RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT AND VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AMONG ADOLESCENTS' IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TONGAREN, DIVISION BUNGOMA DISTRICT.

BY

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DECLARATION

I, George Nabwera Juma declare that this is my own original work and has not been presented to any other university for the award of a master's degree.

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents Raphael Juma and Florence Juma, for all the support and encouragement throughout my education and to my brothers Winston and Mike, my sisters Everlyne, Jacqueline and Valentine Juma with much affection.
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ABSTRACT

This was a study of the relationship between self-concept and vocational aspirations of adolescents. The study also investigated intervening variables like gender, age and socioeconomic background with regard to the relationship between self-concept and vocational aspirations.

The study sample was drawn from ten randomly selected secondary schools in Tongaren division of Bungoma District. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 294 subjects comprising of form one and form four students, out of which 146 were boys and 148 were girls.

Two instruments were used to collect data. The Semantic Differential Scale (SDS) was used to measure self-concept while the occupational preference questionnaire was used to elicit pertinent data relating to socioeconomic background and vocational aspirations.

Data collected in this study, was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (spss). Means and frequencies were used in descriptive statistics while spearman rank order correlation coefficient, multiple regression and the t-test were used in inferential statistics.

The study found that there was a significant correlation between self-concept and vocational aspirations, and between socioeconomic background and vocational aspirations. There was a significant gender difference in vocational aspirations. In addition, there was no significant correlation between age and self-concept and between
age and vocational aspirations. The findings also showed that there was no significant
gender difference in their self-concept mean scores.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

We live in an age that encourages self-understanding. Literature worldwide sends one clear message; to become a complete healthy person, you must understand your own self. Although you may sometimes not really understand who you are, you undoubtedly have a sense of your enduring qualities and faults, your interests and ambitions. Forsyth (1987), notes that there is no doubt that one of the most recent and significant interpretations of human personality is located in the self-concept. This is a key factor many psychologists ascribe to in the integration of personality and in motivating behaviour.

Harter (1998) holds that self is the part of one's personality of which one is aware. Self-concept, according to Wayment and Zettin (1989) is the conscious cognitive perception and evaluation by individuals of themselves, and is their thoughts and opinions about themselves. Chassin and Young (1981) note that self-concept implies a developing awareness of who and what one is. It describes what individuals see when they look at themselves, in terms of their self-perceived physical characteristics, personality skills, traits and social statuses. The individual’s self-concept functions to direct his/her normal or abnormal behaviours (Ezeilo, 1990).

Our self-concepts include not only our beliefs about who we currently are, but also who we might become, our possible selves. Markus and Nurius (1986) note that our possible
selves include our visions of the self we dream of becoming, such possible selves motivate us with specific goals, a vision of life we long for.

Self-concept has often been described as a global entity, and as such there is lack of agreement among authors and researchers on the conceptualization of self-concept. This problem has further been widened by the availability of different definitions of self-concept. Despite this divergence, the problem of conceptualization has however been reduced through the recognition by scholars and researchers that self-concept is multidimensional rather than a single variable. This is evident from the use of the multidimensional approach by researchers such as Mwaniki (1973), Stangvik (1979), Olowu (1983) and Mwathi (1998) who have used the physical, character and social self-concept dimensions in their attempts to derive the global self-concept. Olowu (1982, 1983) thus defines self-concept as consisting of six dimensions: physical self, character self, social self, family self, academic self and emotional self.

One’s self-concept even influences the kind of job or vocation an individual prefers. Work is essential to the existence of every mankind and to the individual as it ensures both survival of society and livelihood of each of its members. Active involvement in the working process is an elementary precondition for many aspects of life. The awareness to be a giving member of society is a source of genuine self-value.

The development of occupational plans during adolescence can be viewed in many aspects as paralleling, or even as part of, the identity development process. As with
developing a coherent sense of identity, the development of occupational plans follows a sequence that involves an examination of one's traits, abilities and interests. This is a period of experimentation with different work roles and an integration of influences from one's past with one's hopes for future. As is the case with identity development, the social environment in which development of career plans takes place profoundly influences occupational role development.

Occupational aspirations of young people have far-reaching effects in their future lives. Otaala (1972) indicates that the aspirations pupils hold are likely to have an influence on the actions they take and choices they make, either to further their education or join gainful employment. Coopersmith (1967) notes that negative attitudes towards the self, usually result in anticipation of failure and perceived lack of ability. This implies that the attitude towards the self may determine one's aspirations be they vocational or others.

Adolescence is a time for the development of realistic occupational plans. As children enter adolescence they begin to think of themselves in terms of abstract values and attitudes. As Erickson (1968) and Marcia (1967) noted, decisions about career choices become part of the self-concept during adolescence when identity issues are being resolved.

There are sound psychological reasons why this task of vocational choice is important. All people need to meet their vocational needs for recognition, praise, acceptance, approval, love, and independence. One way individuals do this is by taking on a vocational identity by becoming "somebodies" whom others can recognize and by which
others grant them emotional fulfillment. Through identifying with a particular vocation, they find selfhood, self-realization, and self-fulfillment (Chiu, 1990).

The process of occupational choice may be characterized as that of developing a vocational identity. The ‘self’ is the central concern for the identity. The concepts of identity and self are intuitively satisfying means of attributing motivation for occupational choice to the person choosing. Thus, self and vocational development interact and affect each other as the individual copes with the problems of deciding upon a career (Tiedman, 1961).

The selection of an occupation is an attempt to fulfill the sense of self. The desire and expectation to get ahead vocationally also depend on self-concept. Adolescents who have determined some career goals for themselves have better and more positive self-concepts than those without any career goals. (Chiu 1990, Munson 1992). Both those with positive and negative self-concepts consider it important to get ahead but those with negative self-concepts are less likely to expect they will succeed. Is there a difference also in the types of positions desired by the negative and the positive self-concept adolescents? In general, those with negative self-concepts want to avoid both positions in which they will be forced to exercise leadership and jobs in which they will dominate others. They do not want to be power wielders. Avoiding leadership or supervision of others is a way of avoiding criticism or judgment.

Several studies have been carried out on self-concept of students both in Kenya and outside Kenya. For instance in Kenya we have studies by Mwaniki (1973),
Anyango (1982), Nyangweso (1985), Kamau (1986) and Mwathi (1998). Most of these studies have focused on the relationship between self-concept and academic or class performance.

Studies have also been done on career aspirations of students by among others Akinkunle (1977), Egsmore (1981), Aswani (1991), and Kibera (1993). These studies have shown among other factors that parents' education level, parents' occupation, peers and family socioeconomic background influence vocational choice. It is also noted that few studies in Kenya have addressed themselves to the area of self-concept and its relationship to adolescents' vocational aspirations.

1.2 Statement of the problem

An occupation requires far more than a set of skills and functions. It means a way of life. A career provides and determines much of an individual's physical and social environment. It also selects traits that are to be utilized and strengthened, and it carries status in the community. A vocational choice is markedly influenced by value judgement and ethical standards. In this sense, occupational choice and personality traits are intimately related.

The type of occupation an individual enters and in which he/she spends his/her life has exceedingly important effects upon the individual's way of life and the satisfaction one gets from it. Aspirations uncongenial to ones personality may create boredom or discontent, which carries over and influences other aspects of life. Of concern, are a
surprisingly large number of adults who are not at all satisfied with the career choices they made while adolescents and live in discontent.

It should be further noted that, the question of vocational satisfaction is too closely interwoven with that part of personal identity. Since the choice of most workers is work connection burdened with negative personal qualities, when asked whether they are satisfied with their work situation most workers have no difficulty in responding affirmatively (Fisher & Hanna, 1931).

