

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT CHOICE AMONG
BOYS AND GIRLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIAMBU
COUNTY KENYA**

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DECLARATION

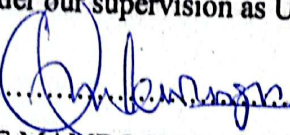
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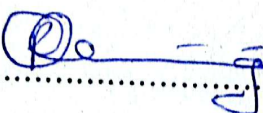
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We confirm that the work presented in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision as University supervisors

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ABSTRACT

Subject choices, made during the secondary school years are important. They determine the career choices among boys and girls in secondary schools. Effective subject choices require students to be equipped with adequate information and advice to make the right choices. Previous research and document evidence obtainable in popular media have consistently reported that Kenyan students are making subject choices, influenced by societal gender stereotyping. As a result many jobs in Kenya have no skilled personnel. These occurrences suggest that, either advice or information while making subject choices is defective. Else, there is a discrepancy between the subject choice programs, objectives and the instructional practice meant to achieve them. The purpose of this study was to investigate subject choice among boys and girls in secondary schools in Kiambu county; Kenya. It was guided by the theory of circumscription and compromise. It specifically aimed at determining factors influencing subject choice decision, programs in place to facilitate subject choice decision making, challenges facing subject choice provision and suggestions on how to improve subject choice decision making. Qualitative Descriptive survey design was used in this research. The study used interview schedules and focused group discussion to collect data. The study population comprised of 2 head teachers, 2 career masters, 10 teachers and 30 female students and 30 male students from school A being a boys school and school B being a girls school. The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data which was coded and entered into ATLAS, and analyzed thematically according to the objectives of the study. The study found out that there are several factors influencing subject choice decision making, these were school choice made by the boys and girls. Family influences among the boys and girls. There were programmes to provide career guidance in these schools such as; motivational talks and educational trips in subjects like geography and history being the most common. However, chances were only available for the bright students in the both boys and girls school. The challenges facing subject choice decision making process were lack of enough resources and material to guide the students, lack of enough time for career masters to guide the students, negative attitudes by the students towards the teaching profession and an inactive career department. Based on these findings the study recommended that schools can look into possibilities of establishing subject choice decision making forms to be filled while students are making subjects choices. These forms should be signed by the school principal, career master, class teacher, parent, guardians and the students. Teachers Service Commission together with the Ministry of Education can look into possibilities of hiring fulltime career masters, who deal specifically with the career needs of students and guide them during subject choice. The study finally suggested that further study should be carried out to find out why the boys and girls were shunning practical subjects. A similar study also should be carried out but involving the parents of the boys and girls and seek to understand the issue from the parents' perspective.