

Relationship between Career Personality Type and Career Indecision among College Students in Machakos County, Kenya

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Abstract

Career decision making stands out as a very significant milestone college students have to make. This has been made difficult by the rapid growth of information technology, industrial growth and job competition. Research has shown that about 50% of post-secondary learners encounter career indecision problems and has become a major issue presented by students for counselling in institutions of higher learning. The objectives of the study were to; identify the career personality types and to investigate the relationship between career personality type and career indecision. The sample size was 250 college students derived using purposive and simple random sampling methods from Machakos University, Machakos Teachers Training College and Machakos Medical Training College. Career personality type was the independent variables while the dependent variable was career indecision. The study adopted a correlational design. The main data collection tools were the RIASEC Personality Scale and the Career Indecision Scale. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation) and Inferential Statistics (t-Test, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient). Findings show that many respondents had the 'Social' and 'Conventional' personality types and a third of the sample reported career indecision. The 'Realistic' career personality type marginally significantly and negatively predicted career indecision. Study findings are expected to make available information on psychological mechanisms underlying career indecision for theory and practice.

Key Words: Career Indecision, Career Personality Type

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I. Introduction

Research on career indecision has taken a number of perspectives. One line of research focuses on the role of emotional intelligence, finding a negative and significant correlation (Santos, Wang, & Lewis, 2018). In Africa, studies have focused on individuals' socio-economic backgrounds in terms of the context they live in and financial backgrounds. For instance, Ngesi (2003) as cited in Shumba and Naong (2012) suggest that poor financial backgrounds of students from disadvantaged communities deter such students from selecting specific educational programmes and careers. Such students will avoid careers that require long periods of training and high cost. The implication is that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not have the same space to make career-related decisions as their counterparts from high socio-economic status. Among Nigerian youth (Salami, 1999, as cited in Shumba & Naong, 2012), wrong career choice making is attributed to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers, and job-related prestige. Additionally, research has reported the important role played by peers. For instance, Igbiniedion (2011) cited in Ooro (2017) found that in Nigeria, peer pressure and counsel from friends were predictive of career choices. The end result was that youth took pathways that they could not enjoy with negative impact on self and employer.

A broad body of research in the area of careers exists in Kenya. Some studies (Muraguri, 2011 as cited in Maina, 2013) indicate that personal and cultural values, family background including parents' support and encouragement and work values, career expectations and career guidance influence career choice. Other studies highlight the role of academic achievement, socio-cultural factors and economic factors (Munyingi, 2012); personal factors of age and gender, and peer influence and parental guidance (Ooro, 2017); job availability and advancement opportunities, and job security and prestige, to predict career decision making. From the foregoing, it is evident that studies in Kenya have focused entirely on career choice at the expense of the process of decision making. Additionally, scarce research in Kenya exists on individual characteristics that predict career decision making, for instance, on the role of self-efficacy in career related decision making (Ogutu, 2017; Migunde, Othuon, & Mbagaya, 2015).

Although research has been done in developed countries on the connection between these various career choice related variables, comparatively fewer studies have been carried out in developing countries among college students. Most of the research related to career choice done in Kenya have focused on factors

that influence career decision making, thereby giving little attention to underlying psychological constructs that influence the process of decision making. This is against the backdrop of student placement being done by Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) without regard to personality types and other career related information except academic achievement. For instance, a study by Maingi (2007) revealed that 63% of students who join public tertiary learning institutions in Kenya through placement by KUCCPS are hardly admitted to pursue courses of their choice thus exacerbating the problem of career indecision. A large percentage of tertiary level students are therefore struggling with settling on courses they did not apply for. It is therefore necessary that more attention be given to research on the psychological mechanisms of career indecision among college students in Kenya. This study therefore aimed at establishing the extent to which career personality types predict career indecision among college students in Machakos County

Statement of the Problem

Students in college are faced with the need to choose academic directions to guide them towards specific future career goals. Unfortunately, despite concerted efforts from families and government to place youth towards desirable career paths, many young people still encounter difficulties in career decision making, and in the transition from the world of school to that of work-related training. This leads to situations where people are employed in areas out of line with their professional training and interests. Such situations are likely to result in work-related frustration, low motivation and productivity. Career indecision is linked to a number of variables including inadequate family support, peer interactions, career-related barriers and social support perceptions, identity-related factors, career self-efficacy beliefs and decision-making skills, among others. It is also evident that some students insist on studying courses without basic foundation because of the inherent prestige attached. Such students are likely to lose interest, and more likely not to complete their training.

