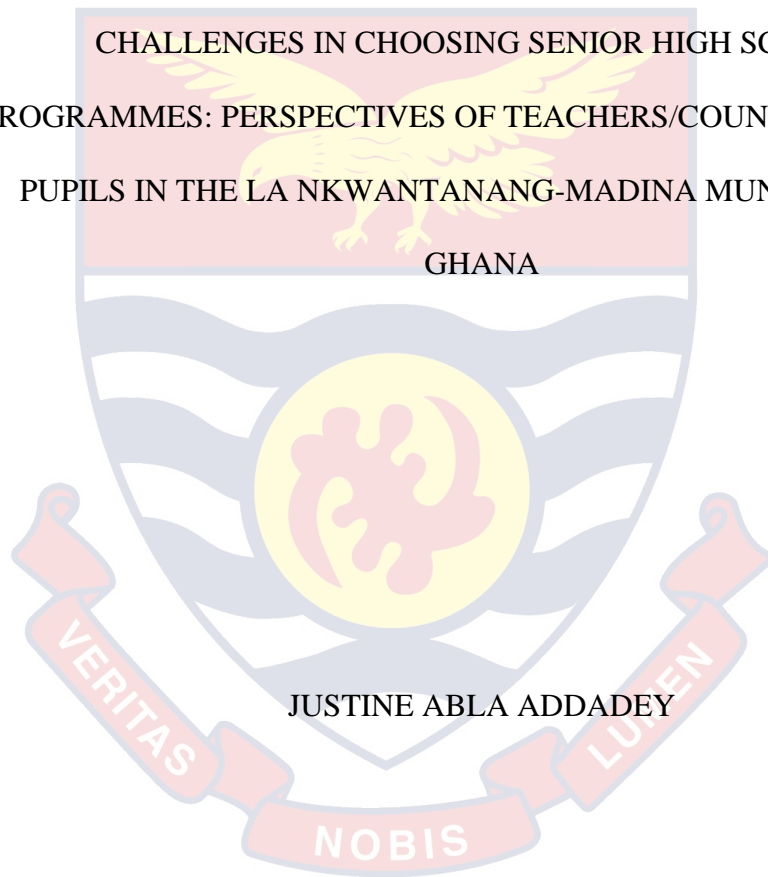


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CHALLENGES IN CHOOSING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
PROGRAMMES: PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS/COUNSELLORS AND
PUPILS IN THE LA NKWANTANANG-MADINA MUNICIPALITY,
GHANA

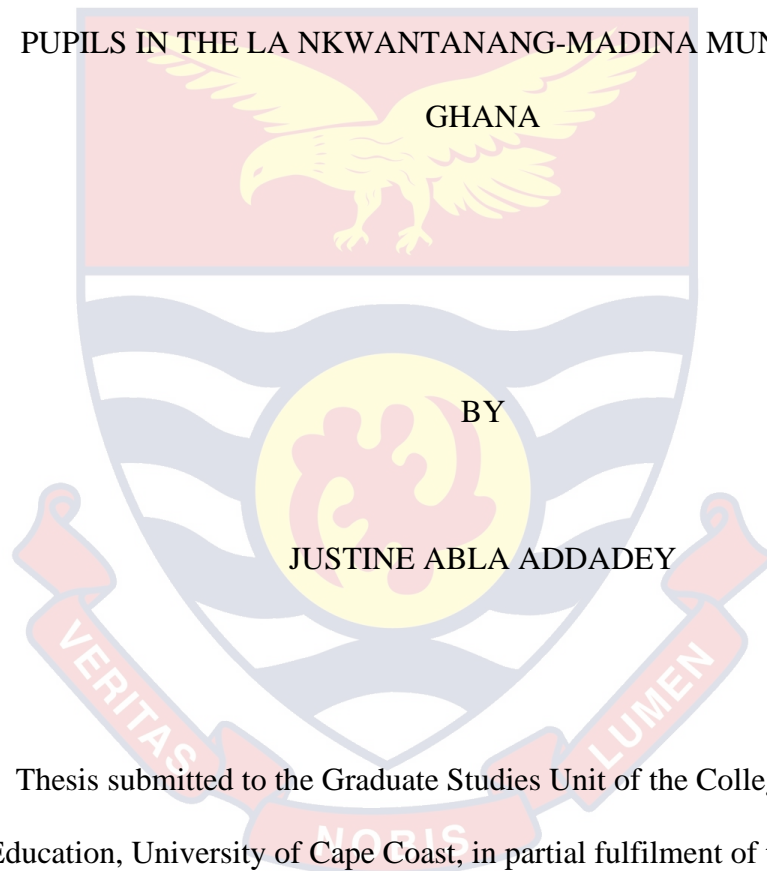


JUSTINE ABLA ADDADEY

2020

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

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PROGRAMMES: PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS/COUNSELLORS AND
PUPILS IN THE LA NKWANTANANG-MADINA MUNICIPALITY,



This thesis submitted to the Graduate Studies Unit of the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Guidance and Counselling

JULY 2020

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Name:.....

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name:.....

Co-Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name:.....

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges junior high school pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face in choosing programmes in their transition to senior high schools. The explanatory sequential design of the mixed approach was employed for the study. The population consisted of all the final year junior high school pupils and teachers/counsellors handling the final year pupils in the JHS in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality. Through a systematic sampling procedure and census approach, 368 pupils and 117 teachers/counsellors were sampled respectively for the quantitative phase of the study. Further, 12 pupils and eight teachers/counsellors were conveniently selected for the qualitative phase of the study. Questionnaire and interview guide were used for data collection. The study revealed that fathers, mothers, siblings, finances and orientation at home were the major challenges JHS pupils faced from the home when selecting their SHS programme. Challenges which were from the schools included teacher interference, peer distractions, and academic performance in school. Based on the findings, it was recommended that parents and guardians should be enlightened by school heads on the relevance of pupils pursuing programmes in line with their interest rather than the parents imposing programmes on pupils to pursue at the SHS level.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely express my profound gratitude to God Almighty for the gift of life, good health, knowledge and understanding, financial provision and the ability He has granted me to carry out this research work. I also express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors Prof. Joshua A. Omotosho and Rev. Dr. Kwesi Otopa Antiri for their time spent in addressing all the concerns about my work.



DEDICATION

To my lovely husband and children: Thomas Tanko Musah, Victoria
Antockley Antock, John King Antockbik Antock and Kristel Abigail Awenley
Antock.

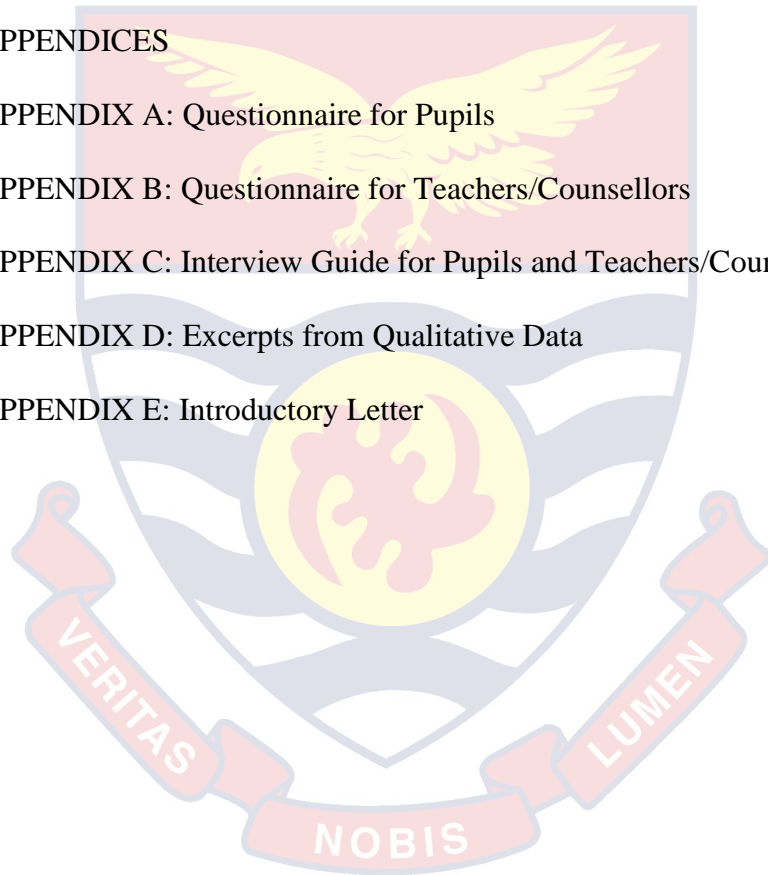


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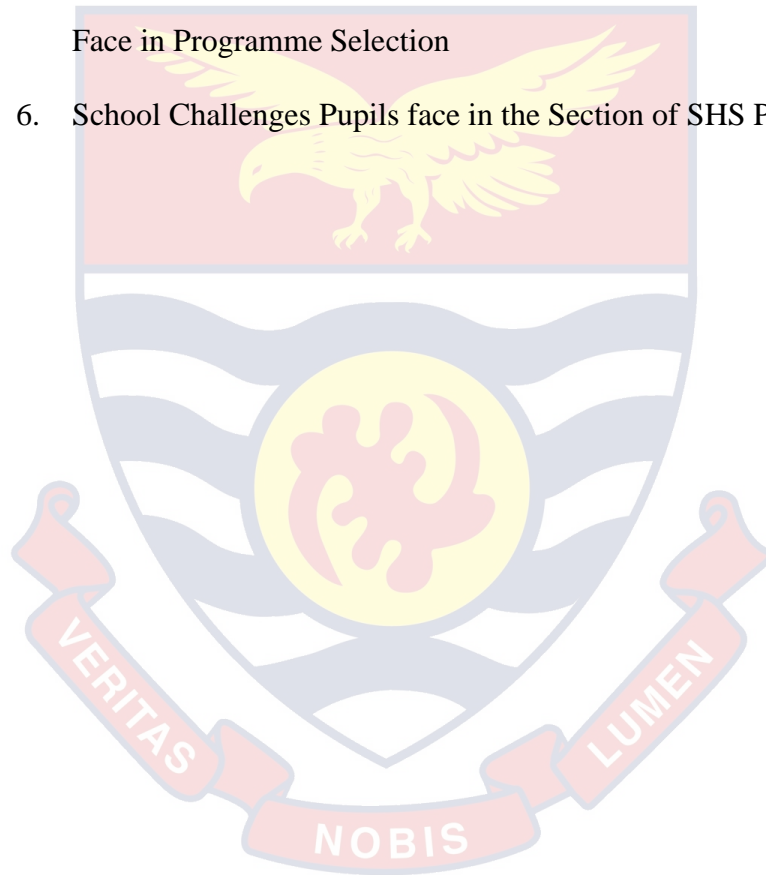
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The ability to select the right programme of study at the senior high school (SHS) level forms the basis of a junior high school (JHS) pupils building a good career choice in future. It also helps to alleviate unnecessary delays in the career goals of the younger generation (Soomro & Ahmad, 2012). Pupils in JHS in Ghana always face the dilemma of selecting the right programmes due to their inability to identify their strength, decision to follow the views of their colleagues and in some cases decisions by their parents on the career path that their wards should pursue. All these make the choice of SHS programmes very challenging for pupils.

