



# Relationship among Occupational Identity, Attitude toward Work, Age and Gender of First Year University Students in Kenya

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**Abstract** - The study aimed at finding out the relationship among occupational identity, attitude toward work, age and gender among Kenyan university students. Participants were 166 first year undergraduate students (103 male, 63 female; age range 17-23 years;  $M = 19.2$ ;  $SD = 1.16$ ) enrolled for Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Business Administration degree courses in Dedan Kimathi University. Data collection was done using a questionnaire composed of items adapted from Occupational Identity Scale-Revised (OIS-R) and the Work Opinion Questionnaire. Data were analyzed using factor analysis, correlation analysis and multivariate analysis of variance. A significant positive relationship was found between age and achievement occupational identity ( $r(164) = .195, P = .05$ ). The results further indicate that attitude toward work had very weak positive correlations with age ( $r(164) = .041, P = .05$ ). In addition, attitude had very weak positive correlations with moratorium ( $r(164) = .017, P = .05$ ) and foreclosure ( $r(164) = .021, P = .05$ ) occupational identities. However, attitude toward work had very weak negative correlations with achievement ( $r(164) = -.022, P = .05$ ) and diffusion ( $r(164) = -.112, P = .05$ ) occupational identities. No statistically significant relationship was found between gender and degree choice ( $\chi^2(1) = 3.651, P = .056$ ). The Hotelling trace test results indicate that boys and girls do not differ in any of the occupational identity statuses ( $F = 1.57, P = 0.05$ ). The results reaffirm the view that occupational identity is a complex developmental process involving the interaction of personality, age and other related factors. Areas of further research are suggested.

**Keywords** - Occupational Identity, Attitude toward Work, Age and Gender, University Students, Kenya

## 1. Introduction

Identity formation is a key milestone in adolescent development. Within the Eriksonian framework (Erikson, 1994; Marcia, 1993) identities are defined as complex notions of one's personal uniqueness that are formed over time through a variety of psychological and social processes. Thus as adolescents develop, they explore a variety of possible identities across different domains of functioning. Regarding occupation, identity refers to an individual's notion of who s/he would be as a worker, and what kind of work would best suit her or him (Eccles, 2009). Developing a coherent and realistic occupational identity during adolescence is critical to a successful transition into adulthood (Eccles, 2009) and to psychological well-being (Meeus, 1996). In fact, Erikson (1994) believed that it is the inability to settle on an occupational identity which mostly disturbs young people. The process of choosing and preparing for future occupations has important developmental implications for adolescents' later well-being. Occupational identity underpins students' career aspirations

and influences their career-related attitudes and behaviours (Hirschi, 2012).

Founded on Erikson's (1994) theory of Identity Development, Marcia (1980) describes the levels at which one has explored or committed to domains of identity such as a career choice. Exploration has been defined as a process of sorting through information about one's self and the environment, while commitment is defined as choosing goals, values, or beliefs. Given varied levels of exploration and commitment, Marcia's identity status model distinguishes four different identity statuses namely: Foreclosure, moratorium, diffusion and achievement. Individuals with a foreclosed identity status have made a commitment but without a period of active self-reflection and the exploration of alternatives. Instead, such an individual has merely accepted the identity developed during childhood when the values and beliefs of his or her family were incorporated into his or her sense of self. Those classified as being in the identity moratorium status are in the process of actively exploring alternatives to their sense of identity, but demonstrate limited, if any, commitment to them. Individuals in the diffusion status avoid the exploration of

alternative selves and the responsibility of making a commitment. Finally, identity achieved individuals have both completed their exploration of alternate identities and have committed to a consistent and well developed sense of self. Although the four statuses can describe identity as a whole, Marcia and other researchers investigated the various domains of identity. A domain of identity, such as occupational, religious or social identity, describes the different dimensions of one's life that may contribute to an overall sense of identity or serve as separate units of identity for that domain. The various domains of identity have been found to develop at somewhat independent rates, although occupational identity domain matures faster than the other identity domains (Skorikov, & Vondracek, 1998).

