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LEVELS OF SELF EFFICACY BELIEFS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Self-efficacy is at the core of human functioning. It affects an individual's choice of activities, effort, and persistence in life. In Kenya, the goal of career guidance is to foster self efficacy in career decision making. Against this backdrop, many secondary school students experience career indecision in subject and course selection. Anchored on the choice model of the SCCT, the study adopted the ex post facto and phenomenology designs to examine the levels of self efficacy beliefs among secondary school students of Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Quantitative analysis were conducted on data obtained from 15 secondary schools in a survey of 658 students (N = 14,250) selected through optimum allocation technique of stratified sampling. Qualitative analysis was done on data obtained from 15 career guidance and counselling teachers selected purposively through automatic inclusion. The aggregate mean and standard deviation of each sub variable of career specific self-efficacy beliefs showed that students demonstrated moderately high efficacy levels in problem solving (Mean=3.41,SD=.72) gathering occupational information (Mean =3.33,SD=.77), accurate self-appraisal (Mean =2.98, SD =.66) and planning for the future (Mean=2.99, SD=.79). Students however, registered low levels of efficacy in goal selection (Mean=2.07, SD=.90). These findings provide insights on the level of career specific self efficacy beliefs among secondary school students. For researchers, the mixed method approach provides an SCCT driven assessment tool for evaluating attainment of career decision making competencies. The study recommends adoption of career interventions geared towards sources of self efficacy in secondary schools.

Key Words: *Self-efficacy, Problem Solving, Occupational Information, Self-Appraisal, Future Planning*

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INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy is at the core of human functioning. It affects the choice of activities, effort, and persistence (Artino, 2012; Lent, 2013; Lent & Brown, 2019). Lent & Brown (2020) observe that the vast changes occurring in the global marketplace and digital technology underline that the world of work is in flux. Long-term occupational viability may rely on the ability to start a compatible work environment and prepare for occupational changes occasioned by technological advances and eventualities such as job layoffs. Problem-solving career competency is significant in an era whereby careers evolve as old ones dissipate. The SCCT choice model proposed by Lent, Brown & Hackett (1994) clarifies the conditions in which career interests get established, academic and vocational options chosen, and career determination performed. In the model, self-efficacy is an important concept. It contributes to the vocational interest which influences choice actions and performance attainment (Lent, 2013). Hackett and Betz (1981) were the first to apply Bandura's social cognitive theory by highlighting the role of self-efficacy in career choices. They focused on the theory to explain women's traditional career choices, suggesting that low self-efficacy may explain the restricted range of women's career options. Their work led to investigations of the role of self-efficacy in career-related behaviors. It also led to the constructs of self-efficacy and outcome expectancies being incorporated into a theoretical framework related to career decisions (Blizak & Chafiqi, 2014).

Positive experiences in domains such as career planning, problem-solving, self-knowledge, occupational exploration, and awareness of role models are likely to increase self-efficacy beliefs and create increasingly accurate self-perceptions (Lent, 2013). Interventions may be targeted at expanding vocational interests, nurturing decision-making skills and exploratory behavior, helping students explore various careers, and increasing consideration of nontraditional careers (Juntunen, Motl, & Rozzi, 2019). A continual challenge for SCCT-based research is that its constructs are assumed to be domain, situation, or task-specific. This means that new or adapted measures are typically required when studying the theory's predictions in the context of a novel application (Lent, 2017). In defining the constructs of each variable based on the five career decision-making competencies, the variable was focused on the career domain. Practically, SCCT offers a framework for discovering and exploring self-efficacy beliefs, the basis of career decision-making. It is also useful in the conceptualization and evaluation of career interventions. Furthermore, it can help foster the exploration of barriers and build support through a decisional balance sheet (Lent, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Performance accomplishments, verbal persuasion, vicarious learning, physiological states, and arousal forge an individual's self-efficacy (Lent, 2013; Lent & Brown, 2019). These sources of self-efficacy are nurtured in a supportive environment. Within the schools, career-specific supportive systems conjecturally foster self-efficacy beliefs. Whereas many studies focus on the effect of career interventions on self-efficacy beliefs, the assessment of specific career competency mastery in career development is overlooked. In Kenya, the absence of a common guidance and counseling structural, implementation, and assessment framework for career-specific self-efficacy mastery fails to provide counselors with relevant feedback aimed at targeted approaches to counseling. While SCCT has implications for career counseling and education, it also has a dearth of research, evaluation, and intervention methods (Wang, Liu & Deng, 2022). The assessment of career decision-making competency mastery based on theoretically driven assessment tools is thus an integral component in understanding the levels of self-efficacy beliefs. This study, therefore, sought to assess career-specific levels of self-efficacy beliefs using SCCT-driven methods among secondary school students in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