According to McShane (1985), although the relationship between strikes and vocational dissatisfaction has not been formulated into an explicit theoretical model, there is widespread public belief that such a link exists. Vocational dissatisfaction has been empirically related to militancy and actual strikes. These findings apply to global and specific job dissatisfaction indices.

A recent survey by French, Caplan and Van Harrison (1992) in New York consisting of 2010 respondents from twenty seven occupations, revealed that forty eight percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the vocations they had gotten into. This is a very large percentage especially in the western world where we have many vocational openings.

In addition, there is an encouraging relative change in gender stereotypes in relation to vocational choice. There are more women opting for jobs traditionally considered male.
If there was no vocational counseling for these individuals when they were adolescents, there might be a conflict between the self-concepts and their vocational aspirations. Consequently, as adults, many of them have made uncongenial vocational choices. There is therefore dire need to investigate the relationship between self-concept and vocational aspirations to shed some light on the issue.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The primary concern of this study was to investigate the nature of the relationship between adolescents’ self-concepts and their vocational aspirations. It also sought to establish, whether adolescents from different socioeconomic backgrounds, age and gender vary in their self-concepts and vocational aspirations with an aim of providing information for the counseling process.

The study specifically addressed the following research questions;

- Is there a relationship between adolescents’ self-concepts and vocational aspirations?
- Is there a relationship between gender and vocational aspirations?
- Is there a gender difference in adolescents’ self-concepts?
- Is there a relationship between adolescents’ age and their vocational aspirations?
- Is there a relationship between adolescents’ socio-economic background and their self-concepts?
- Is there a relationship between adolescents’ socioeconomic background and their vocational aspirations?
1.4 Significance of the study

Career guidance has for a long time been based on limited information particularly in the less developed nations. However with more people recognizing its importance there is need to avail information for the counseling process. This study was a partial input to the unsatisfied demand for more research in to the area of adolescents’ vocational aspirations.

It was expected that the study would provide data to show the relationship between self-concept and vocational aspirations of adolescents’. Such information is essential to parents, teachers, vocational counselors and educators as a whole, who are charged with the responsibility of enhancing adolescents’ welfare. This would motivate them to provide environmental situations and experiences that facilitate the development of healthy self-concepts by adolescence.

In addition, due to the high concern gender issues have received worldwide, the research findings would serve to enlighten counselors, parents and educators in general, on the differential counseling needs of boys and girls in relation to the development of high vocational aspirations. Policy makers and implementers would benefit from such information in making attempts to structure policies that would benefit all the socioeconomic classes so as to boost their self-concepts and vocational aspirations.

Presumably, the current research findings and suggestions will stimulate more research in this area.
1.5 Scope and limitations of the Study

Due to financial constraints and time limitations, the sample size was relatively small. The study covered only ten schools and was confined to Tongaren division.

In addition, in this study job categorization was performed. It is important to note that there is no valid method of ranking occupations in Kenya. This is so because different people employ different rules as yardsticks for ranking occupations. The method used was designed by the researcher and his supervisors and is subject to amendment hence not a fixed occupational ranking method.

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

It was assumed that behavior is controlled in part by an individual’s self-concept; and such behaviour includes an individual’s tendency for high or low occupational aspirations.

It was further assumed that the participants would complete the survey tool objectively.
1.7 Definition of terms

Adolescent: An individual within the period in human development between the beginning of puberty and the attainment of adulthood.

Self-concept: An organized configuration or perceptions of the self, which are admissible to awareness and related to specific areas of behavior and functioning, also known as self-areas.

Aspiration: One’s ambition or expectation.

Vocation: A particular job, occupation, or career.

Vocational aspiration: Preference for a particular job or occupation.

Adolescence: The period in human development between the beginning of puberty and the attainment of adulthood.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises of two sections. The first section comprises of the self-concept theory and the phenomenological theory that form the theoretical framework upon which this study was based. In the second section relevant literature of the self-concept and vocational aspirations among adolescents, quoting both foreign and Kenyan based studies is reviewed.

2.2 Theoretical framework

A theory explains natural events in terms of a system of concepts and laws that relate these concepts to each other (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). According to Ringgenberg, (2000), theories of personality types, traits and patterns have been credited with offering an important avenue of investigation for determining or predicting success in various occupations. Consequently a theory that can explain a phenomenon or predict events, provides grounds for the use of intervention measures to modify results.

2.2.1 Self-Concept Theory

Donald Super (1957) holds that vocational choice and development are a continuing and dynamic process. In this process, individuals explore and establish vocational goals that give them the greatest opportunities for expression of self-concepts that have been developed over the years.
The theory holds that adolescence is a critical period for revising and building an individual's self-image and self-concept, and for finding and assuming an occupational role in which individuals can express themselves in manners consistent with their concepts of self. Self-concepts begin to form earlier but are focused and channelled into occupational choices during adolescence.

Super (1957) postulates five major vocational stages through which each individual must pass. These are specification, implementation, stabilization, crystallization, and consolidation. Crystallization is a stage where an individual formulates ideas about work that are in accord with the individual's self-concept. This is followed by specification. In this stage the individual narrows his/her choices and takes the first steps to be able to enter an occupation. During the implementation phase, an individual finishes training and enters employment. Stabilization is a stage whereby an individual settles down to the appropriate career choice. Advancement and attainment of status occur in the last phase of vocational development called consolidation. In achieving these vocational tasks, the individual's development, environment, and available opportunities are limiting factors in attaining self-realization. It is believed however, that, individuals may be able to succeed in a wide variety of occupations consistent with their self-concepts, interests, and abilities.

These are constellations of interests and abilities and numerous occupations within these constellations. Through a process of reality testing, individuals need to relate their interests and abilities to occupations. As they encounter new experiences, they may have
to readjust their self-concepts and implement this process again because of their changing career choices and performance.

Thus, before wise vocational choices can be made, individuals must have realistic views of themselves in order to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses.

2.2.2 Phenomenological Theory

Combs and Snygg (1959) emphasize that conscious feelings, cognitions and perceptions, are the predominant aspects of the self-concept. As phenomenologists, they believe that awareness is the cause of behaviour and that what individuals think and feel determines what they do. Thus, they hold that self-concept is that part of the phenomenal field that has been differentiated as definite and fairly stable self-evaluations by the individual.

Combs & Snygg (1959) also note that individuals commonly develop perceptions about themselves in terms of their experience and the treatment they have received from those responsible for their development.

Therefore, the phenomenological theory stresses that, a person acts in a manner consistent with his/her perceptual field, which is his/her perception of an event at any time. This includes the choices an individual makes be they vocational or otherwise.
Summary

Supers self-concept theory thus shows that as an individual develops, he/she forms different self-conceptions at different ages. This self-conceptions project the individual to given vocational aspirations, which also develop through a given set of stages.

Consequently, individuals at different ages have different self-concepts and vocational aspirations with the environment playing a key role in their development.

Combs and Snygg also note that awareness is the cause of behaviour. Thus, individuals make choices consistent to the perceptions of themselves.

From the two theories it is evident that self – concept and age have a major influence on vocational choice. In addition, the environment, which comprises the socio-economic background and cultural influences on gender, also influences self-concept and vocational aspirations.

2.3 Self-concept

Kihlstrom and Cantor (1984), define self-concept as one’s mental representation of oneself. This conception of self as a cognitive structure has two sets of implications, namely its relation to the external environment, and its possibilities for change.

Self-concept is considered in terms of two major dimensions, the internal dimension, and the external dimension. The external dimension of the self-concept refers to the sub selves whose frame of reference is external. The individual perceives himself the way he
views other people’s perception of him. Social interaction theorists such as Mead (1934), Sullivan (1953) and Kinch (1963), emphasize the importance of social interaction in the development and maintenance of self-concept of an individual.