While a broad body of research conducted globally on career choice exists, majority of local studies broadly focus on general factors that predict career choices, and on types and prevalence of career choices. Additionally, available research focuses on career choices of people in employment and hence ignores the foundations of career choice-making at colleges and university. It is therefore important to understand the extent to which underlying psychological factors for instance, self-efficacy predict career decision making. Therefore, this study sought to understand the relationship between career personality type and career decision making among college students in Machakos County.

Purpose of the Study

The current study is aimed at establishing the extent to which career personality type and self-efficacy predict career indecision among college students in Machakos County.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1) Identify the career personality types of college students in Machakos County.
- 2) Investigate the relationship between career personality type and career indecision among college students in Machakos County.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the career personality types of college students in Machakos County?
- 2) To what extent does career personality type predict career indecision among college students in Machakos County?

II. Research Design and Methodology

The study adopted a correlational study design. This design is useful in quantitatively studying the relations between variables and describes the situation as it naturally occurs or the current status of the subjects without the manipulation of variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The outcome of interest in the study was career indecision. The independent variable in this study was career personality type. The study was carried out in three government owned colleges within Machakos town in Machakos County: Machakos University, Machakos Teachers Training College and Machakos Medical Training College. The study location was chosen because government owned colleges have a high diversity of students and programmes offered and this allowed for selection of a more representative sample.

First year college and university students from three government owned colleges in Machakos County were targeted. First year college students were targeted in this study because it is at transition to college or university level that students are expected to make decisions concerning the course to study, which has lifelong implications on their career path. Machakos University College had a population of 998 first year students while Machakos Teachers Training College and Machakos Medical Training College had populations of 421 and 303

first year students respectively. The total target population was 1722 students comprising both government and self-sponsored students in first and second semester of first year. Purposive and simple random sampling methods were used to select the colleges and the study participants respectively. The three colleges were purposively selected due to their diversity of students, having both government and self-sponsored students and proximity to each other. From each institution, 10% of the target population was selected to be part of the sample according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). Simple random sampling using a table of random numbers against students' registration numbers was used to select a representative sample from each of the three institutions. From the table of random numbers, 100, 98 and 70 participants each from Machakos University, Machakos Teachers Training College and Machakos Medical Training College respectively were sampled. The final sample size was 268 including 121 female and 147 male students.

A questionnaire was used to collect data to establish the relationship between career personality type and career indecision. The questionnaire comprised items from the RIASEC Personality Scale (Holland et al., 1997) and the Career Decision Scale (Osipow, Carney, Winer, Yanico, & Koschier, 1980). The researcher then used two research assistants to assist in distributing and collecting the questionnaires from the students. Filling the questionnaires took not more than 15 minutes. Quantitative data that was collected was cleaned and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequencies, means and standard deviations were used to describe the sample while inferential statistics were used to establish relationships and prediction between variables

III. Results and Discussion

The findings and discussions of the study were done according to the objectives

The career personality types of college students in Machakos County

The first objective of the study was to identify career personality types of college students. The RIASEC Personality Scale was used to determine students' personality types. Forty-two items on a five point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) were administered. According to the RIASEC Personality Scale, there are six personality types, that is, realistic, investigative, artistic, enterprising, social and conventional. The respective personality types form the sub-scales of the scale comprising seven items each. Means and standard deviations of the personality types were computed and presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Analysis of RIASEC Personality Scale

Personality type	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Skewness
Realistic	250	17.00	35.00	29.34	3.64	-0.77
Investigative	250	18.00	35.00	29.34	3.25	-0.61
Artistic	250	13.00	35.00	26.46	4.25	-0.41
Enterprising	250	17.00	35.00	29.21	3.81	-0.76
Social	250	15.00	35.00	30.21	3.55	-0.97
Conventional	250	19.00	35.00	30.22	3.31	-0.76

Findings from Table 4.1 show that many respondents belonged to the social and conventional personality types. The artistic personality type was rated lowest. Interestingly, across the personality types, respondents reported high scores as can be seen from the negatively skewed scores. Further, the study sought to classify personality types across respondents' sex. The mean scores of male and female respondents across the six personality types were computed and presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Analysis of RIASEC Personality Scale by Gender

Gender		Realistic	Investigative	Artistic	Enterprising	Social	Conventional
Male	M	29.29	29.36	25.99	29.20	29.92	29.99
	SD	3.64	3.29	4.42	3.85	3.44	3.39
Female	M	29.40	29.30	27.11	29.23	30.62	30.54
	SD	3.67	3.20	3.93	3.77	3.68	3.19
Total	M	29.34	29.34	26.46	29.21	30.21	30.22
	SD	3.64	3.25	4.25	3.81	3.55	3.31

The study found out female respondents reported more Realistic, Artistic, Enterprising, Social and Conventional personality types than their male counterparts.