As a precursor to the SCCT, Bandura's social cognitive theory's view self-efficacy beliefs is that self-efficacy is a conviction about one's capability which does not necessarily match one's actual capability in a specific domain. He contends that most useful efficacy judgments are those that slightly exceed one's

capabilities, as this modest overestimation can increase effort and persistence during difficult times. In his perspective, unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act. In addition, self-efficacy is task- and situation-specific (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is a personal and motivational construct that affects and is influenced by behaviors and environmental variables (Lent, 2013; Schunk, & DiBenedetto, 2021). Compared with individuals who feel less efficacious, those with higher self-efficacy should choose to engage in activities, expend greater effort, persist longer and especially during difficulties, and achieve at higher levels. Further, individuals who feel efficacious about learning should engage in self-regulatory actions that improve their learning such as setting goals, using effective learning strategies, monitoring and evaluating their goal progress, and creating effective physical and social environments for learning (Usher & Schunk, 2018 cited in Schunk, & DiBenedetto, 2021). In turn, self-efficacy can be affected by behavioral factors and by the outcomes of actions such as perceived goal progress and achievement, as well as by environmental inputs such a supportive school environment. One of the demerits of self efficacy propositions is the dynamic nature of self efficacy (Schunk, & DiBenedetto, 2021). The nature of exposure to career interventions impacts its status. Therefore, periodic assessment of the levels of self efficacy beliefs is significant as it clearly shows how career interventions impact self-efficacy at various points in the career decision making process among students.