There is a need to empirically study the factors responsible for the challenges and how they can be tackled to enhance the effective choice of SHS programmes. This need formed the basis of this study. The study was carried out to solicit the opinion of the JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality on the challenges they face in choosing SHS programmes and the suggested solutions teachers/counsellors have for overcoming such challenges.

Background to the Study

Young people all over the world have high ambitions, expecting to be highly educated and have professional careers, yet research has shown that many do not develop coherent plans that will help them choose a befitting

career that matches their abilities, values, and the opportunities available for achieving this goal (Amoah, Kwofie, & Baiden, 2015). Jackson (2015) was of the view that judgement about good career decisions depend occasionally on how students see their future and the world. Some students may not have adequate consciousness and knowledge regarding how they should process information from, spiritual, political, social, economic, environmental and personal facets of placing into context and consciousness of ensuring a prosperous career (Jackson, 2015). Pafili and Mylonakis (2011) stressed that in making a correct decision of what career to pursue, students can appropriately use their knowledge and skills to get proper experience which could add to the welfare and development of the society.

The genesis to career choice according to Taylor and Buku (2006) in the Ghanaian educational reforms for SHS students requires that students choose the programme they will offer at the SHS when they are in the final year of the JHS. The career most students choose usually begins from the programme of study they opt for and pursue upon entry into the SHS. These programmes determine to a large extent, which programme he/she can pursue in the University or other higher institutions of learning as well as where one's future career destination will be. The general programme options available to the JHS pupils to pursue include General Science, General Arts, Agriculture science, Visual Arts, Home Economics, Technical and Business programmes (Salifu, 2010).

This transition of pupils from JHS level to SHS level, which requires them to choose a programme to pursue, creates so many challenges for pupils, teachers and parents at large. The main reason behind these challenges is that

when pupils are in their final year at the JHS, it becomes essential that they choose programmes they desire to pursue in SHS. Whatever course a student chooses to pursue would depend on their career prospect (Ajayi, 2012).

Jensen (2010) expressed that choosing a programme has so much repercussion on the abilities and career development of the student. Some students may not be very brilliant from the JHS level but turn to do very well at the SHS level when they have chosen the right course to pursue. This makes the choice of programmes a very delicate issue because the ultimate result could go absurd for a child (Stachowski, 2011).

In the view of Koni, Zainal, and Ibrahim (2012), some researches discovered that not all pupils who enter SHS, or the university, have the intent of obtaining the certificate or degree. Yang (2008) pointed out that in the choice of a course of study at the SHS, one must consider the subjects one finds fascinating. In other words, one should consider subjects that one can easily grasp and understand in order not to encounter many problems in the course of one's study.

Pafili and Mylanakis (2011) stated that students often get influenced by their choice of programmes in school because they follow their friends. They choose a particular course because their friends are choosing the same course. When students do that, they realize when it is sometimes too late, that they are not cut out for the programmes they have opted for. Very often it might be too late to change the programme. As a result, they lose interest in studying such a programme and that might eventually affect their performance in the final exam.

Many factors go into deciding which the right programme is. Gorard (1999) analysed four different studies of programme choice and compiled them into five main groups: Academic (for example, the quality of teaching staff for the programme), situational/convenience (for example, siblings have already done such programme before), organisational selective (for example, the ability of students in a programme) and security (for example, the discipline of the pupils on the programme). According to Bossetti (2004), most parents place a strong emphasis on academic reasons to select a particular programme since they perceive that their children will academically perform well and have a better educational path when they pursue the programme.

Further, Elacqua, Gobierno, and Ibanez (2005) found empirical evidence that parents across all school types (both public and private) rated academic reasons as the most essential factor in their programme choice. Schneider and Buckley (2002) studied the search patterns of parents of schools on an educational website and found that, on average, parents looked at programmes that performed better academically (higher reading and Mathematics scores) as their search progressed. In other words, parents eliminated the programme in which students were found to have poor academic performance.

Ramirez and Dizon (2014) opined that students wrongly believe that for instance, brilliant students offer the sciences and students usually get influenced by this and choose that course only to realize later that it was the wrong field for them. Given this, it is always important to let your interest inform your choice of study rather than follow your friends blindly. Salifu

(2010) indicated that at the SHS level, the core subjects include Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and English. This means that students have to pass these subjects before they can gain admission to any higher institution of learning. They, therefore have no choice but to study them seriously.

There are also the elective subjects which they choose according to their interest and performance. It is always advisable to select those that you are good at and also like. The options in SHS are the Arts, Businesses, Sciences, Visual Arts, Technical subjects and Home Economics. In selecting a course of study, one can seek directives from their parents but if their parents cannot be of assistance because they are not conversant with the subjects, it would be appropriate to seek help from their teachers or elder siblings. They can guide them to select programmes they can study in SHS (Laguador, 2014).

Issues earlier discussed points to the fact that several factors come into play when pupils are required to select a programme of study at the SHS. At the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality, there are concerns of pupils and parents having difficulties in making decisions regarding what programme the child should pursue. The researcher's experience as a teacher for many years is a validation of this claim. In this study, the researcher intends to explore the challenges in choosing SHS programmes from the perspectives of teachers/counsellors and pupils.

Statement of the Problem

Deciding on a specific programme to study at the senior high level remains a very difficult task for JHS pupils when they get to the third year. This is because these pupils are immature and too young to completely be conscious of the implications of the decisions they may make regarding their

education journey and the kind of life they will have exposed to them in the coming years (Olayinka 1973). This was also confirmed by Ashong (2002) who revealed that students who got enrolled in SHS in Ghana did not have adequate knowledge of the programmes in the SHS, and the majority of the students felt they had made the wrong choice of programme (Ashong, 2002).

The predicament of the choice lies in the fact that most of the JHS pupils at their level cannot make the right choice and hence requires direction from their parents, teachers and/or other peoples (Van & Mansori (2013). This makes teachers partake in the challenge of making choices for the JHS pupils (Yang, 2008). The primary concern is whether these agents can assist the pupils to make the right choice or whether these agents possess a challenge in the decision-making process.

The researcher's experiences, as a teacher, have revealed to her that most of the pupils are very naive with regards to what goes into a particular SHS programme, and how it will shape their career path in future. During this period of SHS selection and choosing a particular programme, most pupils become frustrated and it has become an annual phenomenon experienced every year in JHS (Taylor & Buku, 2006).

A number of studies have been conducted related to issues concerning the students' choice of programmes (Akyina et al., 2014; Amoah et al., 2015; Korkmaz, 2015; Pascual, 2014; Preez, 2018; Zare-ee & Shekarey, 2010). These related studies focused on factors influencing the choice of technical programmes (Zare-ee & Shekarey, 2010), Home Economics (Ankoma-Sey et al., 2019), and career choice (Amoah, 2015; Pascual, 2014; Quansah et al., 2020). It was only Akyina et al. (2014), and Jafari and Aliesmaili (2013) who

examined the factors SHS final year students consider in choosing a course to study in the university. Unlike previous studies, this study examines the challenges JHS pupils face in choosing programmes in their transition to SHS.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research was to examine the perspectives of teachers/counsellors and JHS pupils regarding the challenges in choosing programmes in SHS using the case of La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. to investigate the challenges JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the home in choosing a programme in the SHS
2. to identify the challenges JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the school in the choice of a programme to pursue in the SHS
3. to come out with suggested solutions to address the challenges faced by JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality in the choice of a programme in SHS.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study:

1. What challenges do JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the home in choosing a programme in the SHS?
2. What challenges do JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the school in the choice of a programme to pursue in the SHS?

3. What measures can be put in place to address the challenges faced by JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality in the choice of a programme in SHS?

Significance of the Study

It is expected that this research shall be beneficial to relevant stakeholders in diverse ways. First, JHS pupils at La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality will largely benefit from the research findings. The study will help the pupils to understand the factors they need to consider before making their choice of programmes and how informed choices can be made to end up in a better lifetime career choice in future. Also, the awareness of the pupils will be drawn to the challenges which are conscious and unconscious to them. This will enable them to act accordingly in terms of present and future decisions regarding the choices they make for further studies.

Secondly, teachers and counsellors will also find the study very relevant such that it will help them understand the challenges JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face in selecting a programme/course for the pupils. Expectedly, teachers/counsellors may not be conscious of some of the problems they face in this selection process. Teachers/counsellors, with this knowledge, can help pupils to overcome these challenges. Teachers/counsellors will also be careful about how to guide pupils in their decision.

Additionally, parents of the JHS pupils, who are major stakeholders as far as this research is concerned, will also find the results of the research significant. In contemporary times, some parents force programmes on their wards without recourse to the interest of the child. This study will help parents

to understand how their guidance in the selection process can contribute positively or negatively to the child's decision.

Furthermore, educational policymakers such as Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) will find the study relevant in that it will help the management to understand and organise programmes for both pupils and teachers on how to make the right choice of programmes for pupils. This can be possible through presenting the findings of this work in seminars and workshops.

Finally, researchers and students who may wish to carry out a study on a related topic will also benefit from the study by using it as a reference point for related literature to help them achieve their aim. That is, the results of this research will contribute to the growing field of programme choice of pupils.

Delimitation

The study generally looked at challenges JHS pupils experience when it comes to choosing their respective programmes of study at the SHS level and the area considered is La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality. Regarding the content of the study, the challenges were limited to challenges from the home and school. In addition, suggestions to help curtail the challenges were also explored by the teachers and school counsellors. The study mainly focused on final year JHS pupils who have already selected their schools and programmes for placement in SHS and are yet to write the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Counsellors and teachers who teach final year JHS pupils also formed part of the study.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of the research focused on JHSs of La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality and findings pertained to prevailing challenges in the

schools were peculiar to only the study area. As to whether the characteristics of pupils in schools in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality reflect those in the whole country is something which cannot be guaranteed. Hence, the generalization of these results to all schools in the country may be restricted.

Also, the self-report nature of the questionnaire was a limitation experienced. This may end up providing false responses to the questions. This can affect the validity of the responses provided and consequently the conclusion drawn from the study. However, more efforts were put in to create a conducive environment to ensure that respondents feel comfortable in responding to the instrument.

The research design used needed so much time for the implementation of the phases, and there is a possibility of respondent mortality due to the protracted period of data collection. Again, the qualitative stage was not fully specified in advance because the details of the qualitative are based on the results from the quantitative.

Definition of Terms

Final year JHS pupils - This refers to learners in the final year of their study at the Basic Education level.

Programmes – This refers to the various courses available at the SHSs in the country. Examples are General Arts, Home Economics, Visual Arts, Agricultural Science, Technical, etc.