The internal dimension reflects what the person sees when he/she evaluates himself/herself from within. Hall and Lindsey (1969) describe two aspects of this dimension, “self-as-object” and “self-as-process.” The former denotes the persons feelings, attitudes, perceptions and evaluations of himself as an object, while the latter denotes the self as consisting of an active group of processes like thinking, perceiving and remembering.

These self-evaluations may be with reference to the academic, social, physical, character, emotional and family aspects of an individual. Favourable self-evaluations result in a positive self-concept while unfavourable self-concepts result in negative self-evaluations.

According to Ezeilo (1990), the individual’s self-concept functions to direct his/her behaviour. This is bound to affect the way the individual interacts with his environment and the choices he/she makes be they vocational or otherwise.

2.4 Self concept and vocational aspirations

In a study by Rosenberg (1952), 4,585 students were queried about their occupational political and educational aspirations. The sample was selected from eleven universities in U.S.A on representative basis. This was a study of personality traits. In their analysis, it
was found that self concept had a major influence on the kind of vocation an individual chose.

Kamau (1986) investigated occupational aspirations of physically handicapped secondary school students and compared them with the actual job placements of these students. She also examined social factors such as gender, parental background, curriculum, self-concept and societal attitudes. From her sample of 81 subjects, she found that among other things, disabled persons have a high self-perception and hence high aspirations and willingness to compete with others.

Seeking to answer questions concerning the occupational aspirations and expectations of 2,058 students in eastern Kentucky (U.S.A), Powers (1974) collected data concerning idealistic and realistic occupations. She also investigated the degree of relationship of these aspirations and selected personal, family, community, and school related factors. The results showed a significant relationship between the students' self-concepts and occupational aspirations.

Korman (1967) reported a study involving 600 subjects in which he found support for the hypothesis that high self-concept students are more likely to choose those occupations they perceive as requiring their high abilities than are those with a low self-concept.

2.5 Gender differences in Self-Concept

Historically, gender has been lauded as one of the most important contributors to the variance in children and adolescents’ self-concepts (Coleman & Hendry, 1990). A
question arises as to whether young men and women differ in terms of their self-concepts in adolescence. Once again, there is a controversy of literature.

Wylie (1979) concluded that there is no convincing evidence that boys and girls differ in their global self-concept at any age level, however, she notes that differences in domain specific self-concepts might well have been veiled because of past reliance on unidimensional measures.

On the other hand, Osborne and Le Gette (1982) using the Piers-Harris self-concept of ability scale and the Coppersmith self esteem inventory, found that adolescent boys and girls did not differ in global self-concept. However, boys had significantly higher domain specific self-concepts on Piers-Harris clusters of physical appearance attributes and anxiety, whereas girls had self-concepts that are more positive in social domains. These differences occurred across grade levels 7,9,11, and all social classes.

Mboya (1994), using the self-description inventory found that adolescent boys had higher self-concepts than girls in domains of family, physical abilities, physical appearance, and health. Girls had higher self-concepts in general school and emotional stability. Boys also reported higher levels of global self-concept than did girls. These differences occurred irrespective of age and ethnic characteristics of the sample.

Marsh (1984) using the self description questionnaire (SDQ) series of instruments and encompassing the age range from preadolescence to adolescence, found consistent gender differences varied by Domain, boys had higher self concepts in areas of general self,
physical appearance and physical abilities. Girls had higher self-concepts in areas of general school and reading.

Using a meta-analysis based on over 400 subjects Hattie and Mc Inman (1991) reported differences in mean self-concept scores for males and females on only few dimensions. Mathematics and physical ability self-concepts favoured males and verbal self-concept favoured women. More important there appeared to be differences in the manner that males and females integrate this conceptions across various dimensions.

Crocker and Major (1989) in a review of previous studies conducted in the United States of America (USA), argued that there was little evidence for claiming gender differences in self-concept. They suggested that this does not necessarily mean that females and males have similar scores, rather, females could engage in a variety of strategies of self-protection such as attributing negative feedback to prejudice against women.

Piers (1984), using a sample of 485 adolescents from Los Angeles, found gender differences in self-concept. These differences were with respect to specific self-concept domains. Piers found no gender differences in total self-concept. Using cluster scales, she found significant gender differences on 33 of the fifty items that appeared consistent with the sex stereotypes.
Applying Cohen’s (1969) conventions for magnitudes of small, medium, and large effect sizes, she found none of the Piers-Harris items indicated a large difference between the sexes. Only five of the thirty-three items indicated medium effects.

In a study where 15 year old boys and girls were asked to describe their strengths and weaknesses. Williams and Mc Gee (1991), found that over 70% of the sample of 976 from Michigan adolescents perceived themselves as kind, trustworthy and reliable. The average adolescent cited 14 or 15 strengths, and most of them appeared to have positive self-concepts. Boys give more positive responses than girls to items focusing on their activities, while girls emphasized their positive personal qualities.

2.6 Gender differences in vocational aspirations

Despite the liberalization in sex role stereotypes that has occurred during the past 30 years, still the adolescent girls vocational choices tend to be concentrated among jobs that have historically been occupied by women and they are more oriented toward occupations that involve working with people and that allow the expression of compassion and altruism, (Beutel and Marini, 1995). In contrast, relatively fewer adolescent girls plan to enter jobs in which the main tasks involve working with things rather than people as in the case of science and engineering (Jozefowicz, Barber, Eccles and Mallasis, 1994).
There is a general agreement that the career aspirations of female adolescents parallel the sex segregation that exists in the work force. Moreover, the relationship between their aspirations and the realities of the work place becomes stronger as they grow older (Astin and Myint, 1971).

In a study of high school seniors in Wisconsin, Lueptow (1981) found that there has not been significant change in the sex typing of female adolescents vocational aspirants. Adolescent females, aspired to jobs that were dominated by females, especially those that allowed them to work with people.

Stiles, Gibbons and Peters, (1993), note that girls can identify as many occupations as boys but they see fewer occupations as possibilities for themselves. This is because they have lower aspirations or less self-confidence, or are aware of certain barriers that exist for them and not for men.

According to Grotevant & Thornbeke (1982), researchers and theorists previously ignored gender differences in vocational aspirations, partly because they assumed such differences were minor or non-existent. They note that, an important component of adult identity is seeing oneself as a member of a particular vocation/profession. However, men and women have different needs and different aspirations regarding work and careers and achieve their vocational identities through different paths.
Chivore (1986) in a study in Zimbabwe also confirms that girls have different job attitudes, preferences, and expectations. He also notes that women compared to men are concentrated on relatively few skilled occupations and are proportionately over represented in the lower ranks of the occupational pyramid.

In a gifted research programme at John Hopkins University by Stripek and Hoffman (1980), investigators found that high-achieving females had much lower expectations for success than did high achieving males. Many mathematically preconscious females did select scientific and medical careers and only 46% aspired to a full time career compared to 98% of the males.

One group of investigators, Schulenburg, Goldstein and Vondracek (1991), carried out a study on gender differences in career interests and whether the interests ever moderated by student’s educational and career aspirations. They administered a standardized measure of fourteen career interests to a rural sample of 699 Texas high school students. The investigators found marked gender differences in career interests consistent with the traditional sex-role stereotypes. The career aspirations also varied with the student’s educational aspirations.

In a study of occupational identity formation Grotevant & Thornbeke, (1982), found that young men and women in their junior and senior years of high school had made equal progress toward achieving occupational identity. However, there were some male-female differences in kinds of work. Women preferred work that did not have competition,
young men sought challenging tasks and were unconcerned about negative relationships with others.