Conceptual Framework

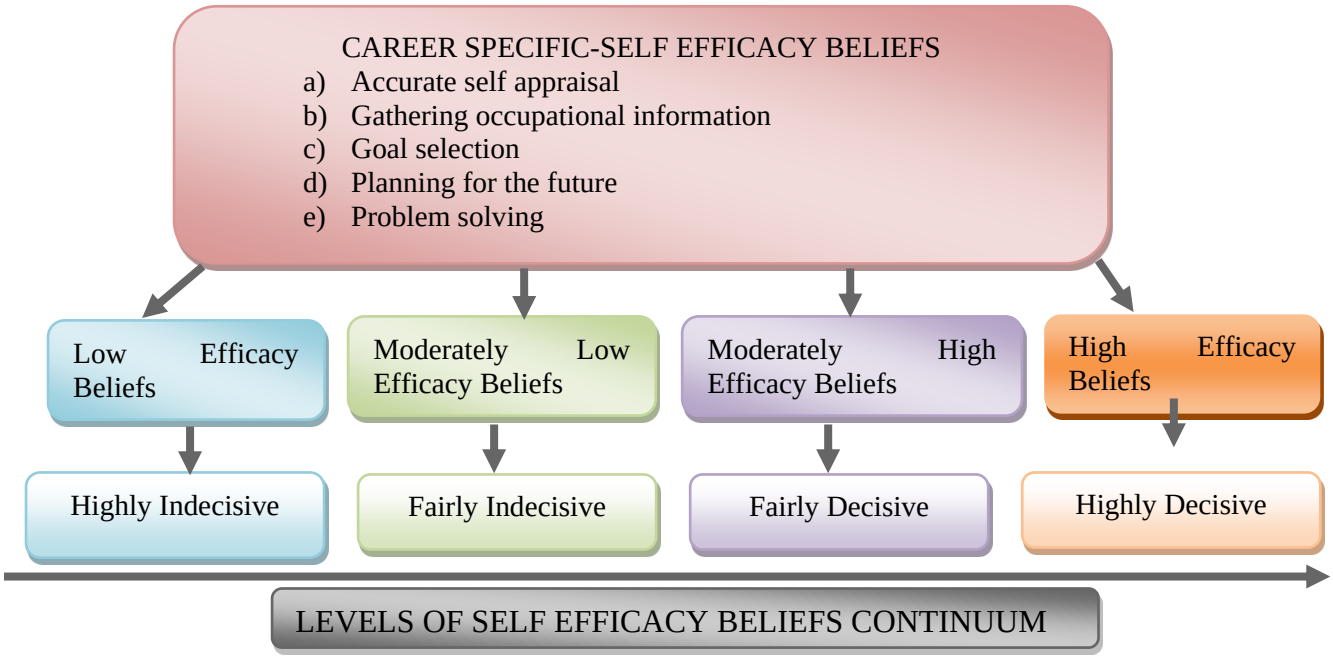

Figure 1**:** Conceptual Model of levels of self efficacy beliefs Source (Researcher, 2022)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The self-efficacy level of an individual determines their pursuit of goals in life. Lent & Brown (2020) classified career decision self-efficacy as a process-related construct whose assessment can facilitate identifying difficulties in career decision-making. In an experimental study, Raeder et al. (2019) investigated the effect of an experimentally induced low perceived self-efficacy on fear acquisition, extinction, and extinction retrieval in a differential fear conditioning task. A sample of seventy-one 18 to 36-year-old university students in Germany constituted the control and experimental group. Results showed that negative verbal feedback led to decreased self-efficacy. This was associated with changes in the acquisition of conditioned fear. During fear acquisition, the negative verbal feedback group showed decreased discrimination of fear responses between the aversive and safe conditioned stimuli relative to a group

receiving neutral feedback. The effects of the negative verbal feedback on the acquisition of fear discrimination learning were indexed by an impaired ability to discriminate the probability of going into a shock during acquisition upon presentation of the aversive relative to the safe stimuli. The findings suggest that the negative verbal feedback reduced perceived self-efficacy relative to the neutral feedback. In examining the antecedence of low self-efficacy, the study offers significant insight into the impact of negative feedback on self-efficacy. The range of the participants' ages is quite huge considering the variable under investigation. This could potentially skew some participants' scores. The experimental nature of the study too brings to the fore extraneous variables especially when dealing with human subjects. Given that the researchers have not mentioned their nature and potential influence, generalizations can only be made to populations with similar characteristics.

Wilde and Hsu (2019) examined the influence of general self-efficacy on the interpretation of vicarious experience information within online learning. Participants were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk. They received a small monetary reward for completing the study. The one hundred and thirty-six participants were native English speakers actively searching for jobs. Results showed that individuals with low general self-efficacy found vicarious experience information significantly less beneficial for their self-efficacy in completing a set task when compared to others with high general self-efficacy. Those with low general self-efficacy were more likely to make negative self-comparisons to the vicarious experience information, restricting its potential to increase their self-efficacy. In contrast, participants with high general self-efficacy found the information on vicarious experience presented beneficial to their self-efficacy for completing the set task. They were more likely to dismiss any information they interpreted to be negative. This study limited its scope to online learning and one source of self-efficacy. It also failed to specify the competencies within vicarious experiences that were studied. This limits the generalization of findings. The proposed study will extend the scope to other sources of career self-efficacy specific to career decision making competencies to include the other three sources.

In China, Chen (2020) explored the influence of self-efficacy on English performance in a survey among male and female university students. A questionnaire was used in data collection. The results show that students with low self-efficacy tend to be pessimistic about learning autonomy and learning motivation. Those with strong self-efficacy flexibly embrace various cognitive and learning methods and achieve excellent self-management and regulation. In addition, students with high scores in English performance demonstrated high self-efficacy scores, revealing a positive correlation between self-efficacy and English performance. Female students' English learning ability efficacy was higher than males. Students' English learning performance values and self-efficacy scores were subjected to regression standardized residual analysis. The regression relationship between self-efficacy and English demonstrated a significantly positive correlation. The study shows how different levels of self-efficacy inform the uptake and attainment of cognitive tasks and the gender perspective in levels of self-efficacy. Ostensibly, the design that informed the study is not identified and hence methodological aspects may not be scrutinized on validity and reliability measures. This impedes meaningful critique and generalization of findings.