Challenges - This refers to difficulties that pupils encounter in choosing a particular school and course to pursue in SHS. Some challenges are home-based and others are school-based. This study is focused on both of them as detached from each other.

Organisation of the Study

The entire research was captured in five main chapters. The first chapter discussed the introduction and it entailed background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, the definition of terms and the organisation of the research. Chapter two covered a review of applicable literature which was linked to the study and development of a conceptual framework. Many books, periodicals, articles, internet materials, were examined to place the research in a proper context.

The research methodology was contained in the third chapter. The chapter discussed the several procedures and methods utilised to collect data. It included research design, population, sampling approaches, research instrument, data collection procedures and analysis. A brief description of the study area also formed part of chapter three. Chapter four presented the results and discussion of the data analyses.

The last chapter provided a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the research. The summary comprised a broad overview of the research and the main findings. Conclusions were drawn depending on the results and recommendations were also captured in this chapter. Finally, suggestions for further research was also stated on the topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The development of the human resource capacity of every nation plays a critical role in the socio-economic development of that economy. The only means through which human resource could be developed is through the provision of formal education and that is why every nation, most especially African nations, are placing and investing more resources into the education of the citizenry (Ahadzie, 2008). It is through education that the best choices regarding career are made to help the nation Ghana. JHS pupils moving to SHS were perceived to have a challenge with choosing the right programme for their secondary education. This aspect of the study focused on reviewing existing literature on the challenges confronting JHS pupils in choosing a SHS programme and the review covered both empirical and theoretical perspective.

The Concept of Education

Vin-Mbah (2012) defined education as the continuous growth of appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours to permit persons to evocatively contribute their quota to societal development. It is also well-structured training and instruction developed to aid in the development of the skills and knowledge of individuals. Education is a hub where specific behavioural patterns are modified and/or changed in an appropriate fashion which in turn

becomes beneficial to society.

The concept of education in Ghana has made education obligatory and comprise 6 years of primary school and 3 years of JHS (JHS). Dzobo's committee was the brain-child behind Junior Secondary School (JSS) education in Ghana with its implemented in 1975, however, it failed in terms of effectiveness due to inadequate textbooks, teacher shortage, and insufficient infrastructure in schools. Furthermore, the JSS system was required as a substitute for the Middle School system, however, this did not work as stipulated and the two systems operated concurrently. The JSS system was called Demonstration schools and was located in towns and cities, while middle schools were mostly located in rural settings (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1978). Throughout the execution of the report, well-experienced headteachers and teachers with long-service managed the affairs of the running of JSS. Headteachers were appointed without being given any professional training.

At the beginning of the 1980s, when the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government led by Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings, decisions were made to correct the anomalies in the educational system receiving sponsorship from the World Bank. This resulted in the 1987 educational reform which entirely substituted all middle schools in Ghana with JSSs and led to the introduction of Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) as an eligibility criterion for getting admission into Senior Secondary School (SSS).

Though the PNDC administration was motivated to make a constructive transformation in the educational system, the management of the

JSSs continued to be the same under the Dzobo's reform era. Heads of schools were unqualified and had inadequate chances for advancement and to build upon their leadership competencies. The impression to improve the administration of JSSs, as earlier stated, was highlighted in the 1992 Constitution which announced the FCUBE scheme (Ghana Education Service, GES, 2001). JHS is the first stage of secondary education in Ghana and also the last stage of the Basic School cycle. According to Adu-Agyem and Osei-Poku (2012), SHS education exposes students to a variety of relevant vocational abilities required for national and human development. Additionally, it helps to develop an interest in lifelong learning in students. The national curriculum at this stage is therefore expanded to cater for the differences in students' skills, interests, abilities, and aptitudes.

In 2008, the Annamuah-Mensah educational reform resulted in the change of name from JSS and SSS to JHS and SHS respectively. The period of SHS education was changed from four years to three (Quainoo, Quansah, Adams, & Opoku, 2020). The 4-year period was returned to a 3-year period after a new administration came into office in 2009. The 2008 and 2010 reforms have attracted the most criticisms, which include whether SHS should be three or four years' duration. The key issue is the fact that SHS serves as preparatory grounds for entry into tertiary institutions as well as an exit point for students who terminate their education at the end of SHS (Curriculum Research and Development Division [CRDD], 2010).

The several programmes in SHS and their elective subjects as listed by Ghana Education Service [GES] (1996) are highlighted below:

- a. General Arts programme: Students reading this programme will be required to read any three or four subjects like; Traditional or Christian or Islamic Studies, Literature in English, Ghanaian Language, Elective Mathematics, French, Economics, History, Music, Geography or Government, General knowledge in Arts (GKA).
- b. Home Economics or Vocational Programme: Students will be required to select from Nutrition and Food or Clothing; Management in Living, and one or two choices from GKA, Textiles Economics, and French.
- c. Visual Arts: Students will need to study GKA and a selection from Leatherworks, Basketry, Sculpture, Textiles, Jewellery, Ceramics and a choice of any of Graphic Designing or Picture Making. The students may additionally choose any one of the following: Economics, Literature in English, Music or French
- d. Business Programmes: This business programme has dual alternatives; Secretarial and Accounting options Students under the accounting option will be required to study the following: Business Management, Accounting, and either one or two of the following; Elective Mathematics, Computing or Typewriting, Economics, Business, Costing, French or Music. Students under the Secretarial dimension will be required to study the following Business Management, Computing or typewriting, and either of one or two of Elective Mathematics, Economics, Costing or Business Mathematics, Accounting, Literature in English, French or Music.
- e. Technical Programme: Students under this programme will be required to study the following: Technical Drawing, either one or two of French

Elective Mathematics, and Physics, and also select Applied Electricity, Electronics, Auto Mechanics, Building Construction, Metal Works or Wood Work.

- f. Science Programmes: Students under this programme have two alternatives; Agricultural Science and General Science. The General Science options comprise subjects such as Elective Mathematics, Physical Science, Chemistry and Biological Science. Agricultural Science consists of subjects such as Elective Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and General Knowledge in Agriculture.

Largely, these programmes have been structured in a way that directs the students' career paths because the programmes have specialized fields that aid to inform students about the occupational implications of each field of study. These programmes also help students to evaluate themselves with regards to their career aspirations, cognitive abilities and interest to decide on a realistic programme and career blends since the programmes students enroll on in the SHS govern their career points. This justifies why Dankwa (1981) contended that the programmes students get enrolled on, to a greater degree, determine their future career paths in higher education.

In most cases, students become confused and indecisive when the time comes to select a programme to study in SHS and subsequently, which career path to choose (Ackummey, 2003). The, then, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2004) in a report of the Education Reform Committee indicated that at the JHS stage, students require assistance, through seminars, workshops and guidance programmes, to help them to choose programmes based on their ability, aptitudes and interests, whether in the area of agricultural, business,

vocational, technical, or general streams. This shows that Ghana's educational system have premeditated programmes which offer students the required direction to comprehensively understand and assess their potentialities, have an explicit knowledge on the existing educational prospects and eligibility criteria and take a convincing choice of school programmes that matches their abilities and interest as well as their preferred career pathways (Ackumey, 2003).

The Selection of SHS Programme among JHS Pupils in Ghana

After the completion of JHS, students contest for enrollment to SHS. Application to SHS is consolidated using a computerized system introduced in 2005 and called computerized school selection and placement system (CSSPS). The computerized system distributes JHS pupils to the various SHS depending on students' desired programme and their academic achievements in BECE (Ajayi, 2012). Jackson (2015) indicated that among one of the few countries in the world in which performance in examination becomes the basis for which JHS pupils progress to SHS and it further influences the programme to choose is Ghana. It is very imperative to understand the challenges students faced in choosing the SHS programme (Jackson 2015).

Studies conducted in Ghana and other nations have proven that students who are from a less-privileged background struggle to apply to "grade A" schools; these schools are very competitive and have better infrastructure and services present (Ajayi 2012; Hoxby & Avery, 2012). This reflection hypothetically demonstrates a source of concern in the school structure if there are motivated or talented students from deprived homes who are not receiving a better education.

In the Ghanaian space, JHS pupils decide on the kind of programmes to study at the SHS level. This is the stage where persons make decisions regarding which career pathway to follow in life. Students select from a number of programmes, namely, General Arts, Technical, Visual Arts, Business, Home Economics, Science and Agriculture programme options. Students require adequate guidance on this decision and transition into SHS so that they can make informed decisions on which occupational path to take. Choices of programmes or careers are based on factors like Socio-economic background (Salifu, 2010; Asaolu, 2001)

From the view of Alutu (2004), the choice of career should be instigated right from the start of school to higher education. Alutu (2004) further indicated that factors such as physical health, choice of friends, lifestyle, income, and mental social status influence the kind of career pathways to choose. Stated differently, the choice of career of individuals plays a vital role in their whole life. The choice of career choice is a difficult task, but still, at some point in time, persons face this difficulty of selecting a career path, planning for it, executing it and progressing in it.

Pafili and Mylanakis (2011) expressed in their study that the point of school and career choice by students is undeniably the most dangerous phase in their life. This is because taking a wrong career pathway can stain one's pleasure in life as this could lead to career instability. Making poor career decision can result in doom not only for the person but also for the whole community. Given the abovementioned, there is the need to ensure that students are well-trained to make suitable career decision (Pafili & Mylanakis, 2011).

According to Akomolafe (2003), one factor which inherently affects JHS pupils' choice of school and programme at the SHS level is the income of the students' family. The level of income of families of students has the probability of influencing the students' choice of career. Students in distressed needs, or are poverty-stricken must be helped via some special exercise or programmes to overcome social and educational challenges they face (Akomolafe, 2003). Yang (2008) opined that environmental factors influence JHS pupils from choosing SHS programmes. The student's support structure which is made up of teachers, siblings, relatives, peers, parents and counsellors are critical to students' choice of programmes (Yang, 2008).

Home Challenges and Programme Choice

The Role of Parents in Pupils' Choice of Programmes

Parents wish that their wards should be prosperous in life. For most parents, their expectations are that their children will one day find themselves in a valuable career and parents always wonder if there is something they can do to make sure that their wards are successful (Mau & Bikos, 2000). Right after the completion of JHS, students are excited and overwhelmed thinking about their career pathways, their preferences and occupational aspirations. These fresh graduates are the ones making the decisions regarding their futures now, and with new thoughts, they are pushed into this completely novel world of programme selection when transiting to the SHS level (Pafili & Mylanakis, 2011).

The majority of students are less knowledgeable in terms of making career decisions and as a result, largely depend on their parents in making such decisions. Scholars like Miller, Wells, Springer, and Cowger (2003) have

argued that students' career decisions are determined by factors such as students' educational achievements level, talent, ambition, and key persons in the family circles. Nevertheless, there is no dispute that the mode of the upbringing of children significantly influence the kind of person the child becomes and this extends to the kind of choices made by the child; is completely reasonable to believe that the child's parents would, to some extent, influence the career and educational decisions of the child (Smith, 1991).

