, the theory maintained that the person is still an active agent who could influence or mould their own environment.

The theory states that career choice and development could be viewed as a process of elimination or circumscription in which a person progressively eliminates certain occupational alternatives from further consideration. Circumscription is guided by salient aspects of self-concept emerging at different developmental stages. It maintained that the career aspirations of children are influenced more by the public (e.g., gender, social class) than private aspects of their self-concept (e.g., skills, interests). In this case, there are four stages of circumscription. The first is called "*orientation to size and power*" (ages 3–5), the second stage is called "*orientation to sex-roles*" (ages 6–8), and the third stage is called "*orientation to social evaluation*" (ages 9–13) as social class and status. The fourth stage is called "*orientation to the internal, unique self*" (ages 14 and above).

The theory concluded that career development process is cooperation in response to external realities and constraints such as changes in the structure of the

labour market, economic depression, unfair hiring practices, and family obligations, individuals have to accommodate their occupational preferences so that their eventual choices are achievable in the real world. This study therefore investigated the role of parents (family obligations) in the guidance and career choice and development for the young people for their future sustainable life.

#### **4. Methodology**

The study was conducted in Njombe district whereby three (3) public urban primary schools were involved. Public schools were randomly selected among fifty schools in the district. These schools were selected due to the fact that they would provide the relevant information required by the study. The study adopted the qualitative research design. The purposive sampling was used to get sample of 12 respondents whereby six of them were parents and six were students three from standard six and other three from standard seven. These participants were included in the study because they were directly affected by the role of parents in guidance and career choice development for children's future life. The study used semi-structured interview for data collection. Finally, data were analyzed through thematic analysis.

#### **5. Analysis of Findings and Discussion**

The study investigated role of parents to guidance and career choice development for their children's future sustainable life. To meet the goals the researcher had interviews with both students and parents by asking questions regarding with the role parents in guidance and career choice development. In analysis, the following sub-themes were found.

The study revealed that, all students have their own interest on the career choice. The students asked on their future career interest four students among six mentioned that they want to be teachers and the rest two wanted to be medical doctors. One student said *"I like to be a teacher after graduation, I want to be teach children mathematics,"* Another student among the two who mentioned medical doctor said that *"I want to became a doctor in hospital, I want to treat the sick people"* The student were asked to explain on how their parents played a role in their career choice where most of the students have no idea on the role played by their parents which revealed that most of the parents they are not aware on their children future career choice and development. The student were asked to explain what their parents always commended to them on school, five replied that their parents always emphasize that, study hard, you must pass exams and education is your inheritance. One student said that, her parents did not say anything about her school. The students responded on the parents' role that, most of parents give them the school requirements like pens, exercise books, school uniform and school contributions.

On the other hand, parents were asked on the aims of sending their children to school most parents explained that school is a foundation of higher learning for their

children's future life, some expanded that school is the only inheritance in the world, and three of them mentioned that education is a way through their children's career in life. One parent said,

*"I like my child to study very hard and became someone in this world, not like me I have no permanent and recognized job, and this is very bad in life"*

From the above parent's comments, it has been revealed that parents have ideas on the core function of education in the future world of their children. Then parents were asked how often they had at least discussion with their children on their future career two of them said at least twice a year. Together parents were to suggest the method that can be used to determine and guide their children on career choice for their future occupation; parents mentioned the following; rising students' interest on their career choice, giving them a direction of the career choice, by comparing their career choice with their abilities, by encouraging them their subjects by giving award and reward, by finding extra teaching on career subjects of their choice, by having enough time to talk and discuss with children on advantages and disadvantages of various career and by providing vivid tour different occupations places with their children. One parent said:

*"Actually I have to spare time at least one hour per day to talk with my child and discuss issues about his future career, you know I am a teacher but not necessary my son becomes a teacher it might be not his interest."*

The above parent statement concurs with Naik (2004) idea that, guidance is associated with helping a child in maintaining a normal relationship between her/his abilities and the demand of environment with proper emphasis upon maturation of capacities for socialized self-directions

The parents were asked also to explain what they do in encouraging their children in academic issues. Most parents replied that, they just provide materials for their children, they award them when they pass their exams, they make emphasis on their study and also checking their daily progress in academics by reading -through their assignment. Parent said:

*"Always I listen to teachers if there is a problem at school with my child; I make sure the problem is solved. I have friendly with some teachers at school they provide me information on my child and they tell me what is needed at school at the moment."*

Findings on effect of parent's roles on guidance and career choice development for their children future sustainable life on one hand revealed that, most parents have some ideas on the positive effects on their roles on guidance and career choice development for their children future sustainable life. The parents responded that, parental guidance help children to meet their planned goals with specific career choice,



makes support on the children to be creative in their career choice, creates a satisfaction on the career choice, enable the assessment and evaluation of child career choice and his/her interest and show a proper direction on what do in order to meet the targeted career in their life.

