



Investigating Factors Influencing Career Choice among Students in Girls' Senior High School in the Kumasi Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the complex challenge of career decision-making in the 21st century, exacerbated by technological advancement and heightened job competition. Focusing specifically on female students within the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana, the study aimed to identify the key factors influencing the career choice process among final-year students in girls' Senior High Schools (SHS). Employing a mixed-methods paradigm, the research utilized simple random sampling to select 192 participants from three girls' SHS. Quantitative data were analyzed using one-way ANOVA, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. The investigation revealed four primary factors significantly shaping career decisions: parental influence, student personality, school guidance facilities, and peer group pressure. Findings underscored that informed parental guidance, achieved through adequate career counselling for parents themselves, is crucial for enabling wise career advice to their children. Furthermore, personalized career guidance and counselling aligned with individual personality traits were found to be essential for empowering girls to make intelligent career choices. The accessibility and utilization of robust school-based career and vocational guidance services were also identified as critical for fostering informed decisions. The study concludes that effective career decision-making for female students necessitates multi-faceted support systems. Key recommendations include encouraging parents to actively discuss careers and express confidence in their daughters' abilities. Educational authorities (Government, Ghana Education Service-GES, Schools) are urged to develop comprehensive programs that assist both parents and female youth in exploring diverse, including emerging and non-traditional, career paths. The findings highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions within the educational ecosystem to empower young women in navigating the complexities of career choice.

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INTRODUCTION

Choosing a career path is a very important decision in the lives of girls in high school, as it determines what profession they will pursue in the future. The career path chosen by students affects them throughout their entire lives. Gelici-Zeko et.al. state in their research that parents, teachers, society and government recognize the need for proper career guidance and development.¹ The choices of programs

¹ M. M. Gelici-Zeko et al., "Studying the Influence of Packaging Design on Consumer Perceptions (of Dairy Products) Using Categorizing and Perceptual Mapping," *Packaging Technology and Science* 26, no. 4 (2013): 215–28.

at the high school level determine the type of program to pursue at the university level, and this choice leads to the career path of students.

Many students have limited assistance in deciding on a career choice in senior high school. Their choices are frequently swayed by media portrayals, peer influences, and a lack of clarity about their core passions, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. High School Students may have a level of uncertainty about where to get help on how to choose a career, since a career is a lifelong plan. Students at this level must be assisted to enable them to have a clear-cut plan, as it will be difficult for them at their age to see things about themselves. Selecting a career path is still a significant challenge for high school students in Ghana and worldwide at large. Regardless of age, color, race and ethnicity, determining one's career path and aspirations is a critical issue for all. Nurul S. B. N. mentioned in his research that in rapidly and fast-changing societies, wage employment is unlikely to be available on a scale sufficient to absorb more than a small fraction of the young people when they do arrive at the labor market.²

Servaas et.al described a career as a job or profession for which one is trained and which one intends to follow the whole of one's life.³ It is the sequence of work-related experiences and attitudes that occur over the span of the person's working life.⁴ Buku and Taylor define a career as a profession, occupation or employment by means of which a person regularly earns his or her living, especially one for which he or she has had a period of training in an institution or through apprenticeship.⁵ Fhloinn and Fitzmaurice mentioned that a career is a chosen pursuit.⁶ It is life's work and success in one progression. It is the sequence of major positions occupied by a person through his or her lifetime.⁷

Choosing a career is one of the most critical decisions female students will encounter in their educational pursuits, as it determines their future trajectory. This choice carries lifelong consequences, influencing not only their professional journey but also defining their identity and how they navigate their roles in society. Currently, the issue of girls' and women's education in Africa has drawn significant international attention. Most girls face certain barriers to accessing formal education, and even when granted access, quite a substantial number eventually withdraw from school due to various factors.

Parental support is a significant predictor of career commitment for women and motivation to master small tasks required for long-range goals for both men and women.⁸ Finally, career decision-making skills have been linked to early childhood experiences, family attitudes and practices regarding careers, and role modeling by mothers and fathers.⁹

There is legislation in existence in Ghana which makes provisions for equal opportunity to education at all levels and uniform conditions of service for both males and females. Despite all these provisions, women's subordinate position in society has largely remained unchanged. This situation could be traced to psychological, cultural and socio-economic factors which tend to affect females adversely in their career ambitions.

Apambilla et.al. described the present graduate unemployment because of inappropriate decision-making regarding career choices among graduates during senior high education.¹⁰

² Lutvia Nurul Kafi and Agwin Degaf, "Euphemism and Dysphemism Strategies in Donald Trump's Speech at SOTU 2020," *International Journal of Humanity Studies* 4, no. 2 (2021): 194–207.

³ Servaas Van der Berg et al., "The Impact of the Introduction of Grade R on Learning Outcomes," *University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch*, 2013.

⁴ Nicolas Vernet and Anne Coste, "Garden Cities of the 21st Century: A Sustainable Path to Suburban Reform," *Urban Planning* 2, no. 4 (December 29, 2017): 181–96, <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v2i4.1104>.

⁵ D. Buku and A.I. Taylor, *Basics of Guidance and Counseling* (Winneba: Department of Psychology and Education, University of Education, Winneba, 2006).

⁶ Eabhnat Ní Fhloinn and Olivia Fitzmaurice, "Any Advice? Lessons Learned by Mathematics Lecturers for Emergency Remote Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic," in *Takeaways from Teaching through a Pandemic* (Routledge, 2024), 8–14.