Several previous pieces of research conducted have discovered that a greater cross-section of students quotes parents as a significant factor when making career choices (e.g., Acheampong, 2014; Awan et al., 2017; Boateng and Galilee, 2019; Knowles, 1998; Mau & Bikos, 2000; Marjoribanks, 1997; Smith, 1991; Wilson & Wilson, 1992). Ode, Babayeju, and Onalowu (2013) also added that parents discouraged their wards from choosing Home Economics programme. Though parents may be unconscious of their influence on the career vocational and development decisions of their wards, students are mostly at the mercies of their father or mother (Miller et al., 2003). According to Salifu (2010), the career decision stage is mostly a crisis stage which is characterised by indecisiveness and confusion, and this makes decision making difficult and susceptible to other external influences. Father, mother, and guardian being the immediate social environment of the child take the opportunity of this to influence children decisions (Franklin & Rodger, 2003).

Shellenbarger (2006) maintained releasing the burdens on students to follow the parents' career paths when he lamented that: "...the best lesson that

can be told children of nowadays is that it's a good idea to shift professions" (p. 112). In particular, parents play a vital role in the professional ambitions and professional development goal of their wards (Taylor, Harris, & Taylor, 2004). Devoid of parental support or approval, younger adults and students are frequently unwilling to exploring different career opportunities. Though parents recognize their responsibility and try to support the development of the career of their teenagers, parents carry a message across saying "don't make similar errors that I made" (Otto, 1989). This comment influences teenagers or adolescents to make decisions concerning professional and academic programmes. Thus, the extent of parental influence in the child's lifetime decisions, whether negative or positive, can affect how the child selects their future occupations.

From the foregoing, parental influence has been noted to be among the toughest and the most consistent determinate of students' attitudes towards selecting a specific programme of study and consequently, the choice of career (Kniveton, 2004). This is not only common in international communities, but also in Ghana studies have found that parental influence is a key variable in understanding the career choices of children (Akyina, Oduro-Okyireh, & Osei-Owusu, 2014; Ankoma-Sey, Quansah, & Nsoh, 2019; Anderson & Kim, 2006; Herrera & Hurtado, 2011; Quansah, Ankoma-Sey, & Dankyi, 2020). It has been noted that in some cases parents forced their children to go into vocations and careers without considering the abilities and interests in the name of protecting the family name and taking after their parents (Akyina et al., 2014).

The Role of Peer Groups in Pupils' Choice of Programmes

The primary social group of the child after the family is the peers where the child makes an attempt to be recognised and accepted by the group. At this stage, the child forms associations by themselves and have the opportunity to issues (such as fashion, secular music, eating habits, forming associations, etc) that they disagree with older persons (Webber & Walton, 2006). Harris (1977) stated that the peer group of adolescents or children significantly determines their personal and intellectual development. This has been supported by numerous longitudinal researchers that peers significantly influence academic performance (Palos & Drobot, 2010).

Peers play a significant role in the child's socialisation process and their pressure and impact have received extensive recognition in moulding and shaping the pathways of the child (Brym, 2001). The growth of a child is primarily influenced by the home they are coming from; nevertheless, peer goes beyond the socialisation process with the choice and adoption of social activities, academics, appearance, and lifestyle (Sebald, 1992). Likewise, peers are dramatic and pivotal in building children's ideas, attitudes and perceptions to appreciate the external world and in making future decisions, and as well support cohorts in times of discomforts and distress (Miller, 1992). Peers aid in examining and scrutinising ideas, beliefs, and feelings in a satisfactory way (Corsaro, 1997).

Scholarly research works regarding the influence of peer group show that peers operate outside the confines of the family to find or search for opportunities which make their self-expression and direction more apparent (Adler & Adler, 1998). Further, at the decision-making level among persons at

early stages, scholars have recounted that a greater part of students' decisions regarding career choice depends on teacher advice, peers, education, ability, and extent of counselling and family and cultural background (Palos & Drobot, 2010). In recent times, prospective peers and friends are a possible agent of positive relationships towards education, career search and joining a political or social organisation (Zimmerman, 2003).

School Challenges and Programme Choice

Role of Peers in Schools

Gaviria and Raphael (2001) noted that negative peer effects are explicit in the form of school dropout, alcohol consumption, drug use, sexuality, smoking, and delinquency. In addition, it has been maintained by Thomas and Webber (2009) that the effects depend on female and male, their subjects, classes, livelihood, dwellings and career paths. The influence of peers is more noticeable among same-sex, and in mutual relationships and friendship (Webber & Walton, 2006). Also, Navin (2009) noted that dating as another factor that might influence the career search of a teenage. Career search is described as the degree to which potential careers are explored and well-thought. Navin (2009) has advocated that examining career alternatives before committing to career results in future career satisfaction and success.

This study stipulates that friends and peers possess a significant challenge to pupils in their choice of programme to pursue in the SHS. friends and peer have a substantial drive toward academic decisions and career choices (Akyina et al., 2014). However, looking at the part that parents play in the personality growth and socialisation process, they regularly play the original principal role in the value transmission but friends and peer appear to

have the utmost role in the variation of decision making, appearances, lifestyle and academic choices (Mau & Bikos, 2000). Moreover, both peers and parents dominate in academic decision-making and career choices (Marjoribanks, 1997). Though several scholars have confirmed how other variables like occupational, prestige and community values affect students career decisions, numerous findings, among others provide sufficient evidence of the huge influence of peer group and parent (covertly or overtly) on the adolescents' career choice. Therefore, the majority of students select programmes based on advice from peers without examining their weaknesses and strengths (Miller, 1992).

The Role of Cognitive Ability and Interest

Shertzer and Stone (2003) revealed that the component of interest and ability are the fundamental variables affecting SHS students' selection of programmes. Shertzer and Stone (2003) further stated that the absence of interest can continuously result in reduced efficiency. Building interest in a particular programme develops improved achievement. A better choice of programme will assist adolescents in achieving the needed goals in the selected career pathways. Taylor and Buku (2006) pointed out that the issue of impracticable career decision among students in Ghana should be blamed on the current state of the nation. For example, there are insufficient qualified or professional teachers in second cycle schools to provide career direction to support students in making realistic decisions. From the view of Nwagu (2003), the majority of the student's drop-out of school because of wrong programme choices, lack of interest, financial restraints and unrealistic career aims.

The choice of occupation is a developmental process that extends over several years (Blau, Brummund, & Liu, 2013). There is, consequently, no particular time at which students decide to select one out of all potential careers but, there are intersections at which their lives take crucial turns which reduce the span of extra substitutes and this affect the final occupational choice. Stated differently, the choice of a specific career needs to match the abilities and interest of persons to avoid being frustrated and trapped at work. The choice of career, consequently, suggests addressing what one wants to be and how the person goes about achieving what he/she wants. Nevertheless, the first stage in the choice of career is being capable of recognising what the individual wants. This is regularly determined by the person's interests and values. Next, the individual needs to reach out to understand what their desires are and this is rarely achieved without making conscious efforts.

Furthermore, Okeke (2000) indicated that school programmes appropriately selected and reasonably studied and balanced with interest and abilities when deciding on a career to pursue can serve as a major determinant of career success. Okeke (2000) highlighted that a well-selected academic programme directs the future career decisions of students. Thus, students should be sufficiently supervised in selecting study programmes which are in alignment with their interest and abilities to help them in achieving their primary aims of education.

The observations of Olayinka (1993) revealed that several African students are tempted to select professions without doing the right self-evaluation but merely because it has huge financial gains or a high degree of status which comes with the profession. Olayinka (1993) further added that

self-evaluation and assessment is a crucial element of planning and selection of career. Thus, students must extremely be conscious of their work values, personality preferences, skills and interests to recognize professions that suits them most.

Measures for Challenges JHS Pupils Face in Choosing SHS Programme

Choosing an SHS programme plays a vital role in the career path and decision of profession that JHS pupils make at their completion level of three-year basic education. There is a need for the Ghana Education Service, the religious leaders and parents as well as teachers of the JHS pupils to identify special ways of helping the students who are practically young to make the right decision. The various interventions that could help JHS pupils to make the right choice of the programme have been discussed in this section of the study.

According to Kelechi and Ihuoma (2011), school counselling departments should be granted the opportunity to know and understand the abilities of the students and what could be their preferred career choices. Kelechi and Ihuoma stated that a major role of guidance and counselling is to make students aware or conscious of the alternatives available to them. Career guidance and counselling is a service used to organise programmes in career growth that provide opportunities for school counsellors to help students. This is to help students recognise and learn in ways that give them the ability to be successful in planning and selecting careers for effective adjustments and transitions to occupations and, also in the management of their professions. This will be an intervention that will help the students.

Asuru (2007) believed that teacher supervision should target refining instructional quality and the excellence of achievement outcome and guaranteeing that schools inform specific learners with such attitudes, skills and knowledge. This helps them to live fulfilling and meaningful lives, provide inputs, contribute their quota to societal development; improvement of practices and eventually improve learning outcomes through SHS programme or course choices. Instruction supervision should target refining the quality and quantity of basic education programme.

Karen-Lyn (2011) identified that open house dialogue with predecessors in SHSs and those working in various institutions as an intervention to help JHS pupils to choose the right programmes. JHS pupils tend to make decisions based on what their direct seniors who are ahead of them may tell them and that can help them to make the right programme choices. Dotong (2014) also mentioned that open houses discourse with peers, alumni, and student programmes tremendously influence students. Dotong (2014) further lamented that these sources are not well-acknowledged, but very dominant to influence the decisions of students regarding the SHS to attend and the best programme to choose. However, this seems to be lacking in Junior High Schools and hence created a gap that this study sought to address by identifying the various interventions that could help JHS children in choosing programmes to pursue at the SHS level (Dotong, 2014).

Ohixlwerei and Nwosu (2009) also expressed that the existence of support groups is a significant avenue that if appropriately executed, can assist an individual in the career decision process. Creating support groups have the probability to ensure that the student makes appropriate decisions even when

there are emotional, educational, and financial difficulties. There is evidence that individuals journey the pathways which are less difficult when entering higher education institutions. Thus, if a father or mother exercises sufficient force on their children to enter a specified professional field, the child is likely to adhere to the suggestion of the parents only when he/she has no career plans. Students must have a well-thought career strategy in their final year of senior cycle schooling.

The following approaches were suggested by Kelly (2006) as strategies to assist students in making appropriate career decisions in the process of selecting a profession to journey: (a) educational guidance programme, (b) Vocational/career guidance programmes, (c) parental support, (d) teacher/headteacher support, and (e) school-based guidance and counselling coordinators. These strategies are discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

Educational guidance programmes

Pecku (1991) stipulated that several nations are, in recent times, making use of guidance and counselling programmes to assist students (at all levels of education) in schools. This is because guidance and counselling, particularly educational guidance, support students in their learning. This assist students to appropriately handle the challenges they face in the growth and development in schools. Closing examining the difficulties young children encounter in colleges and schools, it is obvious that there is a need for educational guidance. Educational guidance is linked to all components of college or school, the instructional approaches employed, the curriculum, and other curricular discipline and activities (Mau & Bikos, 2000).

