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Influence of Geography on Various Career Choices in Africa. A
Critical Literature Review



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Influence of Geography on Various Career Choices in Africa. A Critical Literature Review

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Abstract

Purpose: Education and training should therefore consider the role of geography in instilling learners with basic foundation skills to tackle the various challenges faced in the society. The overall objective of this study was to examine influence of influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa. A critical literature review

Methodology: The paper used a desk study review methodology where relevant empirical literature was reviewed to identify main themes and to extract knowledge gaps.

Findings: The findings of the study indicate that a large percentage of students aspire to pursue careers that are related to Geographic Information systems (GIS) and cartography. Careers in economic geography and physical geography follow closely. The least aspired careers by students are those related to geographic education and regional geography. This shows that learners aspire for careers that are related to information and communication technology because GIS entails use of computers while cartography also entails use of computer technology such as Google maps and Global Positioning System (GPS). The fact that geography has a topic on map interpretation makes the learners to be familiar with map work; this could also be a reason why they have an interest in cartography.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: The study recommends that the importance of geography subject should be emphasized on learners at the early stages of secondary school such as form one and two. This will enable the learners to make informed subject choice because it will have an impact on their career prospects. Students who love geography subject should be encouraged to study it and encouraged to pursue careers related to geography in tertiary colleges and university. More learners should be encouraged by teachers and parents to choose geography because it covers a wide scope in terms of socio-economic activities that man is involved in. This will make the learner to be an all-round person who can bring development to the society.

Keywords: *Influence, Geography, Various Career, Choices Africa.*

INTRODUCTION

The Report of Commission of Inquiry into Education System of Kenya, (1999) recommended that the secondary school curriculum comprise of a few core subjects and a wide variety of elective subjects from which a learner can choose to pursue either humanities or science subjects. This was viewed as a good way of giving learners a chance to specialize in areas of their choice. Geography was recommended to be a core subject in form 1 and 2 among Mathematics, English, Kiswahili, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, History and Government, Religious Studies and Physical Education. Students are therefore able to choose geography when they get to form three. Geography is the only discipline concerned with understanding why and how both physical and cultural phenomena differ from place to place on the surface of the earth. Because geography is such a broad field of study, a great diversity of job opportunities awaits those who pursue college training in the discipline, (Adeyemi, 2019). Students make choices for reasons relating to long term goals.

The subject geography is taught with the objective that learners will acquire basic foundation skills so as to propel them towards making valuable contributions to the society. These contributions can be made through the acquisition of basic foundation skills as well as in the world of work. Geographic education can lead a learner into pursuing various career paths. In Britain the British geography curriculum puts emphasis on development of skills needed to carry out geographical inquiry, map work, and fieldwork, Clarke (2022). The fact that geography subject is optional in the Kenyan curriculum, means the students who choose the subject should be enlightened on the careers that geography subject can lead them to.

Students' perceptions on their ability in particular subjects influence their decisions, (White, 2017). Evidence indicates that students who begin preparing for an occupation in high school are more successful in their labour market both in the short and long run. These students are more likely to find employment and enter the occupation of their choice and increase their earning power, (Vanessa, 2022). Adeyemi (2019), carried out a study on the factors that influence the choice of geography subject in Botswana. The study sampled 218 form 5 students of geography of 2004 class. The study found out that majority of the students chose the subject of geography because it is related to their intended career. The students mentioned that they chose geography because they want to become pilots, meteorologists, archaeologists, environmentalists and geologists in future. The study also found out that only 9% of the students would want to choose geography in order to become future teachers. Whereas studies have been conducted in Botswana, this study also sought to find out the reasons behind the choice of geography over other subjects in the same category among form 3 students in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Wiersma (2015), carried out a study on Career Aspirations and Expectations of Secondary School Students of 8-4-4 system of education in Kiambu, Kajiado and 27 Machakos districts. The study points out that majority of secondary school students prefer clerical and professional jobs relative to manual and technical jobs. The study also found out that the age of students was closely related

to their career and educational aspirations and expectations. Younger students preferred to pursue university education while older students preferred to train for jobs and to enter the world of work.