⁷ Olusegun Oladele Jegede, "Artificial Intelligence and English Language Learning: Exploring the Roles of AI-Driven Tools in Personalizing Learning and Providing Instant Feedback," *Universal Library of Languages and Literatures* 1, no. 2 (2024).

⁸ Helen S Farmer, "Model of Career and Achievement Motivation for Women and Men.," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 32, no. 3 (1985): 363.

⁹ Vicki L. Plano Clark et al., "Mixed Methods Approaches in Family Science Research," *Journal of Family Issues* 29, no. 11 (November 1, 2008): 1543–66, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X08318251>.

¹⁰ Prince Awini Apambilla et al., "Exploring the Key Determinants of Career Choice among Senior High School Students in the Pru West District, Ghana," *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research* 6, no. 2 (2024): 276–85.

Interestingly, the Ghana education development literature is devoid of any research study, empirical or analytical, that assesses the influencing factors of career choice among females in girls' senior high schools in Ghana. This study, therefore, seeks to fill such a vacuum by assessing the influencing factors of career choice among female students in girls' senior high schools in Ghana.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Family/Parents-related Factors and Students' Career Choices

Families and parents play a significant role in the professional readiness, aspirations and career goal development of their children. With parents' approval or support, students are not often reluctant to explore diverse career possibilities. Shumba and Naong state that adolescents' own aspirations are influenced by their parents' aspirations or expectations for them.¹¹

Parents play diverse roles in shaping their children's awareness of various professions and career paths, as well as the expectations tied to them, whether through conscious guidance or unintentional influence. The information provided by the family provides students with some form of guidance and this influences the choices they make.

Parental influence on the career path of students differs across various cultures and social settings. Studies such as Dillard and Campbell have shown that parental influence on African children's career choice may be stronger than that of American children's choice of career.¹²

Student Personality Related Factor and Students' Career Choice

Self-exploration helps students to assess various personal attributes relevant to career decision-making, including values, interests, personality traits, skills, abilities, lifestyle preferences, and areas of weakness. Students' perceptions of themselves in roles where personality plays a pivotal role may significantly shape their career choices.

Personality is necessary in making the right career choice, and it is important for students to have a better understanding of themselves and their personality. Students' personalities must be of a self-motivated type, and students must investigate career possibilities as early as possible and not procrastinate until they are compelled to decide.

Guidance Facility and Students' Career Choice

Gibson and Mitchell postulate that career counselling, career assessment, and resource person, consultant and linkage agent are the roles of school counsellors in students' career development.¹³ Many students have problems with their choices of programs in high school and are not certain about their prospects.¹⁴

Career guidance services are accessible across diverse settings, including educational institutions like schools, universities, and training centers, as well as government employment offices, workplaces, nonprofit or community organizations, and private companies. These services can be delivered through individual sessions or group workshops, either in person or remotely via helplines, online platforms, or digital tools. They encompass a range of resources such as career information (provided in print, digital formats, or other media), tools for self-assessment and evaluation, personalized counseling, and educational programs designed to build skills in self-awareness, opportunity recognition, and career planning. Additional offerings may include trial experiences to test career paths, job-search assistance, and support for transitions between roles or industries.

¹¹ Almon Shumba and Matsidiso Naong, "Factors Influencing Students' Career Choice and Aspirations in South Africa," *Journal of Social Sciences* 33, no. 2 (2012): 169–78.

¹² John M. Dillard and N. Jo Campbell, "Influences of Puerto Rican, Black, and Anglo Parents' Career Behavior on Their Adolescent Children's Career Development," *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 1981. Lee S Shulman, "Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching," *Educational Researcher* 15, no. 2 (1986): 4–14.

¹³ Robert L. Gibson and Marianne H. Mitchell, *Introduction to Counseling and Guidance Textbook* (Prentice Hall College Div, 1995).

¹⁴ Daniel Kwasi Gameli Avugla, "Factors Influencing Career Choice among the Senior High School Students in the South Tongu District of Volta Region, Ghana," *Unpublished Thesis, University of Education*, 2011.

Peer Group Influence and Students' Career Choice

A peer group is a social and primary community made of students with common traits like the same age, background, and social standing. These students exert a significant influence on one's actions and beliefs. Within peer groups, hierarchies exist alongside distinct behavioral dynamics. They establish behavioral norms through explicit and implicit rules, outlining expected conduct and shared values that all members are encouraged to follow." Peer group influence in career choice is inevitable. A young person may ask another friend to choose a program or course that she is pursuing so that both can end up in the same career or job in the future.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This present study is premised on John Holland's Vocational Personality Theory, the Self-concept Theory of Career Development, Anne Roe's Need Theory, Socio-cultural Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory.

John Holland's Vocational Personality Theory

In a study by Avugla, John Holland's theory shows that there is a match between an individual's career choice and his or her personality and numerous variables that form their background.¹⁵ According to this theory, once individuals find a career that fits their personality, they are more likely to enjoy that career and to stay in a job for a longer period than individuals whose work does not suit their personality. He groups individuals into six basic personality types.

