Kuria Male Adolescents and Career Choice Experiences: The Role of Careers Knowledge and Significant Others

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Abstract

Given their historical attachment to a career in the armed forces, this study sought to uncover knowledge of young Tanzanian Kuria males on identifying careers, sources of career information and the influence of significant others on their choice of career. A total of 258 male students (from Tarime district) responded to a questionnaire and focus group discussions. It was revealed that young Kuria males have a good knowledge of the different careers available in the world of work, and their attachment to a career in the army has little to do with career illiteracy. To young Kuria males, parents and relatives appear to have a strong direct and indirect influence on their favouring a career in the armed forces.

Key words: career, career choice, and significant others

Introduction

Choosing a career is one of the important decisions individuals have to make in life. Biswalo (1996) and Ndambuki and Mutie (1999) defined career choice as the process of choosing a vocation, preparing for it, entering it and progressing in it. From Maslow's theory of needs, a career is important for an individual's survival, safety, social and self-actualization (Kimbrell &Vineyard, 1992). We know that there are several careers available in the world of work (Kidd, 2006; Cobb, 2001; Santrock, 2005) and more career opportunities are opening up due to advances and changes in the dynamic technological world. However, a significant number of people or some groups have varying experiences and challenges in the choice of a career to pursue in life (Biswalo, 1996; Kimbrell & Vineyard (1992).

For example, although there are several career opportunities in the world of work, historically, Kuria males from Tanzania have long been defined as those preferring a career in the army (Fleisher, 2002; 2000), but research on their attachment to this career remains limited. Therefore, this study had three goals: (i) Assess the knowledge of young Kuria males about identifying different careers in the world of work; (ii) Explore sources of career information available to young Kuria males; and (iii) Explore the influence of significant others on young Kuria males' choice of an army career. An understanding of young Kuria males' career choice experiences is not only essential for bridging the empirical gap, but also for the development of comprehensive career education programmes that take potentially significant others into account.

Kuria Males and Career Choice

Historically, defence forces throughout the world have been dominated by males and ruled by gender stereotyping (Gemmell, 2002; Molekane, 1996). Although recruitment to the armed forces is voluntary for all Tanzanians with a minimum of secondary school education (Kingazi, 2006; Lupogo, 2001), Kuria males have long been defined as those preferring a career in the armed forces (Fleisher, 2002; 2000). For example, although Kurias represent less than one percent of the 120 Tanzanian ethnic groups (Fleisher, 2000; Fleisher, 2002; Brock-Utne, Desai, & Qorro, 2005), it is estimated that they comprised about 50% of the Tanzanian army (troops) at the time of the Tanzania-Uganda war of 1978-1980 (Fleisher, 2000; Fleisher, 2002).

As a result, there are popular jokes that associate Kuria males with a career in the army in Tanzania. For instance, when you inform a male from a typical Kuria community that you are a surveyor, the simple feedback may be which army is that? More interestingly, there is even a joke that associates the name of the Tanzanian army with the Kuria Tribe in which JWTZ is also ironically referred to as "Jeshi la Wakuria Tangu Zamani" [JWTZ] (Swahili for the "Army of the Kuria Since Long Ago") instead of Jeshi la Wananchi Tanzania (Swahili for the Tanzania Peoples Defence Forces [TPDF]) (Fleisher, 2000, p.82). The question remains, what factors are at play in driving Kuria males to take up a career in the army?

Factors Influencing Individuals' Career Choice

Studies have shown that career choice is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by the interaction between internal individual factors and the constraining and enabling forces of the social context (Kidd (2006). On the one hand, internal individual factors entail an individual's cognitive and mental processes that are applied when making judgments, for example, cognition, knowledge, attitude, perceived control, self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and personality among many others (Ajzen, 1988; Feldman, 1999; Sharf, 1992). On the other hand, social agencies are external forces (e.g., significant others) or obstacles encountered by an individual from the environment in the course of choosing a career (Ajzen, 1988; Cobb, 2001; Sharf, 1992; Kidd, 2006). In fact, how these factors, especially internal factors such as knowledge and external forces such as significant others, work to influence Kuria males' career choice remains unclear.

