

**SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER DECISION
OF POST GRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF
TANZANIA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF
TANZANIA**

2019

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that she has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled; "Social Perspective Factors Influencing Career Decision of Post Graduate Students: A case of the Open University of Tanzania" in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Degree of Master in Human Resource Management (MHRM).

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Date

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DECLARATION

I, Steven J. Assenga, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

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Signature

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Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my lovely wife Emma, and my daughter Myrah for their encouragement and an endless support.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate social perspective factors that influence the choice of career among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. The investigation serves as a ground to establishing a career counselling section that would assist students at the Open University of Tanzania and all youth in the community at large to help students make career choice from a well-informed perspective. A survey design which was mainly quantitative in nature was used in this empirical study. A questionnaire was used in collecting data from the participants. One hundred and thirty three post graduate students participated in the study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 calculated the percentages and mean that were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that family members, both nucleus and extended, had an influence on students' choice of careers. The parental influence, parental education, and parental actions was rated highly as compared to other family related aspects. The study also revealed that peers had an influence on students' choices of careers through peer advice and encouragement. However, the influence of gender on career choice was significantly rated. In other words, gender influenced students' choice of careers since respondents agreed there were career special for men and other career special for women. Some recommendations had been made. The study recommended there is a need to orient parents on matters related to careers and youth to be close and associate with positive influential peers. Lastly, the study also recommended the improvement of career counselling chamber at the Open University of Tanzania to cover and assist students and community at large on matters relating to career decisions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION.....	ii
COPYRIGHT	iii
DECLARATION	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xiv
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 Background to the Study.....	1
1.3 Statement of the Research Problem.....	3
1.4 Research Objectives.....	4
1.4.1 General Research Objective	4
1.4.2 Specific Research Objectives	4
1.5 Research Questions.....	4
1.5.1 General Research Question	4
1.5.2 Specific Research Questions.....	5
1.6 Relevance of the Study	5
1.7 Organization of the Report.....	5

CHAPTER TWO	7
LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 Overview	7
2.2 Conceptual Definition	7
2.3 Critical Review of Supporting Theories.....	8
2.3.1 Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (1976).....	9
2.3.2 Social Cognitive Career Theory (1994)	10
2.4 Empirical Analysis of Relevant Studies.....	12
2.4.1 General Studies	12
2.4.2 Studies in African Countries.....	13
2.4.3 Studies in Tanzania	14
2.5 Research Gap	15
2.6 Conceptual Framework	15
2.7 Theoretical Framework	16
2.7.1 Family Influence and Career Decision.....	17
2.7.2 Gender Influence and Career Decision	18
2.7.3 Peer influence and Career Decision	18
2.8 Summary.....	19
CHAPTER THREE	20
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	20
3.1 Overview	20
3.2 Research Strategies	20
3.2.1 Research Design.....	20
3.2.2 Survey Population	20

3.2.3	Study Area	21
3.2.4	Research Philosophy	21
3.2.5	Research Paradigm.....	22
3.3	Sampling Design and Procedures	24
3.3.1	Sample Size	24
3.4	Methods of Data Collection.....	25
3.4.1	Data Collection Instruments	25
3.5	Data Processing and Analysis.....	27
3.6	Expected Results of the Study	27
3.7	Study Variables and Measurement Procedures	28
3.8	Validity and Reliability of the Study	28
3.9	Ethical Considerations.....	29
	CHAPTER FOUR	30
	PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF	
	FINDINGS	30
4.1	Overview	30
4.2	Demographic Characteristics.....	30
4.3	Family Influence on Career Decision.....	31
4.4	Gender Influence on Career Decision	33
4.5	Influence of Peers on Career Decision.....	35
	CHAPTER FIVE	39
	SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	39
5.1	Overview	39
5.2	Review of the Research Problem.....	39

5.3	Literature Review	40
5.4	Research Methodology.....	40
5.5	Summary of the Findings	41
5.5.1	Sub-Research Question One: Family Influence on Career Choice.....	41
5.5.2	Sub-Research Question Two: Gender Influence On Career Choice.....	41
5.5.3	Sub-Research Question Three: Peer Influence on Career Choice	41
5.6	Conclusion	42
5.7	Contribution of the Study	42
5.8	Recommendations	43
5.9	Area for Further Research	44
	REFERENCES	45
	APPENDICES.....	53

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents	30
Table 4. 2: Student's Response on Family Influence	31
Table 4. 3: Influence of Other Family Members on Student's Career Decision	32
Table 4. 4: Student's Relatives Pursue the Same Career	32
Table 4.5: Student's Response on Gender Influence	34
Table 4.6: Student's Response on Peer Influence on Career Choice	35

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between 16

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
FASS	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
FBM	Faculty of Business Management
FED	Faculty of Education
FLW	Faculty of Law
FSTES	Faculty of Science, Technology, and Environmental Studies
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MHRM	Master of Human Resource Management
MPM	Master of Project Management
MUHAS	Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SLTCDM	Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OUT	Open University of Tanzania
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The chapter covered the background to the study, statement of the research problem, research objectives and research questions, relevancy of the study and organization of the report.

1.2 Background to the Study

Career decision has become one of the critical aspects of an individual's life all over the world. Career selection is one of the many important choices students will make in determining future plans. This decision will impact them throughout their life. Ferry (2013) reports that career decisions are pivotal points in student's life. According to Dilnot (2019) career choice is one of the most important processes in an individual's life as one would enter the real working environment. A misperceived career choice directs all individual efforts and resources into wrong direction, when not aligned with the expectations; would not only be frustrating rather draining of the individual energy and wastage of resources. The re-alignment is possible, but it has serious implications in terms of time, money and motivation (Sharif et al., 2017).

The essence of who the student is, will revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work (Cortez, 2019). So no matter if they are headed for work or for college, there are factors that affect their career decisions. Muraguri (2011) states that an individual's choice of career is likely to be influenced by several factors including personal and cultural values, family background, career expectations and

career guidance. Some also make career decisions by taking the path of least resistance for example, following a career path advocated by their parents or following in the footsteps of an elder sibling (Crespo, 2018). According to Najar et al., (2018), career choice is influenced by multiple factors including personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and financial.

Several studies show that new students all over the world are usually faced with a dilemma in making a career choice in their life (Tanackovi et al, 2018). Bakare et al (2018) found that many youths made wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers, or as a result of prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling. Therefore, the concept of career development involves the person's creation of a career pattern, decision-making style, integration of life roles, values expression, and life-roles self-concepts (Herr et al., 2004).

Parents, teachers, the society and the government as a whole recognize the need for proper career guidance and development. Helping students choose a career has always been part of the provision of education at all levels. In Tanzania, preparing for a career begins at the secondary education level, and proceeds up to tertiary level. It is a process that starts early in childhood when one's aspirations and perceptions begin to be shaped (Mkumbo et al., 2014). The career choice of the students must need to be based on; strong knowledge, complete information, and appropriately guided, matching individual personality type and other intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The students need to be oriented on new emerging trends, future opportunities and

challenges in the context of career choice options. They need to know the prevalent market trends and practices and job scenario of various sectors.