Educational guidance has been described as the assistance offered to the persons for them to appreciate their potentialities, have explicit knowledge of diverse educational prospects and their condition, to make prudent decisions concerning extracurricular, the course, colleges, curricular and school (Marjoribanks, 1997). At the basic school level, the guidance programme must assist the students in initiating a good start, judiciously plan, to obtain the best out of schooling and get them ready for further schooling. Educational guidance is sometimes employed in diagnosis and detecting if students need special attention. At the second cycle level, educational guidance should aid the students to better appreciate themselves and diverse facet of the school, to choose suitable programmes and to obtain data regarding different educational prospects. The students should be assisted to be accustomed to the professional implications of the several school programmes (Pecku, 1991).

Vocational/career guidance programmes

Eshun (2000) have highlighted the fact that students require assistance in finding gainful and suitable work. Owing to the developments in technology and science, and subsequent changes in the business sector, several professions have been developed. Today, there are millions of specialized occupations and jobs. Due to this, there is a significant need for instituting vocational guidance. Vocational guidance has been described as a process of supporting students in selecting a career, preparing for the career and entering the profession and progressing through the selected profession. It is primarily concerned with assisting students to make decisions and make choices with

regards to planning a prosperous future and building an appropriate profession (Shertzer & Stone, 2003).

The objectives and aims of vocational guidance include (1) assisting individuals in discovering their skills and abilities to match the broad requirements of the profession being considered, (2) assisting persons in developing a positive attitude towards work to dignify whatever form of vocation they may prefer, and (3) helping persons to critically assess the numerous forms of professions available and to acquire skills for analysing data about these professions. At the basic school level, even though no formal guidance programme is required, career orientation may be introduced at this level. At this level, some skills and qualities which have countless vocational implications should be instituted. At the second cycle level, career guidance should assist individuals to appreciate themselves, understand the world of work, to grow job readiness and decision-making directions. At the higher education level, vocational guidance should be more official. At this level, vocational guidance should aim at assisting students to gain information on diverse professions, training apprenticeship and job facilities (Kelly, 2006).

Parental support /guidance

Parents have a key influence on their adolescents' career decision and professional development. Parents desire that their wards are always a success and happiness in life and career choice is a key factor in this desire (Shellenbarger, 2006). Pieces of literature have also found that when students feel that they are loved and supported by their mother and/or father, they become much confident in their capability to search for careers and to select a profession that will be exciting and interesting. This is significant because

research has shown that teenagers, who feel knowledgeable in the choice of a career, are more likely to have satisfactory career decisions in the future (Keller, 2004). There is some level of influence from parents regarding their children's level of training or education they receive; the information they acquire about jobs and diverse professions; the attitudes and beliefs they develop towards work, and the enthusiasm they have to become successful. In most cases, these skills are unconsciously learned because teenagers and children by captivated the expectations attitudes of their parent as they live and grow with them. Keller suggested that the following strategies can be adopted by parents to assist their children in making good decisions concerning their career;

- i. Inspiring their children to obtain as much education as probable.
- ii. Assisting their children to identify their innate skills and talents.
- iii. Building their knowledge of the business world.
- iv. Giving them training on decision-making abilities.
- v. Appreciating gender fairness and acknowledging diversity in culture.
- vi. Supporting children to become conscious of career materials or training and educational prospects.

Teacher/Head teacher's guidance/support

The teacher is also a key player as far as students' career selection and programme choice are concerned. In the observations of Moore (1998), the curriculum of the school has the fundamental purposes of developing a complete person by shaping the psychomotor, affective and cognitive features of the person. The instructor is a major expert in the school instructional milieu and thus, their participation and support in the selection and

development process are critical. The information offered through documentation is maintained by the teacher is crucial for JHS pupils' choice of programme. Concerning programme selection and choice of schools at the second cycle stage, the teacher has been found to influence the decisions of students (Oladele, 2000). Through constant evaluation, the instructor can advise students about their development or examine the appropriateness of a particular programme for specific students. The instructor during teaching makes the students conscious of the world of work and this assists them to have a mentality on a particular career vocation.

School headteachers should identify the significance and the need for complete instruction and learn in the school setting, and also establish a well laid out and implemented guidance and counselling programme in the school (Mankoe, 2001). Mankoe maintained that the headteacher, as the administrative head of the school, should establish managerial plans of supporting guidance and counselling programmes in their respective educational institutions.

In Tolbert's (1980) view, the heads of schools must inspire teachers to assist students to appreciate themselves, their weaknesses and strengths, and also motivate teachers to be more thoughtful to the needs of students, problems, worries, and even assisting them in finding solutions to some personal difficulties. The headteacher serves as a coordinator and makes sure that students make suitable options and choices when they register for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) where they select the programmes and SHSs they prefer.

Provision of school-based guidance and counselling coordinators

Guidance and counselling, according to Oladele (2000), is seen as a service and a concept that supports the youth and their prospects. The guidance focuses on each student and assists them in making choices to match their educational objectives. In fact, guidance functions with education so that individuals can become valuable person in the larger society. Therefore, Farrant (1980) stresses that the key objective of education is to prepare the learner fit for living and to be easily lived with. Education with guidance and counselling stimulate students, parents and teachers understanding of the different stages of developments and their effect on the decision-making process, adjustment and growth (Pafili & Mylanakis, 2011).

Considering the new and changing educational structure and system globally, the role of career guidance and counselling in schools cannot be overlooked, especially when JHS pupils are always making decisions with regards to the type of programme to pursue in SHS (Dontong, 2014). Aside from assisting with students' complete development in academics, students need to be directed and supported to make the right decisions and choices (Dontong, 2014).

The multifaceted demands of the world, the growing educational expansions and opportunities, the competitive nature of life, the dynamic nature of individual needs, and the nation's expectation of schools to offer the manpower needed in meeting the demands of the nation makes it vital for the right guidance of the adolescence in schools in Ghana (Akyina et al., 2014).

The issue now is whether students are well supported, guided and appropriately situated at a point where they can take advantage of the chances

available and make convincing career decisions or are abandoned to make impractical career choices due to the unwarranted pressures from parents and peer groups, profession values and prestige without considering the abilities, skills, aptitudes, interests and plans of the students

Theoretical Review

The theories purported to back the study on challenges encountered by JHS pupils in the choice of programmes are the self-efficacy theory, the theory of vocational development, and social cognitive career theory.

Vygotsky's Social Development Theory

The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky (1978) states: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals." (p57).

A second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD): a level of development attained when children engage in social behavior. Full development of the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. The range of skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone.

Vygotsky's theory was an attempt to explain consciousness as the end product of socialization. For example, in the learning of language, our first

utterances with peers or adults are for the purpose of communication but once mastered they become internalized and allow “inner speech”. Vygotsky’s theory is complementary to Bandura’s work on social learning and a key component of situated learning theory as well. Because Vygotsky’s focus was on cognitive development, it is interesting to compare his views with those a constructivist (Bruner) and a genetic epistemologist (Piaget).

This theory reflects this study because the choice of programme is an evaluation process of the individual making the decision in a social setting. Just as Vygotsky mentions, the child making the decision is found in a social setting and as such, whatever happens in that setting influences the decision-making process. This manifest in instances where the child is observed to depend on father, mother, siblings, family relatives, guardians, peers, and teachers to assist in this decision-making process.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCCT) was developed contingent on Bandura (1986) general social cognitive theory. Lent and Brown (2006) noted that the SCCT highlights the inter-relationship among environmental, individual, and behavioural elements that are presumed to influence one’s career and academic choice. Key issues raised in the framework of the theory were self-efficacy, interests, beliefs, environmental supports, outcome expectations and choice actions (Lent, Sheu, Gloster, & Wilkins, 2010). In studying JHS pupils’ choice of programmes in SHS and its related issues, SCCT provides a suitable theoretical lens (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

The theory has been employed in some studies associated with the intentions to choose of programmes several fields (e.g., Byars-Winston,

Estrada, Howard, Davis, & Zalapa, 2010; Betz & Hackett, 1983; Lent, Lopez, Lopez, & Sheu, 2008; Hackett, Betz, Casas, & Rocha-Singh, 1992). SCCT postulates that the will-power to produce a specific choice can be described as a function of goals and interests. Meanwhile, interest in a choice action is related to learning experiences and self-reference confidence. Given the central significance of initial experience in the various subjects in the JHS (Marshall, McGee, McLaren, & Veal, 2011), intentions to choose a particular programme can be said to be a function of motivation and learning related subjects at the basic education level.

According to Pajares and Kranzler (1995) intentions to choose specific- programmes are related to previous academic achievement and self-efficacy beliefs. Other studies also mentioned students' attitudes towards related subjects as key drivers of students' choice of the preferred programme (Trusty, 2002; Eccles, 1994). SCCT also stresses the role of ecological barriers and supports the determination of the choice of action. In the higher education context, students' decision to pursue specific programmes is a response to the situational supports and barriers—academic, financial, or social. Students transiting to tertiary education requires several demands including academic integration into college, the need for financial resources, and numerous external difficulties. The product of this process may exhibit either blockades or supports and consequently influence students' choice of programmes in SHS education.

The theory helps explain the challenges associated with the choice of programme to pursue in SHS. Therefore, the will-power of the individual produces a specific choice which is a function of goals and interests. With this,

the central significance of initial experience in the various subjects in the JHS, intentions to choose a particular programme can motivate the choice of a specific programme to pursue.

Theory of Vocational Development (TVD)

The Theory of Vocational Development (TVD) was propounded by Parsons (1909), positing that effective career choice was rooted in an understanding of self and vocational knowledge. According to Parsons, personal and occupational understanding leads to greater job satisfaction, better productivity, and lower costs for employers. Parson's ideas served as a foundation for career guidance in America until the middle of the 20th century (Brown, 2002). In the ending half of the 20th century, Super (1963) built upon the work of Parsons by proposing one of the first life-span theories that considered career choice as a fluctuating concept (Stitt-Gohdes, 1997).

Linking this theory to the topic under study, it can be expressed that JHS pupils need self-understanding of their vocational knowledge when it comes to those that will decide to pursue technical and vocational studies. With this theory, the challenge with regards to the SHS programme with regards to self- vocational knowledge could be resolved.

Empirical Review

In their study, Zare-ee, and Shekarey (2010) explored the impact of personal, familial, and social factors on students' programme choice technical schools in Iran. Through a survey, 249 students were sampled randomly from Andimeshk Zone of Iranian technical schools and the questionnaires were administered to them regarding personal, familial, and social factors that influenced their choice of computer engineering, accounting, ICT, welding, or

other analogous programmes in the technical schools. Information concerning the study was gathered using a Likert-type scale questionnaire developed and validated by the researchers. The results from the step-by-step regression analytical procedure, Zare-ee, and Shekarey found that personal, familial, and social factors significantly influenced the choice of programmes by students. Furthermore, a comparison analysis discovered that no significant difference exists between female and male students concerning being influenced by such factors in their selection.