Knowledge and sources of career information. Knowledge plays an important role in several decisions made by individuals in life. Being informed or knowledgeable about different careers can help individuals by eliminating chance elements in the process of choosing a career (Biswalo, 1996). Kidd (2006) argues that "when provided at the right moment, information can make a big difference in career planning" (p.115). For example, Biswalo (1996) and Ndambuki and Mutie (1999) maintained that occupational information in terms of valid and usable data about different career options, positions, duties, entry requirements, conditions of work, rewards offered and advancement patterns, are crucial for choosing and developing a career.

In a similar vein, Ajzen (1991) emphasizes that the ability to join a career of interest may not be realistic when a person has relatively little information or knowledge about the career. For example, a study by Brinkley and Joshi (2005) in the US found that adolescent boys have greater intentions of pursuing IT-related careers due to adequate knowledge than adolescent girls who are less knowledgeable. As a result, being less informed of other available careers may make an individual exercise the "by chance" element in the choice of a career (Biswalo, 1996).

Studies such as Biswalo (1996), Corsin (1984), Hill and Nathan (2006), Kariuki (2008), Kidd (2006), Ndambuki and Mutie (1999) and Sharf (1992) identify different sources of career information, which include the mass media (radio, newspapers and television), books, professional journals, the internet, videos, occupational flyers, career counsellors, teachers, and role models, such as parents and relatives. However, sources of career information may vary from one person to another and from one context to another due to an individual's level of exposure, level of literacy and environmental differences. From this backdrop, it is anticipated that Kuria male adolescents are less knowledgeable/informed about other careers available in the world of work and have ineffective sources of career information.

Significant Others and Career Choice

In the process of development, children have opportunities to see, hear and sometimes get involved in the jobs done by those people who are important to them – known as significant others. In this study, the phrase 'significant others' refers to the entire set of persons in an individual's life – say, parents and relatives – whose opinion will affect the course of an individual's life. In some cases, close significant others, for example parents and family members, even take their children to their workplace, which means that they model careers for young people (Cobb, 2001; Santrock, 2005). Additionally, Ajzen (1988) and Sharf (1992) pointed out that significant others such as parents and relatives may be biased and sometimes have inadequate information about careers, and so they may either influence their children positively or negatively in the entire process of choosing a career.

To date, research studies have reported mixed findings regarding significant others and young people's choice of a career. For example, studies such as Moore (2006), Fouad (2007), Guay, Senecal, Gauthier and Fernet (2003), Van Hooft et al. (2006) in western countries demonstrated that significant others have a strong positive influence on children's and young people's career choice. However, other studies, for example Borchert (2002), Brinkley and Joshi (2005), Kolvereid and Isaksen (2005), from the same context, revealed that significant others have little influence on young people's career choice. Similarly, while some studies in the African context (e.g., Nnochirianye, 1985; Fateh, 1992) linked career choice with parental influence and traditional beliefs rather than psychological influences, other studies such as Tsado (1985) revealed that students are not necessarily influenced by parents and relatives in the choice of a career. However, the influence of significant others on career choice in the Tanzanian context, and the Kuria community in particular, is yet to be ascertained, despite their long-term

attachment to an army career. Therefore, the present study addressed the following specific research questions. First, what is the level of knowledge of Kuria male adolescents of different careers available in the world of work? Second, what major sources of career information are available to Kuria male adolescents? Third, do significant others influence young Kuria males to choose an army career?

Method

Study design and context. This study employed a concurrent mixed-method research design using both quantitative and qualitative methods – a survey and focus group interviews. Mixed method research has been shown to provide a deeper and more holistic understanding of research objectives (Best & Khan, 2006; Creswell, 2009). While the quantitative method provided data on careers knowledge and sources of career information, the qualitative method obtained young Kuria males' lived experience of the influence of significant others on their career choice and development. This study was conducted in Tarime district in Mara region because it is the main district occupied by Kurias whose males have historically preferred an army career unlike females who are socialized to choose domestic chores (Fleisher, 2000; Tobbisson, 1986).