Research indicates that each status is associated with a unique pattern of personality and behavioural traits. The foreclosure identity status is associated with low conflict and idealized relationships with their parents, closed-mindedness, smug self-satisfaction, authoritarianism, and not being open to new experiences (Skorikov, & Vondracek, 1998; Schwartz, 2005). These characteristic behaviours indicate that commitment without explorations of alternative identities may result in problematic personal adjustment (Clancy & Dollinger, 1993; Nauta, & Kahn, 2007; Padilla-Walker et al., 2008; Waterman, 2007). Foreclosed individuals are likely to be much more attached to their secure life and those who have contributed to their security; they resist change and are attached to known norms, rules and what is familiar to them (Mikolyski, 2008). Basically, a foreclosed individual adopts someone else's beliefs, standards, and at times choices without critically exploring them first.

Moratorium identity status is associated with high levels of internalized prosocial values and behaviours, open-mindedness, and critical thinking (Schwartz, 2005). However, such individuals are also high in neuroticism and low in conscientiousness. They experience low levels of psychological well-being and lack confidence in their ability to make effective career decisions (Clancy, & Dollinger, 1993; Nauta, & Kahn, 2007; Padilla-Walker et al., 2008; Waterman, 2007). Researchers taking a developmental approach to identity argue that individuals tend to spend less time in this status due to the stress associated with its high level of exploration and low commitment.

Individuals in the diffuse identity status have many negative characteristics including high neuroticism, low conscientiousness, low levels of agreeableness, low levels of well-being, and fewer internalized values and prosocial behaviours (Clancy, & Dollinger, 1993; Nauta, & Kahn, 2007; Padilla-Walker et al., 2008; Waterman, 2007). In addition, identity diffusion has been associated with general apathy, academic and drug problems, poor interpersonal skills, and those more affected by one's environment. The diffused individuals have a weaker social support network, are at risk for depression, and often do not take advantage of opportunities that could be helpful to them. Thus, the diffused individual lacks the foundation of inner strength and environmental

support to explore and make choices.

Identity achievers are highly conscientious and extroverted and have low levels of neuroticism and high levels of well-being (Clancy, & Dollinger, 1993; Waterman, 2007). They demonstrate other characteristics such as high levels of prosocial values, highly internalized values, effective decision making, deep interpersonal relationships, balanced thinking and prosocial behaviours which are indicative of a positive adjustment and career maturity (Padilla-Walker et al., 2008; Salami, 2008). Vocational identity achievement refers to the conscious awareness of one's occupational interests, abilities, goals, and values and the structure of meanings in which such self-perception is linked with career roles (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Skorikov, & Vondracek, 2007). Various studies indicate that identity achievement relates positively to psychological adjustment, including life satisfaction and career maturity (Waterman, 2007; Mikolyski, 2008; Salami, 2008; Skorikov, & Vondracek, 2007). Hirschi and Herrmann (2012) proposed that vocational identity achievement acts as an important mediator link between presence of a calling in one's career and life satisfaction. Using a short-term longitudinal study design on a sample of 269 German college students, their study confirmed the mediation hypothesis. They found that calling predicted vocational identity achievement 6 months later and that identity served as a stronger predictor of life satisfaction. Vocational and professional identity is positively correlated with the related constructs of career decidedness (Khasawneh et al., 2007; Hirschi, 2011), job involvement (Skorikov, & Vondracek, 2007), career maturity (Salami, 2008) and career commitment (Duffy, Dik, & Steger, 2011).

Early discussions about what people want to do in the world of work are related to their personalities. Super's (Super, 1994) life-span theory of career development combines elements of developmental, personal, social, learning and phenomenological psychology with self-concept as well as trait and factor considerations. Super conceptualizes vocational development as the process of developing and implementing a self-concept (Estrada-Hernandez, 2004). Super considers occupational identity as a core construct in career and life-span development. A later theory by Holland (Holland, 1997) expounded the idea that people choose occupations to optimize the fit between their individual traits and their occupational interests.