Although women may continue to have generally lower aspirations than do comparatively talented males, there are some indications that women's aspirations have substantially increased over the past several decades (Leung, Conoley & Scheel, 1994).

2.7 Self-Concept variation with age.

Whether children's self-concepts change markedly as they grow, change and experience the world and whether adolescents' self-concepts plummet or remain unstable for a number of years as they enter the period of storm and stress, are some of the pertinent questions asked by investigators and laypersons alike. There is yet no coherent picture on age effects in multidimensional self-concepts of children and adolescents.

Wylie (1979) after reviewing hundreds of studies conducted before 1978 concluded that there was no convincing evidence of any age related effect, positive or negative in global self-concept between the ages of six and fifty. Researchers using more sophisticated theoretical models and more psychometrically sound techniques have concluded that age per se accounts for a very small portion of the variance in self-concept responses.

Marsh (1991) does posit however that there is a relatively strong support for a curvilinear age effect in global self-concept such that there is a decline during preadolescence. A reversal of this decline during early or mid-adolescence and a rise in self-concept during
late adolescence and early adulthood. He notes that although empirical support for his curvilinear effect was mixed, no study has found an increase in self-concept during preadolescence.

Crain and Bracken (1994), in a large scale cross-sectional study of over 2500 American students using the multidimensional self-concept scale across the 9-19 year old age range found a statistically significant mean difference in global self-concept.

Dusek and Flaherty (1981), utilizing a sophisticated longitudinal sequential design with a large sample of 1,632, found little longitudinal evidence for age effects in multiple dimensions of self-concept from grades 5 through 12. The age effects found in their cross-sectional analysis were significant but tended to be small and inconsistent across the three age cohorts they considered. They thus concluded that self-concept during adolescence develops in a stable and continuous manner with changes occurring slowly, gradually and only at the individual student level.

In an effort to cover the period from preadolescence to early adulthood, Marsh (1989), summarized data from 12,266 Australian students who composed the non-mature groups of Self Description Questionnaire 1 (SDQ 1), SDQ 11 and SDQ 111 instruments. There was a linear decline in self-concept for both boys and girls for the preadolescent age. For mid and early adolescence, there was an initial decline and later increased. For SDQ 111 there was a reasonably consistent increase in self-concept with age.
2.8 Self-concept and Socio-economic background

People learn about themselves from others, both through social comparisons and direct interactions. McGuire & McGuire (1982), note that one of the most powerful determinants of currently available self-conceptions is the configuration of the immediate social environments. People compare with superior others to evaluate themselves and with inferior others to feel good.

Parents of high socio-economic background usually have high self-concepts, are relatively emotionally stable, and are likely to have children of high self-concept. This is so because these parents tend to have close social relationships with their children, encourage their independence and allow them considerable freedom. Parents of low socio-economic status have low self-concepts and do not provide behavioural guidance to their children, are harsh and disrespectful. The typical form of punishment used is withdrawal of love hence produce children with low self-concepts.

2.9 Socio-economic background and Vocational Aspirations

Ironically, the most fateful step in the process of choosing an occupation does not involve the real choice at all; rather, it is the socio class one is born into. The socio-economic level of the parents is the best predictor of the level the children will achieve (Jencks, 1972). The family provides knowledge to the child. He/she learns what kind of jobs are there, what the opportunity structure is, and what a person has to do to prepare for a
particular job, certain attitudes towards self and the world that play a crucial role in occupational choice.

A study by Blau and Duncan (1967), which did not include daughters, found that a majority of the sons of working-class fathers remain on working class jobs, but only approximately 37% move into white-collar occupations. Most upward mobility occurs in small steps, while sons of middle class parents remain in high status jobs.

Educational and vocational aspirations depend partly on self-image, but this in turn may be derived from family background. In a study by Sarigiani, Wilson, Peterson and Vicary (1990) adolescents’ vocational plans and self-image were consistently lower in a rural community than those of adolescents in a high or medium socio-economic community. Within the rural sample, young adolescents with lower aspirations also had lower self-images.

Socio-economic status tends to influence the knowledge and understanding youths have of different occupations. Middle class parents unlike working class parents tend to develop broad vocational interests and awareness of opportunities beyond the local community. Socially disadvantaged students have seen less, read less, and experienced less variety in the environment in general and have fewer opportunities than the socially privileged. Consequently, low socio-economic males and females are inclined to take the only jobs they know about. Thus middle class youth tend to choose occupations with higher status than do lower class youth (Rice, 1996)
According to Steinberg (1989), middle class families encourage children to value autonomy, self-direction, and independence; consequently, adolescents who have been raised to value attributes that are characteristic of middle class will seek those attributes when they plan their careers. In contrast, children from lower socio-economic status are more likely to be raised to value obedience and conformity; therefore, jobs that appeal to these values will be attractive.

Kilonzo (1981) conducted a survey among primary students in standards 5, 6 and 7 in Kenya. The study was about career awareness of students and their future plans. The study found a significant relationship between the father’s education and the career aspirations. Similarly, the family background was found to have some influence on these students’ career aspirations.

A survey on the aspirations of students done by Somerset (1971), found that in Kenya as elsewhere, secondary school pupils assess their performance relative to that of other pupils in the same class and school and the status of their school relative to others and as such peg their aspirations with the level of the school.
2.10 Summary and Analysis of the review

In the literature review, certain pertinent issues have emerged. First, though much of the literature supports the view that gender is one of the most important factors contributing to the variance of adolescent’s self-concepts and vocational aspirations, this could be due to the sex role stereotypes prevalent in most societies though they vary from society to society. However, these stereotypes are changing rapidly and it would therefore be interesting to find out whether this change has had an effect on gender differences with regard to self-concept and vocational aspirations among adolescents.

It is also evident that a significant factor in vocational choice and self-concept development is the interaction between the individual and the environment, consequently, the environment in which an individual develops has its own effects on the individual’s self-concept and vocational development.

There is yet no coherent picture of how age affects the multidimensional self-concept in adolescence. One major reason for this ambiguity has been the almost exclusive focus on global rather than domain specific self-concepts of the subjects. Despite this, it is evident that age may be a significant factor in vocational aspirations and self-concept development.
2.11 Conceptual framework

Self-concept
- Positive (high)
- Negative (low)
- Physical self
- Character self
- Emotional self
- Academic self
- Social self
- Family self

Gender

Vocational aspirations
- High
- Low

Age

economic background
Limitations
Attitudes
Norms

Vocational aspiration:
- High
- Low
2.11 Research hypotheses

From the literature review the following research hypotheses were drawn:

1. There is a significant correlation between the self-concepts and vocational aspirations of adolescents’ in general.

2. There is a significant difference in mean vocational aspirations scores between boys and girls.

3. There is a significant difference in mean self-concept scores between boys and girls.

4. There is a significant correlation between adolescent’s age and their self-concepts.

5. There is a significant correlation between adolescent’s socio-economic background and their self-concept.

6. There is a significant correlation between adolescents’ socio-economic background and their vocational aspirations.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology. In doing so, the following are discussed.

- Research design
- Research variables
- Area of study
- Population and sample
- Instrumentation
- Data collection technique
- Pilot study
- Data Analysis

3.1 Research Design

An ex post facto study was conducted to examine the relationship between self-concept and vocational aspirations among adolescents. An ex post facto research is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable. Inferences about relations among variables are made, without direct intervention, from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables (Kerlinger, 1964).
3.2 Research variables

The variables studied were self-concept, vocational aspirations, gender, age, and socio-economic background.

The independent variables were self-concept, age, gender, and socio-economic background.

The dependent variable was vocational aspirations.