Participants. Some 258 form four and form three Kuria male students from five randomly sampled secondary schools in Tarime district were involved in the study. Simple random sampling was used to obtain a representative sample of respondents from schools and by grade level (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Koul, 1997). In particular, 57% of the participants were from form three (age range M=17.62, SD= .99), while 43% were from form four (age range M=18.62, SD= .79). A subset of eight randomly selected students from those who filled in the survey, four from each grade in each school, were involved in the focus group discussions. Forms three and four constitute a group of students who are in transition, not only from school to the world of work, but also from adolescence to young adulthood characterized by extensive exploration of different career opportunities available in the world of work (Cobb, 2001; Santrock, 2005).

Measures

Questionnaire. A structured questionnaire with closed items developed by the researcher (after a critical review of previous studies) and reviewed by peers was used to collect various information from participants relevant to the study. The first part of the survey had items on demographic information such as age and grade level. The participants also responded on several closed items on knowledge about different careers in the world of work and their sources of career information. Moreover, there were three open-ended questions which gave participants the freedom to write additional responses on their knowledge about careers and sources of career information. The survey was administered by the researcher during normal class hours to all students who gave their consent to participate in the study. Ethical issues such as anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided were emphasized. On average, 30 minutes were spent completing the survey.

Focus group discussion (FGD). Five FGDs were conducted by the researcher in each of the five sampled secondary schools soon after administration of the survey. Each FGD had eight respondents and the discussion in each session took 45 minutes to one hour. Each member was requested to participate freely in various aspects of the discussion after rapport had been established. Discussion in the focus groups was planned to help the researcher gather participants' views and opinions on how significant others influence their career choice. Open-ended questions, for example, "How do parents and relatives influence your career choice? Do parents and relatives influence the choice of an army choice?" guided the discussion.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data. Data were entered and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0 (Pallant, 2005). Frequencies, percentages and descriptive statistics were computed and used to assess respondents' background information, career knowledge and sources of career information. Next, an independent sample *t*-test was used to explore whether or not there were significant differences in the mean scores on knowledge about identifying careers between the two grades (i.e., forms III & IV).

Qualitative data. Qualitative information on Kuria male adolescents about the influence of significant others on their career choice was categorized and analysed according to the themes that emerged from the FGDs (Flick, 2009; Creswell, 2009). The FGD interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Word. Data analysis began by using the inductive method through a flat or open coding system that enabled the generation of deductive themes (Creswell, 2009; Schwandt, 2007), which were used to explain the influence of significant others on young Kuria males' career choice. The findings were reported together with quotations from the respondents.

Results

Knowledge of young Kuria males about careers

This objective assumed that, with the exception of the army career, young Kuria males are well able to identifying other types of career in the world of work. Table 1 below summarises the knowledge of young Kuria males in identifying different types of career in the world of work.

Table 1: *Students' Knowledge of Careers (N=258)*

Career	Frequency	Percent
Accounting	199	77.1
Army	228	88.4
Social worker	112	43.4
Translator	132	51.2
Medical doctor	206	79.8
Carpenter	151	58.5
Engineer	177	68.6
Pilot	190	73.6
Teaching	233	90.3
Artist	173	67.1
Geologist	98	38.0
Police	220	85.3
Pastor	175	67.8
Driving	220	85.3
Lawyer	207	80.2
Farming	203	78.7
Librarian	55	21.3
Banker	159	61.6
Nurse	155	60.1
Journalist	212	82.2

In order of familiarity, the teaching career was identified by 90.3% (233), followed by the , 88.4% (228), the police, 85.3% (220), driving, 85.3% (220), journalism, 82.2% (212), and lawyer 80.2% (207).The careers least identified by Kuria male students were librarian (21.3%), geologist (38%) and social worker (43.4%).Apart from the few careers which did not appear to be well known by young Kuria males, the results suggest that they know a lot about the different careers in the world of work.