Holland's theory rests on four assumptions, as cited in Avugla et al.,

1. In our culture, people can be categorized as one of the following: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional.
2. There are six medaled environments: Realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.
3. People search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values and take on agreeable problems and roles.
4. Behavior is determined by an interaction between personality and environment.¹⁶

Self-concept Theory of Career Development

The theory of self-concept has received much attention in parts of the world. Super suggested that career choice is essentially a process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept.¹⁷ Super indicated that self-concept is a product of complex interactions among a number of factors, including physical and mental growth, personal experiences, and environmental characteristics and stimulation.¹⁸ In Saint Martin's University Center for Career and Calling, it states that people choose occupations that permit them to express their self-concepts. Work satisfaction is related to the degree to which they have been able to implement their self-concepts.

Savickas emphasized that Molefe, the process of career construction essentially involves developing and implementing vocational goals, self-concept should emerge in late adolescence to serve as a guide to career choice and adjustment.¹⁹ The self-concept theory has many implications for career counselling of Senior High School Students. To help make effective career choices for students, the self-concept theory outlines the following: As outlined in the Career counseling Centre by Weebly, the career development stage and set goals for mastery of the tasks are unique to each stage.

¹⁵ Avugla, "Factors Influencing Career Choice among the Senior High School Students in the South Tongu District of Volta Region, Ghana."

¹⁶ Avugla, "Factors Influencing Career Choice among the Senior High School Students in the South Tongu District of Volta Region, Ghana."

¹⁷ Donald E Super, "The Natural History of a Study of Lives and of Vocations," *Perspectives on Education* 2, no. 3 (1969): 13–22.

¹⁸ Super, "The Natural History of a Study of Lives and of Vocations."

¹⁹ Mark L. Savickas, "Reinvigorating the Study of Careers," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 61, no. 3 (December 2002): 381–85, <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2002.1880>.

1. Help students clarify self-concept because any task that enhances self-knowledge will increase vocational maturity. Then help them relate their self-knowledge to occupational information.
2. Expose students to a wider range of careers because occupational options narrow over time, consider lifestyle implications and consider the vocational advancement of subjects studied in school.
3. Direct work experience is vital. Try one role in the real world of work. Supers' development view of career development in the context of the self allows for changes over time. This is very appropriate in the 21st-century workplace.²⁰

Anne Roe's Personality/Need Theory posits that career choice is based on childhood orientation or experience at home to satisfy needs, and people choose an occupation that satisfies important needs.²¹ This theory attempts to understand, make meaning of and utilize individual motives, purposes and drives to support career development, she believes can satisfy needs in different ways, hence classifications of occupation into eight groups. According to Avugla et. al, everyone is born with certain physiological predispositions and psychological and physical factors which interact with the home environmental condition.²²

Socio-cultural Theory of Career Development

Socio-cultural theory of career development posits that there is a strong inter-relationship of sociological and cultural factors in occupational choice and development. Individual characteristics responsible for choice are biologically determined but socially and culturally conditioned through family influences, values, attitudes, place of birth, social positions and relations, environmental and educational experiences, sex-role characteristics, etc.²³ Blau theorized that career choices are greatly influenced by the reality of the occupational opportunity structure that is part of the macro-system, of which social and cultural systems are indispensable parts.²⁴ The theory posits that socio-cultural factors play a significant role in shaping individuals' career trajectories, ambitions, and decision-making. People often select professions that they believe are aligned with fulfilling specific societal or cultural expectations.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

The Social Cognitive Career Theory proposes that career choice behavior is shaped by variables, among which are outcome expectations, career interests and career self-efficacy, which are interrelated, with the latter serving as a mediating factor between an individual's background, interests, and their career expectations.²⁵ Career self-efficacy is shaped by a combination of individual factors, such as inherent predispositions, gender, and race/ethnicity and contextual factors, including family socioeconomic background and experiential learning opportunities. This mediating mechanism underscores how self-efficacy bridges personal and environmental influences on shaping career-related aspirations.²⁶

The theory emphasizes the interactive influence of contextual factors and a person's cognitive variables on individual career development. In the interactive influence, the social cognitive career

²⁰ Louis A. Busacca and Mark C. Rehfluss, *Postmodern Career Counseling: A Handbook of Culture, Context, and Cases* (John Wiley & Sons, 2016).

²¹ Anne Roe, "The Psychology of Occupations. New York: John Wiley & Sons," *Inc., RsinH*, 1956.

²² Avugla, "Factors Influencing Career Choice among the Senior High School Students in the South Tongu District of Volta Region, Ghana."

²³ Peter M Blau et al., "Occupational Choice: A Conceptual Framework," *ILR Review* 9, no. 4 (1956): 531–43.

²⁴ Gary Blau, "Testing the Effect of Level and Importance of Pay Referents on Pay Level Satisfaction," *Human Relations* 47, no. 10 (1994): 1251–68.

²⁵ Robert W Lent, Steven D Brown, and Gail Hackett, "Toward a Unifying Social Cognitive Theory of Career and Academic Interest, Choice, and Performance," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 45, no. 1 (1994): 79–122; Dorcas Wangari Wachira, "Relationship between Parental Variables and Career Choices among Students in Mixed Day Secondary Schools in Kinangop Sub-County; Nyandarua County, Kenya," *Nyandarua County, Kenya*, 2018.

²⁶ Lent, Brown, and Hackett, "Toward a Unifying Social Cognitive Theory of Career and Academic Interest, Choice, and Performance."

development model, Lent et.al., provide that one's background and/or contextual factors would impact the individual's learning outcomes and self-efficacy.²⁷

The theory posits that the choice of content goals and action goals is impacted by self-esteem and results. The theory explains that if an individual is interested in a particular career, that career will eventually become a goal, and this becomes the individual's preferred career path.