Enguchukwu (2017), investigated the correlates of job aspirations of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to ascertain the jobs that appealed most to senior secondary school students in the State and also find out factors that influence their job aspirations. The study found out that students aspired most to medicine, accounting, law, pharmacy and engineering because of their high economic rewards, social value and high prestige. The students aspired least to jobs for religions, psychology and counseling because of peer group influence.

King (2018), conducted a study on school students' perceptions of careers related to GEES in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The study notes that perceived career opportunities and interest in the subject tend to be important factors influencing degree subject choice. The findings of the study indicated that many students could not come up with a specific job. The jobs named included; Weatherperson, teacher, geographer, geologist, conservationist, environmentalist, volcanologist and environmental manager. The study indicates that GEES students can move into a wide variety of jobs.

Barasa (2018), carried out a study on Students Perceptions of Geography in Ontario Secondary schools. The study investigated high school students' perceptions of the relevance of geography in various areas. Geography was ranked as relevant in preparing students for careers in urban planning, tourism, environmental planning, and resource management. The subject ranked as less relevant in preparing for careers in medicine, law and civil service. Laurie, (2020), carried out a research on high school students' perception of career technical Education and factors that influence enrolment in programs at a regional occupation centre in South Bay area of Los Angeles. The study found out that students in high school are aware of the careers they intend to pursue and they study courses that are related to their careers in high school. This study sought to establish the career aspirations of secondary school geography students in Uasin Gishu County and whether the subject influences them to opt for the careers having chosen it. Maweu, (2015), investigated the relationship between attitude towards Mathematics and students' performance for mathematics based careers and found that preference for mathematics based careers was significantly related to attitude towards Mathematics. According to Kimayu, (2022), students' performance in geography in KCSE has been identified as a significant predictor of preference for geography related careers among secondary school students.

Statement of the Problem

Geography is one of the subjects in the secondary school curriculum whose aims and objectives have been derived from the national goals of education one of which is that the learner should be self-reliant and productive in the society. When the geography syllabus is covered well and its content taught according to the national goals of education, it is expected that the learner will be

able to acquire knowledge and skills during classroom interactions and practical activities which will enable him/her to be prepared for a career in life as well as pursue further studies which will prepare him for the world of work. The teaching and learning of geography has, however not met its objectives in terms of realization of national goals of education as stipulated in the geography syllabus due to the way it is taught. Most classroom interactions have been marked with rote memorization of facts and standardized assessment tests. The extent to which classroom interactions impart learners with basic knowledge and skills in order to realize the eight goals of education one of which expects a learner to be self-reliant and productive should be established. There is need for an in-depth and an extensive evaluation to determine influence of Geography on various career choices.

Objective of the Study

The overall objective of this study was to examine influence of influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa. A critical literature review.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would enlighten teachers on the career aspirations of geography students. The data on the reasons as to why learners opt to choose geography over other subjects would enlighten the teachers on the ways of making the subject to be chosen by more students due to the current small number of students who opt to study geography. The study would also provide information on the relevance of geography in understanding societal problems thereby giving insights into the areas that geography syllabus needs to address so as to make learners fully equipped to bring positive contributions to the society.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The study was guided by Donald Super's Vocational Development theory (1957). Super's theory approach focuses on how children develop career interests and takes both environmental and internal processes equally into account. Super believed that the degree to which a given individuals career development is successful depends on how well that person is able to identify and implement higher career self-concept. According to Super, one's career concept is directly influenced by personality, abilities, interests, experiences and values and the ways in which one integrates these characteristics into life roles. As one experiences new situations and learns more about the world of work ,he/she is likely to develop a new set of interests ,new possibilities of expressing self-concept and find new ways of integrating one's values into the career choice process. Super described career development as consisting of five distinct stages. The first stage, Growth, which begins from birth up to the age of 14, involves people forming attitudes and behaviors that are important for the development of their self concept and learn about the general nature of the world of work.