Ahmad and Safaria (2013) examined the effects of high and low self-efficacy on the academic achievement of fifteen 5th-grade boys at a local school in Pakistan. The instruments included a semi-structured interview guide used by Hague's (1990) Urdu Self-efficacy scale and content analysis of interviewees' responses. It was found that students with high self-efficacy obtained higher scores in the test whereas students with low self-efficacy obtained low scores in the test. Further, content analysis of interviewee's responses showed that participants with high self-efficacy showed higher effort and persistence to achieve goals while participants with low self-efficacy discontinued their work. Additionally, students with high self-efficacy expressed a preference for complex courses than participants with low self-efficacy. Generally, participants with high self-efficacy had confidence to perform assigned work whereas those with

low self-efficacy harbored pessimistic thoughts about their accomplishments and personal development. The findings offer insights into how different levels of self-efficacy inform the behavioral characteristics of individuals. However, generalizability is hampered by the use of a single small sample.

Rahmati (2015) examined academic burnout in university students with high or low levels of self-efficacy. The sample consisted of 120 students selected randomly among Alame Tabatabaee University students, in Iran. They completed academic burnout and self-efficacy questionnaires. Mean and standard deviation and t-tests were used in data analysis. Those students, whose scores were one standard deviation higher than the mean, had high self-efficacy but one standard deviation lower than the mean had low self-efficacy. A negative and significant (.001) relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and all the subscales of academic burnout, emotional exhaustion, academic disinterest, and academic inefficacy was established. This implies that self-efficacy beliefs affect individuals' selection, purposes, emotional reactions, effort, adjustment, and resistance. High self-efficacy helps create calmness when facing difficult assignments and activities. On the contrary, low self-efficacy leads to pessimism and weakens problem-solving. Divergent from the proposed study which will focus on the affective aspect of self-efficacy specific to career aspiration, this study looked at the expression of self-efficacy in cognitive tasks namely academic burnout. Zamfir & Mocanu (2020) assessed the perceived academic self-efficacy among Romanian upper-secondary education students. The sample consisted of 502 students enrolled in the final grade of high school. They were drawn from 35 different high schools in Romania and their average age was 18 years. Data was collected on their beliefs about their ability to perform on the baccalaureate exam. Results show that 12.6% of the surveyed students had low self-efficacy based on the exam that they were going to take at the end of the school year (grades less than 6.00), while 35.2% of students displayed medium levels of self-efficacy (6.00–7.99) and 52.2% believe that they could obtain high grades at baccalaureate exam (8.00–10.00). The Chi-square test ($p = 0.000$) showed that perceived self-efficacy varies significantly by area of residence. Low self-efficacy is more prevalent in rural areas as 26.3% of rural students do not feel able to obtain a final grade above 6.00 in the baccalaureate exam, compared with 3.4% in urban areas. Also, urban areas register a significantly higher concentration of those with high self-efficacy (63.9%) than rural areas (34.8%).

Aurah, (2017) used a correlational research design in a survey to investigate the relationship between science self-efficacy beliefs, gender, and academic achievement, among high school students in Kenya. 2,139 students in their final year of high school responded to a science self-efficacy questionnaire, adopted from SEMLI-S by Gregory Thomas, David Anderson, and Samson Nashon (2007). A test was then administered to examine the academic achievement of students. The genetics problem-solving test in this study was explicitly designed to provide students with problem-solving experience. Students who rated themselves highly confident in genetics registered high scores on the genetics test. Whereas problem-solving was examined as a construct specific to the genetics domain, the proposed study assessed it as a construct within career competencies skills. Aomo et al., (2018) examined the relationship between self-efficacy and indulgence in behavior problems among students in selected secondary schools in Homabay, Kenya using a correlation survey design. The target population was 11479 students approaching their final year drawn from three sub-counties in Kenya, and the sample size comprised 386 students. The general self-efficacy and indulgence in behavior problem questionnaires were used to collect data. A bivariate correlation (zero-order) was used to analyze data with the aid of SPSS. The finding revealed that high self-efficacy was associated with a lower level of indulgence in behavioral problems. Low self-efficacy was associated with a higher level of indulgence in behavioral difficulties. The findings offer invaluable insights into the crucial role of self-efficacy.The reviewed literature clearly underscores the significance of self efficacy beliefs in decision making. Self efficacy belief is affected by negative feedback (Reader et al., 2019), locality (Zamfir & Mocanu, 2020). Inversely, self efficacy beliefs affects learning motivation (Wilde & Hsu, 2019), learning autonomy (Chen, 2020), academic burnout (Aomo et al., 2018) and academic achievement (Ahmad & Safaria, 2013). It is

noteworthy that with a strong empirical validation on the impact of self efficacy beliefs, studies fail to document the level of career self efficacy among secondary school students.