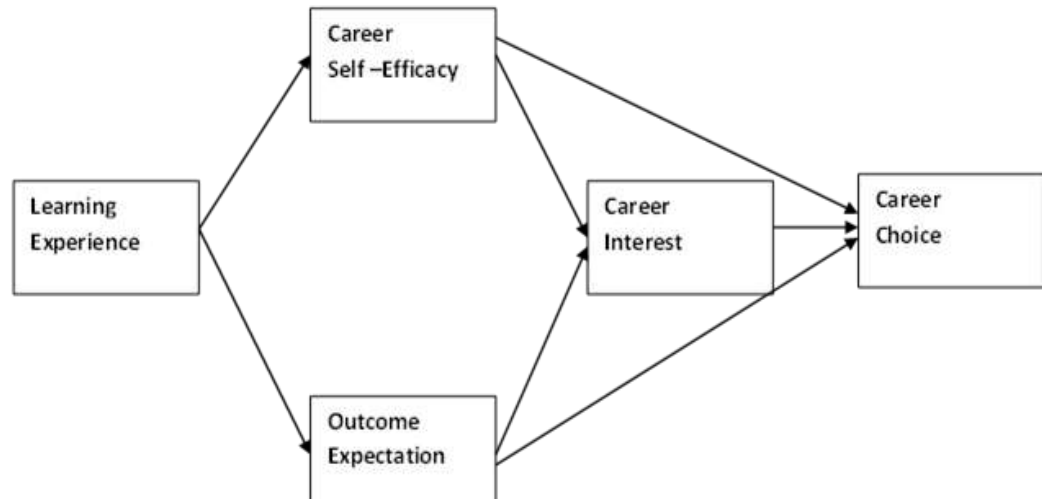


Figure 1: Conceptual model adapted
Source: Conceptual model adapted from SCCT.²⁸

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Avugla said that certain families are noted for a particular job because they value that job and assume it may give them the respect they need in society.²⁹ The research by Amedzor showed that parental, personality, school guidance and peer influence.³⁰ Parent-related factors are very important or significant in the choices students make. Parents provide the necessities for students and see them through education or training to achieve their aspirations. The work of Ferry, cited in Avugla, revealed that the cultural and social context of family and community was found to be instrumental in how youth learn about careers and was influential in the choice process.³¹

One's personality is a contributing factor affecting work. In a broader sense, personality is a fundamental and essential feature of a person and not associations. Career selection demands that the personality of the individual be considered. One's personality is a very important element in the process of choosing a career because one's job is in variance with one's personality; the individual will find job satisfaction rather difficult.

Peers who are close friends of high school students also influence them in making their career choices. Students tend to share common features: age, sex, social level, academic level, values and beliefs and are seen as co-equals. The contradiction between the education provided in general and vocational institutions and the actual skills, competencies, and knowledge demanded by the workforce has grown more pronounced. When establishing objectives and making informed choices, certain personal traits, particularly motivation and mindset, play a pivotal role. Additionally, high school

²⁷ Lent, Brown, and Hackett, "Toward a Unifying Social Cognitive Theory of Career and Academic Interest, Choice, and Performance."

²⁸ Mei Tang, Wei Pan, and Mark D Newmeyer, "Factors Influencing High School Students' Career Aspirations," *Professional School Counseling* 11, no. 5 (2008): 2156759X0801100502.

²⁹ Avugla, "Factors Influencing Career Choice among the Senior High School Students in the South Tongu District of Volta Region, Ghana."

³⁰ B. Amedzor, "Career Guidance Needs of JSS 2 Pupils in Ho Township Basic Schools," *Winneba: The University of Education (Unpublished B. Ed. Long Essay)*, 2003.

³¹ Avugla, "Factors Influencing Career Choice among the Senior High School Students in the South Tongu District of Volta Region, Ghana."

students may lack accessible information about diverse career opportunities available, leaving them without a clear understanding of their options prior to making decisions.

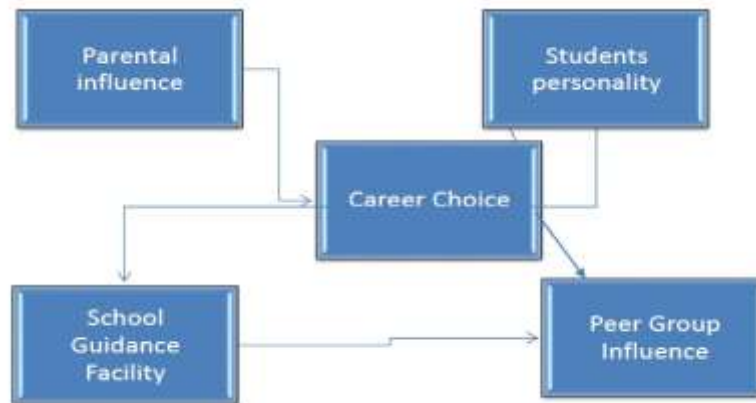


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework, Source: Manu Y. A, 2024

METHODOLOGY

The author used a descriptive research design and used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies (mixed method). Qualitative findings were used to support the quantitative findings. Female final year students in girls’ senior high schools in the Kumasi Metropolis were the target population. The author chose this group of students since at this adolescent stage, students might be having career thoughts, and after completing school, students may end up choosing their career and not furthering their education, whereas others may further acquire a tertiary education. These students are in a better position to respond adequately to the questionnaire.