Despite the facts that students require guidance in order to make the right career decisions there is a problem of wrong career choice of many students entering higher education in Tanzania. Yet there was limited research in Tanzania concern the factors affecting career decision among post graduate students. This study tried to fill the gap by understood social factors influencing career decisions among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

Students are faced with the need to choose an academic major as well as to develop career goals for the future (Guerra, 2014).Lack of access to career counseling and development has led to the situation where we have staff in organizations doing wrong jobs which do more harm than good to individuals and organizations. Regardless of great effort put forth by families, government agencies and non-government agencies, many young people encounter difficulties in the transition from the world of school to that of work (Atchoarena, 2015).

Some students insist on studying courses where they clearly lack basic foundation in academic and attitude preparation. There are cases where students have enrolled in certain programs but later on discover they lack interest in the particular field (Waudu, 2016). Students select careers based on many factors they perceive appropriate. Most often their choices and decisions are uninformed thereby resulting in dissatisfaction. Therefore the study specifically set out to investigate social

perspective factors influenced career decisions of post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study was guided by one general research objective and three specific research objectives. These objectives are described hereunder.

1.4.1 General Research Objective

The main objective of the study was to investigate social perspective factors influencing career decisions among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

1.4.2 Specific Research Objectives

- i. To examine the influence of family in career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.
- ii. To determine how gender influence career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.
- iii. To examine role of peer influence in career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided with one general research question and three specific research questions. These questions are described hereunder.

1.5.1 General Research Question

What are the social factors influencing career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania?

1.5.2 Specific Research Questions

- i. What are the influences of family background in career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania?
- ii. What are the influences of gender in career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania?
- iii. What are the roles of peer influence in career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania?

1.6 Relevance of the Study

The study aimed to determine social perspective factors influenced career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), therefore this study expected to enable families and community at large to create good ground for children to decide on their career at the childhood stage and students to be in good shape when choosing their fields of study to match with their career goal expectations. Furthermore, the study findings can become useful to improve educational curriculum at primary, secondary, college and university level to meet social demands of people in aspects of technical competences, skills, talents and fast global changes. Finally, the study can assist organization's human resource management department in preparation and implementation of career planning and career path as an instrument for potential staff retention.

1.7 Organization of the Report

This research report was organized into five chapters whereby chapter one is subdivided into several sections includes background to the study, statement of the research problem, research objectives, research questions, relevance of the research

and organization of the study. Chapter two is divided into literature review overview, conceptual definitions, critical review of supporting theories, critical review of the relevant empirical studies, research gap identified, conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and summary of the literature.

Chapter three includes chapter overview, research strategies, survey population, and area of the research, sampling design and procedures, variables and measurement procedures, methods of data collection, data processing and analysis, and expected results of the study. Chapter four has been categorized into four subsections; overview, and response returning rate, demographic information of the study participants and presentation of findings based on each research objectives. Lastly chapter five presents Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation based on the findings which have been presented and discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents the review of literature related to this study. It is divided into three parts namely; the review of related theories, empirical studies and knowledge gap. The researcher examines critically other studies that have been conducted which relate to this research and incorporate the findings obtained in this current study. The chapter reviewed different literatures related to the study of factors influenced career choices among post graduate students in Tanzania. Then chapter discussed in depth the literature on social perspective factors influenced career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. It is organized into conceptual definitions, critical review of supporting theories, critical review of relevant empirical studies, research gap identified, conceptual frame work, theoretical frame work, and summary of literature review.

2.2 Conceptual Definition

Career: Career concerns an individual's progression through a series of jobs over his or her lifetime and includes that person's education and unpaid work experiences, such as internships and volunteer opportunities. The progress and actions taken by a person throughout a lifetime, especially those related to that person's occupations (Vondracek, 2019). In this study the term "career" refers to any type of professional engagement students pursue whether paid or unpaid.

Career Path: Career path refers to the growth of the employee in an organization. Career Path basically means the various positions an employee moves on one by one

as he grows in an organization. The employee may move vertically most of the time but also move laterally or cross functionally to move to a different type of job role. Guidance and career counselors can encourage young people to take a constructive approach to their early employment experiences by providing opportunities to discuss career path to follow, as well as skills or experience a job provides that might be useful in the future (Callaghan, 2015).

Family: Family is a group of people who are related to each other, especially parents and their children (Fouad, 2016). Patton (2017) defined family as the two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption who reside together. A family can either be nuclear, extended or the guardians of the student.

Gender: Sáinz (2018) defined gender as a state of being a male or female as expressed by social or cultural distinctions and differences rather than biological ones. Gender refers to the socially-constructed roles of and relationships between men and women. Gender concerns men and women, including conceptions of both femininity and masculinity (Thams, 2018). In this study gender refers to state of being male or female as defined by society.

2.3 Critical Review of Supporting Theories

This section reviewed theories which related to the study so as to make the researcher understood the assumptions and conclusion which have been reached by various theories in relationship to matter under investigation. This enabled the researcher to find out what was missed or reach into relevance and valid conclusion.

2.3.1 Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (1976)

The theory was developed by Krumboltz et al (1976). The theory states that "People acquire their preferences through a variety of learning experiences, beliefs about themselves and the nature of their world emerge through direct and indirect education experiences. They take action on the basis of their beliefs using learned skills". Social learning theory of career decision making focuses on teaching clients career decision-making alternatives and makes use of the concept of the "triadic reciprocal interaction" (learning as the interaction with environment and genetic endowment) and emphasizes the role of instrumental & associative learning.

Consequently, key concepts/tools for the practitioner are reinforcement and modelling. The application of this theory to practice involves the practitioner attempting to identify and correct any incorrect beliefs held by the client about the decision making process. Social learning theory of career decision making (SLTCDM) was developed to address the following questions: Why people enter particular educational course or jobs, why they may change direction during their lives and why they may express various preferences for different activities at different points in their lives.

Although Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (SLTCDM) provides good grounds for a person to choose a particular career, the theory has some limitations as it provides a coherent explanation of a person's career path after it happens but the theory does not explain what a career counselor can do to help people shape their own career paths.

2.3.2 Social Cognitive Career Theory (1994)

Developed by Robert et al in 1994, SCCT is based on Albert Bandura's general social cognitive theory, an influential theory of cognitive and motivational processes that has been extended to the study of many areas of psychosocial functioning, such as academic performance, health behavior, and organizational development. Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is a relatively new theory that is aimed at explaining three interrelated aspects of career development: How basic academic and career interests develop, how educational and career choices are made, and how academic and career success is obtained. The theory incorporates a variety of concepts (e.g., interests, abilities, values, environmental factors) that appear in earlier career theories and have been found to affect career development.

Three intricately linked variables; self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and goals serve as the basic building blocks of SCCT. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's personal beliefs about his or her capabilities to perform particular behaviors or courses of action. Unlike global confidence or self-esteem, self-efficacy beliefs are relatively dynamic (i.e., changeable) and are specific to particular activity domains. People vary in their self-efficacy regarding the behaviors required in different occupational domains. For example, one person might feel very confident in being able to accomplish tasks for successful entry into, and performance in, scientific fields but feel much less confident about his or her abilities in social or enterprising fields, such as sales. SCCT assumes that people are likely to become interested in, choose to pursue, and perform better at activities at which they have strong self-efficacy beliefs, as long as they also have necessary skills and

environmental supports to pursue these activities.