Self-identity theorists argue that young people should generally know themselves well enough to make a career decision between the age of 18 and 24 or during university years (Erikson, 1994; Vondracek et al., 1995). Khasawneh, et al. (2007) argue that it is essential for students to develop occupational identities and career decision-making skills during the university years. A study by Malanchuk, Messersmith and Eccles (2010) suggests a developmental progression in the nature of young people's occupational identities across adolescence and early adulthood. Thus many young people in college are expected to make educational choices that may directly relate to their later occupational

options. These decisions have implications for the kind of jobs they are most likely to enter after they finish their studies.

Researchers argue that a healthy occupational identity is likely to be useful to college students. Some even isolate occupational identity as an indicator of readiness for career decision-making (Vondracek *et al.*, 1995; Vondracek, & Skorikov, 1997). Others also suggest that students learn class materials better when it is consistent with their vocational identity (Salami, 2008; Vondracek, & Skorikov, 1997). Such a developing identity is likely to reduce the stress of making critical educational choices and to smooth the psychological transition to adulthood. Malanchuk *et al.* (2010) established that development of a career identity is linked to students' well-being. Specifically, young people whose occupational identities were more mature during adolescence fared better during the transition to adulthood than their peers whose identities were less well developed. In fact, students who have not yet identified career options may feel trapped and frustrated, and may have little or no commitment to school (Skorikov, & Vondracek, 1998; Salami, 2008). Research on this area indicates that having well-articulated occupational goals predicts higher self-esteem in high school students (Chiu, 1990) and that one's value of occupational goals predicts success in the transition to the workforce (Nurmi, Salmela-Aro, & Koivisto, 2002; Gümüs, Hamarat, Çolak, & Duran, 2012). Malanchuk, *et al.* (2010) argue that healthy vocational identities are likely to provide satisfying work experiences.

Against the backdrop of widespread unemployment among young adults in developing countries, career-related decisions constitute a major decision during their schooling years. However, this decision is greatly influenced by the social environment. The structure and consistency in the social environment is provided by attitudes (Udoukpong, Emah, & Umoren, 2012). Positive work attitudes further influence successful transition from school to work or post-secondary education (Fore & Riser, 2005). In addition, the attitudes that people hold toward different careers influence their career choices. Studies show that strongly held attitudes: are good predictors of behaviours; significantly influence performance (Udoukpong *et al.*, 2012); and vitally affect the holder's interests (Soenens, Duriez, & Goossens, 2005). Since attitudes affect our choices, performance and evaluations, we hypothesize that students' vocational identities are related to their work attitudes.

Although the relations between personality, occupational choice and demographic variables are complex, different researchers have found gender differences in the development of the different identity status domains (Mikolyski, 2008; Sandhu, & Tung, 2006; Hejazi, Shahraray, Farsinejad, & Asgary, 2009). Sandhu and Tung (2006) studied gender differences in adolescent identity formation process. Using a sample of 600 adolescents in India aged 13-21, they compared scores of four identity statuses. Their results revealed that girls were higher than boys on identity achievement, morato-