Exploration (15-24) is considered to be the heart of career decision making process as it consists of three major development tasks; Crystallizing, Specifying and implementing career choice.

During crystallizing task, career dreaming occurs but most of the options identified at this stage are more idealistic than realistic. The specifying task of career exploration involves narrowing down career aspirations to a few options worthy of more detailed exploration. Implementing a career choice means obtaining relevant education and training related to an occupation. It is an advanced phase of career exploration but not the end of it.

The third stage, is Establishment, (25-44 years). Work experience associated with the career is obtained. It is a time for trying out the choice to determine if it is a good one while in Maintenance stage (45-64), the stability within a career becomes the primary objective. Most persons in the maintenance stage continue to improve working conditions and experience growth and development within their chosen careers. The final stage is Decline/disengagement (65+) which is marked by reduction in the role that particular work plays in one's life. Individuals in the disengagement stage make a decision to retire or change careers altogether. Each stage has a unique set of career development tasks and accounts for the changes and decisions that people make from career entry to retirement. These five stages are not just chronological. People cycle through each of these stages when they go through career transitions.

EMPRICAL REVIEW

Muchiri (2021), conducted a study that sought to determine dresses the issue of teachers' pedagogical preparedness for the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Secondary Education Level (SEL). Consequently, the study sought to establish geography teachers' readiness, their pedagogical knowledge, technological skills and perceptions towards the implementation of CBC in Mwea East Sub-County SEL. The study adopted descriptive survey design where the target population was limited to; 24 secondary schools, 24 head teachers and 100 geography teachers. From the findings of the study, majority of the respondents had not attended in-service training and therefore, were not conversant with the concept of the CBC. However, some teachers revealed that during their pre-service training under the 8.4.4 system of education, they were prepared and equipped with expository and heuristic teaching strategies to implement any curriculum. Nonetheless, in regards to digital literacy, majority of teachers expressed that they had not been exposed to ICT Curriculum and most of them felt incompetent as they lacked technological skills and knowledge. It was therefore, concluded that, a good number of them were struggling with the concept of the CBC and lacked the capacity demanded by the CBC framework. Nevertheless, factors like; limited seminars, workshops for continuous teachers' development, lack of digital devices and skilled computer instructors and parental engagement in teaching and learning processes were cited as factors that were likely to hinder effective implementation of the CBC in SEL. The study presented a methodological gap as it utilized explanatory research methodology while our study will be a desktop review approach.

Kimunto (2017), conducted a study to establish how geography is being implemented in public secondary schools. The study was conducted in Ganze Sub-County of Kilifi County, Kenya. The study findings showed that 96.2% of the teachers interviewed were not involved even though they

believed teacher's role is important in curriculum implementation. The study revealed that such teaching and learning resources as textbooks, teacher's guides, photographs, maps were available in schools but were inadequate. Challenges which were collected include incomplete syllabus coverage, inadequate teaching and learning resources, lack of knowledge on how marking is done, inadequate time allocated to geography despite its wide syllabus. The study concludes that poor management in schools by the principals demoralized the students and geography teachers. The study recommends that fieldwork should be adequately budgeted for change of methodology. Teachers should be invited and trained to be KNEC examiners. The study presented a geographical gap as it done in Kilifi while our study will focus on influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa.

Langat (2016), conducted a study to investigate whether the educators and learners use instructional materials in practical geography. The study design used was descriptive survey. The study population comprised of Geography Heads of Department (HOD's), teachers and students in secondary schools. Simple and random sampling techniques were used in selecting the research participants. This included a sample of 5 schools, 300 students, 5 Geography HOD's and 10 Geography teachers. Students and teachers' questionnaire, interview schedule and checklists were used in data collection. Analysis of data was done using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as include frequencies and percentages. The collected data collected was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used in data analysis. The results showed that 70 % of the schools had instructional materials yet only 22.5% of teachers utilize these resources while more than three quarters rarely or never utilize instructional materials. Majority of Geography teachers had poor attitude towards utilization of instructional materials. The study also revealed that Maps were the most utilized resources in classrooms, the least utilized being radios and dramas. The study presented a conceptual gap as it focused on whether the educators and learners use instructional materials in practical geography while our study will focus on influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa.