3.3 Area of study

The area of study was Tongaren Division which is located in Bungoma District, Western Province. This expansive of undulating pen plains receives a high amount of rainfall and is highly agriculturally productive. This largely rural area is served by mainly all weather roads with only one tarmac road cutting across the edge of the division. It neither has piped water nor electricity. Most of the working population comprises of both primary and secondary school teachers. The division is 278 km squared in size and has twenty-one secondary schools of which only one is a boys’ school, the rest are mixed schools.

3.4 Population and Sample

Ten secondary schools were selected at random from a total number of twenty schools. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain the study sample. Stratified random sampling is a method where the population is divided into two or more mutually exclusive segments (strata) based on categories of one or more combinations of relevant variables. Then simple random samples are drawn from
each stratum; these sub samples are joined to form the complete stratified sample (Kerlinger, 1964). The ballot method was used to sample population in each stratum. A total of 300 subjects were drawn from these institutions. These comprised form one and form four students aged approximately between fourteen and eighteen years. Forms one and four were selected to cater for a larger age difference present in high school. In addition form one students are in middle adolescence where as form four students are in late adolescence.

3.5 Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in the study;

(i) The modified semantic differential scale (SDS) for assessing the self concept of the subjects

(ii) The vocational preference questionnaire for assessing the subject's vocational aspiration and socio-economic background.

3.5.1 Description of the modified semantic differential scale (SDS)

The scale was adopted from Olowu (1983) and covers six self-areas. These include, Academic self, social self, physical self, family self, emotional self and the character self, with each of the six self areas represented by these items on scales as denoted below.
Table 1: The six areas used in the modified semantic differential scale (SDS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self concept Areas</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical self</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character self</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional self</td>
<td>7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic self</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social self</td>
<td>13-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family self</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This scale consists of eighteen bipolar adjectives and phrases separated by a line similar to a likert type rating scale. The items are randomly placed so as to avoid set responses from the subjects. The respondent is required to check any one of the five positions shown along the line separating each pair of phrases on adjectives.

3.5.2 Scoring The Modified Semantic Differential Scale (SDS)

To facilitate the scoring of the modified semantic differential scale, numerical values of 1-5 were assigned to each of the five positions on the scale as indicated below.
The numerical value against the check mark made by the respondent was the score for the particular item (i.e. 3). The total self-concept score for each subject was obtained by adding the numerical values for all the 18 items.

Each subject’s obtained total self-concept score was then classified as positive or negative in relation to the expected mean score obtained as explained below.

To obtain the mean score, the lowest possible score per item (that is 1) and the highest possible score (5) were added and their sum divided by 2 to give the expected mean score per item \((1+5)/2 = 6/2 = 3\). The value obtained was multiplied by 18 (total no of items) to give the expected total mean score per subject.

\[ 12 \times 3 = 54 \text{ (expected total mean score per subject)} \]

This mean score was used to categorize the subject’s score as positive or negative. A score of 54 and above was considered to indicate a positive self-concept while that below 54 was considered to indicate a negative self-concept.
3.5.3 Validity and reliability of the semantic differential scale

The semantic differential scale (SDS) has been used in Nigeria by researchers such as Olowu (1982,1983), Odin, (1986) and Ezeilo, (1987). In Kenya, it has been used by Mwathi, (1998). Olowu (1983) holds that the semantic differential scale has a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.71 and a concurrent validity of 0.55. In addition, Ezeilo (1987) obtained a test retest reliability coefficient of 0.70. This scale was thus preferred owing to the high validity and reliability obtained in Nigeria by Olowu (1983), and Ezeilo (1987). Like Kenya, Nigeria is a third world country with conditions similar to Kenya’s.

The scale has previously been used successfully in Kenya by researchers such as Mwathi (1998).

3.5.4 Description of the Occupational preference questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two sections, A and B

Section A consisted of a questionnaire on the socio-economic background of the respondents. This consisted of the individual factors that contribute to the global socio-economic background. These factors include, parents’ education level, parents’ occupation and the private property likely to be owned by the parents.

Section B comprised of fifty occupations, which were randomly placed, the alternatives were restricted to a number that efficiently covered the major areas. These occupations were then ranked in the order of skill and training required. To rate the vocational aspirations of the students; whether high or low, the occupations were classified according to the education needed. The classification of occupations according to prestige, earnings, skill levels, education, and
intelligence have been attempted by a number of psychologists. The superiority of any method over another depends upon purpose. The important consideration is the recognition of the fact that none of these is pure, they are not mutually exclusive / non-overlapping and that none of them is all-inclusive and sufficient. This is due to the complexity of the society.

3.5.5 Scoring The Occupational Preference Questionnaire

To facilitate the scoring of the occupational preference questionnaire numerical values of 0-8 were assigned to the choices listed in the questionnaire. The maximum score obtained in each subsection varied with the type of information required as indicated below.

SECTION: A

1. Level of education

The highest level of education (university degree) was awarded eight points and points reduced to the lowest level of education (never went to school), which was awarded one point.

2. Type of occupation score

   Professional 4
   Skilled 3
   Semi skilled 2
   Unskilled 1

3. If they own land 2 points
   If they do not own land 0 point
   a) Cash crops and food crops 4 points

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b) Cash crops alone 3 points  
c) Food crops alone 1 point  
4 Have animals 2 point  
Don’t have animals 0 point  

B) Any type of animal reared 1 point  
(i) Five animals and below 0 point  
(ii) Between six and twenty animals 1 points  
(iii) Above twenty animals 2 points  

5. Any of the items stated each one point  

SECTION B
Numerical values of one and two were assigned to the fifty occupations listed in this section. The occupations that require more education were given a value of 2 and were rated as high aspirations whereas those that require a very little amount of education were given a value of 1 and were rated as low aspirations.  

Scores for the occupations  
High 2 points  
Low 1 point  

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS CLASSIFICATION
To classify the socioeconomic classes, the total score was obtained. The total score was then divided by three so as to obtain the range of scores for each socioeconomic class. Using these three categories, the values obtained by the respondents were classified as high, middle and low socioeconomic classes as indicated below.
The total number of scores expected is 58.

The number of SES groupings is 3

Number of scores per SES group is $\frac{58}{3} = 19$

Classification by points

- Low socio-economic status: 19 and below
- Middle socio-economic status: 20 to 38 points
- High socio-economic status: 39 to 58 points

3.6 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in two schools in Tongaren Division, Namunyiri and Maliki secondary schools. These schools were not included in the final research process. The sample for the pilot study consisted of thirty randomly selected students. This pilot study was done to pre-test the modified semantic differential scale and the occupational preference questionnaire to facilitate the following:

- Improve the data collection instruments.
- Allow a thorough check of planned statistical and analytical procedures.

Consequently, the terminology, which the study subjects found difficult, was simplified. The random placement of adjectives and phrases was enhanced to prohibit set responses.
3.7 Data collection technique

Schools career masters/mistresses assisted the researcher and his assistant to establish a rapport with the students. The study sample was then selected through random sampling. The students were placed at a distance of one meter from each other so as to avoid the influence of the neighboring students as they filled the research instrument. The researcher and his assistant then distributed the questionnaires. The participants were given ten minutes to go through the instructions and ask questions on sections where they did not understand. The participants were then allowed a time of thirty minutes to fill the questionnaires, after which the researcher and his assistant collected the questionnaires.

3.8 Data analysis

A descriptive data analysis and inferential statistical analysis were carried out on the data collected. The spearman rank order correlation technique was used to test whether there were significant correlations between self-concept and vocational aspirations. The t-test was used to test for gender differences in self-concept and vocational aspirations. Multiple regression analysis was used to look for the contribution of age, gender and socio-economic background on self-concept and vocational aspirations.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results that were obtained in this study. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section gives a descriptive statistical analysis of the obtained data with regard to age, gender, socioeconomic background, and self-concept.