rium and foreclosure. Boys scored higher than girls in identity diffusion. Sandhu and Tung concluded that girls seem to be outperforming boys even in traditionally male-dominated areas of identity formation. Other studies have suggested that girls show higher levels of exploration (Luyckx *et al.*, 2008; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, & Pollock, 2008). Research in Kenya indicates significant gender influences on career choice among students (Kochung, & Migunde, 2011; Nalinya, 2011). Further, although students' age has no significant effect on the development of vocational self-concept, career issues emerge as they progress in education (Murugami & Nel, 2012). Murugami and Nel further report a linear relationship between the development of vocational self-concept and decision making self-efficacy. Since gender and age differences partially reflect different experiences growing up, differences in personality and differences in socialization (Sneed, Schwartz, & Cross, 2006), such differences are expected to exist among Kenyan university students' identity status domains.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, students rarely relate their academic subjects to their future careers and what they would like to be in their adulthood. This creates lack of vocational self-concept and career decision-making skills (Murugami, & Nel, 2012). The need for students to enhance their vocational self-concept is crucial because they need to make effective career decisions. Currently, no studies have evaluated the applicability of identity status measures among Kenyan student population. There is a risk of offering ineffective career guidance and counselling support services to students. Without such measures, career counsellors in Kenya have a limited approach to understanding the career identity development of college students and they may not effectively support young people to become productive and satisfied adults in the work force. No study has used the vocational identity measure in Kenya. Further, the psychometric soundness of this instrument when used with African samples remains largely unknown. Without such studies, the global applicability of the currently predominantly Western-developed identity development perspectives largely remains unclear (Sneed, *et al.*, 2006).

This study contributes to the growing literature on vocational identity measurement by evaluating the relationship between vocational identity status, demographic variables and work attitudes among a sample of Kenyan college students.

### *Hypotheses:*

- Gender is not related to degree choice and occupational identity.
- Age is not related to occupational identity and attitude towards work.
- Vocational identity is not related to attitude towards work.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 166 first year students, (male=103, female= 63), enrolled for Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Business Administration courses at Dedan Kimathi University, Kenya. The age of participants ranged from 17 to 23 years ( $M = 19.2$ ;  $SD = 1.16$ ). Age was positively skewed ( $skewness = .59$ ,  $SE = 0.19$ ;  $kurtosis = .375$ ,  $SE = 0.38$ ).

#### 3.2. Instruments

To measure occupational identity, the Occupational Identity Scale-Revised (OIS-R) (Veiga & Moura, 2005) was used. The OIS-R comprises of 28 items divided into four vocational identity statuses: achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion. The students responded to the items on a five-point likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The variables with their descriptive statistics (i.e. raw means and standard deviations) and their alpha estimates are presented in Table 1. The overall reliability alpha ( $\alpha$ ,  $N=166$ ) for the instrument was .8. The reliability alphas for the subscales were: Achievement (.79), moratorium (.81), foreclosure (.76) and diffusion (.83). To ascertain the construct validity of the scale, factor analysis was conducted using principal component analysis and Varimax rotation. The obtained four factors (see Table, 3) were similar to those defined in the scale’s construction and adaptation (Veiga & Moura, 2005; Melgosa, 1987). The factors obtained account for 38.14% of the total variance, thus distributed: achievement 17.31%,

moratorium 7.53%, foreclosure 7.34%, and diffusion 6.48%. The results of the factorial analysis, therefore, allowed us to maintain the items, as well as their distribution to the same factors of the version adopted by Veiga and Moura (2005). Table 2, shows the results of testing the scale’s multidimensionality.

Attitude towards employment was measured using Work Opinion Questionnaire (Johnson, Messe, & Crano, 1984). The questionnaire has 8 items which measure self-confidence and motivation for work. Point values for items 2, 3 and 7 are assigned as follows: Strongly agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1. Items 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8 are reverse coded. Point values are summed for each respondent and divided by the number of items. The intended range of scores is 1-4, with a higher score indicating a more positive attitude toward employment (Dahlberg, Toal, Swahn, & Behrens, 2005; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991). Reliability alpha for this scale was .48. This was deemed sufficient considering that the scale’s internal reliability has been pegged at .54 (Harter, 1985) among African-American samples. This is relatively low but the inclusion criteria used by Dahlberg et al. (2005) supports its use.