In a similar study, Korkmaz (2015) explored the factors affecting high school students' career decisions in technology and science in Turkey. To achieve this aim, 1192 students (age-range 14-17, 558 male, 629 female, 5 did not indicate their gender) were sampled to participate in the study. A standardised questionnaire called the Career Choice Instrument (CCI) were administered to the participants. Conducting a series of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) showed that variables such as family income, the gender of student, type of school, and father and mother education level influenced students' choice of career and career preferences. Korkmaz concluded that indicators like parental education level, income, gender, and type of school had a significant main effect on the adolescent choice of career.

In another study, Amoah, Kwofie, and Baiden (2015) assessed the factors influencing the students' choice of career in SHS in Ghana. The research design employed a descriptive research survey. Nearly 322 final-year SHS students were sampled from four schools in the Agona West Municipality. These cohorts of participants were allowed to attend a workshop planned by the school counsellor on the need to choose a career and this led

the students to decide the kind of programme to choose if they are to be admitted to the university. The results revealed that students planned their profession to facilitate the selection of the preferred career. During this period, the students go through self-assessment and evaluate what they desire to do in a lifetime, make informed decisions on programmes and schools to go which aid them to attain their career aspirations. Additionally, the career choice of a student was affected by determinants like personal motivations in life, academic standards, the easiness of being employed after training, and the extent of job security.

Pascual (2014) also explored the determinants of career preference of fourth-year high school students at the University of Rizal System' Laboratory School in Morong Rizal. The association of the determinants influencing students' course preferences to their career preference, Brainard's Occupational Preference Inventory (BOPI), academic performance and their elective marks were measured. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in analysing the data. The study showed that job availability after school is the first concern of students in selecting a programme to pursue in college. The majority of the students prefer to choose a science-related programme or "common programmes". The least desired programme was noted to be in the field of Agriculture. Further analysis showed that most of the student desired to choose professional programmes. Students' desired programmes were found to be consistent with their occupational preferences as well as the occupation of the father. Factors that were not associated with students' choice of programme and occupational preferences included the

occupation of the mother, students' sibling interest, monthly family income, and students' academic performance.

Additionally, Akyina, Oduro-Okyireh, and Osei-Owusu (2014) sought to examine whether SHS students made rational decisions regarding the choice of academic programmes in the school. The research entailed students in the six SHS in Kwabre East District, Ghana. Whereas the final year students were sampled purposively, a proportional stratified random sampling technique was utilised to select 331 students from the several programmes in each stratum (school) to participate in the study. The instrument used was a researcher-developed and validated questionnaire which was administered to the participants. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in analysing the data. The study revealed that SHS students generally make cogent decisions regarding the choice of their programmes. The majority of the students were found to evaluate their weaknesses and strengths and search for information on their programmes before making a choice. The students also were found to select programmes depending on their interests or abilities. Nevertheless, very little students searched for qualified counsellors to help them make informed decisions before they choose programmes.

In their study, Preez (2018) was motivated by the deprived nature of mathematics teaching in South Africa and the dearth of knowledgeable mathematics instructors and sought to find out the determinants of postgraduate students' choice of mathematics as a major course in three universities in the Western Cape Province. The students who participated in the study were Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students and were required to respond to a series of questions and also responding to a

standardised FIT-choice instrument. The research discovered that student answers concerning their inspirations were extraordinarily consistent, irrespective of the participants' social class or home language. Student responses regarding the choice of the programme were largely contingent on intrinsic motivations.

Quansah, Ankoma-Sey and Dankyi (2020) explored the factors influencing SHS female students' selection of STEM-related programmes in tertiary institutions in Ghana. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. The study covered third-year SHS female students in three regions in the country. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, an instrument that was developed and validated by the researchers were administered to 1,938 participants selected from 15 schools. It was discovered that school-linked indicators like elective mathematics status, course of study, and interest in science and mathematics, affected the choice of STEM-related programmes by female students. Home-related factors (e.g., socioeconomic status, parents' education level) and personal factors (e.g., locus of control, career indecision, self-confidence) also played a significant role in the choice of STEM-related programmes by female SHS students.

Ankoma-Sey, Quansah and Nsoh (2019) investigated the factors influencing SHS students' enrolment in the Home Economics programme in Ghana. Using a cross-sectional descriptive survey design, the study targeted first-year Home Economics students from 16 sampled SHSs in Greater Accra, region, Central region, and Western region. Through a census sampling procedure, all first-year Home Economics students in the selected SHS were involved in the study, making a total of 1,136 participants. Information fro

respondents were obtained through questionnaire administration. Binary logistic regression analysis showed that the determinants of students' decision to enrol in the Home Economics programme were perceived workload, interest, teachers, fathers, family relatives, BECE grade, and job prospects, among others. Variables like gender, friends, mothers and desire to be an entrepreneur, did not affect students' choice of the Home Economics programme.

Jafari and Aliemaili (2013) investigated the determinants of the choice of the university among pre-university students in Iran. Through a survey data were collected and analysed quantitatively. A cluster sampling approach was used for the selection of participants. The results revealed that university-related factors, social indicators, personal factors, and economic factors affected the student's choice of university.

Eze (2001) specified numerous factors that influence male students in the choice of Home Economics as a course; that there is a discrepancy in the socialization of girls and boys at an early phase of life; he recognises triviality of Home Economics for boys; nonexistence of career education for young people; and femininity of Home Economics programme. Several authors have underscored a number of factors that affects the enrolment and gender disparities in the Home Economics programme. Although these factors provide a clue to what propels students to choose Home Economics as a programme of study in the SHSs, less empirical evidence has been provided to that effect. That is, no study was found which investigated the factors influencing the choice of Home Economics programme in SHSs.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the intent of the study and the literature reviewed, a conceptual framework was developed to guide the conduct of the study. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework for the study.

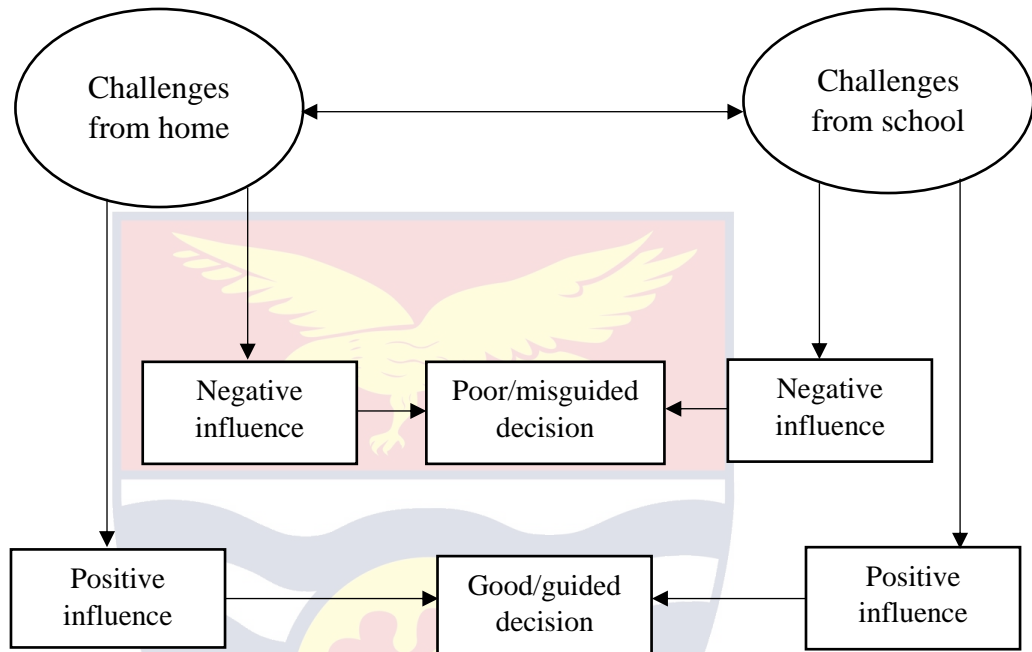


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework

Throughout the literature review, it is clear that there are a host of challenges and potential obstacles in the way of pupils as they make choices for the school and programmes they would prefer to study in the SHS. After the extensive review of literature, it appeared that some agents or activities from the home and school and as well from the individual places pose challenges to the pupil making the decision. At home, for instance, the father, mother, siblings, finances at home and friends at home are likely to throw a challenge to the person making the decision. In the school, teachers, headteachers, peers and performance in school can also be an obstacle for making the right choice. These dimensional challenges, in most cases, interplay to present a challenge to the pupil making the choice.

Lawer (2015) conducted a study find out factors that informed second cycle students' choices of programmes of study and career in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. The descriptive survey was used for the study, and both questionnaire and interview guide were used in gathering the data. The questionnaire was administered on the students while the Coordinators and the heads of the selected institutions were interviewed. A total of 432 subjects was used for the study. Out of this number, 420 were students, 6 were Guidance Coordinators, and 6 were Heads of Institutions. The study revealed among other things that career guidance programme was not given prominent attention for the full benefit of students. Hence students' source of career information was limited. It was also noted that though students had some information about the self, much was not known about the world of work. Recommendations on how to improve the implementation of career guidance programmes in senior high schools so students become well informed to choose their future careers were given at the end.

Summary of Literature Review

The ability of JHS pupils to choose SHS programmes have been a challenge to most pupils. The main reason for the challenge was their inability to take effective decisions. The literature review critically examines the challenges and possible interventions that can assist JHS pupils in choosing the best programmes to pursue in SHS. The review expressed that students' profession success can be best reached if the correct course matched their ability, intellect, and personality. Undergoing the career appropriate to students by incorporating an occupation plan with the curriculum aid students to make informed decisions concerning what programme to read in school.

Though elective programmes are in existence to aid students to make informed decisions in the programme in SHS, it is also vital to assist students to appreciate the significant issues they have to study in the choice of a programme in the future.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods and methodology employed for the research. The research methods and procedures that were employed are categorised under the following subheadings: Research design, Population, sampling approach, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and Ethical consideration, and analyses.

Research Design

The explanatory sequential mixed method design was employed for the study. The mixed methods approach enabled a combination of quantitative and qualitative strategies in collecting data, analyzing the data and making inferences for the general purposes of depth and breadth of understanding of the issue of investigation (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

In the explanatory sequential design, the investigator started by carrying out a quantitative investigation and followed up on some selected results using a qualitative approach to explain the results from the quantitative phase. The reason for the implementation of the qualitative inquiry is to clarify the earlier quantitative results in detailed. As the name implies, the explanatory sequential design demonstrates how the qualitative data assist in explaining the results from the quantitative phase (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The primary intent of this design was to utilise qualitative data to clarify earlier quantitative results. In this study, the explanatory design is appropriate because the investigator seeks qualitative data in an attempt to explain positive-performing exemplars and surprising results (Bradley et al., 2009; Morgan, 2014; Morse, 2003). In other cases, the design is utilised in explaining the mechanisms via qualitative data to throw more light on why the quantitative results were found and how they might be described.