The second section consists of an inferential statistical analysis of the data, whereas the last section contains a summary of the results.

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

4.1.1 Gender Distribution In The Sample

The total sample consisted of 300 randomly selected subjects from ten randomly selected secondary schools in Tongaren division. Results from six subjects were nullified because they failed to follow instructions in filling in the semantic differential scale and/or the vocational preference questionnaire, leaving a sample of 294 subjects. The distribution of the sample with respect to gender is as shown in the following table.
Table 2: Gender distribution in the sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that there were more females than males in the sample with a difference of two in the frequencies and a 0.6 percentage.

4.1.2 Descriptive Analysis of Self-Concept

From the self-concept data obtained, a descriptive analysis was performed by means of calculation of frequencies and percentages as shown in the table that follows.

Table 3: Self-concept Data: A Descriptive Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-concept status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive self-concept</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative self-concept</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows that 78.6% of the adolescents had positive self-concept whereas only 21.4% had negative self-concept.

4.1.3 Distribution of Various Socioeconomic Classes

With regard to socioeconomic classes, the three classes namely, high, middle and low were represented in the sample as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4 Distribution Of Various Socioeconomic Classes In The Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socioeconomic classes</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 above shows that a majority of the adolescents 69.1% were of middle socioeconomic background. Seventeen percent of the adolescents were of low socioeconomic background, while 13.9% were of high socioeconomic background.
4.1.4 Distribution by Age in the Sample

The table below shows a descriptive analysis of the data of the samples age.

Table 5: Age: A Descriptive analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 – 16 yrs</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 – 19 yrs</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 22 yrs</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 5 above, fifty two percent of the subjects were aged between seventeen and nineteen years. 39.5% were aged between fourteen and sixteen years, whereas only 8.1% percent were aged between twenty to twenty two years.

4.1.5 Descriptive Analysis on Vocational Aspirations Data

Data collected on vocational aspirations was subjected to descriptive analysis as shown in table 6.
Table 6: Vocational Aspirations: A Descriptive Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocational aspirations</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 illustrates that a majority of the subjects 59.9% had high vocational aspirations while only 40.1% had low vocational aspirations.

4.1.6 Class Distribution Of The Sample

A descriptive data analysis was carried out on class distribution as shown on table 7 below.

Table 7: A Descriptive Analysis Of Class Distribution Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form 1</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 4</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from table 7 that there were more form ones than form fours with a difference of eight in the frequencies.
4.2 INFERENTIAL STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

4.2.1 Statistical hypotheses

The following statistical hypotheses were tested;

1. There is no significant correlation between self-concept and vocational aspirations of adolescents in general.

2. There is no significant difference in mean vocational aspirations scores between boys and girls.

3. There is no significant difference in mean self-concept scores between boys and girls.

4. There is no significant relationship between adolescents' age and their self-concepts.

5. There is no significant correlation between adolescents' socioeconomic background and their self-concepts.

6. There is no significant correlation between adolescents' socioeconomic background and their vocational aspirations.
Table 8: Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vocational aspiration</th>
<th>Self concept</th>
<th>Age of the student</th>
<th>Socioeconomic status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correlations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspiration</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.273(***)</td>
<td>-.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self concept</strong></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.273(***)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>.364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spearman's rho</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>-.083</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age of the student</strong></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.126(*)</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>-.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.364</td>
<td>.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spearman's rho

46
4.2.2 Relationship between self-concept and vocational aspirations

The first null hypothesis stated; there is no significant correlation between self-concept and vocational aspirations among adolescents.

To test this hypothesis students’ scores on self-concept were correlated with their vocational aspirations scores. The results presented on table 9 show a correlation coefficient of 0.273. This correlation was significant at p< 0.05 level of significance. Multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the combined contribution made by the variables; age, gender, and socioeconomic background, students self-concept on vocational aspirations. Table 9 gives a summary of the results.

Table 9: multiple regression analysis to show the interaction effect of age, gender, and socioeconomic background self-concept, on vocational aspirations.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>0.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R square</td>
<td>0.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the results in table 9 above the following observations can be made:

a) The R square of 0.074 means that 7.4% of the total variance in students' self-concept was accounted for by age, gender, and socioeconomic background and students' self-concept on vocational aspirations.

b) The F value shows that the contribution made by these variables towards students' self-concept is significant at p< 0.05 level of significance.

A t-test was carried out to find out the individual contribution of the independent variables on students self-concept.

Table 10: t-test to show the contribution of age, gender, self-concept and socioeconomic background on vocational aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Significant t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.181</td>
<td>-3.144</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.113</td>
<td>-1.985</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic background</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>0.815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>3.532</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the results in table 10, gender and self-concept had a significant influence on vocational aspirations at p< 0.05 level of significance.

All these statistical inferences confirm that self-concept is significantly correlated with vocational aspirations. The null hypothesis was thus rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted at p< 0.05 level of significance.
4.2.3 Vocational Aspirations across Gender

The second null hypothesis stated:

There is no significant difference in mean vocational aspirations scores between boys and girls.

Mean vocational aspiration scores were calculated, and then a t-test was done to test this hypothesis.

Table 11: Table showing mean vocational score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Boys (N=146)</th>
<th>Girls (N= 148)</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Aspirations</td>
<td>Mean SD</td>
<td>Mean SD</td>
<td>2.541</td>
<td>0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7712 0.4714</td>
<td>1.327 0.501</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 shows that:

i) The mean vocational aspiration score for boys was higher than that of girls

ii) The difference in the mean vocational aspiration score between boys and girls was statistically significant at p< 0.05 level of significance.

A gender difference was expected, because of the fact that boys are encouraged by society to set high goals and to begin competing at an early age, whereas girls are encouraged to be nurturing.
4.2.4 Difference between Genders in Self-concept

The third null hypothesis stated: There is no significant difference in mean self-concept scores between boys and girls.

To test for significant difference, means were calculated and then a t-test was done.

Table 12: table showing mean differences between boys and girls in self-concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Girls (N=148)</th>
<th>Boys (N=146)</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.35</td>
<td>9.62</td>
<td>63.35</td>
<td>9.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 12 it can be noted that:

i) The difference between the mean self-concept scores of boys and girls is two, with, boys having a slightly higher self-concept.

ii) The difference between mean self-concept scores is not statistically significant at p< 0.05 level of significance.

These findings support those of Osborne and Le Gette (1982) whose results show no gender difference in self-concept.
4.2.5 Correlation between age and self-Concept

The fourth null hypothesis stated; There is no significant correlation between adolescents’ age and their self- concept.

This hypothesis was tested by correlating the students’ age and their scores on self-concept. A correlation coefficient of 0.20 was obtained. This correlation was not significant at p< 0.05 level of significance.

Multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the combined contribution made by the variables, age, gender, and socioeconomic background on students’ self-concept.

Table 13 gives the summary of the results

Table 13: Multiple regression analysis to show the interaction effect of age, gender, and socio-economic background on self-concept.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>0.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant F</td>
<td>0.283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the results in table 13, the following observations can be made;

i) The R square of 0.17 means that only 17% of the total variance in students self-concept was accounted for by age, gender, and socioeconomic background. This value of 17% is quite small.

ii) The F value shows that the contribution made by these variables towards students' self-concept is not significant at p< 0.05 level of significance.

A t-test was carried out to find the individual contribution of age, gender and socioeconomic background on students' self-concept.

Table 14: multiple regression showing the individual contribution of age, gender, and socioeconomic background on self-concept.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Significant t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>1.505</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>-0.275</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic background</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>0.337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 14, age does not have any significant influence on self-concept.