Self-efficacy beliefs are assumed to derive from four primary sources of information: personal performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences (e.g., observing similar others), social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. Personal accomplishments (successes and failures with specific tasks) are assumed to offer a particularly compelling source of efficacy information, but the nature of the social models and reinforcing messages to which one is exposed, and the types of physiological states one experiences while engaged in particular tasks (e.g., low levels of anxiety), can all affect one's self-efficacy regarding different performance domains.

Outcome expectations refer to beliefs about the consequences or outcomes of performing particular behaviors (e.g., what will happen if I do this?). The choices that people make about the activities in which they will engage, and their effort and persistence at these activities, entail consideration of outcome as well as self-efficacy beliefs. For example, people are more likely to choose to engage in an activity to the extent that they see their involvement as leading to valued, positive outcomes (e.g., social and self-approval, tangible rewards, attractive work conditions). According to SCCT and the larger social cognitive theory, persons' engagement in activities, the effort and persistence they put into them, and their ultimate success are partly determined by both their self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations.

Personal goals may be defined as one's intentions to engage in a particular activity (e.g., to pursue a given academic major) or to attain a certain level of performance

(e.g., to receive an A in a particular course). In SCCT, these two types of goals are, respectively, referred to as choice goals and performance goals. By setting goals, people help to organize and guide their own behavior and to sustain it in the absence of more immediate positive feedback and despite inevitable setbacks. Social cognitive theory posits that goals are importantly tied to both self-efficacy and outcome expectations: People tend to set goals that are consistent with their views of their personal capabilities and of the outcomes they expect to attain from pursuing a particular course of action. Success or failure in reaching personal goals, in turn, becomes important information that helps to alter or confirm self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations.

2.4 Empirical Analysis of Relevant Studies

2.4.1 General Studies

The study conducted by Chan, (2018) on social cognitive perspective on factors influencing Taiwanese sport management students' career intentions. Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) was used as a basis for investigating the factors influencing the career intentions of Taiwanese sports management students. The results of a path analysis supported SCCT, indicated that self-efficacy contributed to career interests, outcome expectations, and career intentions. Social support was related to self-efficacy, and outcome expectations were related to career interests. However, the results did not support the hypotheses that social support and outcome expectations contribute to career intentions. The study has some limitations and critics as it does not touch other factors which affected career decisions of the students, factors like social barriers, internships, vocational guidance programmes

and learning effects in career decision making.

Kazi, et al, (2016) conducted a study on factors influencing student's career choices an empirical evidence from business students at Pakistan. The motivation behind the research study was to investigate factors that influence career choice of the student and create a possible alignment between their preferences and the institutions curriculum and offerings. The study revealed that "interest in the subject" is the most dominant factor influencing career choices of business students. Financial outcomes, ease of subject and future job opportunities were observed to have minor impact. The study results were indicative of the importance of students counseling sessions and other interventions to provide them with updated knowledge, and information to create their interest in the right choices and available options. The career choice of the students is also influenced by the level of their social class, financial resources, affordability and future employability.

2.4.2 Studies in African Countries

Chinyamurindi, (2016) conducted a study by using narrative analysis to understand factors influencing career choice in a sample of distance learning students in South Africa. The study revealed that career choice is an important decision in an individual's life. The goal of the study was to investigate factors that influence distance learning students' career choices among a sample of previously disadvantaged distance learners in South Africa. Upon analysis, the following five themes emerged as influencing career choice: the influence of significant others, academic performance, personal circumstances, environmental forces, and career interventions.

In Kenya, Hussein et al.,(2016) conducted a study on Career preferences of final year medical students at a medical school in Kenya. The study explored factors influencing the choice of career specialization and location for practice among final year medical students by gender. A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out on final year students in 2013 at the University of Nairobi, School of Medicine in Kenya. The study revealed four core specialties predominate as career preferences. Females were more likely to select a particular career due to ease of raising a family. Rural origin of students was found to be the most important factor for retention of rural health workforce.

2.4.3 Studies in Tanzania

Amani, et al (2014) conducted a study on the Influence of Family Background on Career Choice among Undergraduate Students in Tanzania. The study qualitatively investigated how family background factors influence career decision-making by university students. Data was collected and analysed using the thematic approach. The results show that the family played a significant role in undergraduate students' choice of careers. The influence was particularly significant in families with a higher level of education beginning at secondary school. Generally, students tend to choose professions similar to those of their parents. The results also show that the influence of biological parents on career decision-making was more pronounced than that of their relatives.

Mlangwa et al. (2017) conducted a study on career development plans of dental students at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), Tanzania. The study examined dental students' career development plans contributes

to understanding of their professional expectations and planning of human resource for health within a health system. The study revealed that most students had decisive thoughts and sufficient knowledge about their future career. The study recommended that universities in Tanzania need to ascertain professional counseling sessions and mentorship programmes so that most students will be able to make informed decisions on their future career.

2.5 Research Gap

Most of the reviewed literature in this study concentrated on social factors influenced students' career decision at undergraduate level and neglected students who pursued post graduate studies. Moreover, in Tanzania perspective there was low number of literature which described social perspective factors influenced career decision among post graduate students studied through open and distance learning (ODL). Therefore the study aimed to advance knowledge on social perspective factors influenced career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The study guided by two variables that was affecting variable (factors affecting career decision: family background, gender impacts and peer influence) and affected variable (career decision). The assumption of the conceptual framework below was that there is strong relationship among variables. This means that family background, gender and peer influence directly affect individuals' career decision.

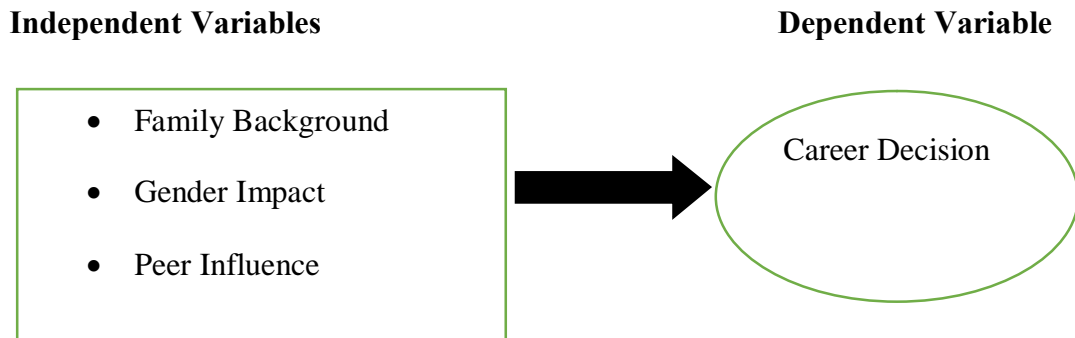


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between Variables

Source: Researcher, 2019

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework shows the variables and their relationships to predict and explain a phenomenon (Malhotra et al., 2010). The theoretical framework for this study hinged on career choice theories. The figure 2.1 in conceptual framework expressed the relationship between variables, i.e. independent and dependent variables. The figure tried to explain factors influenced career decision: family background, gender impact and peer influence (independent variable) may affect positively or negatively individuals' career decision (dependent variable). The link between social cognitive factors and career decision is not an exception in this regard.