The author’s accessible population was selected from final-year students from Kumasi Girls Senior High School, Kumasi Wesley Girls Senior High School and Yaa Asantewaa Girls Senior High School. The population of final year students for all the selected schools was 2,137, made up of the 957 final year students in Kumasi Girls Senior High School, 880 final year students in Yaa Asantewaa Senior High School and 300 final year students in Kumasi Wesley Girls Senior High School.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The convenience and stratified sampling techniques were used. The study employed Purposive sampling techniques to select three public girls’ senior high schools in the Kumasi Metropolis. The selected schools were Kumasi Girls’, Yaa Asantewaa Girls and Kumasi Wesley Girls Senior High School. The study selected these public Girls’ schools based on proximity and the familiarity of the schools to the researcher.

Moreover, within each high school, the study is selected from 3-year students who were stratified into programs. The author further stratified 96 respondents according to their program’s population in each institution. The researcher calculated the percentage of the population in each institution to determine the sample size for the students in each institution.

Table 1: Sample size of final year students’ respondents

Program	Total Number of Students According to program
General Arts	52
Business Management	32
Home Economics	34
General Science	52
Visual Arts	32
Total	192

Source: Field data, 2025

The respondents were randomly selected from each group (student population) in each school according to programs from each school. The researcher randomly selected 49 General Science students, 44 Business Management students, 41 Home Economics students, 26 General Science students, and 32 Visual Art final year students from Kumasi Girls respectively. In all, 192 final year students were selected.

Data Collection Instruments

The author employed the use of structured questionnaires and interviews. The structured questionnaire for the students was divided into five parts.

1. Students' characteristics (personal data)
2. Parental Factors influencing students' career choices
3. Personality Factors influencing students' career choice
4. School Guidance Facility influencing students' career choices
5. Peer Group influence and students' career choice

It was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire of 1 (**strongly agree**), 2 (**agree**), 3 (**disagree**), 4 (**strongly disagree**)

Analysis of Data

The author analyzed the collected data quantitatively and qualitatively using descriptive statistics on SPSS. ANOVA was used to analyze research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4, and the quantitative data was analyzed in themes and direct quotations

Ethical Considerations

Permission for the administration of the questionnaire in the selected schools was obtained from the heads of the selected schools and other relevant persons and authorities, such as assistant heads of academic, guidance and counselling coordinators. The study, moreover, sought the consent of the target group in each school. The students and the guidance and counselling coordinators were informed of the purpose of the study and the nature of their participation. The participants were assured of privacy and confidentiality. Questionnaires were neatly and confidentially handled by the researcher, before, during and after being filled in by the respondents.

Plagiarism and paraphrasing have attracted the attention of scholars in recent times. Plagiarism involves taking undeserved credit for something that another professional has written and damages both the author and his or her profession.³² Paraphrasing involves close copying of another writer's words, one-to-one correspondence in the expression of ideas, and structural similarities in writing.³³ In this study, all sources of materials used were acknowledged, and all the actual words, ideas or structures used by the researcher were duly acknowledged.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Frequency distribution tables with percentages and ANOVA were used as an analytical tool based on a Likert scale constructed. The presentations of results were done in the order in which the research questions were presented.

Response Rate

Out of a total of 200 questionnaires distributed, 192 were retrieved, representing a response rate of about 98%. This high response rate was because of respondents being aware of the benefits of the research.

³² M. D. Gall, J. P. Gall, and W. R. Ball, *Educational Research: An Introduction* (Boston : Pearson Education Inc., 2007).

³³ Gall, Gall, and Ball, *Educational Research: An Introduction*.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**Table 2: Distribution of Sampled Institutions in the Study**

Name of School	Frequency	Percentage
Kumasi Wesley Girls	26	13.5
Yaa Asantewaa Girls	80	41.7
Kumasi Girls	86	44.8
Total	192	100

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 3 shows that out of the 192 respondents, 86 (44.8%) were from Kumasi Girls Senior High School, 80 (41.7%) were from Yaa Asantewaa Girls, whilst the remaining 26 (13.5%) were from Kumasi Wesley Girls Senior High School. The reason for the disparity in the distribution of respondents from the three senior high schools is due to the student populations; Kumasi has a higher population, hence the highest number of respondents, followed by Yaa Asantewaa Girls and then Kumasi Wesley Girls, all in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Table 3: Distribution of Age of Respondents

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
16-20	190	99.0
21-25	2	1.0
Total	192	100

Source: field data (2025)

The researcher deemed it appropriate to find out from the respondents their various ages. This, to a greater extent, could inform the researcher as to whether their career decisions were influenced by the ages of the respondents in any way.

From the age range point of view, Table 4 reveals that most respondents were between the ages of 16 and 20 years. One hundred and ninety respondents, 190 (99%), were between the ages of 16-20 years, whilst the remaining 2 (1%) were between the ages of 21-25 years. It can be inferred that most of the respondents were teenagers, considering the age bracket they belong to. This makes the research very relevant because it was a study that aimed to find out the influencing factors of career choice among female students, who are adolescents, in girls' senior high schools.