These statistical inferences confirm that age of the student is not significantly correlated with self-concept.
4.2.6 Relationship between socioeconomic background and self-concept

The fifth null hypothesis stated: There is no significant correlation between adolescents’ socioeconomic background and self-concept.

To test whether there was a significant correlation between self-concept and socioeconomic background, the rank correlation technique was used. A spearman rank order correlation coefficient was computed and a value of 0.53 obtained.

Hypothesis testing was done to determine whether the population rank correlation coefficient is significantly different from zero and positive at $p < 0.05$ level of significance using an upper tailed test.

Since the size of the sample ($N=294$) was greater than 30, the sampling distribution of the values of spearman rank correlation($r$) was approximated by the standard normal probability distribution with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of $1/n-1$.

The upper limit of the acceptance region was calculated and found to be 0.58. Therefore the rank correlation coefficient of 0.53 lay within the acceptance region therefore the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative hypothesis rejected. This means that there is no significant correlation between socioeconomic background and adolescents’ self-concept.
4.2.7 Relationship between socioeconomic background and vocational aspirations

The sixth null hypothesis stated; There is no significant correlation between socioeconomic background and vocational aspirations.

To test whether there was a significant correlation between socioeconomic background and vocational aspirations, a spearman rank order correlation coefficient was calculated and a value of 0.126 obtained. This correlation was significant at p<0.05 level of significance.

A t-test was carried out to find out the individual contribution of the independent variables on vocational aspirations.

Table 15 summarizes the results
Table 15: contribution of age, gender, self-concept and socioeconomic background on vocational aspirations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Significant t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.181</td>
<td>-3.144</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.113</td>
<td>-1.985</td>
<td>0.815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic background</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>3.532</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 15 above, socioeconomic background and self-concept have a significant relation to vocational aspirations, but the relation of age to vocational aspiration is not significant.

All these statistical inferences confirm that socioeconomic background is significantly correlated with vocational aspirations.
4.3 Summary of the findings

At p< 0.05 level of significance the following were the findings of the study.

1. There is a significant correlation between self-concept and vocational aspirations among adolescents.

2. There is a significant difference in mean vocational aspirations scores between boys and girls.

3. There is no significant difference in mean self-concept scores between boys and girls.

4. There is no significant correlation between adolescents’ self-concepts and their age.

5. There is no significant correlation between adolescents’ socioeconomic background and their self-concepts.

6. There is a significant correlation between adolescents’ socioeconomic background and their vocational aspirations.
5.0 INTRODUCTION
The results obtained in chapter four are discussed in this chapter. It also gives conclusions drawn and recommendations.

5.1 Discussion of the results

5.1.1 Adolescents self-concept

Results of the descriptive statistics show that, in general, adolescents have positive self-concepts. The findings show that 78.6% of the adolescents had positive self-concepts whereas only 21.4% had negative self-concepts. These results support the findings of Williams & Mc Gee (1991), who found that over 70% of the adolescents comprising their study sample had positive self-concepts. This may be attributed to among other things the fact that through experience, the adolescent gradually becomes more specific and realistic in his/her self-theory. He/she draws parameters to his/her self-theory to avoid unnecessary disillusionment and to insure optimal functioning, hence, high self-concepts among adolescents.
5.1.2 Self-concept and gender

Data analysis indicated that boys and girls did not differ significantly with regard to self-concept, though boys had a slightly more positive self-concept. Similar results were obtained by Wylie (1979), and Crocker and Major (1989) who found no evidence that boys and girls differ in their global self-concepts.

Such findings may be attributed to the fact that African gender stereotypes that hold girls as a lesser gender, may be fading. As parents get more enlightened, adolescent development free of gender stereotypes is enhanced.

On the other hand, Mwathi (1998) and Kamau (1986) found significant gender differences in self-concept between boys and girls. These findings could be due to the fact that their samples consisted of disabled subjects who because of the public view, they have low self-concepts and may have high self-concept variations within their population depending on the nature of the handicap and gender.

5.1.3 Self-concept and vocational aspirations

Results of the data analysis indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between self-concept and vocational aspirations.

These findings confirmed those of earlier studies by Rosenberg (1952), Powers (1974), and Kamau (1986), which indicated that self-concept was one of the factors that influence vocational aspirations of students.
Results show no significant difference between boys and girls in their self-concept scores, but data analysis on vocational aspirations data shows that there is a significant difference between genders in vocational aspirations. Boys have higher vocational aspirations as compared to girls. This shows that although girls have self-concepts that are relatively similar to boys, their vocational aspirations are different from those of boys.

These findings confirm findings by Leung, Conoley and Scheel (1994), who found that, although women’s vocational aspirations have substantially increased over the past several decades, they continue to have generally lower aspirations than comparatively talented males.

5.1.4 Gender And Vocational Aspirations

Results of the data analysis indicated a significant difference between boys and girls in their vocational aspirations with boys having higher aspirations. This confirmed findings of other studies by Aswani (1991) and Kibera (1993), which found that boys had higher vocational aspirations compared to girls.

Similarly, studies with American subjects found similar results. This group of investigators Schulenberg, Goldstein, and vondracek (1991) found marked gender differences in career interests consistent with the traditional sex role stereotypes in rural American areas.
Such findings could be attributed to the fact that boys are encouraged by society to set high goals and begin competing at an early age whereas girls are encouraged to be nurturing.

In this study, 54% of the females had their vocational choices concentrated in nursing, teaching, and secretarial professions. These results confirm Chivore’s (1986) findings that; compared to men, women are concentrated on relatively few skilled professions and are proportionately over represented in the lower ranks of the occupational pyramid.

Such findings are likely to change with time as these traditional gender stereotypes are gradually reducing and females see most occupations as a possibility.

5.1.5 Age And Self-concept

Results of the data analysis indicated that there was no significant correlation between self-concept and age. This finding may be due to the fact that the age range for the selected sample was relatively small (16-21 years), because the study concentrated on form one and form four students only.

This study confirms earlier studies done by Crain and Bracken (1994) and Wylie (1979), which found that age did not have any effect on self-concept, despite the
fact that their samples had a larger age difference ranging from 9 to 19 years of age.

Studies by Dusek and Flaherty (1981) and Marsh (1991), found significant influences of age on self-concept. This difference in results may be due to the fact that they had very large samples and utilized a sophisticated longitudinal sequential design, a method that was not possible in this study due to time and financial constraints.

5.1.6 Self-concept and socio-economic background

Results from the data analysis show there is no significant relationship between self-concept and socio-economic background.

This result contradicts the expectations of McGuire and McGuire (1982), who hold that the immediate social environment determines an individual’s self-concept. These findings were as a result of studies done with American subjects from affluent areas and those from very low socio-economic status areas predominantly inhabited by the blacks. These results may have been highly influenced by the American black populations struggle to come to terms with the discriminatory tendencies prevalent in their society.

Results of this study may have shown no significant relationship between adolescents’ Self-concept and socio-economic background because the area where
this study was carried out is a settlement scheme with few variations in the population. In addition, the procedure for categorizing individuals into socio-economic classes in Africa is a complex one due to the differences in the criteria used in different cultures.

5.1.7 Socio-economic background and vocational aspirations

Data analysis shows that, there is a significant relationship between socio-economic background and vocational aspirations. These results support the findings of Kilonzo (1981), which show that socio-economic background influences vocational aspirations.

In a study in the United States of America, Steinberg (1989) it was found that family values influence vocational aspirations. Consequently, adolescents who had been raised to value attributes characteristic of the middle class sought those attributes when they grew up whereas those from the lower class rose to value obedience and conformity, sought jobs that appeal to those values. This confirms the findings that despite a difference in location, socio-economic background has an influence on vocational aspirations.