Does the level of career knowledge differ between the two grades? An independent *t-* test revealed that there was a significant difference in careers knowledge between the scores for form three (*M*=12.80, *SD*=5.55) and form four [*M*=14.56, *SD*=5.19; *t* (244) = -2.61, *p*=.01]. However, the difference was small (*eta* squared= .026), accounting for only a 2.6 percent difference. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics on Careers Knowledge and t- test Across Grade Levels*

Grade level	N	Mean	S.Deviation	T	df	Sig.level
Form 3	145	12.80	5.55	-2.61	244	.01
Form 4	111	14.56	5.19			

Mean difference is significant at p<.05

Sources of Career Information

Since sources of career information may vary according to the context (Hill & Nathan, 2006; Kidd, 2006), this study was also interested in finding out the sources of career information available to young Kuria males. The results are summarized in table 3.

Table 3: *Sources of career information available to young Kuria males*

Source of career information	Frequency	Percent
Books	205	79.5
Newspapers	218	84.5
Parents	191	74.0
Computer-internet	95	36.8
Friends/Peers	145	56.2
Teachers	210	81.4
Relatives	150	58.1
Television	189	73.3
Radio	228	88.4

According to the findings, the major sources of career information available to young males in the Kuria community in order of strength are radio (88.4%), newspapers (84.5%), teachers (81.4%), books (79.5%), parents (74%), television (73.3), relatives (58.1%), friends (56.2%), and computer-internet (36.8%). It appears that the mass media and significant others – teachers, parents and peers - are the major sources of career information available to young Kuria males, unlike the computer and internet sources. The students went further in identifying other sources of career information through open-ended questions and in FGD sessions. The following sources of career information were frequently pinpointed by students: church gatherings, cellular phones, brochures, public assemblies and traditional dances.

Influence of Significant Others on Career Choice

Generally, significant other appeared to have either a direct or indirect influence on Kuria male adolescents' career choice and development. The following five major themes emerged from the FGDs: gender role socialization, stereotypes, ethnic conflicts, role models and aggressive culture.

Gender role socialization. This appeared to be one of the common themes that emerged from the FGD interviews. Like many African cultures, it was revealed that in the Kuria community male children are socialized from their childhood to take on masculine roles such as family and livestock security, while females are socialized to take on domestic chores (Fleisher, 2000; Tobbisson, 1986).Similar to Onditi (2012), the participants reported that "…our relatives and the community praise the army as a career for a real man *(omumura, a Kuria term)* and other careers such as teaching, agricultural officer, nurse and many others are meant for cowards and

females….” This suggests that how parents and relatives evaluate a career has an impact on children's career preferences and decisions (Onditi, 2012).

Stereotypes. This also emerged as a common theme. Some longstanding stereotypes and prejudice exist among clans, which has contributed to historical inter-clan conflicts (Mahende, 2012) and in driving the career choice of children and young people in the Kuria community as described below:

> “…the army is a prestigious career in our community…; … it makes you a hero and warrior and among the most respected people among all the groups in our society …; … for example, when an army officer from the Tanzanian Peoples' Defence Force passes by, you will hear young people saying *tulieni mwanamme anapita* (order please! A man is passing)… Seeing a Kurian boy joining other careers means he has tried but missed the opportunity of joining the armed forces.”