#### 3.3. Data Collection procedure

Filling in the questionnaires was supervised by the lecturer of the classes involved in the study. This task took place during the normal lecture hours and students collaborated voluntarily. Participants were given 20 minutes to fill in the questionnaires.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of the Subscales Based on Sex

Variable	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach’s $\alpha$
Achievement Occupational Identity	Male	26.56	5.06	.79
	Female	25.44	5.35	
	Total	26.14	5.19	
Moratorium Occupational Identity	Male	18.95	5.58	.81
	Female	20.70	5.87	
	Total	19.61	5.74	
Diffusion Occupational Identity	Male	12.81	4.25	.76
	Female	12.48	4.64	
	Total	12.68	4.39	
Foreclosure Occupational Identity	Male	15.96	4.57	.83
	Female	15.86	3.87	
	Total	15.92	4.31	

Notably, Table 1 shows that male students had higher scores in the subscale of occupational identity achievement while female students had higher scores in the subscale of

moratorium. In the other subscales male and female students posted almost equal scores.

**Table 2.** Factor Structure of the OIS-R

Items	Factors			
	Achievement	Moratorium	Diffusion	Foreclosure
25	.712			
22	.683			
23	.608			
27	.549			
20	.524			
5	.466			
3	.465			
17		.651		
9		.644		
12		.615		
1		.612		
21		.551		
6		.431		
10		.378		
11			.713	
14			.675	
16			.619	
2			.468	
19			.458	
7			.436	
28			.332	
15				.699
24				.605
13				.598
18				.472
4				.357
8				.183
26				.127

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 19 iterations.

## 4. Results

To determine whether gender was related to degree choice,

chi-square test of independence was conducted. The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3.** Cross Tabulation of Gender x Degree Course

		Degree course		Total	
		BCOM	BBA		
Gender	Male	Count	69	34	103
		% Within Gender	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%
		% Within Degree course	68.3%	52.3%	62.0%
		% of Total	41.6%	20.5%	62.0%
	Female	Count	32	31	63
		% Within Gender	50.8%	49.2%	100.0%
		% Within Degree course	31.7%	47.7%	38.0%
		% of Total	19.3%	18.7%	38.0%
Total	Count	101	65	166	
	% within Gender	60.8%	39.2%	100.0%	
	% within Degree course	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	60.8%	39.2%	100.0%	

**Table 4.** Chi Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.304 <sup>a</sup>	1	.038		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	3.651	1	.056		
Likelihood Ratio	4.280	1	.039		
Fisher's Exact Test				.049	.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.278	1	.039		
N of Valid Cases	166				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 24.67.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of degree choice for male and female students. No statistically significant relationship was found ( $\chi^2 (1) = 3.651, P = .056$ ) between gender and degree choice. This

implies that both Males and Females equally prefer BCOM and BBA degree courses. *Phi* and Cramer's *V* tests (both  $=.161, P=.038$ ) indicated a very weak association between the two variables.

**Table 5.** Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes and Occupational Identity Status

Attitude type		Occupational Identity Status			
		Achievement OIS	Moratorium OIS	Diffusion OIS	Foreclosure OIS
Low attitude	Mean	26.2714	19.5000	13.2571	15.8143
	N	70	70	70	70
	Std. Deviation	5.14407	6.00423	4.42223	4.43730
High Attitude	Mean	26.0417	19.6979	12.2604	16.0000
	N	96	96	96	96
	Std. Deviation	5.24538	5.56137	4.34377	4.23270
Total	Mean	26.1386	19.6145	12.6807	15.9217
	N	166	166	166	166
	Std. Deviation	5.18846	5.73523	4.39151	4.30784

Table 5 shows mean, and standard deviation, of occupational identities based on attitudes towards work. The results indicate that students had higher attitude scores in the OIS subscales of achievement and moratorium, and the least attitude

scores in the diffusion subscale of OIS. The correlation coefficients of age, attitude and occupational identity subscales are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Correlation Matrix of Age, Attitude and OIS Subscales

