Relative Influence of Selected Predictor Variables on Occupational Aspirations of Secondary School Students in Nairobi Province, Kenya

Mutweleli Samuel Mutua

Department: Educational Psychology

Supervisors:

Prof. Fredrick M. Okatcha
Prof. Edward Oyugi

This study was designed to investigate the relative influence of the selected predictor variables (students’ self-concept, academic achievement, knowledge about careers and home background) in predicting occupational aspirations of secondary school students. The researcher’s aim was to determine the best predictor of secondary school students’ occupational aspirations. Further, the inherent gender differences in students’ self-concept and occupational aspirations were studied. In the exploratory study, the relative influence of specific domains of self-concept on occupational aspirations and school effect on students’ knowledge about careers was investigated. The study adopted an ex post facto research design and the sample consisted of 240 form two students selected from 10 public secondary schools in Nairobi Province. In the selection of schools and subjects included in the study, both stratified and simple random sampling procedures were used. Students’ self-concept was measured by the modified semantic differential scale, which measured six domains of self-concept, namely; physical self, character self, emotional self, academic self, social self and family self. A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to measure students’ home background, knowledge about careers and occupational aspirations. Students’ academic achievement was measured by use of examination records. The study was guided by three hypotheses, which hypothesized that there is a difference in the relative influence of students’ self-concept, academic achievement and knowledge about careers on occupational aspirations; There is a significant relationship between students’ home background and occupational aspirations; and that, there are significant gender differences in students’ self-concept and occupational aspirations. In data analysis, the researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistics. Multiple regression model was used to study the relative influence of the predictor variables, Chi-square was used to study the relationship between home background variables and occupational aspirations and for the difference between means, t-test for independent samples was used. Anova was used to compare means for students’ knowledge about careers. The results provided evidence that; There was difference in the relative influence of students’ self-concept, academic achievement and knowledge about careers on occupational aspirations and that academic achievement had the largest influence. Among the family background variables only fathers’ education was significantly correlated with students’ occupational aspirations. No significant gender differences were found between boys and girls in terms of self-concept. However in relation to
the specific domains, a significant gender difference was found in relation to emotional self and this was in favour of boys. Further, no significant gender difference was found in occupational aspirations. However, significant gender differences were reported in terms of choice of occupations in different job groups. In relation to the specific domains of self-concept, academic self had the largest influence on occupational aspirations and that there was significant school effect on students knowledge about careers. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended the strengthening of career guidance and counseling services in schools.