METHODOLOGY

Self-efficacy is at the core of human functioning. It affects an individual's choice of activities, effort, and persistence in life. In Kenya, the goal of career guidance is to foster self efficacy in career decision making. Against this backdrop, many secondary school students experience career indecision in subject and course selection. Anchored on the choice model of the SCCT, the study adopted the ex post facto and phenomenology designs to examine the levels of self efficacy beliefs among secondary school students of Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Quantitative analysis were conducted on data obtained from 15 secondary schools in a survey of 658 students (N = 14,250) selected through optimum allocation technique of stratified sampling. Qualitative analysis was done on data obtained from 15 career guidance and counselling teachers selected purposively through automatic inclusion. The Self Efficacy Beliefs scale, an adaptation of Bertz' scale (1986), was formulated using the five career competencies constructs. It yielded a strong reliability coefficient (0.749). The aggregate mean and standard deviation of each sub variable of career specific self efficacy beliefs showed that students demonstrated moderately high efficacy levels in problem solving (Mean=3.41,SD=.72) gathering occupational information (Mean =3.33,SD=.77), accurate self appraisal (Mean =2.98, SD =.66) and planning for the future (Mean=2.99, SD=.79). Students however, registered low levels of efficacy in goal selection (Mean=2.07, SD=.90). These findings provide insights on the level of career specific self efficacy beliefs among secondary school students. For researchers, the mixed method approach provides an SCCT driven assessment tool for evaluating attainment of career decision making competencies. The study recommends adoption of career interventions geared towards sources of self efficacy in secondary schools.

FINDINGS

Table 1 captures the representation of the level of career-specific self-efficacy beliefs among secondary school students in Uasin Gishu County on each of the career-specific self-efficacy belief sub-variables.

Table 1: The level of career specific self efficacy beliefs among secondary school students in Uasin Gishu County

Sub Variable	**Statistic**		
Accurate self appraisal	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**
I can accurately examine the career field that I would like to pursue in future	658	1.9772	.6275
I know what my ideal career field will be	658	3.0213	.7897
I know what will be of value in the career field that I intend to pursue	658	2.9438	.7674
I have figured out sacrifices that I will make so as to achieve my career aspiration	658	3.0851	.7677
I know the kind of lifestyle I will lead as a result of my career	658	3.8815	.3235
Variable aggregate score	**658**	**2.9817**	**.6552**
Sub Variable	**Statistic**		
Goal selection	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**
I know the university cut off points for the career field I am interested in	658	2.7994	0.7798
I know the employment trend for the occupation I am interested in	658	2.5775	0.8570
I know the average yearly earnings of people in the occupation I am interested in	658	2.2872	1.0604
I have already talked about occupational information with an employee from the career field I am interested in	658	2.7249	0.8432
I have gathered information about the universities offering the course that I intend to pursue	658	2.7143	0.9779
Variable aggregate score	**658**	**2.0757**	**0.9037**

Sub Variable	Statistic		
Occupational information	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**
I am able to select the course that I will pursue at the university from a list of potential courses	658	3.1018	0.7901
I am able to select my preferred occupation from a list of occupations	658	3.3389	0.7894
I am able to choose a career that will fit my preferred lifestyle	658	3.3860	0.7625
I am able to choose the university that will help me attain my career aspiration	658	3.3404	0.8292
I am able to choose a career field that will fit my interests	658	3.5046	0.7028
Variable aggregate score	**658**	**3.331**	**0.7738**
Sub Variable	**Statistic**		
Planning for the future	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**
I have made plans for my career goals for the next four years	658	3.2401	0.8166
I have determined the academic steps I need to take to successfully complete my chosen career field	658	2.8237	0.7837
I have talked to professionals working in the career field of interest to get an on ground perspective of my career	658	2.5942	0.7944
I have identified organizations that are relevant to my career options	658	2.9377	0.7219
I know what to do to successfully manage placement options for my career field	658	3.3723	0.8107
Sub variable aggregate score	**658**	**2.9936**	**0.7855**
Sub Variable	**Statistic**		
Problem solving	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**
I put more effort in subjects that might prevent me from attaining the course I will pursue	658	3.4195	0.7196
I work persistently towards my career aspiration even when I get frustrated	658	3.4118	0.7187
I will review my course of study to another if I do not merit to study my first career option	658	3.4088	0.7119
If I will not be satisfied with the course I intend to select, I will easily change to another	658	3.4286	0.7248
Given the few slots at the university, I will consider a university based on my chances of meeting cut off points as opposed to the prestige of the university	658	3.4012	0.7237
Sub variable aggregate score	**658**	**3.4140**	**0.7197**