To determine whether differences in means of personality types were significantly different between male and female respondents, t-tests were run with gender as independent variable and personality types as dependent variables. Findings were presented in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: T-test Results of Personality Types

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	SE Diff
Realistic	Equal variances assumed	0.19	0.66	-0.22	248	0.83	-0.10	0.47
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.22	223.34	0.83	-0.10	0.47
Investigative	Equal variances assumed	0.84	0.36	0.13	248	0.89	0.05	0.42
	Equal variances not assumed			0.13	227.84	0.89	0.05	0.42
Artistic	Equal variances assumed	0.77	0.38	-2.07	248	0.04	-1.12	0.54
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.11	237.90	0.04	-1.12	0.53
Enterprising	Equal variances assumed	0.03	0.86	-0.06	248	0.95	-0.03	0.49
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.06	227.08	0.95	-0.03	0.49
Social	Equal variances assumed	0.00	0.97	-1.55	248	0.12	-0.70	0.45
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.53	215.12	0.13	-0.70	0.46
Conventional	Equal variances assumed	0.55	0.46	-1.29	248	0.19	-0.55	0.42
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.31	231.61	0.19	-0.55	0.42
Career Indecision	Equal variances assumed	0.16	0.69	0.23	248	0.82	0.19	0.85
	Equal variances not assumed			0.23	216.94	0.82	0.19	0.86

Findings from Table 4.3 indicate significant differences between male and female respondents in the 'Artistic' personality type, $t(248) = -2.07, p = 0.04$. Findings therefore indicate that female respondents ($M = 27.11, SD = 3.3$) were significantly different from their male counterparts ($M = 25.99, SD = 4.42$). Descriptive findings provide evidence that many respondents belonged to the social and conventional personality types while the lowest career personality type was the 'Artistic'. Additionally, female respondents reported more Realistic, Artistic, Enterprising, Social and Conventional personality types than their male counterparts. Inferential analysis confirmed significant sex differences in 'Artistic' career personality type with more female than male respondents reporting.

Career Personality Type and Career Indecision

The second objective was to determine the relationship between Career Personality Type and Career Indecision. Career indecision was measured using the Career Indecision Scale on a four-point likert scale ranging from 'only slightly like me (1) to 'exactly like me' (5). Higher scores indicate high career indecision. The descriptive findings were presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Analysis of Career Indecision Scale

Mean	SD	Career Indecision			
		Low Career Indecision		High Career Indecision	
		f	%	f	%
31.37	6.61	166	66.4	84	33.6

Table 4.4 shows that a third of the sample reported high career indecision. To find out whether there was a significant correlation between personality types and career indecision, Pearson Product-moment correlation coefficient matrix was computed. Results show that only the 'Realistic' personality type significantly and negatively correlated with career indecision, $r = -0.14, n = 250, p = 0.02$ at the 0.05 level of significance. Further, the study sought to find out the extent to which career personality type predicts career indecision. Simple linear regression analysis was done and the overall equation was insignificant, $F(6, 243) = 1.34, p = 0.239$. An examination of the beta weights did not show any positive prediction. This was presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Coefficients of Personality Types

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	37.56	4.36		8.61	0.000
	Realistic	-0.36	0.19	-0.19	-1.89	0.06
	Investigative	-0.15	0.18	-0.08	-0.84	0.40
	Artistic	-0.02	0.12	-0.01	-0.17	0.87
	Enterprising	-0.06	0.17	-0.04	-0.36	0.72
	Social	0.23	0.17	0.12	1.34	0.18
	Conventional	0.11	0.21	0.05	0.50	0.61

Findings from Table 4.5 present very important perspectives to the relationship between personality types and career indecision. Though statistically insignificant, it is evident that 'Social' and 'Conventional' personality types are more likely to predict career indecision. 'Realistic', 'Investigative', 'Artistic' and 'Enterprising' personality types negatively but insignificantly predict career indecision and hence are important in career decisions. Findings show that the 'Realistic' personality type marginally significantly and negatively correlated with career indecision. This implies that an increase in the 'Realistic' career approach resulted in reduced career indecision. Though the prediction model was insignificant, evidence was found to conclude that respondents who have the 'Social' and 'Conventional' career personality types are more likely to be undecided in their choices. Findings of this study are in line with previous studies in the area. For instance, Nauta (2007) found a relationship between Holland's typology and one facet of career decision making, that is, exploration. The study found that realistic, artistic, and conventional interests were positively associated with self-exploration; while investigative and enterprising career personality types were negatively associated with such exploration.

IV. Conclusion

Female students have more realistic, artistic, enterprising, social and conventional personality types than their male counterparts. 'Social' and 'Conventional' personality types are more likely to predict career indecision. 'Realistic', 'Investigative', 'Artistic' and 'Enterprising' personality types negatively but insignificantly predict career indecision and hence are important in career decisions.

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