Table 4: Distribution of Program of Study

Program	Frequency	Percent
Business	32	16.7
General arts	52	27.1
General science	42	21.9
Home economics	34	17.7
Visual arts	32	16.7
Total	192	100

Source: Field data (2025)

It was relevant to know the program each respondent was studying. It was revealed that each respondent either read business, general arts, general science, home economics or visual arts. General arts had the most students (52=27.1) followed by general science (42=21.9%), then home economics (34 = 17.7%), visual arts (32=16.7%) and then business (32=16.7%). These are the programs offered in the selected schools in the study; findings of the study can be generalized for all female senior high schools in the metropolis and region.

Table 5: Distribution of Parental Description

	Frequency	Percent
Father	22	11.5
Mother	38	19.8
Both	98	51.0
Guardian	34	17.7
Total	192	100

Source: Field data (2025)

Since the research was designed to find out the influencing factors of career choices of females in girls' senior high schools, there was a need to find out whether they were staying with only the father, mother, both parents or a guardian. Table 5 shows the responses of students indicating with whom they stay. Ninety-eight (51%) mentioned that they were staying with both parents; 38 (19.8%) indicated that they were staying with their mother; 34 (17.7%) indicated that they were staying with their guardian, whilst 22 (11.5%) said that they were staying with their father.

Table 6: Mothers' Education Level

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Primary/ Basic	32	16.7
Secondary	44	22.9
Tertiary	58	30.2
Does not stay with the mother	58	30.2
Total	192	100

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 6 presents the educational level of the mothers of respondents who are in the study. From the sample, 58 (30.2%) indicated that the highest educational attainment of their mothers was tertiary education; 44 (22.9%) mentioned secondary education, and the remaining 32 (16.7%) indicated primary/basic education. It can therefore be concluded here that mothers of most respondents have had a reasonable level of education, and this could influence the role they play with respect to the choice of career for their wards. Fifty-eight, representing 30.2% of respondents, indicated that they were not staying with their mother and were therefore not required to provide the educational levels of their mothers.

Table 7: Distribution of Fathers' Educational Level

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Primary/ Basic	22	11.5
Secondary	26	13.5
Tertiary	76	39.6
Does not stay with the father	68	35.4
Total	192	100

Source: Field data (2025)

Father's education was also very important with respect to fathers' influence on the career choices of their daughters. It was therefore equally important to find out the educational background of the fathers of the respondents. It was revealed that most of the fathers had been educated up to tertiary level (39.6%), followed by 26 (13.5%) being secondary school leavers and then 22 (11.5%), indicating that their highest level of education was primary/basic. Those who did not stay with their father were 68 (35.4%).

Table 8: Guardians' Educational Level

	Frequency	Percent
Primary/Basic	18	9.4
Secondary	4	2.1
Tertiary	14	7.3
Living with parents	156	81.2
Total	192	100

Source: Field data (2025)

For those who were staying with their guardians, it was revealed that most of the guardians were primary/basic school certificate holders. Some also indicated that their guardians were holders of a secondary school certificate, 14 (7.3%) mentioned that their guardians were holders of a tertiary school qualification. 156 (81.1%) students were living with either their mother or father or both parents, hence did not need to provide any information on guardian education.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference between parental influence and the career choice of students.

To test the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference between parental influence and the career choice of students, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. The result is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: ANOVA Test on Parental Influence on Students' Career Choice

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	114.28	22	5.19	5.89	.000
Within Groups	149.03	169	.88		
Total	263.26				
P < 0.05 (Significant result)					

The table shows that in the ANOVA test $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the alternate hypothesis accepted, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between parental influence and career choice. It could be concluded that parental influence is a contributing factor that accounts for decisions made by female students in choosing a career.

Hypothesis two

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference between students' personality influence and career choice of students.

Table 10 represents a one-way between-groups ANOVA that was carried out to determine if there are significant differences in the means, and the results are presented in the Table.

Table 11: ANOVA Test of Personality Influence Career Influence

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	78.38	11	7.13	6.94	.000
Within Groups	184.88	180	1.03		
Total	263.26	191			

P < 0.05 (Significant result)

The table shows that in the ANOVA test $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the alternative hypotheses accepted, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between personality influence and career choice. So, it could be concluded that personality type is a factor that accounts for decisions made by female students in choosing a career.

Hypothesis Three

H₀; There is no statistically significant difference between school guidance influence and the career choice of students.

Table 12: A one-way between-groups ANOVA was carried out to find out whether there are significant differences in the means, and the results are presented in Table 15

Table 12: ANOVA report on school guidance and influence on the career of students

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	117.492	17	6.911	8.250	.000
Within Groups	145.765	174	0.838		
Total	263.257	191			

P < 0.05 (Significant result)

The table shows that in the ANOVA test $p > 0.05$. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the alternate hypothesis accepted, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between school guidance influence and career choice. So, it could be concluded that the school guidance facility is a factor that accounts for the decision made by female students in their career choice.

Hypothesis four:

H₀; There is no statistically significant difference between peer group influence and the career choice of students.

Table 16 represents a one-way between-groups ANOVA that was carried out to find out whether there are significant differences in the means, and the results are presented in Table 17

Table 16: ANOVA report on peer influence and career choice of students

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	90.330	14	6.452	6.604	.000
Within Groups	172.297	177	0.977		
Total	263.257	191			

P < 0.05 (Significant result)

The table shows that in the ANOVA test $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the alternate hypothesis accepted, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between peer group influence and career choice. So, it could be concluded that peer group is a factor that accounts for the decision made by female students in the choice of career.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Research Question One: How do parents/family influence the career choice of their female wards?