According to diverse studies there were numerous contextual or contingent variables that influenced nature of the above mentioned relationship. Among variables influenced career decision were; influence of significant others, feedback from academic performance, consideration of personal circumstance, environmental forces and the influence of career interventions (Chinyamurindi, 2016).

2.7.1 Family Influence and Career Decision

Research on family influence has increased rapidly during the last couple of years, yet an understanding of family influences on career choices still remains sparse. Much of the research on family influence focus on individual parents' careers, for instance, mothers or fathers influencing children to take up a certain career. This study considers family members' influence on career choices which includes parents, siblings and extended family members.

The first interactions of a child with people takes place within its home among members of its family who include parents, siblings and relatives. A child is affected by a number of family-related factors such as the marital relationship of the parents, the socio-economic status of the family, the atmosphere of the home (whether parents are warm or hostile), the environmental condition, occupational status of the parents and the number of siblings in the family (Bollu et al., 2017). The family dynamics therefore play a pivotal role in the career readiness of the students.

Family relationship dynamics, such as parent-child attachment, parental support, family cohesion, enmeshment, expressiveness, and conflict, have been found to influence a variety of career constructs (Malau, 2018). It has been suggested that the family of origin provides an important locus for development of effective career decision - making skills that individuals access as they move into adulthood and start to make important career decisions (McMahon, 2017). This is important because studies show that adolescents who feel competent regarding career decision-making, tend to make more satisfying career choices later in life (Figueiredo, 2016).

2.7.2 Gender Influence and Career Decision

Gender is viewed as the division of people into two categories, men and women, based on their biological differences (Rogers, 2017). Since gender is used to distinguish between males and females, it implies that there are a number of attributes that go with gender as defined by society. According to Mtemeri, (2017) through interactions with caretakers, socialisation in childhood, peer pressure in adolescence, and gendered work and family roles, men and women are socially constructed to be different in behaviour, attitude and emotions.

In other words, women have the capacity to engage in male-dominated careers and men engage in what are perceived as women's jobs as defined by the society. Igbiniedion, (2011) male students perceived that parental influence as a factor that influenced their choice of a secretarial career, which is more inclined towards female students. These contradictions formed the basis of the need to carry out a study in Tanzania to establish whether gender has an influence in career choices among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

2.7.3 Peer influence and Career Decision

Peer influence cannot be underestimated as it was found to be influential in career choices. Peers have a paradoxical influence on each other's career decisions. On one hand, individuals are prone to conform to each other's ambitious educational decisions and, on the other hand, are discouraged from ambitious decisions when surrounded by successful peers (Rosenqvist, 2018). Career information, suggestion and peer role models provide proximal and distal support, promote individuals' career exploration not only directly but also indirectly through career decision-

making self-efficacy. In comparison, emotional support from peers provide only distal support, promoting individual career exploration indirectly through career decision-making self-efficacy. Peers influence career choice through peer interactions (Huang, 2018). As the students interact, they share information about careers. This is in line with Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory which emphasized the importance of learners interacting with one another in their environment.

2.8 Summary

The chapter provided a brief analysis of various literatures as a basic foundation of this study. It described both theoretical and empirical studies to guide the entire methodology of the study. The chapter act as a framework that guided the researcher to carry on this study following the path of the fore scholars.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

In this chapter, the research design is presented, the survey population, study area, sampling design and procedures, methods of data collection, data analysis techniques and expected results is explained.

3.2 Research Strategies

This part provides the strategies that were used in this study including philosophy, approach, design, study population and area of the research as below.

3.2.1 Research Design

Research design is a basic plan that guides the data collection and analysis phases of the research project. It provides the framework that specifies the type of information to be collected, its sources and collection procedure (Shodhganga, 2015). An appropriate research design will be crucial in enabling to arrive at valid findings, comparisons and conclusions. A faulty design results in misleading findings and is therefore tantamount to wasting human and financial resources (Kumar 2019). A quantitative approach was used in the current study to assess social perspective factors that influencing post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania to choose careers.

3.2.2 Survey Population

Population for a survey is the entire set of units for which the survey data are to be used to make inferences. Thus, the target population defines those units for which

the findings of the survey are meant to generalize (Nguti et al., 2019). Therefore the study used total number of 300 post graduate students across all academic faculties of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) to provide relevant data from various disciplines on social perspective factors influenced career decisions.

3.2.3 Study Area

The study was conducted at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) across all academic faculties; Faculty of Business Management (FBM), Faculty of Education (FED), Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Faculty of Law (FLW), and Faculty of Science, Technology and Environmental Studies (FSTES).

3.2.4 Research Philosophy

This study applied positivism research philosophy in order to study the society that relies specifically on scientific evidence, such as experiments and statistics, to reveal a true nature of how society operates (Saunders et al., 2009). The study adopts multiple interpretations of each participant's experiences; hence reality is subjective rather than finite as believed in Positivists beliefs where truth is finite and subjected to measurements. In such a philosophy, researchers tend to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity in its unique context instead of trying to generalize the base of understanding for the whole population (Saunders et al., 2009). The philosophy was preferred due to the fact that it accommodates diversifying views when looking up into the phenomenon and does not support generalization as the reality is inter-subjective based on the meaning and understanding on social and experiential levels. As positivism supports quantitative paradigm, this study used quantitative paradigm.

3.2.5 Research Paradigm

Willis, (2007) identified research paradigm is a framework that guides research and practice in a field, includes a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality. Research paradigm includes knowledge, a methodology and an epistemology that the researcher used to view the factors that influence the choice of career pathways among post graduate students at OUT (Tien, 2009). Scotland, (2012) ontological position of positivism is one of realism which has an existence independent of the knower. Ontology is the assumption that we make about the nature of reality and epistemology is a general set of assumptions about the best ways of enquiring into the nature of the world (Esterby et al., 2002).

According to positivist epistemology, science is seen as a way to get at the truth, to understand the world well enough so that it might be predicted and controlled (Krauss, 2005). The truth is determined through verification of predictions (Tien, 2009). The present study sought to establish factors that influence the choice of careers among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. This included a literature review regarding career decision factors. Positivists researchers are independent, detached and maintain a distance from the object of the research (Tien, 2009).

In the current study, the researcher maintained minimal interaction with participants when collecting data. Participants completed the questionnaire in their own time. Krauss, (2005) positivists go forth into the world impartially separating themselves from the world they study and discovering knowledge which is directed at explaining relationships. The use of questionnaire in the current study allowed the

researcher to deal with facts provided by the participants rather than feelings and emotions as used in other research paradigms. The researcher remained detached from the participants as they completed the questionnaires and sought to uncover the truth about factors that influence career decisions among post graduate students objectively and impartially.