Source: Research Data (2022)

Level of Accurate Self Appraisal

The first sub-variable examined students' level of accurate self-appraisal. Findings show that students' judgments of their conviction on accurate self-appraisal were moderately high. Students demonstrated knowledge of the kind of lifestyle they will lead as a result of their preferred career (Mean = 3.88, SD = .32), have figured out sacrifices that they will make to achieve their career aspiration (Mean = 3.09, SD = .77), know what their ideal career fields will be (Mean = 3.02, SD = .79) and what will be of value in the career field they intend to pursue (Mean = 2.94, SD = .77). They were, however, hardly convinced they can accurately examine the career field that they would like to pursue in future (Mean = 1.98, SD = .63). From their experience, the career guidance and counselling interviewees indicated that their students fairly appraise their career trajectory.

All interviewees indicated that by form four, their students know what they would like to pursue in tertiary institutions, and by the third term when they fill out KUCCP forms, they narrow down their career aspirations to about four preferences by the KUCCPS requirements. Interviewee 15 revealed, *"Right now, our form four candidates can list four courses they would choose from in order of most to least preferred... we spent least time when filling their university courses applications with KUCCPS because they preselect their preferences ahead of time and ultimately, they get picked for one of the four preferences*."

Furthermore, nine interviewees felt that their students fairly know what to do to attain their career aspirations. The interviewees said that their students set academic targets for the entire year with their preferred career in mind and with the help of their class teachers they strive for value addition progress towards their targets. They also consult with subject teachers in areas of weakness. Interviewee 1 stated, *"Our students have personal timetables, and academic progress cards that clearly outline their academic targets, attainment, gaps, and remedial strategies…we help them stay on track so they can stand a high chance of course eligibility at the university..."*Besides, all interviewees indicated that their students were contented with the sacrifices that come with the competitive nature of their preferred courses. Most interviewees felt that their students were convinced that the career aspirations that they wished to pursue would give them the lifestyle that they envisioned for themselves. According to Interviewee 13, *"The most popular outcome expectation that students cite whenever we ask why they have settled for a particular course or career field is the lifestyle they want. Our students have ambitious lifestyles..."* Interviewee 8, observed that, "*My students love flashy lifestyles, so their aspirations revolve around courses that are likely to attract high income commensurate to the lifestyle that they would like to have. That's why many wake up as early as 3:00 a.m. and retire to bed at 11:00 p.m…''*

From the teachers and students, the findings show that students are highly efficacious in assessing the lifestyle they anticipate based on their preferred career choice. They also know what is of value in their career preferences and the sacrifices they will make to succeed. However, despite this high efficacy, they showed low efficacy in identifying their ideal career. This might be occasioned by limited exposure to the actuality of career pathways, leading to uncertainty about the demands of those roles. Further, some are sceptical about their skills and competencies. This makes them unsure about the future. In Kenya, cognitive abilities play a role in the placement of students to courses and ultimate career fields. Therefore, uncertainty may also arise from low academic performance.