In the first step, the investigator plans and implements a quantitative stage which entails the collection and analysis of quantitative data. As in the case of this study, an initial large sample of pupils was selected and the questionnaire was administered to them. This was followed by the analysis. In the second phase, the investigator integrated the two approaches in a way to identify specific results from the quantitative phase which called for further clarification and using these results to direct the implementation of the qualitative part. To be precise, the investigator refined and developed the qualitative research questions, samples purposeful, and collected data in such a manner that was followed directly from the quantitative strand.

Consequently, the qualitative stage was linked to and grounded in the quantitative results. In the third phase, the investigator carryout qualitative inquiry by gathering and analyzing qualitative data. The investigator, finally, described to what degree and in what means the qualitative results clarify and provide understanding into the quantitative results and what generally is known in relation to the aim of the study (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

It is imperative to mention that the point of integration- the point at which the quantitative data meets the qualitative- for this study is the analyses

phase. That is the investigator analyses the data from the quantitative strand and reports the results. Because some results may require further clarification, the investigator introduced a qualitative dimension to provide more insight into the results. The quantitative results highlight the exact results which need clarifications via qualitative inquiring and recommend which participants can appropriately clarify the quantitative results.

The explanatory sequential design has several strengths. First, the design pleases quantitative investigators since it usually starts with a robust quantitative positioning. Secondly, its use makes it easy to execute since the investigator carries out the two stages—quantitative, then qualitative—distinctly and gather at a time only one form of data. This suggests that individual investigators can manage the implementation of this design. Lastly, the design connects itself to emergent methodologies in which the second stage can be planned depending on what is found from the earlier quantitative stage.

Despite the strengths of the design, there are some challenges associated with its use. This design needs so much time for the implementation of the phases, and respondents must be available over a protracted period. Though the qualitative stage can be restricted to a few participants, sufficient time is still required to take data. Again, the qualitative stage cannot be fully specified in advance because the details of the qualitative are based on the results from the quantitative.

Study Area

The La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality is located in the Greater Accra Region. It is one of the 16 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in the region and was created in 2012 as part of the newly created Assemblies aimed at deepening decentralization and bringing development to the doorstep of citizens. La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipal was established by Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 2131 and inaugurated in June 2012. It was carved out of the Ga East Municipality.

The La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality is located in the northern part of the Greater Accra Region. It covers a total land surface area of 70.887 square kilometres. It is bordered on the West by the Ga East Municipal, on the East by the Adentan Municipal, the South by Accra Metropolitan Area and the North by the Akwapim South District. A total of 80,121 persons at La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality representing 91.3 percent of the population 11 years and older in the Municipality are literate in at least one language, while the non-literate population constitute 8.7 percent. Five out of every 10 persons (55.4%) could read and write in English and the Ghanaian language. Also, about seven out of every 10 persons (67.6 percent) who were 65+ could read and write in English and the Ghanaian language. The populations who could read and write in both English and French, and English, French and Ghanaian language are 1.0 percent and 3.0 percent respectively. The results further show that the number of non-literate females (5,694) is about three times more than that of the males (1,921). Similarly, the female literate population (39,876) in the Municipality is slightly less than their male counterparts (40,245).

Population

The target population for this research consist of all the final year JHS pupils and teachers/counsellors handling the final year JHS pupils in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality. Precisely, teachers/counsellors and the pupils were considered to provide the relevant information required for the study. The La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality has 56 public basic schools which were all considered for the Study. The population of the pupils was 8,418 and the teachers/counsellors were 117. It must be indicated that all the persons who were school counsellors were teachers as well.

Sampling Procedure

The sample size for this study comes in various forms due to the design employed (explanatory sequential design). First, a cluster sampling procedure was employed to select 10 schools from the 56 schools. The cluster sampling technique was used due to the large and dispersed population and the need to ensure those sampling elements given an equal chance of being selected. Afterwards, 368 pupils were sampled through a systematic sampling procedure. This sample size was based on the assertion of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) that for a population between 8,000 and 9,000, a sample size of 368 is deemed adequate and sufficient to generalise. For the teachers/counsellors, all 117 of them were sampled to be involved in the research. The census approach was utilised in involving all of them (Creswell, 2012).

Creswell (2012) pointed out that a sample size of 10 is appropriate for qualitative research if the population is above 1,000. Creswell further indicated that for a population of 100 or 150, sample size less than 10 is suitable. Based on the assertion by Creswell, 12 pupils and eight

teachers/counsellors were sampled to be part of the study. The convenience sampling procedure was used to sample the 12 pupils and eight teachers/counsellors. The researcher followed up on particular items in the quantitative results, and then based on the issues specific respondents provided, they were selected to clarify the earlier quantitative results (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Twelve pupils and eight teachers/counsellors were selected for the follow up qualitative study, a more systematic approach was employed by using the quantitative results to guide the selection of the respondents who are in the best position to clarify the quantitative data. This technique required that data should be available on the specific responses of specific participants in the quantitative sample. This was done by having unique identifiers for each of the participants.

Data Collection Instruments

Two data collection instruments were used for this research. First, a questionnaire was used to take quantitative data from pupils and teachers/counsellors and an interview guide was further used to take follow up data. All the instruments were developed and validated by the researcher.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was preferred for the quantitative data because it is not expensive to use and can be administered to several individuals within the shortest possible period (Neuman, 2007). The self-report nature of the questionnaire increased the risks of respondents giving false information which in turn affects the validity of the findings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Nevertheless, the participants were guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality, and volition of data gathered, and sought their consent, even though participation

was voluntary. The respondents were made to understand that pseudonyms would be given to their schools for the sake of anonymity, and also their names would not be required in the questionnaire. Further, the respondents were assured that the data were going to be saved in computer software with password protection. By ensuring that, it was expected that respondents would, at best, provide accurate responses to the items on the questionnaire (Neuman, 2007).

The questionnaires were in two forms; the first form was developed to solicit information from the pupils (see Appendix A), and the second form was designed to take data from teachers/counsellors (see Appendix B). The questionnaire for the pupils had two sub-sections (i.e. sections A and B). Section A had 5-items on the socio-demographic characteristics of the pupils, namely, gender, age-range, SHS category, a programme of study and whether they had plans of attending SHS. Section B comprised 19-items that measured the challenges pupils faced in choosing a programme of study in SHS.

The second form of the questionnaire administered to teachers and/or school counsellors entailed three sub-sections (i.e., sections A, B, and C). Section A had 3-items soliciting for the pupils' demographic data, namely, gender, age and position in the school. Section B had 10-items and focused on finding out which home variables served as challenges pupils faced in choosing a programme of study in SHS. Section C had 5-items and solicited information on some challenges the pupils faced from the school in choosing a programme of study in SHS.

Interview guide

The interview guide was the follow-up qualitative data collection instrument used in this study for the qualitative data. Specifically, an unstructured interview was conducted. The interview guide allows for probing (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2008). This data collection instrument was administered to some selected participants in this study as a way for them to clarify the quantitative results. The interview guide had 6 major items with several probes. The items were developed based on the specific results from the quantitative dimension.

Validity

Ensuring the validity of the data collection tool in any research work is vital and central to the acceptability of the entire research results. Validity is the degree to which an empirical measure sufficiently mirrors the actual connotation of the theory under investigation (Babbie & Mouton, 2011; Bryman, 2004). To add up, the validity of the responses from a data collection tool was carried out to guarantee trustworthiness and authenticity. The following validity procedures were employed:

Face Validity: In guaranteeing face validity, the data collection instruments were given to the investigator's peers for their evaluation. These comprised colleague teachers. The comments made were used to revise the instruments. According to Oluwatayo (2012), face validity is described as the subjective evaluation of the relevance and presentation of the data collection tool as to whether the questions/items in the tool seem to be clear, unambiguous, reasonable, and relevant. To guarantee the face validity of the study

instruments in this research, the questionnaire was discussed and revised with colleagues.

Content validity: As a theoretical concept, content validity describes the degree to which the measurement instrument exhibits the evidence of comprehensive and fair coverage of the area of questions/items that it is expected to cover (Oluwatayo, 2012). The content validity was granted by experts in the field of education which included retired teachers and headteachers, other educationists who have in-depth knowledge about the areas of study. These professionals made critical and insightful remarks which were considered in preparing the final form of the instruments (Babbie, 2007). The insightful comments by the experts in the field help in reshaping the entire instrument to capture every area of the study.

Construct Validity: The logical relationships among research variables is described as construct validity. In the view of Walden (2012), construct validity denotes the degree to which the operational meaning of a variable mirrors its theoretical definitions. Construct validity is the extent to which inferences can be reasonably be made from the operationalization in research to the theoretical concepts on which those operationalizations are grounded (Cohen et al., 2008). In this study, the construct analysis was yielded by factor analysis which helped in separating clustered items in the instrument from another as done by other researchers.

Reliability

Creswell (2005) reveals that the goal of good research work is to have measures that are reliable and valid. Creswell further refers to reliability as the dependability of a psychological trait or the extent to which a measuring tool

measures a similar manner every time it is utilised under a similar condition with a similar subject. In other situations, reliability can be explained as the extent to which items hang together to measure a specific construct. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate was utilised.

Pre-testing of instrument

The questionnaires were pre-tested in two public schools within the Tema Metropolis. The schools had similar characteristics as schools in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality, though they were not part of the sample for the study. Fifty (50) JHS pupils and ten teachers/counsellors were selected from these two schools to respond to questionnaire items for the pre-test.

The responses were critically examined. Although the teachers/counsellors did not have any difficulty in responding to the instrument, the pupils did. Comments raised by the pupils in the comment section provided on the instrument were adequately addressed. The pupils indicated that some of the questions were not clear to them and so the researcher had to recast those questions. The result showed a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient (r) of 0.82 and 0.73 for the questionnaire for pupils and teachers/counsellors. This confirmed that the questionnaire had high reliability and therefore reliable (Creswell, 2012).

Because the design was explanatory sequential design, the interview guide was developed after the main analyses. However, the interview guide was sent to the supervisors to ensure its content validity and that the content of the interview guide matched the issues in the research.

Data Collection Procedures

A letter of introduction was obtained from the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast (Appendix E) and this was sent to the selected institutional and departmental heads requesting their permission to carry out the research in their outfit. The letter of introduction provided access to the research as the heads of the various group read it and understood the objective of the research. Ethical clearance was also sought. In this study, four colleagues were recruited and oriented to help in the administration of the questionnaire. Before data collection, initial arrangements were made to establish the appropriate contact and to inform the gatekeepers of the data collection zones. The aim of the research was highlighted to the participants so that they can willingly and objectively respond to the questionnaire. The administration for the questionnaire was carried out and the data were taken immediately.

After the data from the questionnaire were analysed, the interview guide was developed in line with the issues which emerged from the analyses. Participants were then sampled and the interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted at a private office within the school premises. The interviews were recorded.