3.2.6 Research Approach

Research approach is a plan and procedure that consists of the steps of broad assumptions to detailed method of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Yin, 2014). In this research quantitative approach was used.

3.2.6.1 The Quantitative Approach

Quantitative researchers operate under the assumption of objectivity and that there is reality to be observed and that rational observers who look at the same phenomenon will basically agree on its existence (Johnson et al., 2012). In the present study, objective findings validated the results of the study because they were based on the actual findings from the field as the researcher remained distanced from the participants. A quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses positivist claims for developing knowledge (Creswell, 2003). The positivist paradigm leads to a scientific and systematic approach to research. A quantitative approach was used in this study as it allowed the researcher to carry out an objective analysis and generate factual knowledge through measurement.

Quantitative data is analysed using statistics (Punch, 2005). It is the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena (Tewksbury, 2009). Explaining phenomena using

measurements and statistics (Hoy, 2010) was the key to the current study since it allowed the researcher to investigate and explain factors that influence the choice of careers among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

3.3 Sampling Design and Procedures

Kumar (2019) sampling is the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group. A sample is a subgroup of the population you are interested in. Chan et al (2018) sampling design is a mathematical function that gives researcher the probability of any given sample being drawn. The study employed non probability sampling procedures and used purposive sampling technique to come up with respondents from across all five OUTØ academic faculties. Purposive sampling technique employed in this study as it focus on a specified characteristics of a population that are of interest (Koech et al, 2016).

3.3.1 Sample Size

According to Smith et al., (2018) sample size is the act of choosing the number of observations or replicates to include in a statistical sample. The sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. Since the targeted population was known, the study adopted the formula of Israel (1992) as shown in equation below to determine the sample size of the research respondents:

$$\text{Equation 1: } n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Whereby; n is optimum sample size, N is the population size, e is the level of precision (i.e. the desired precision, e.g. 0.05 for 95% confidence level). For this case, Targeted population was 300 post graduate students, implying n was approximately 95 as derived in equation 2 below:

$$\text{Equation 2: } n = \frac{300}{1 + 300(0.05)^2}$$

Therefore, the optimum sample size (n) was 133 post graduate students of the Open University of Tanzania.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

Data is any information that has been collected, observed, generated or created to validate original research findings. Data produce information when processed leading to meaningful context (Moyo, 2015).

3.4.1 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instrument is anything that is useful in collecting information for research study. Synonymously is also referred as a 'research tool' or a 'research instrument' for example observation forms, interview schedules, questionnaires and interview guides. A questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. In a questionnaire respondents read the questions, interpret what is expected and then write down the answers (Kumar, 2019). For this research study questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect information from the respondents because it enabled a researcher to collect information from large number of people easily and economically (Beiske, 2016).

3.4.1.1 Questionnaire

Cohen et al., (2011) questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information providing structured, often numerical data that is administered without the presence of the researcher and often comparatively straight forward to analyse. Since the researcher did not intent to engage research assistants, questionnaires were the best instruments since they could be administered without the presence of the researcher and were clear and precise.

The questionnaire was used in this study to collect data from post graduate students regarding factors that influence the choice of careers. This is in line with Acharya (2010) who argues that questionnaires intend to obtain answers either on the facts related to the respondents or the opinions of the respondents regarding the subjective or even the objective matters. The current study sought to collect objective data and also facts, opinions, expectations and level of knowledge with regard to factors that influence the choice of careers among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

3.4.1.1.1 Close-ended Questionnaire

A closed ended questionnaire is one in which the inserted questions have possible answers in advance and so the respondent is limited to one of the pre-coded responses given (Mathers et al., 2007). Highly structured closed ended questions are useful because they can generate frequencies of responses amenable to statistical treatment and analysis and are quicker to code and analyse than word based data (Cohen, et al., 2011). The advantages of using closed ended questions in the current study were that carefully chosen response options allowed for the same frame of

reference for all participants when choosing an answer. The answers to closed ended questions are pre-determined and, as a result, they are both more specific than open ended questions and more likely to promote consistency among respondents in terms of understanding both the question and the response required (Colosi, 2006). Hence closed ended questions were preferred in the current study as they allowed the researcher to generate frequencies on factors that influence the choice of careers that were easy to analyse.

3.4.1.1.2 Open-Ended Questionnaire

Colosi (2006) stated that open ended questionnaires insert questions which do not place restrictions on the answers respondents can provide. In other words, open ended questionnaires allow the respondents to express themselves without limitations as compared to closed questions which prescribe a range of responses from which the respondent may choose. The answers provided may be rich in detail but it may be difficult to compare the responses over a large number of participants because the question is not direct (Leiva et al., 2006). Open ended questions yield more varied responses than closed ended questions and may highlight responses that evaluators could not have anticipated.

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis

The study analyzed the collected data by means of statistical tables and figures with little descriptions where sophisticated computerized tools "SPSS version 20" and excel 2013 was used to process the data (Palinkas et al., 2015).

3.6 Expected Results of the Study

The study found out how independent variables influenced dependent variable in this

topic of interest. That is, social perspective factors influenced career decisions of the post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). This was achieved through testing two identified variables (i.e. dependent variable: career decision and independent variables: family background, gender influence and peer influence).

3.7 Study Variables and Measurement Procedures

The study collected data which helped to measure whether social cognitive perspective factors had positive or negative effects on career decision of the post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. This study used two variables namely as independent variables (family background, gender and peer influence) and dependent variable (career decision).

3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Study

3.8.1 Validity

Validity is the extent to which the scores from a measure represent the variable they are intended to (Chari, 2018). The study used questionnaire method to collect information from the selected sample. Researcher constructed kind of questions in questionnaire which conformed the study variables in conceptual framework to ensure validity of the study and to be relevant with the study purpose and which can answer the research questions.

3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which assessments are consistent (Chari, 2018). The researcher used pilot method in testing reliability of the data by spreading the questionnaires to some of the students as it was expected that some questions had

several possible answers. The researcher established the reliability of the questionnaires by computing the alpha coefficient of the questions in the questionnaire.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In order for a researcher to abide to ethical principles, researcher passed a letter to relevant authorities to issue the management of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) states who the researcher was and what type of research study the researcher was undertaken. The researcher assured the data collected was only be used for research purposes alone in order to maintain confidentiality of the collected data. The study was not involve plagiarism materials because this can lead to a serious and punishable offense.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents, interprets and discusses findings. At first, the chapter reports on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by family influence on career decisions. The next in the chapter is the gender influence on career decisions. At last, the chapter presents how peers influence on choices on career decisions among postgraduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics

The study involved respondents of all sex across all OUT's academic faculties. The findings in table 4.1 reveal that in this study, there were more female respondents (50.4%) than males (49.6%). This perhaps due to women empowerment campaigns which are being done by the government and development partners on raising the number of women students in higher learning institutions. Majority (45.9%) of post graduate students involved in this study were from other programmes. The rest belonged to MBA (22.6%), MHRM (15%), MPM (12.8%), and PGDBS (3.8%) programmes.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n=133)

Variable	Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	66	49.6
	Female	67	50.4
Programme of Study	MHRM	20	15.0
	MBA	30	22.6
	MPM	17	12.8
	PGDBS	5	3.8
	OTHERS	61	45.9

Source: Field (2019)

4.3 Family Influence on Career Decision

The section presents the influence of the family on career decision among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. The family aspects included both the nuclear family members which comprised the father, mother and other siblings. The extended family members were also considered. These include aunts, uncles, grandparents and other related family members. Table 4.2 below shows how family members influenced career choices of post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania.