Ethnic conflicts. The longstanding historical intra-clan and inter-clan conflicts between/among Kuria ethnic groups (Mahende, 2012) appeared to be a unique theme on the role of significant others on the choice of a career by children and young Kuria males. In the Kuria community, families and clans are often involved in tribal wars and cattle raiding (Fleisher, 2000), which was revealed to have either a direct or indirect influence on young people's preference for a career in the armed forces, as described below:

> “…I have been directly involved in tribal wars using traditional weapons since I was in class four and found a significant number of my age mates in the battlefield, which is why I can easily join the army without any problem…; … in our community, the clan with few army officers or few retired army officers is less respected and disadvantaged when there are inter-tribal and intra-tribal wars, which is a common phenomenon in our community…”

Role models. Having role models of particular careers who are admired also featured in the FGDs. This is supported by Fleisher (2000), who pointed out that there are more retired army officers living in Mara region, especially from the Kuria community. The following is a quotation from FGDs:

> “A good number of our relatives have been doing well in the army, for example recently my uncle is the one who led operation Comoro… and I am also planning to join the army soon after completing ordinary level education… …my thoughts, feelings and dream is to become an officer in the army…; my father, older brothers and uncles are officers or retired army officers, and so I am also thinking of joining the army and my parents are happy about it (Do you have forms? – the respondent asked!).”

Aggressive culture. Kuria is one of the ethnic groups in Tanzania characterized by cruelty, hostility and aggressive behaviour (Mahende, 2012). In general, aggressive behaviour can be associated with authoritarian parenting, which may in turn influence children's decisions in life including career choice. Regrettably, aggression seems to be a normative cultural identity of Kuria people. For example in Onditi (2012) the respondents said that “…by nature we are strong, courageous, good warriors and these make us fit for a career in the army” (p, 65). In a similar vein, a respondent from FGD said that “… I have been involved with local security guard groups and scouts as a step to joining the army in future….” With this in mind, Kuria

males are socialized from their early years by significant others to develop a passion for a career in the army.

Discussion

This study attempted to assess the knowledge Kuria male adolescents have about different careers in the world of work and the influence of significant others on their career choice. The findings suggest that most young Kuria males have a good knowledge of the different careers available in the world of work, which is important for making an informed career decision (Ajzen, 1991; Biswalo, 1996). For example, in order of familiarity, the careers of teaching, the army, the police, driving, journalism, law, medical doctor, farming and accounting were identified by over 70% of the respondents. This implies that the long-term attachment of young Kuria males to a career in the armed forces has little to do with knowledge about other careers in the world of work.

The overall high level of knowledge about different types of careers can be explained by many factors, such as frequent exposure to significant others and role models in the respective careers (Onditi, 2012). For example, through their interactions with students, teachers expose them to other careers while at the same time being a role model of the teaching career. This is in line with the Tanzanian education policy which states that one of the teachers' roles is to prepare students to fit into the world of work (Biswalo, 1996; & URT, 1995).

Likewise, knowing about a career in the armed forces by a large number of young Kuria males (over 85%) may also be linked to the direct or indirect influence of significant others. This is supported by (Arnold et al., 2005; Nnochirianye, 1985; Onditi, 2012; Van Hooft et al., 2006). For instance, it was revealed that gender role socialization, aggressive culture, ethnic conflicts, stereotypes and role models in the armed forces play a significant role in influencing young Kuria males to favour the army over other careers. Fleisher (2000) pointed out that there are more retired army officers living in Mara region, especially from the Kuria community. This was confirmed during FGDs, where respondents reported that there are over 20 retired army officers in their village. Similarly, others reported having relatives and immediate neighbours who are employed or have been working in the armed forces.

Relatives in the armed forces were revealed to play two major roles. First, they acted as role models to young people of the army career. For example, some of the respondents confirmed feeling proud seeing army officers and their combat operations and have joined the scouts and local security guards in order to practise and apply army-related skills prior to employment. Cobb (2001), Santrock (2005), and Sharf (1992) revealed that from an early age children see, hear and develop an interest in the job done by people who are important to them. Second, relatives and some of the role models in the armed forces acted as referees to integrate young people in the army.