Six students were randomly picked (two students from each school) and interviewed on how and whether their parents influenced them in choosing a career path.

Theme of Parental Influence

The theme of parental influence emerged from the interviews conducted. Most of the respondents mentioned that the occupation of their parents/family and their expectations influenced their choice of career. This is where the SCCT is relevant, that parental expectations and for that matter, influence the career choice students make.³⁴

“My father is an engineer, and he wants me to work at his workplace, so I am doing science so I can work in his company one day”. [Respondent A]

Another Respondent B & C also indicated that:

“My father wants me to be a lawyer, and I want to be a good lawyer like him” [Respondent B]

Another also indicated that.

“Mum decided for me. She is a doctor, and she wants me to be a doctor, so I will be taking care of her” [Respondent C]

The various comments show that the occupation and expectation of the parents/family of the students influence their career paths; therefore, most students agreed that parents had a major role in choosing their careers.

Research Question Two: What were the personality factors that influenced the career choice of girls?

Theme of Personality Influence

The theme of personality and outlook emerged from the interviews conducted. Most respondents indicated that they considered their personality in choosing a career.

A respondent said

“I love to debate, and lawyers argue a lot, so I want to be a lawyer” [Respondent B]

³⁴ Tang, Pan, and Newmeyer, “Factors Influencing High School Students’ Career Aspirations.”

In confirmation with this respondent, another respondent indicated that:

"I want to be a soldier because I am strong and bold, so I can be a soldier" [Respondent A]

Also, a respondent revealed that she thinks she is shy, so she prefers jobs that will not expose her to a lot of people.

"I am an introvert, I want to work in an office so I don't meet a lot of people or where they will ask me to talk a lot" [Respondent C]

The responses and the theme of personality consideration that emerged from the responses and remarks of the student are in line with Holland's personality and job environment. Holland's theory validates the student's perspective by demonstrating that personality is the bedrock of vocational behavior. When students align their traits (creativity in Artistic types) with fitting environments (design careers), they mirror Holland's prediction of enhanced fulfillment. (Holland's typology, 1959).

Research Question Three: How does school guidance influence career choice among girls?

Theme of the School Guidance Facility

The theme of the school Guidance Facility emerged from the interviews conducted in line with the research question posed. Most of the participants indicated that constant engagement in the Guidance Facility also gave them career awareness to help them make their career decisions. This is evidence in their responses during the interview.

"I have been going to the counselling center to read articles on law and how to become a lawyer, and it is very interesting" [Respondent D]

Another respondent said,

"Yes, there was a time the counsellor organized a seminar, and some people came to talk to us about the aviation industry and the prestige attached to it, especially for a pilot, so I want to be a pilot." [Respondent B]

In reconciling with respondents B and D responses with another respondent C, who said:

"The school counsellor puts on the notice board various bulletins and newsletters which talk about different careers and the schools which offer those programs..." [Respondents C]

The three interviewees said the same thing, which borders on the theme of having the benefit of a school guidance facility.

Research Question Four: How does peer group contribute to the choice of career among girls?

Theme of Peer Influence

The theme of peer influence emerged from the interviews conducted with respect to the research question on peer influence. Most of the participants indicated that the ability to prove their strengths to their peers made them happy. This was because of their sharing ideas on careers and their closeness to friends with whom they share so many similarities. They also wanted to be part of the group.

"I talk a lot, and my friends always tell me I can be a good lawyer, so they call me a lawyer" [Respondent E]

Another reported that:

"But I believe I can be a counsellor because my friends say I am calm and patient, so people come to me to share their problems with me, and I listen to them and give them advice". [Respondent C]

In confirmation with respondents B and C

“Hmm, yes, my friends tell me I am beautiful, and also I walk like I am modelling, so I started doing photoshoots, and gradually I have become interested in modelling”. [Respondent F]

The theme of peer influence that emerged from the interviews is in line with the findings of Super on peer influence on career choice.³⁵ Both posited that peers are embedded in the career development ecosystem, acting as informants, validators, and social regulators. This confirms their philosophy that empirically demonstrating that peer influence operates through normative conformity, information exchange, and emotional validation. These mechanisms can either facilitate informed decisions or exacerbate career mismatches, highlighting the need for structured career guidance to mediate peer impact.

DISCUSSION

From the findings above, parents/family do influence students' career choices. Most students go into a career direction of what their parents/family wants them to be in future, though some may not be in line with their own personal dreams. The result from the quantitative analysis shows parental influence on career choice. This confirms the statement by Grimstad and Way, who reported one mother's message to her daughter on the theme of becoming self-sufficient: You must have a way to take care of your family. And she (her mother) says you cannot depend on a man. And she said you must think about number one, and that's you. And she said: How are you going to make a living? How are you going to support your children if you don't have some kind of training?³⁶

The parental influence on students' career paths differs by culture and social setting. So, the Socio-Cultural theory is relevant.³⁷ Students' personalities also have an influence on their career choices. The results of the interview made it obvious and confirmed the results on the questionnaire that students choose their career in line with their personality. This confirms John Holland's theory that one's career choice aligns with their personality traits and the diverse factors influencing their background. Holland proposed that people with artistic personalities tend to be imaginative, creative, inventive, and unconventional.³⁸ These individuals thrive in open-ended, flexible environments where they can express themselves through art and creativity. They often gravitate toward solitary or independent pursuits, typically avoiding highly structured, routine, or socially intensive scenarios.