On the other hand, the findings revealed the negative effect on the role of parents' guidance and career choice development. The parents revealed that there are negative effects if the parents did not play their roles in guidance and career choice for children development. One parent confirmed that,

*"I think the child loses direction on their future career choice development when they miss the control and guidance from their parents."*

From the above argument the other parents commended that, if there is no proper guidance on career choice likely the children will lose interest of their occupation which will lead to desire for the change of career. Also, parents argued that without their guidance in career choice children might lack the abilities for creativity and also may cause the children to leave the occupation or sometimes to underperform in the chosen occupation.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study concluded that, the role of parents (family) on guidance and career choice has a greater impact in children's future sustainable life yet it is not practiced in most families in Tanzanian societies. It has been discovered that, most parents do support their children on education issues like financial and other school facilities and sometimes make emphasis on studying hard for their future education and life in general yet the study discovered that most parents do forget the very important aspect which is on life after schooling of their children. The study discovered also that most parents do expect their children to be engaged in a certain occupation yet they do not know which one and they did not prepare their children on a particular career which leads to most children to lack guidance on their career choice for their future life. The study further discovers that, most students have limited knowledge on their career choice since they mentioned teachers and medical doctor as their career choice. This revealed that they are ignorant of other careers because most of the time, they meet with teachers and medical doctors at hospitals and at school. That's that is why they like teaching and when they are sick they see medical doctors diagnosing them which leads to become familiar with only two careers among a number of careers around the community.

## **7. Recommendation**

From the findings the study recommended that, parents should pay more attention on children's career choice development from early childhood. In this case, the study

suggested that, parents should have time to cooperate with their children, talk and discuss on their interest, abilities, and career choice for their future development.

Also, educational stakeholder should integrate issues of guidance and career choice development in curriculum, at least for basic and compulsory education (pre-primary school education to ordinary secondary education). This will help the children to have awareness on their career choice development with their requirements from the beginning of their education system for their future sustainable life.

## References

1. Athanasou, J. A. and Esbroeck V.R. (2008). *International Handbook of Career Guidance*: Springer Science + Business Media B.V.
2. Biao, I. & Dipholo, K. B (2013). Rethinking Education for Sustainable Development in Africa. *The African Symposium: An online Journal of the African Educational Research Network*. University of Botswana.
3. Dworetzky, J. P. (1996). *Introduction to child development*, 6th ed. Washington: West Publishing Company
4. Gottfredson, L. S. (1981). Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations [Monograph]. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 28, 545–579.
5. Gottfredson, L. S. (1996). Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development: Applying contemporary approaches to practice* (3rd ed., pp. 179–232). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
6. Gottfredson, L. S. (2002). Gottfredson's theory of circumscription, compromise, and self-creation. In D. Brown & Associate (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (4th ed., pp. 85–148). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
7. Gottfredson, L. S. (2005). Applying Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise in career guidance and counseling. In S. D. Brown & R. T. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 71–100). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
8. Holland, J. H. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall
9. Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, (2014). *Education and training policy Tanzania* Dar es Salaam Government Press.
10. Mutie, E. K., & Ndambuki, P. (1999). *Guidance and Counseling for schools and colleges*, Oxford University Press.
11. Naik, D. (2004). *Fundamentals of Guidance and Counseling*, India; Adliyayan Publishers.
12. Parsons, F. (1909). *Choosing a vocation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
13. Penn, H, (2004). *Childcare and Early Childhood Development Programs and Policies. Their Relation to Reducing Poverty*. London: Childhood Poverty Research and

Policy Centre (CHIP) Retrieved October 10, 2006 from  
[www.childhoodpovert.org](http://www.childhoodpovert.org)

14. Peters, D. L, Neisworth, J .T & Yawkey, D.T. (1985). *Early Childhood Education :From Theory*
15. Super, D. E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development: Applying contemporary approaches to practice* (2nd ed., pp. 197–261). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
16. Super, D. E., & Sverko, I. (Eds.). (1995). *Life roles, values and careers: International findings of work importance study*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
17. Super, D. W. (1969). Vocational development theory. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 1, 2–30.
18. Super, D. W. (1980). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 16, 282–298.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).