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	<i>r</i>	1	.041	.195*	-.072	.018	.067
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.598	.012	.356	.813	.389
2. Attitude	<i>r</i>	.041	1	-.022	.017	-.112	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.598		.779	.827	.149	.785
3. Achievement Occupational Identity Status	<i>r</i>	.195*	-.022	1	-.380**	-.311**	.261**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.779		.000	.000	.001
4. Moratorium Occupational Identity Status	<i>r</i>	-.072	.017	-.380**	1	.371**	-.146
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.356	.827	.000		.000	.061
5. Diffusion Occupational Identity Status	<i>r</i>	.018	-.112	-.311**	.371**	1	-.119
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.813	.149	.000	.000		.128
6. Foreclosure Occupational Identity Status	<i>r</i>	.067	.021	.261**	-.146	-.119	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.389	.785	.001	.061	.128	
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

The results indicate a significant positive relationship between age and achievement occupational identity ( $r(164) = .195, P = .05$ ). The results further indicate that attitude toward work had very weak positive correlations with age ( $r(164) = .041, P = .05$ ). In addition, attitude had very weak positive correlations with moratorium ( $r(164) = .017, P = .05$ )

and foreclosure ( $r(164) = .021, P = .05$ ) occupational identities. On the other hand, attitude toward work had very weak negative correlations with achievement ( $r(164) = -.022, P = .05$ ) and diffusion ( $r(164) = -.112, P = .05$ ) occupational identity statuses.

**Table 7.** *F*-Test for Single Variable Effect of Gender

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Means Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Gender	Achievement OIS	47.221	1	47.221	1.752	.187
	Moratorium OIS	117.712	1	117.712	3.615	.059
	Diffusion OIS	1.801	1	1.801	.093	.760
	Foreclosure OIS	.626	1	.626	.033	.855

Table 7 presents the results for intergroup effects which indicate that there are no significant differences between male and female students in all the occupational identity statuses. To examine gender differences in occupational identity statuses, multivariate analysis of variance was used. Results of the Box's test for equality of covariance matrices was not significant ( $F_{10} = .78, P = 0.05$ ). Results of the Levine test for equality of variances shows that the error variance among the matrices is not equal among occupational identity statuses. The Hotelling trace test results ( $F = 1.57, P = 0.05$ ) indicate that boys and girls are not different in any of the occupational identity statuses.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the OIS-R and Work Opinion Questionnaire produce reliable data when used among Kenyan students. This is important since most of the psychological measures have been developed in non-African contexts and their global applicability remains limited (Sneed *et al.*, 2006).

The results reaffirm the view that occupational identity is a complex developmental process involving the interaction of personality, gender, age, and other related factors. Gender had

been hypothesized to be related to both degree choice and occupational identity. Since both degree choice and occupational identity are related to career choices (Khasawneh et al., 2007; Duriez, Luyckx, Soenens, & Berzonsky, 2012; Duffy et al., 2011), we started by testing whether gender had any relationship with degree choices. A chi-square test of independence indicated no statistically significant relationship between the two variables. This is contrary to findings in earlier studies among Kenyan students that show significant gender influences on career choice (Kochung, & Migunde, 2011; Nalianya, 2011). However, it is important to note that our results were based on a university students sample unlike the samples used in these other studies. The results further indicate male students had higher scores in the subscale of occupational identity achievement while female students had higher scores in the subscale of moratorium. This finding may partly support findings on gender differences in occupational identity formation (Hejazi et al., 2009). In the other subscales male and female students posted equal scores. Importantly, all our statistical tests revealed no significant differences between male and female students in all the occupational identity statuses. This contradicts findings by Sandhu and Tung (2006) that girls post higher scores in the identity subscales of achievement, moratorium and foreclosure. This may be attributed to differences in socialization.

The finding that there is a significant positive relationship between age and achievement occupational identity implies that as people grow older they attain a stable occupational identity. This is congruent with Waterman (1999) developmental hypothesis which suggests that identity has a developmental direction towards achievement. This hypothesis has been supported by findings of reviews of cross-sectional and longitudinal research showing that identity achievers are more prevalent in older groups, while diffusion is more common in younger age groups (Berzonsky, 1996; Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010). Although the finding is inconsistent with Murugami and Nel (2012) finding that among Kenyan students, age had no significant effect on the development of vocational self-concept, it offers support to their finding that career issues emerge as students progress in education.