These findings may be due to the fact that an individual’s socio-economic background influences the amount of information that is available to him/her.
Consequently, individuals from the lower socio-economic classes do not have access to much information.

5.2 Conclusions

From the foregoing discussion, several conclusions can be drawn; self-concept and vocational aspirations are significantly and positively correlated. This means that a person with positive self-concept is likely to have high vocational aspirations while one with a negative self-concept will likely have low vocational aspirations.

Adolescents in general have positive self-concepts. This may be due to among other factors the fact that they are able to draw realistic self-theories that are not susceptible to disillusionment thus optimal functioning and a positive self-assessment.

Despite the fact that boys' and girls' have relatively equal self-concepts, girls have lower vocational aspirations. Unlike boys', the girls' vocational aspirations are concentrated on relatively few skilled professions and are proportionately over represented in the lower ranks of the occupational pyramid.

The research showed that age was one of the factors that are not correlated with self-concept and vocational aspirations. This calls for further investigation into the factors that relate to self-concept and vocational aspirations.
Among adolescents, socio-economic background is not significantly correlated with adolescents' self-concepts. This factor needs more research in areas with more defined socio-economic classes preferably in urban areas. On the other hand, socio-economic background has a significant influence on vocational aspirations thus the higher the socio-economic background of an individual, the more likely the higher the vocational aspirations of the adolescent.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made based on the observations made in this study.

1. To improve the negative self-concept observed among a few adolescents, there should be adolescent counselling with a view to helping them appreciate themselves by concentrating on their capabilities rather than their weaknesses irrespective of their gender.

2. Because parents and teachers play a vital role in adolescent development counselling services should be offered to them on how to assist persons with negative self concept without making them feel incapable and encourage them ‘to feel as independent as possible.

3. Adolescents should be educated on the vocations that are available, and the requirements for each vocation. This vocational education and counselling would assist adolescents to have realistic vocational aspirations and avoid over concentration on the few vocations that are known to them.
4. Policy makers and implementers should structure policies with the aim of assisting adolescents from low socio-economic classes and girls to make good vocational choices.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Based on the findings of this research, the following additional research is recommended.

- A replication of this study using a wider cross-section of schools, both primary and secondary as this study was limited to only ten secondary schools in Tongaren division.
- Research in the area of availability of vocational information and education, which may be a factor influencing adolescents vocational aspirations.
- A study on the causes of low vocational aspirations among girls
- A study on the influence of age on vocational aspirations and self-concept using a wider age cross-section.

In general, more research needs to be done in the area of vocational aspirations to facilitate appropriate vocational choices.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX I: THE MODIFIED SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL SCALE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

This booklet has two sections, section A and section B: Section A consists of one illustration item which you must fully understand before proceeding to section B. Section B consists of eighteen similar items which you are supposed to respond to in the same manner as the illustration item indicates. Write your name in the space provided, and Please note that your answers will be treated confidentially.

Name of student .............

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SECTION A: THE ILLUSTRATION ITEM

In this section you will find a single item. This item is made up of two adjectives, one of which is the opposite of the other. These are adjectives, which have been used by students like you to describe themselves. A line divided by five points as shown below separates the two adjectives:

```
Tall     |     |     |     | Short
```

Imagine that you are required to judge your feelings towards yourself. Examine carefully the two adjectives given. Think of where you would place yourself on that line separating the adjectives. Once you have decided on the point, place a star on the point and write the word ‘myself’ above.

For instance if you feel the adjective tall describes you very well, then place a mark next to this adjective as shown below.

```
Tall X (myself)     |     |     | short
```

If "tall" describes you, but not very well, then you may put the mark as shown below.

Tall    X (myself)    short

If the adjective "short" describes you very well, then you put the mark as shown below.

Tall    short    X (myself)

If "short" describes you but not very well, then you put the mark as shown below.

Tall    X (myself)    short
If you feel that you are in between the two adjectives, that is, neither tall nor short, then put a mark at the mid point as shown below.

Tall  X (myself)  Short

If you have now understood how you are supposed to respond to the item as shown above, then you may proceed to section B. In section B you will find eighteen items, which are similar to the one you have been practicing above. The only difference is that you will meet new pairs of adjectives think carefully over each item and rate yourself on the line between the two adjectives by putting a mark on the relevant point and writing the word “myself” above it. Do this for all the eighteen items in section B.

You are informed that there are no right or wrong answers. Therefore whatever answer you write is correct as long as you are telling the truth about your feelings toward yourself. You are reminded that your answers will not be shown to anyone, therefore be as honest as possible with your self-ratings.
SECTION B

Beautiful

Ugly

Unhealthy

Healthy

Strong

Weak
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpful at home</th>
<th>Not helpful at home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loved at home</th>
<th>Not loved at home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not lonely at home</th>
<th>Lonely at home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX II: OCCUPATIONAL PREFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Background information. Please tick ( ) beside the correct answer.

1 Give your sex: Male ( ) Female ( )

1 In which class are you Form 4 ( ) Form 1 ( )

2 How old are you ……

3 What is (or was) your father’s highest level of education?
   ( ) Never went to school
   ( ) Lower primary
   ( ) Upper primary
   ( ) Form two
   ( ) Form four
   ( ) Form six
   ( ) Post secondary diploma
   ( ) University degree

5 What is (or was) your mother’s highest level of education?
   ( ) Never went to school
   ( ) Lower primary
   ( ) Upper primary
   ( ) Form two
   ( ) Form four
   ( ) Form six
   ( ) Post secondary education
4 What is (or was) your father’s major occupation? .............................................

5 What was your mother’s major occupation? ....................................................... 

6 Do your parents own land?  Yes ( )  No ( )
   
b) If yes, do your parents grow on the land  (i) Cash crops?
      ( ) Yes ( ) No

   (ii) Food crops
      ( ) Yes ( ) No

8 Do your parents keep animals on the land?  ( ) Yes ( ) No
   
b) If yes which ones among the following do they keep? Please indicate how many.
      ( ) Dairy cattle  ( ) Number
      ( ) Beef cattle  ( ) Number
      ( ) Goats  ( ) Number
      ( ) Sheep  ( ) Number
      ( ) Others (Specify)................................. ( ) Number

7 Do your parents own any of the following? Please tick the relevant.
   ( ) Motor vehicle  ( ) Television
   ( ) Radio  ( ) Bicycle
   ( ) Electric/Gas cooker  ( ) Kerosene stove
   ( ) Timber house  ( ) Semi-permanent mud house
   ( ) Permanent house  ( ) Grass thatched house
   ( ) Electricity/solar power in the house
SECTION B:

Instructions: Please tick beside the occupation you wish to take up after school.

For example: Cook (/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gardener</th>
<th>Messenger</th>
<th>Security guard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank clerk</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>Plumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Magistrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>Army officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto mechanic</td>
<td>Sales man/woman</td>
<td>Photographer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Waiter</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>Forest ranger</td>
<td>Business man/woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer analyst</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashier</td>
<td>Dentist</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiographer</td>
<td>Hair dresser</td>
<td>Politician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>Surveyor</td>
<td>Jua kali artisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory technician</td>
<td>Public health officer</td>
<td>Nutritionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Farm manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>Petty trader</td>
<td>Prison warder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>Police officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other (please specify)...........................................
APPENDIX III: SCHOOLS VISITED
Lungai secondary school
Kibisi secondary school
Mbakalo secondary school
Karima secondary school
Milima secondary school
Lukhuna secondary school
Mabusi secondary school
Kakamwe secondary school
Sirakaru secondary school
Eluuya secondary school