Table 4. 2: Student's Response on Family Influence (n=133)

Item	Cronbach	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Mean
I have chosen a career already	0.803	60.2	24.1	7.5	3.8	4.5	4.3158
Parents influence on students affect career decisions at college	0.796	45.1	22.6	17.3	7.5	7.5	3.9023
Students come to college with predetermined careers	0.803	40.6	28.6	15.8	6.8	8.3	3.8647
Parental Education has an impact on student's choice of career	0.796	19.5	33.8	27.8	7.5	11.3	3.4286
Parents Action have an impact on student career decision	0.799	16.5	30.1	30.1	9.0	13.5	3.2782
The family business is a factor in my career decision	0.788	9.8	24.8	26.3	16.5	22.6	2.8271
The dominant profession in my family is also my preferred career	0.781	10.5	19.5	32.3	16.5	21.1	2.8195
Information I got from my parents helped me to choose a career	0.778	15.0	21.8	29.3	15.8	18.0	3.0000
My father's career had an effect on my choice of career	0.775	13.5	18.8	24.8	21.1	21.8	2.8120
My mother's career had an effect on my career choice	0.776	12.0	18.0	24.1	18.0	27.8	2.6842
Older siblings had an influence on my career choice	0.794	10.5	29.3	18.0	12.8	29.3	2.7895
An extended family member was influential in the career that I choose	0.788	12.8	18.0	24.1	12.8	32.3	2.6617

Source: Field (2019)

Table 4.2 reveals that students choose their careers first (84.3%) and they join the college with their pre-determined careers (69.2%). Although parents influence (67.7%) affected career choices of the student at college, parental education (53.3%) played a great role to influence career decisions to children at the family level. The rate are on the high side where most of the items are above 0.70 on Cronbach's Alpha which imply the respondents' responses were reliable. Through an open ended question which was included in the questionnaire within the family influence on career decision section, 73.7% of respondents identified that none of their family members apart from parents had influenced them to pursue their careers as shown in the Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3: Influence of Other Family Members on Student's Career Decision (n=133)

Item	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Brother	19	14.3	14.3
	Sister	9	6.8	21.1
	Uncle/Aunt	7	5.3	26.3
	None	98	73.7	100.0
	Total	133	100.0	100.0

Source: Field (2019)

Through close ended question which was included in the questionnaire within the family influence on career decision section, 48.1% identified that none of their relatives had been in profession they pursue as shown in the Table 4.4.

Table 4. 4: Student's Relatives Pursue the Same Career (n=133)

Item	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	64	48.1	48.1
	One	26	19.5	67.7
	Two	24	18.0	85.7
	More than two	19	14.3	100.0
	Total	133	100.0	100.0

Source: Field (2019)

Therefore, the present study shows the overwhelming majority of respondents agreed on the influence of family in students' career decision at the Open University of Tanzania. The agreed response was above the average of 3.0 with reliable respondents' responses as presented by Cronbach's Alpha readings of above 0.70. The study presented that students choose their career first before join the university (84.3%), had pre-determined their career (69.2%), agreed on parental influence (67.7%), and influence of parental education (53.3%) was quite consistent with the earlier findings of the study conducted by Mtemeri (2017), Henriksen et al (2015), Heinz (2015), Wilkes et al (2015), and Wen et al (2018) which reported that family background, older siblings, members of an extended family, father and mother's careers, family business and family friends of students greatly influenced the nature of academic course to pursue, nature of desired job and presented role of parents and older siblings towards career decisions of the respective students.

4.4 Gender Influence on Career Decision

The section presents the findings from the post graduate students of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) concern gender influence on career decisions. Table 4.5 presents post graduate students' responses on gender influence on career decisions. In order to establish the magnitude of gender influence on career decision of post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania, respondents were presented with gender related components to specify the extent to which gender influence career decision. The computed Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each score was above 0.70 suggesting that the items used in this analysis were suitable for measuring respondents' responses. The aspect of gender on students' career decision

had positive influence because there are some of the mean scores which are above 3.5 averages.

Table 4.5: Student's Response on Gender Influence (n=133)

Item	Cronbach	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Mean
There are careers suitable for men and others suitable for women	0.816	48.1	18.0	16.5	9.0	8.3	3.8872
Gender influences student's choice of careers	0.806	45.1	25.6	14.3	9.0	6.0	3.9474
Male students have higher career ambitions compared to girls	0.809	38.3	20.3	21.1	12.8	7.5	3.6917
Girls are competing with boys for careers that were used to be dominated by men	0.817	25.6	27.8	28.6	7.5	10.5	3.5038
I value career advice I get from same sex friends	0.804	19.5	21.8	29.3	9.8	19.5	3.1203
Boys and girls are socially constructed to be different in terms of careers	0.806	17.3	24.1	26.3	13.5	18.8	3.0752
Women's role is homemaker and men's role is breadwinner	0.805	10.5	15.8	28.6	21.8	23.3	2.6842
Gender influences career behavior	0.805	23.3	30.1	24.8	10.5	11.3	3.4361
Women put higher value on careers that are concerned with caring for others	0.808	13.5	20.3	43.6	9.8	12.8	3.1203
There are traditional male subjects and female dominated subjects	0.803	14.3	16.5	36.1	13.5	19.5	2.9248
Masculine identity and feminine identity have an impact on career choice	0.806	13.5	18.0	36.1	12.0	20.3	2.9248

Source: Field (2019)

The study findings in Table 4.5 reveal that there were careers suitable for men and others for women (66%), in this regard gender influenced students' choices of their careers (60.7%). The findings further shows that male students had higher career ambitions compared to their girls' counterparts (58.6%), although girls used to compete with boys for men dominated careers (53.4%). The findings of the current

study was consistent with the findings of the previous literature, for example; Ahmadi et al (2018), Berenbaum (2018), Kay et al (2015), Kossek et al (2017), Rodríguez et al (2016), Koech et al (2016) and Ahmed et al (2017).

4.5 Influence of Peers on Career Decision

This section presents the influence of peers on the Open University of Tanzania post graduate students' career decisions. Factors such as peer career education, peer influence on career choice and the importance of career advice from peers, among many other peer aspects, are assessed.