The results indicate that attitude toward work had a very weak positive correlation with age. This may imply that as people grow older they slowly develop a positive attitude towards work. Apparently, students had higher attitude scores in the subscales of occupational identity achievement and moratorium and the least attitude scores in the diffusion subscale of OIS. However, correlation analysis indicate that attitude toward work had a very weak negative relationship with achievement and diffusion occupational identity statuses. This contradicts findings that indicate achieved occupational identity to be positively correlated with the constructs of career and life satisfaction (Hirschi & Herrmann, 2012), career decidedness (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007), job involvement (Khasawneh et al., 2007), and career commitment (Duffy et al., 2011). Further research may shed light on this finding

considering that achievement occupational identity status is reached after carefully evaluating alternatives before settling on goals and may therefore be expected to have a positive relationship with attitude towards work. In fact studies (Malanchuk et al., 2010; Nurmi et al., 2002) suggest that occupational goals predict success in the transition to the workforce and that healthy vocational identities are likely to provide satisfying work experiences. The finding that attitude toward work has weak positive correlations with moratorium and foreclosure occupational identities may be interpreted in the context of Kenyan socialization where people get into careers influenced by significant others and where unemployment rates remain high (Murugami & Nel, 2012). Since the relationship between attitude toward work and the other variables is not outrightly discernible, it may be explained by various lurking variables. More research is needed to find out what these variables could be.

## 6. Limitations

A major limitation of the study is that we used just a single sample of university students in Kenya. Using adolescents in primary and secondary schools would greatly inform the applicability of the questionnaires among adolescents in all ages. A second limitation is that we only performed CFA to ascertain construct validity of the OIS-R. Since CFA and EFA should be used as complementary analyses (Roesenthal & Rosnow, 2008; Pedhazur, & Schmelkin, 1991) it is possible that some items may have cross-loadings, or even that a single-factor model may be obtained when EFA is used. The research examined the structure of occupational identity using one-time data in which respondents rated items with regard to a particular time frame. A limitation of this approach is that it ignores the issue of change in occupational identity. Regarding the variables under study, it is worth noting that identity represents cognitive-dynamic forms of self-regulation (Erikson, 1994). Kaplan and Flum (2010) note that adaptive self-regulation entails monitoring and adjusting the projected identity in response to feedback and environmental affordances. These limitations call for a cautious interpretation of the findings.

## 7. Conclusion

Identity formation is a very complex developmental process. This study found age to be an important factor in both identity formation and attitude towards work. Since gender was found to have no significant influence on occupational identity formation, there should be other factors that bring about gender differences in career selection. The attitude toward work only slightly influenced occupation identity probably because, the scarcity of job opportunities in the country have made students to select careers based on chances of employment rather than on their abilities and interests.

## 8. Practical Implications

OIS-R and attitudes towards work questionnaire are reliable measures when used among Kenyan young people. These instruments may provide reliable results when used in the area of school-based career counselling. Instruments concerning adolescents' vocational identity may represent a useful means for psychologists, teachers and other professionals in education to understand their students better (Republic of Kenya, 2005; Hartung, Porfeli & Vondracek, 2005). The OIS is an important research instrument because, according to the nature of the results, it provides reliable data even when used for testing a Kenyan sample. The scale helps to understand individuals who show features that are not specific to a single status since it provides the results separately in each status for each individual. The OIS validity has important consequences because as the scale narrows down the nature and level of adolescents' career options, it allows for better counselling in terms of their vocational calling. In short, the analyses undertaken regarding the Occupational Identity Scale's psychometric features present positive values in terms of their use in Educational practice and research. The results proved consistent with the theory and research on vocational identity.

## 9. Recommendation

Further research is needed using adolescents in primary and secondary schools to obtain new data that may inform further improvement of the version of the scales used in this study. Further research may also be done with students from different faculties and/or universities using both cross-sectional and longitudinal designs to fully ascertain the psychometric usefulness of the measures adopted for this study.

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