Level of Self Efficacy in Gathering Occupational Information

The second sub-variable examined students' level of self-efficacy in gathering occupational information. Findings revealed that students' judgment of their conviction on occupational information was relatively moderate. They are aware of the university cut-off points for the career field they are interested in (Mean = 2.80, SD = .78), have at least talked about occupational information with an employee from the preferred career fields (Mean = 2.72, SD = .84), have reasonably gathered information about the universities offering the course that they intend to pursue (Mean = 2.71, SD = .98). Additionally, they somewhat know employment trend for the occupation they are interested in (Mean = 2.58, SD = .86) as well as the average yearly earnings of people in the occupation they are interested in (Mean = 2.29, SD = 1.06). From their experience, interviewees indicated that their students are fairly conversant with occupational information about their preferred career aspirations. Eight interviewees indicated that their students understand the cut-off points for the career fields they are interested in. These interviewees felt that students preferred courses that mirror their academic performance. High achievers prefer clusters that require high-performance scores. The progressive learners look for less competitive courses whose cut-off points are easily attainable. According to Interviewee 6, *"Students inquire about courses matching their academic ability."* Interviewee 2, felt students inquire for cut-off points intending to work towards attaining the minimum expected points. The interviewee indicated, *"...they have often worked hard to attain the cut-off points for their preferred courses*."In addition, many interviewees indicated that their students know about employment trends of their preferred occupations and how much they can expect to earn. According to some of the interviewees, most of their students make inquiries from career experts during career talks or career fairs about the employment trends of their preferred occupations. Most of their inquiries were centred on budding or fading occupations, the kind of skills in demand, and the level of professional development needed to advance in career fields. Interviewee 9 said, *"... the Q/A sessions of our career talks focus predominantly on the labour market information. Students ask experts about what they need to do to get to the peak of the career fields, the requisite skills, working*

*conditions, and lucrative job ventures in industries in terms of remuneration."*Furthermore, all interviewees indicated that their students understood which subject clusters are significant for eligibility into their preferred courses. They noted that during the subject selection process in form two, most of their students sought advice on which subjects to select given their preferred future courses at the university.

Interviewee 3, pointed out, *"The choice of group 3, 4 & 5 subjects is gruelling for us. Students are often conflicted on which subjects to drop given their performance in those subjects, available slots in consideration of resources, and their preferred course's eligibility requirements."* While concurring with this view, Interviewee 9, explained that, *"...career experts' exposition has helped us in facilitating effective subject selection as we rarely witness indecision after subject selection talks."*

Based on the average mean of the sub-variable indicators and in consideration of the interview output the students ' level of self-efficacy in gathering occupational information is moderate. Most students are fairly efficacious in gathering occupational information of their preferred career aspirations. Students' inability to gather occupational information effectively might be occasioned by their inability to locate career information, enormous information they may find overwhelming to synthesize, time constraints, and lack of requisite reading and comprehension skills.

Level of Self Efficacy in Goal Selection

Students' degree of self-efficacy in selecting goals related to their career aspirations was examined in the third sub-variable. The results showed that their level of self-efficacy is somewhat high. From their statements, they indicated confidence in their ability to select a career path that aligns with their interests (Mean = 3.50, SD =.70), fits their desired lifestyle (Mean = 3.39, SD =.76), their ability to choose their preferred occupation from a list of vocational opportunities (Mean = 3.34, SD =.79), select the course they will take at the university from a list of possible courses (Mean = 3.10, SD =.79), and their conviction that they can select the university that will enable them to achieve their career goals (Mean = 3.02, SD = 0.79). Interviewees were concerned that in as much as their students were able to select the courses that they were likely to pursue at the university from a list of potential courses and knew their preferred occupation and lifestyle; availability of preferred courses, universities, and eligibility criteria remained obscure. This in a way makes their students hesitant about their goal selection. Interviewee 1 stated, *"Most alumni have missed out on their preferred courses owing to the competitive nature of courses. Our students prefer medicine, engineering, law, and nursing. The cut-off points are often high and fluctuate depending on performance and a university's eligibility criteria."*Interviewee 3 detailed, "*Some students are conflicted about their goal selection because of inconsistency in their subject performance..."*Interviewee 14 said, *"Academic ability plays a major role in determining goal selection. Steady high achievers select their career goals with ease however the ones with wavering academic achievement are doubtful and keep adjusting their goals every term..."*

Observably, the competitive nature of courses and few slots in universities creates instability among students in goal selection. Some constantly shift their preferences depending on their academic performance. For others, the eligibility criteria might demoralize them and force them to disengage from setting goals.