Table 4.6: Students' Response on Peer Influence on Career Choice (n=133)

Item	Cronbach	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Mean
Career education comes from other students	0.774	31.6	28.6	25.6	9.0	5.3	3.7218
Peer influence regarding career choices is powerful	0.757	34.6	33.8	17.3	10.5	3.8	3.8496
My friends have influenced me to choose a career	0.747	32.3	25.6	21.1	14.3	6.8	3.6241
Peer advice on career guidance was helpful to me	0.756	18.8	27.1	31.6	10.5	12.0	3.3008
My friends validated the career that I choose	0.755	15.8	20.3	31.6	16.5	15.8	3.0376
Information given by friends is always reliable	0.748	12.0	18.8	29.3	23.3	16.5	2.8647
I choose a career that is similar to my friends	0.756	9.8	13.5	30.1	26.3	20.3	2.6617
I embrace the advice I get from peers that I value most	0.751	12.8	18.0	31.6	18.8	18.8	2.8722
My friends give comprehensive and proper advice on careers	0.749	14.3	16.5	29.3	21.1	18.8	2.8647

Source: Field (2019)

Table 4.6 reveals that peers were powerful influential on students' career choices (67.4%). In view of these findings career education came from other students (60.2%), whereby 57.9% of the respondents reported that their career choices were influenced by their friends. The mean score range from 3.0 up to 3.8 and few variables with mean score of below 3.0. The computed Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each score was above 0.70 suggesting that the items used in this analysis were suitable for measuring respondents' responses.

It emerged from this study that peers influenced students' career choices. This is consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) which purports that peers are sources of social learning as they model and sanction styles of conduct and serve as comparative references for appraisal and validation of personal efficacy (Bussey et al (1999)). Home friends (30.1%) appeared to have greatest influence to career decisions of post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. This was observed through respondents' responses to an open ended question which was included within the section of peer influence in the questionnaire as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Which Of Your Friends Were Most Influential to the Career You Would Like to Pursue? (N=133)

	Item	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Classmates	22	16.5	16.5	16.5
	Friends at College	37	27.8	27.8	44.4
	Colleagues	33	24.8	24.8	69.2
	Home Friends	40	30.1	30.1	99.2
	None	1	0.8	0.8	100.0
	Total	133	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field (2019)

75.9% of the respondents identified that there is no (none) any kind of information concern career which they normally get from their peers on an open ended question states "what kind of information normally students received from their peers on career decision?" which was included in the questionnaire within the peer influence on career decision section as shown in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: What Kind of Information About Careers Do You Normally Get From Peers? (n=133)

Item		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	101	75.9	75.9	75.9
	Career future Prospects	13	9.8	9.8	85.7
	Career future challenge	6	4.5	4.5	90.2
	Prons and Cons of career	13	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	133	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field (2019)

Peers (38.3%) appeared to have greatest influence on post graduate students career decision at the Open University of Tanzania. This was observed through respondents' responses to a close ended question which was included in the questionnaire within the peer influence on career decision section states "Generally which of the following was most influential to your choice of careers?" as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Generally which of the following was most influential to your choice of careers? (n=133)

Item		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Family	50	37.6	37.6	37.6
	Gender	32	24.1	24.1	61.7
	Peers	51	38.3	38.3	100.0
	Total	133	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field (2019)

Therefore, the current study revealed that peers (38.3%) had greatest influence on post graduate students' career decision at the Open University of Tanzania as depicted by close ended question in the questionnaire. The findings of this study was consistent with the findings of the previous literatures for example; Means et al (2016), Dossajee et al (2016), Merriam et al (2019), English et al (2016), Whiston et al (2017), Koech et al (2016), Ahmed et al (2017), and Kossek et al (2017). Through the current study it's possible to prove the statement stated "show me your friends I will tell you who you are" since peers play a pivotal role in shaping and designing an individual career aspirations and decisions (Mhango, 2018).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

The study sought to establish factors that influence the career decisions among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. In the present chapter, the context of the problem presented in Chapter One is reiterated; the summary of literature, research methodology and the findings on each sub research question are presented. This chapter also presents the conclusions of the study and recommendations for the improvement of career decisions at the OUT and community at large.

5.2 Review of the Research Problem

The current study focused on investigating the influence of social cognitive factors on career decisions of the post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. As reflected in chapter one, career decision is very complex especially to individuals who are not well informed on a varieties of career they wish to pursue before and after completing their school life (Ajufu et al 2013). Several studies show that new students all over the world are usually faced with a dilemma in making a career choice in their life (Tanackovi et al, 2018). Bakare(2018) found that many youths made wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers, or as a result of prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling.

As reflected in Chapter one, although few Tanzanian studies (Nguti et al, 2019 and Amani et al, 2018) investigated career issues, to the knowledge of the researcher,

they did not look at factors that influence career choices for post graduate students who learn through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. The results of the current study can help universities and colleges to enhance their counselling sections in serving the students with relevant information concern factors influencing career decisions such as the influence of family, gender and peers that make them choose careers.

5.3 Literature Review

As reflected in chapter two, most literature with the support from the theory of Social Cognitive Career Theory of 1994 and Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making of 1976 reveals that social perspective factors like family, gender and peer influence individuals' career decisions. Kazi et al (2016), Malhotra et al (2010), Bollu et al (2017), Malau (2018), McMahan (2017), Figueiredo (2016), Rogers (2017), Igbinedion (2011) and Mtemeri (2017) all conducted studies to investigate social cognitive factors influencing career decisions of students and revealed social factors like education, level of economy, family, peers, education and older siblings around can influence an individual's career decisions.

5.4 Research Methodology

In order to investigate the influence of the above mentioned factors, the Research Methodology in Chapter three dealt with the issue of the positivism paradigm methodology. Data was collected using the quantitative approach. A survey design was used to collect the data from post graduate student at the Open University of Tanzania. A sample of 133 post graduate students participated in the study. The instrument used to collect data was Questionnaire. Data was analysed by use of

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 in which Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data.

5.5 Summary of the Findings

5.5.1 Sub-Research Question One: Family Influence on Career Choice

It emerged from the present study that family had an influence on student's career decision because the overwhelming majority of respondents agreed on the influence of family in student's career decision at the Open University of Tanzania. The study shows how parental education, parental actions and parental influence was positively influence the post graduate students in career decisions.

5.5.2 Sub-Research Question Two: Gender Influence On Career Choice

It emerged from the current study that gender had a significant influence on career decision of the post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. This had being proved when respondents agreed that there were careers which were suitable for men and other suitable for women, gender influences student's choice of career, gender influences career behavior, and male students have higher career ambitions compared to girls.

5.5.3 Sub-Research Question Three: Peer Influence on Career Choice

The present study revealed that peers had a significant positive influence on career decisions of post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. The study revealed that peer influence was important for post graduate students to consider because it drives and shape most of the student's career aspirations. This was witnessed through respondent's responses as they agreed to notions that peer

influence regarding career choices was powerful, career education comes from other students and friends had influenced students to choose a career.

5.6 Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate factors that influence the career decisions of post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. As revealed by the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the family had a role in influencing students' career choices. Parental influence, parental education and older siblings are crucial in post graduate students' career decisions. The study also concluded that gender played its part to influence post graduate students' career decisions. The study revealed that gender influences career behavior, gender influences student's choice of career and there are career suitable for men and others suitable for women. The study further concluded that peers have a significant positive influence in students' career decision. This was proved through respondents' responses in the notions that peer influence regarding career choices was powerful, career education comes from other students and friends had an influence on career decisions.