Savickas stressed that career construction is a process centered on forming and applying one's vocational self-concept and typically begins in late adolescence, providing a framework to navigate career decisions and subsequent adaptation.³⁹

Also, students from warm homes will opt for people-oriented jobs or services/from accepting, loving and protecting home, and the child from rejecting, neglecting and casual bring home will grow up to be interested in non-person-related careers like technology, transportation and science.⁴⁰ School guidance facility influences students' career choices. All the respondents interviewed confirmed they had information and some degree of influence from the school guidance facility, either directly or indirectly.

In the history of education in Ghana, not much can be said about the study and practice of guidance services. This is because the profession or discipline is relatively new in Ghana. Ackumey states that it formally started in the country in 1955 because of the desire to open Youth Employment Development under the then Ministries of Labor, Social Welfare and Education.⁴¹

However, the formal inclusion of guidance services in the school curriculum was done in 1960 through the Curriculum Research Development Unit (CRDU) of the then Ministry of Education, which

³⁵ Super, "The Natural History of a Study of Lives and of Vocations."

³⁶ Jane A., Grimstad and Wendy L. Way, "The Role of the Family in the Vocational Development of Family and Consumer Education Teachers: Implications for Vocational Education," *Journal of Vocational Education Research* 18, no. 4 (1993): 43-80.

³⁷ Blau et al., "Occupational Choice: A Conceptual Framework," 1956.

³⁸ John L Holland, "A Theory of Vocational Choice.," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 6, no. 1 (1959): 35.

³⁹ Savickas, "Reinvigorating the Study of Careers." 155.

⁴⁰ Roe, "The Psychology of Occupations. New York: John Wiley & Sons."

⁴¹ M A Ackumey, "An Evaluation of the Guidance and Counselling Course of the Bachelor of Education Degree Programmes at the University of Cape Coast," *Unpublished M. Ed. Thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, 1989.*

was established to cater for school program and welfare services, education for the handicapped, as well as guidance services.⁴²

From this historical background, the provision of guidance services in girls' senior high schools is very necessary to assist them in making informed career choices. Through the school guidance program, students get motivated and have adequate information about various careers and requirements, as well as the prestige that comes with them. They agreed that the early career guidance exposure they had had shaped their thoughts and actions, leading them to make informed choices.

There is a correlation between peer groups and students' career choices. The participants acknowledged that peer groups have some level of impact on their career interests. Blau et al. proposed that career decisions are heavily shaped by the realities of occupational opportunities within the broader macro-system, which encompasses social and cultural systems as essential components.⁴³ According to Blau et al.'s Socio-Cultural Theory, peer influence aligns with social dynamics, reflecting its roots in collective societal contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings.

- Parents should be encouraged to communicate both about work and their career with their wards and have faith in their abilities to be successful, and improve the career development outcome of their female wards.
- Parents must be inculcated in their minds the right attitude towards the whole problem of career choice in order that they, in turn, may support and encourage the development of the right attitude in the minds and provide assistance on matters relating to the career of their female wards.
- Every girl's Senior School should have proper structures put in place to provide effective guidance services with a professional school counselor and not teachers acting as one. Counselors should create projects that require students to research selected occupations of interest and apply this to choose a career.
- Educators (Government, GES and Schools) should provide and design initiatives and approaches to support parents and young individuals, particularly young women, in exploring diverse career opportunities that provide access to emerging or non-traditional career paths.
- To support students in all-girls schools in pursuing academic paths and professional opportunities, a structured and well-rounded counseling program that includes career guidance matching the career fields outlined in national benchmarks needs to be established and executed.
- Counselors in schools must develop and deliver guidance activities geared towards helping females in girls' schools understand themselves in relation to career guidance.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical interplay of social and psychological factors shaping career decision-making among girls. The findings affirm that parental influence, when supported by adequate career information and guidance, empowers parents to provide more informed and constructive career advice to their daughters. Furthermore, personality considerations are pivotal; career guidance interventions that consciously integrate and respect individual traits significantly enhance the likelihood of girls making intelligent, self-aligned career choices. The institutional role is equally vital. School guidance facilities must be robust and accessible; greater exposure to structured career and vocational counselling services demonstrably correlates with wiser career decisions by students. Similarly, peer groups exert a profound influence on girls' career aspirations. Proactively guiding peers on vocational matters transforms them into potential sources of valuable support and insight during career decision-making processes. Collectively, these factors informed parental guidance, personality-sensitive counselling,

⁴² Andrea Mqondiso Buka and Jacob Maisha Molepo, "A Psycho-Pedagogic Approach for Inclusive Classes in Disadvantaged Rural Primary Schools in South Africa: Advancing Teaching Practices," *International Journal of Educational Sciences* 12, no. 1 (2016): 38–44.

⁴³ Peter M. Blau et al., "Occupational Choice: A Conceptual Framework," *ILR Review* 9, no. 4 (1956): 531–43.

accessible school guidance resources, and positively-oriented peer influence form an essential ecosystem for fostering sound career choices. Therefore, this study concludes that empowering key stakeholders (parents, educators, counsellors, and peers themselves) with relevant knowledge and resources, while deliberately tailoring support to individual personality profiles, is fundamental to enabling girls to navigate career pathways successfully and make fulfilling, strategic vocational decisions.

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