Level of Self Efficacy in Planning for their Future

The fourth sub-variable which examined students' level of self-efficacy in planning for their future career aspirations demonstrated that students' judgment of their conviction in planning for the future was moderately high. Students have moderately talked to professionals working in the career field of interest to get an on-ground perspective of their career (Mean = 2.59, SD = .79), fairly determined the academic steps they need to take to complete their chosen career field (Mean = 2.82, SD = .78), relatively identified organizations that are relevant to my career options (Mean = 3.34, SD = .79). Furthermore, they expressed confidence that they had made plans for their career goals for the next four years (Mean = 3.10, SD = .79) and were convinced

that they know what to do to successfully manage placement options in their career field (Mean = 3.02, SD = .79).

Five interviewers were certain that their students had decided on the career pathways and devised strategies to attain their aspirations after four years of schooling. Interviewee 1, stated, *"My students have effective study habits and revision strategies that have contributed to value addition in their academic progress report."* Interviewee 10 detailed, *"Most students set their academic targets every term which they review at the end of the term and make necessary remedial engagements."* According to some interviewees, their students have talked to professionals working in the career field of interest to get an on-ground perspective of their career and have identified employers, firms, and institutions that are relevant to their career options.

Interviewee 11 said, *"During our annual career day, students look forward to meeting professionals from their preferred career fields... their meetings are significant in shaping their perception of careers."* A significant number of interviewees felt that their students know what to do to qualify for admission to a career field of their choice. Interviewee 12 stated, *"Each of our candidates has university cut-off points for the past five years in select courses. They work hard in their cluster subjects and ensure it does not come below the minimum expected. This practice has helped them over the years to secure preferred courses."* Interviewee 1 professed that, *"the university eligibility criterion has helped students to monitor their subject performance and work towards aligning their scores with the demands of university expectations."*

Students' initiatives in planning for the future demonstrate an intentional focus on their preferred career aspiration. Efficacious planning for the future demands establishing career goals and actionable plans to achieve them. It also involves identifying important academic and co-curricular goals and concentrating time and effort for maximum productivity. A constant review and amendment of progress academic reports provides clarity on ones career trajectory.

Level of Self Efficacy in Problem Solving

The fifth sub-variable examined students' self-efficacy in problem-solving. Students' judgment of their conviction on problem-solving was high. They expressed confidence in their ability to easily change to another course if dissatisfied with the course they have selected (Mean = 3.43, SD = .72), put more effort in subjects that might prevent them from attaining the course they will pursue Mean = 3.42, SD = .72) and work persistently towards their career aspiration even when they get frustrated (Mean = 3.34, SD = .79). Furthermore, they expressed confidence that they will review their course of study to another if they do not merit to study their preferred career option (Mean = 3.41, SD = .71) and were convinced that given the few slots at the university, they will consider a university based on their chances of meeting cut off points as opposed to the prestige of the university (Mean = 3.40, SD = .72).

Several interviewees especially those drawn from the National and extra-county school categories were confident that their students work persistently towards their career aspirations even when they encounter obstacles. Interviewee 1 stated, *"I have had students whose academic performance declined drastically but no matter how low their grades were in subjects that would determine their eligibility, these students have worked relentlessly to redeem their performance. Their determination pays off..."* Interviewee 3 detailed that, *"despite the rigors of school life, students who are focused on a particular career have maintained their commitment to hard work and perseverance."* A few interviewees felt students would review their course and university selection. Interviewee 14 said, *"In our consultation forum, I have seen flexibility among students. They are well aware that the courses and universities are competitive. Therefore many of them are ready to abandon their initial considerations for new ones depending on their KCSE academic performance, cluster points, and the competitive nature of courses and universities."*

The sub-variable's fairly high level of self-efficacy indicates that students would adjust to the changes in the job environment. Individuals who easily acclimatize to new situations view hurdles as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable challenges.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Highly efficacious individuals adapt have a high affinity for success. They are self aware, enduring and risk oriented, focus on goal attainment and adapt to situations. The assessment of self-efficacy beliefs provides a clear understanding of the career competencies that students exemplify mastery and those they experience difficulties. It is therefore a basis for formulating effective career interventions aimed enhancing self efficacy beliefs for better career decision making.

The study recommends adoption of career interventions geared towards sources of self efficacy in secondary schools. It also recommends further validation of the SCCT driven levels of self efficacy assessment tool locally and regionally.

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