5.7 Contribution of the Study

The present study on social perspective factors influencing the career decisions of post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania may be the first of its kind to be carried out in Tanzania for students who learn through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. The study makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge as it investigated the social perspective factors that influence the career decisions of post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. The University and students in general can benefit from the findings of the study by

improving the counselling unit to enable students to be well informed on matters relating to career choice and development.

The study may be referred by other researchers in the same field or similar fields as a baseline study to their studies. The government of Tanzania may also benefit from the current study when designing a career guidance curriculum for both primary, secondary, college and university level students.

5.8 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study on social perspective factors influencing the career decisions of the post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania, the following recommendations, from both the literature review and the findings from the empirical study, are made:

- i. The study recommended that career counselling unit/section ought to be introduced in the University to provide reliable advice to students on all matters relating to career. Through the career counselling section university students would receive all information relating to the field of study on the aspects of opportunities available and challenges.
- ii. The study also suggested inclusion of academic curriculum of career matters in the formal syllabus at all levels of study that is, at primary, secondary and university level to impart relevant knowledge to the youth for them to be in a position to make an informed decisions on career issues.
- iii. The current study also recommends on the provision of training concern career guidance skills to parents and guardians for them to understand the

whole concept of career management and development so as to rise their children in the career of their wishes.

- iv. The study also recommended the provision of training to peers on matters relating to career choice through various youth conferences, workshops and seminars. This will improve kind of advices students receive from their peers and close friends on issues of career decisions.
- v. The study recommends that it is necessary to consult key stakeholders like students, parents, guardians and industry when designing career guidance syllabus to reflect the actual requirements demanded by the particular industry in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude.

5.9 Area for Further Research

The current study concern social perspective factors influencing career decision was targeted post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) where it analysed three independent variables namely; family, gender and peer influence on career decision. This study pave the way to other researchers to analyse other variables which influence career decision as discussed in this study. Furthermore researchers may conduct studies on social perspective factors influencing the career decision of students who study in conventional universities because the current study concentrated on students who learn through Open and Distance Learning system (ODL). Finally researchers may wish to conduct other studies in this topic of interest by using different methodology (Qualitative Method) for knowledge expansion.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS CAREER DECISION

This questionnaire seeks to assess social perspective factors that influence the choice of careers among post graduate students at the Open University of Tanzania. The study is part of the researcher's subject in Master of Human Resource Management (MHRM) at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) and will help in student's career guidance and counselling service provision in the university. You do not need to write your name as no respondent will be traced or identified from this study whatsoever as confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. There are no right or wrong answers. The researcher is only interested in your own opinion. All data and information generated from this study will be treated as strictly private and confidential. You are therefore kindly requested to complete the questionnaire as honest as possible. Thank you for participating in this study.

Bibliographic Data

Serial Number

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Kindly indicate your response to each question by placing a tick in an appropriate box.

Male	
Female	

1. Gender

2. Post graduate programme of study e.g. (MHRM): í í í í í í í ..

Section A: Family Influence on Career Decision

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I have chosen a career already					
2. Parents influence on students affect career decisions at college.					
3. Students come to college with predetermined careers					
4. Parental education has an impact on students' choice of career					
5. Parents actions have an impact on student career decision					
6. The family business is a factor in my career decision					
7. The dominant profession in my family is also my preferred career					
8. Information I got from my parents helped me to choose a career					
9. My father's career had an impact on my choice of career					
10. My mother's career had an effect on my choice of career					
11. Older siblings had an influence on my career choice					
12. An extended family member was influential in the career that I choose					

13. Who else among family members would have influenced you to take the career you want to pursue _____ .

14. How many of your relatives have been in the profession that you pursue?

None	
One	
Two	
More than Two	

Section B: Gender Influence on Career Decision

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. There are careers suitable for men and others suitable for women					
15. Gender influences students' choice of careers					
16. Male students have higher career ambitions compared to girls					
17. Girls are competing with boys for careers that were used to be dominated by men					
18. I value career advice I get from same sex friends					
19. Boys and girls are socially constructed to be different in terms of careers					
20. Women's role is homemaker and men's role is breadwinner					
21. Gender influences career behavior					
22. Women put higher value on careers that are concerned with caring for others					
23. There are traditionally male subjects and female dominated subjects					
24. Masculine identity and feminine identity have an impact on career choice					

Section C: Peer Influence on Career Decision

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25. Career education comes from other students					
26. Peer influence regarding career choices is powerful					
27. My friends have influenced me to choose a career					
28. Peer advice on career guidance was helpful to me					
29. My friends validated the career that I choose					
30. Information given by friends is always reliable					
31. I choose a career that is similar to my friends					
32. I embrace the advice I get from peers that I value most					
33. My friends give comprehensive and proper advice on careers					

34. Which of your friends were most influential to the career you would like to pursue?

Classmates	
Friends at college	
Colleagues	
Home friends	

35. What kind of information about careers do you normally get from peers?

í í

í í

36. Generally which of the following was most influential to your choice of careers?

Family	
Gender	
Peers	

Thank You

APPENDIX 2: Research Schedule/Activities

Target Date	Task and “to do list”	Date Completed
1 st -15 th May, 2019	Preparation & submission of proposal Chapter 1	15 th May, 2019
16 th -25 th May, 2019	Submission of proposal Chapter 2 and 3	25 th May, 2019
26 th May-10 th June, 2019	Submission of Proposal	10 th June, 2019
11 th June-30 th July, 2019	Data Collection	30 th July, 2019
31 st July-15 th August, 2019	Data Entry Activity	15 th August, 2019
16 th -25 th August, 2019	Data Analysis	25 th August, 2019
26 th August-20 th September, 2019	Research Report Writing	20 th September, 2019
21 st August-15 th October, 2019	Report Defending & preparation of Research Black Book	15 th October, 2019
16 th -25 th October, 2019	Submission of Research Report Black Book	25 th October, 2019

APPENDIX 3: Research Report Work Plan

1 st May – 30 th October 2019							
S/N	Activity	May	June	July	August	September	October
1	Preparation & Submission of Research Proposal						
2	Field work (Data collection)						
3	Preliminary Data analysis						
4	Data analysis						
5	Report writing						
6	Defending Research Report						
7	Prepare & Submitting Research Report Black Book						

APPENDIX 4: Research Report Budget

The study is estimated to cost one million and eighty thousand (1,080,000) Tanzania shillings only. The breakdown of the budget is shown on the table below:

Item	Description	Units	Days	Unit cost	Total
Training of Research Assistant	Research assistant training	2	2	20,000	80,000
Study Tool Piloting	Pre-testing study tools for 2 days	2	2	25,000	100,000
Data Collection	Research assistant allowances	2	10	20,000	400,000
Data entry	Data cleaning, coding and transcribing using four research assistants	4	5	20,000	400,000
Stationaries	Stationary (printing, photocopying, binding)	1	1	100,000	100,000
Total					1,080,000