Ngeno (2015), conducted a study to investigate the challenges facing effective use of learning resources in public secondary schools in Bureti sub-county. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study's population comprised of forty five schools, fifteen thousand two hundred and seventeen students and seventy seven Geography teachers. Nine public schools were selected for study using purposive sampling techniques based on school categories and students 'gender composition such as one county boy and girl and three mixed schools, one girls and three mixed sub-county schools. The study revealed that instructional resources like textbooks were used but they are inadequate. It also found that textbooks, globe and maps were frequently used while diorama, internet and radio were rarely used. The study showed that most of the teachers never used computer at all since most of them are not computer literate and for those who used, minimal

time is allocated to them. The study however presented a methodological gap as it utilized descriptive survey design while our study will utilize desktop review approach.

Wafula (2015), conducted a study to investigate the relationship between field work and performance in the teaching and learning of geography in Kiminini Division, Trans-Nzoia County. The underlying theory in the study was based on the pragmatist Kneller (1971). The study used descriptive research design whose locale had 40% of the secondary schools selected from Kiminini. The data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) which involved mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages. In conclusion, the geography teachers hardly utilized field study which affects performance. Teachers preferred other teaching methods to field work making it difficult for learners to conceptualize what the teacher covered in class. From the study, it was recommended that teachers should embrace utilizing field work. Lastly, more Geography lessons should be allocated to the discipline specifically for field work. The study presented a contextual gap, as it focused on the relationship between field work and performance in the teaching and learning of geography, while our study will be influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa.

Nyawira (2012), conducted a study that examined the role of Kenya's regional development policies and strategies in regional development. It adopted spatial equity to assess the success of regional policy. The study used various social and economic indicators of development such as housing, health, income, occupation, water supply and electric power supply selected on the basis of their appropriateness to Kenya's planning and the availability of data. Computer based techniques such as the derivation of summary statistics, cross tabulation of data collected from the field, the computation of an index of regional development and simple linear regression analysis were used to analyze data. The study concluded that there are marked inequalities in regional development in Nakuru District, the most developed regions being the urban areas. The observed inequalities were attributed to Kenya's regional development policies and the strategies. The study presented a conceptual gap as it focused on the role of Kenya's regional development policies and strategies in regional development while our study will focus on influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop literature review method (desk study). This involved an in-depth review of studies related to influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa. Three sorting stages were implemented on the subject under study in order to determine the viability of the subject for research. This is the first stage that comprised the initial identification of all articles that were based on influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa. The search was done generally by searching the articles in the article title, abstract, keywords. A second search involved fully available publications on the subject on influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa. The third step involved the selection of fully accessible publications. Reduction of the literature to only fully accessible publications yielded specificity and allowed the researcher

to focus on the articles that related to influence of Geography on various career choices in Africa. After an in- depth search into the top key words (influence, Geography, various career, choices Africa), the researcher arrived at 6 articles that were suitable for analysis. This were findings from:

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SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that a large percentage of students aspire to pursue careers that are related to Geographic Information systems (GIS) and cartography. Careers in economic geography and physical geography follow closely. The least aspired careers by students are those related to geographic education and regional geography. This shows that learners aspire for careers that are related to information and communication technology because GIS entails use of computers while cartography also entails use of computer technology such as Google maps and Global Positioning System (GPS). The fact that geography has a topic on map interpretation makes the learners to be familiar with map work; this could also be a reason why they have an interest in cartography.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the importance of geography subject should be emphasized on learners at the early stages of secondary school such as form one and two. This will enable the learners to make informed subject choice because it will have an impact on their career prospects. Students who love geography subject should be encouraged to study it and encouraged to pursue careers related to geography in tertiary colleges and university. More learners should be encouraged by teachers and parents to choose geography because it covers a wide scope in terms of socio-economic activities that man is involved in. This will make the learner to be an all-round person who can bring development to the society.

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