It was also interesting to find out that young Kuria males intend to join the army due to their early socialization in relation to inter-tribal and intra-tribal conflicts and wars (Mahende, 2012). The practice of parents exposing children to the battlefield makes them feel that they can best serve in the armed forces. This is supported by the findings of Onditi (2012) that "young Kuria males start to admire and develop an interest in the army career right from their childhood" (p, 65). In this regard, young Kuria males seem to associate the army with war and violence. Indeed, this is a misconception which needs to be challenged since in the contemporary world, roles in the army are becoming more complex and more scientific beyond the traditional combat roles. Additionally, the act of exposing young children to the battlefield at a tender age may expose them to long-term psychological, social and physical damage, which calls for immediate intervention.

Another interesting though surprising finding was that in the Kuria community, a career in the army is greatly respected by the clans, which plays a direct or indirect role during inter-tribal wars. This concurs with the findings of a study by Mugonzibwa *et al*. (2000), which maintains that the image of a career and the respect it commands in society are the most important factors governing career choice. Here is a typical quotation from FGD "… in our community, the clan with few army officers or few retired army officers is less respected and disadvantaged when inter-tribal and intra-tribal wars take place, which is common in our community…". It was revealed that clans with army employees or retired army officers get support and training in war techniques during conflicts. Fleisher (2000) and Fleisher (2002) maintained that the violence and cattle raiding in Tarime and neighbouring districts have been escalated by the military skills and firearms acquired from the army. This reinforces the resolve of parents, family members and different clans to encourage their sons to take up a career in the armed forces so as to stand a better chance of winning inter-tribal and intra-tribal wars. This suggests that the historical attachment of Kuria males to an army career is a complex phenomenon which cannot be entirely addressed in a single study.

This study also revealed that the majority of young Kuria males were not familiar with some careers, such as librarian, geologist and social worker. This can be explained by several factors, including, for instance, the lack of exposure to and information about these careers (Nkuba, 2012). According to Nkuba, the provision of career services in Tanzanian government schools will remain a dream due to the lack of an effective career education programme. For example, over 78% of students in this study had not been informed about a career as a librarian. This shows that there are no effective library services in secondary schools,which not only limits students from knowing about different careers, but it also affects their learning.

This study has also revealed that Kuria male adolescents' ignorance of other careers may also be associated with *gender role socialization* and *stereotypes* about careers as described by the participants "… other careers… are meant for cowards and females". With this attitude, young Kuria males are likely to pay less attention to other careers that are not linked to the armed forces. This is unhealthy in the contemporary world of work which is so dynamic with the

emergence of new careers and changes in the traditional ones such as the army. Stereotypes and prejudice may narrow their chances of investigating opportunities in other careers, and may result in heuristic career decisions in extreme cases. In other words, if these stereotypes remain unchallenged and unchanged as the child develops, they will continue to affect children's career decision making, especially in the Kuria community where the army is still recognized as a prestigious career. In general, students' ignorance of some common careers in the world of work has been linked with a lack of comprehensive and holistic career education programmes in Tanzanian secondary schools (Nkuba, 2012).This suggests the need for comprehensive career education programmes that take Kuria community members into account.

An independent sample *t*-test analysis revealed that there was a significant difference in the knowledge of careers between form four and form three students. It appears that form four students had a better knowledge of careers than form three students. However, the difference was quite small (*eta* squared= .026), accounting for only a 2.6 percent level of difference. According to the 1995 Tanzania education policy, form three and form four students are placed in specific subject disciplines which match their interests and abilities (Biswalo, 1996; & URT, 1995). For example, there are students in science, arts and commerce disciplines. This makes both form three and form four students more occupied with issues relating to their future careers. Lugoe (1996) and Santrock (2005) argue that forms three and four involve young people who are in transition from school to the world of work and from adolescence to young adulthood, where different behaviours such as career choice are tried, internalized and identified ready for normative adult roles.

The difference in careers knowledge between the two grade levels suggests that age and grade seniority have a positive impact on careers awareness. Biswalo (1996), Ginzberg *et al.* (1951), Sharf (1992) and Kidd (2006) emphasize that individuals aged 17 and 18, who are mostly form three and form four students in the Tanzanian context, are at the stage of thinking about a career and so their choice of a career is more focused. This implies that those individuals who are older and those in higher grades are likely to have benefited from experience, and so are more knowledgeable about careers than students in lower grades. However, this argument might not be easy to apply in an environments where an individual is deprived of access and exposure to effective career education and information sources.

Biswalo (1996), Hill and Nathan (2006) and Ndambuki and Mutie (1999) pointed out that occupational information, such as knowledge about careers, entry conditions, duties, and advancement patterns are crucial for an individual's career development. Exploration of sources of career information found that Kuria male adolescents have more access to the media, teachers, books, parents, relatives and friends than the computer-internet as sources of career information. For instance, the FGDs revealed that radio stations cover a wide area, in both rural and urban areas. Tanzania Broadcasting Cooperation (TBC1), Victoria FM, Radio Free Africa and Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation are the major radio stations which are reported to be easily accessed by students in Tarime district. This has exposed students to different types of occupation, positions in occupations and career advertisements during various programmes, for

instance, news bulletins. Newspapers also advertise job vacancies and the related tasks. This suggests that the mass media needs to make relevant and appropriate programmes and sources more accessible to young people at home and in school.

Teachers and books were also ranked high as sources of career information for students. This is obvious because the two sources are mainly found in the school environment where students often interact with them on various issues in the process of teaching and learning. We know that teachers and career-related textbooks are a reliable source of career information. However, it is hard to believe in the effectiveness of books in environments such as Tarime, where library services are yet to be efficient. In a similar vein, to play an effective role in helping students with career-related matters, teachers need to be competent and have adequate career education resources. Whether teachers are effective or not is beyond the scope of this study.

As noted earlier, parents were also found to play a significant role in providing Kuria male adolescents with career information, followed by relatives and friends. We know that as children grow and develop, they see, hear and interact with their parents and relatives in relation to certain careers (Cobb, 2001; Santrock, 2005; Taylor et al., 2004). For example, through FGD sessions some students confirmed that they have discussed their career dreams with their parents and relatives. It was found that from the discussions most parents and relatives were in favour of a career in the armed forces rather than other careers available in the world of work. This means that young Kuria males are not oriented to other careers. Additionally, not all parents are knowledgeable about careers available in the world of work, and so they may perpetuate their positive or negative biases while educating their children in the choice of a career.

Despite being a modern and reliable source of career information, the computer-internet source, as pointed by Hill and Nathan (2006), is not available to young males in the Kuria community. This may be attributed to either the lack of computer literacy or accessibility in comparison to other sources of career information such as the radio and newspapers. This should serve as a wake-up call to policy makers and education stakeholders to promote the use of information and communications technology in the education system beginning at the lower levels.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion. This study found that Kuria males have good knowledge for identifying the different types of career in the world of work and have adequate sources of career information. In spite of demonstrating adequate knowledge of different types of career available in the world of work, this study found that young Kuria males are still in favour of a career in the armed forces. This may be explained by various factors, such as the direct and indirect influence of significant others through social and cultural practices, such as gender role socialization, aggressive culture, significant role models in the armed forces, historical ethnic conflicts, and

stereotype/prejudice towards some careers. However, there is a need for a longitudinal or an ethnographic study across the Kuria community (e.g., young people of both sexes in school and out of school and the adult population) to gain an in-depth understanding of how these factors interact to influence the career development of children and youth.

Recommendations. Given the lack of effective career services and education in Tanzanian government schools (Nkuba, 2012), this study recommends that career counsellors should be provided and comprehensive career information centres where students can have easy access to various reliable sources of career information. It is also recommended that schools should have coordinated career education services so as to challenge misconceptions, prejudices and stereotypes for effective career decision making by students, especially Kuria male adolescents, who are still inclined to join the armed forces. Nevertheless, the push from parents, role models and community members, which appears to have an adverse impact on the holistic development of children and young people, for example, exposing them to warfare at an early age and persuading them to join the army for the purpose of winning inter-tribal conflicts, should be discouraged.

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