Data Processing and Analysis

The quantitative data gathered were cross-checked, clustered and analysed. Two forms of data were analysed to address the research questions. For each research question, both forms of data were obtained. That is, data from all the sections of the questionnaire (administered to pupils and teachers/counsellors) were analysed using frequencies and percentages.

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was conducted through a manual means. The manual approach was used because the participants for the interviews were relatively few. The qualitative data were triangulated with the quantitative data. From the perspective of Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic analysis goes through six distinct stages. The phases are:

1. Familiarisation with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Familiarisation with the Data: The data was transcribed by the researcher. This gave the researcher a foreknowledge of what the data was all about and the pattern of participants' responses. After the transcription, the researcher replayed all the audio recordings against the transcriptions to make sure that all errors involving participants' verbal utterances were corrected. The researcher then read through all the transcriptions two times to make sure the researcher had a broad knowledge of the data collected. The participants were given pseudonyms (such as Kelli, Pollre, Hempey, etc.) for easy identification. For the pupils, the pseudonyms were Xerk, Ylowt, Wiplot, Dialely, Zacki, Jupita, Silow, Kayr, Pieror, Jaina, Barbhs, and Nhatan. The teachers/ counsellors were also given authored names as Zori, Jayru, Poala, Itearyt, Quatey, Yirue, Erame, Shaloe, Uyirew, and Bonoro.

Generating Initial Codes: Whilst trying to familiarise with the data, the researcher took notice of recurrent ideas that seemed to span across the entire

data set. These ideas were colour coded with the theme or sub-theme they represent put in parenthesis against them. Since I reviewed literature in certain thematic areas which also informed the interview questions, these initial codes were generated under those themes. Notwithstanding, the researcher tried to identify other themes that did not relate to any specific theme from the literature review and these were also given codes.

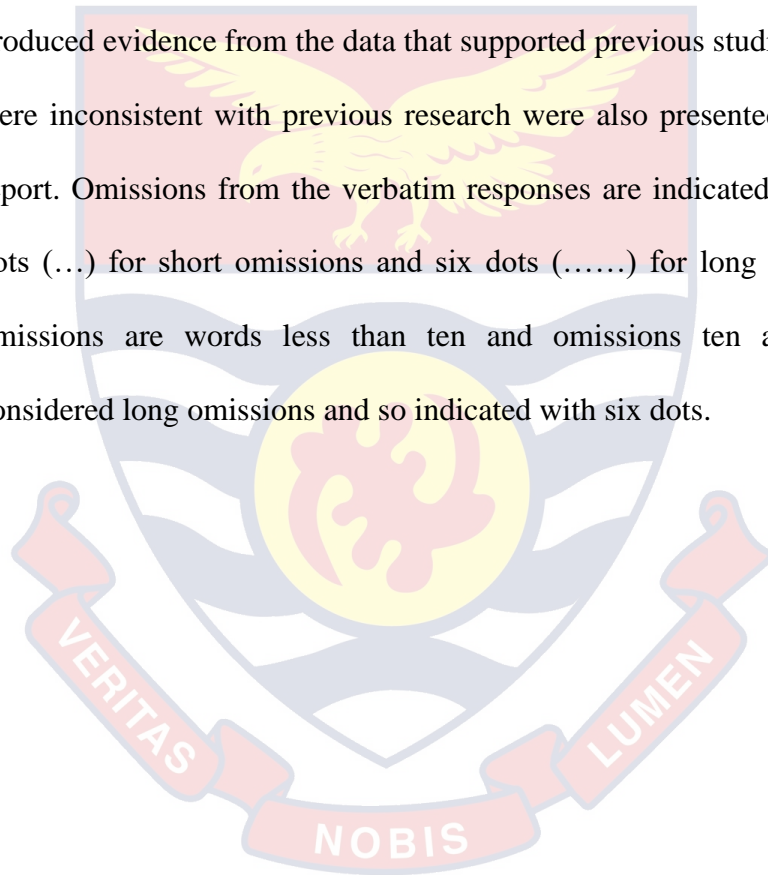
Searching for Themes: After the data was coded, I started looking for how the codes related to the predefined themes identified in the literature. It must be admitted here that, the research was built around three predefined themes with sub-themes (due to the explanatory sequential design used) and those themes guided the analysis. Here, I was able to identify from the codes other sub-themes that were related to the main themes identified in the literature. Therefore, Braun and Clarke's third stage was not followed exactly in this study since the themes were predefined. One noticeable thing done at this stage was my attempt to look for how different themes combined to form overarching themes and themes that were closely related were put together to aid the analysis.

Reviewing Themes: At this stage, the researcher reread the identified themes and the codes that had been captured under them. This ensured that the codes captured under the various themes related to those themes. This also allowed the researcher to reposition certain codes under more related themes than their initial ones.

Defining and Naming Themes: Apart from the new themes that emerged from the data gathered such as peer influence, the analysis was done along the main themes and sub-themes identified in the literature. Therefore, the

researcher did not have to give new names except an instance where two themes were combined to form one overarching theme. This was also informed by the responses from the quantitative inquiry.

Producing the Report: This stage involved a write-up of the research report. I did not just produce extracts to support themes but rather I was analytic as possible by interpreting the data. I tried making sense of the data gathered under the various themes bearing in mind the research questions. I also produced evidence from the data that supported previous studies and those that were inconsistent with previous research were also presented in the research report. Omissions from the verbatim responses are indicated with dots; three dots (...) for short omissions and six dots (.....) for long omissions. Short omissions are words less than ten and omissions ten and above were considered long omissions and so indicated with six dots.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This section of the study focused on the presentation and discussion of the findings. The analysis has been organised from two main perspectives which comprised the demographic features of the pupils and the teachers/counsellors perspective, and the main analysis. The main analysis was done in line with research questions guiding the study.

As earlier indicated, the point of data integration was at the analysis level. This suggests that the qualitative data immediately follows the quantitative data. For the pupils who were involved in the quantitative data, 316 out of 368 questionnaires were valid for data collection which corresponds to a response rate of 85.9%. For the teachers/counsellors, 100 out of 117 valid questionnaires were obtained which correspond to a response rate of 85.5%. For the qualitative data, a 100% response rate was achieved for both pupils and teachers/counsellors interviewed.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The study comprised two different categories of respondents: pupils and teachers/counsellors. The study surveyed the demographic information for these two groups of respondents. The demographic data for the respondents were relevant in order to make a meaningful judgement about the findings of

this study. This data also provides some sense of whether the sample is a reflection of the population (Salkind, 2010).

Background information of respondents

The background information of the pupils was explored. These include gender, age range, whether they had plans for attaining SHS education, school their preferred school category and the programme they would want to pursue in SHS.

Figure 2 presents the gender distribution of the respondents.

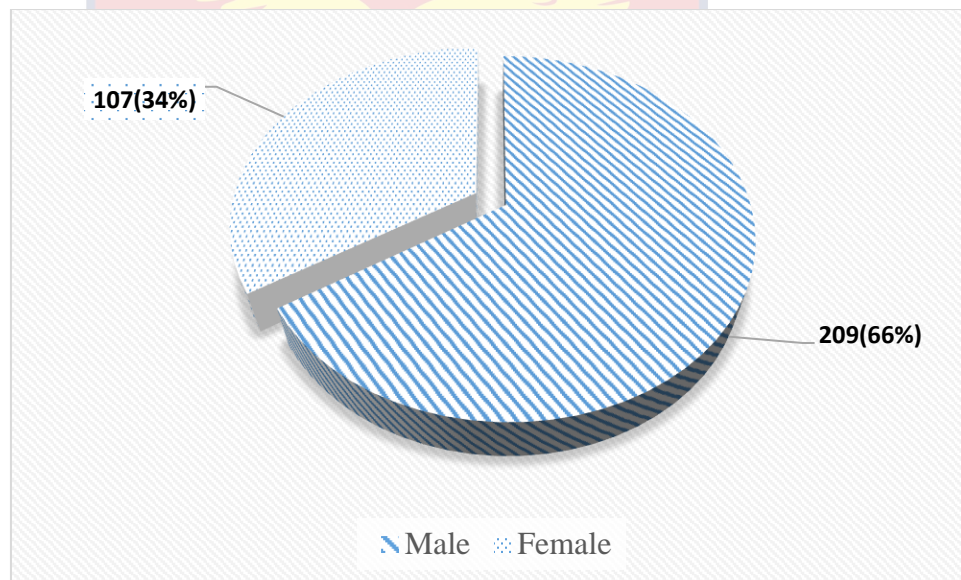


Figure 2- Gender Distribution of Respondents

Two hundred and nine males, representing 66% of the respondents, and 107 females, also representing 34% respondents, participated in the study (Figure 2). This implies that a greater proportion of the study respondents were males. Figure 3 shows the age distribution of respondents

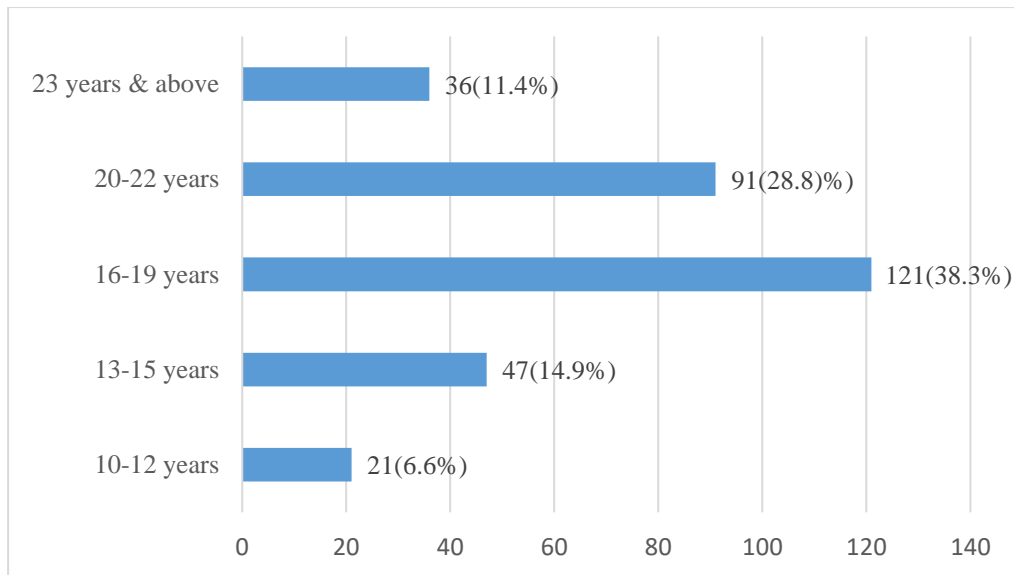


Figure 3- Age Ranges of Participants

As shown in Figure 3, the majority of the pupils were between the ages of 16 and 19 years (38.3%) whereas a few of them were in the age bracket of 10 and 12 years (6.6%). Other participants were aged between 20 and 22 years (28.8%), and 13 and 15 years (14.9%). This implied that most of the respondents aged 16-19 years.

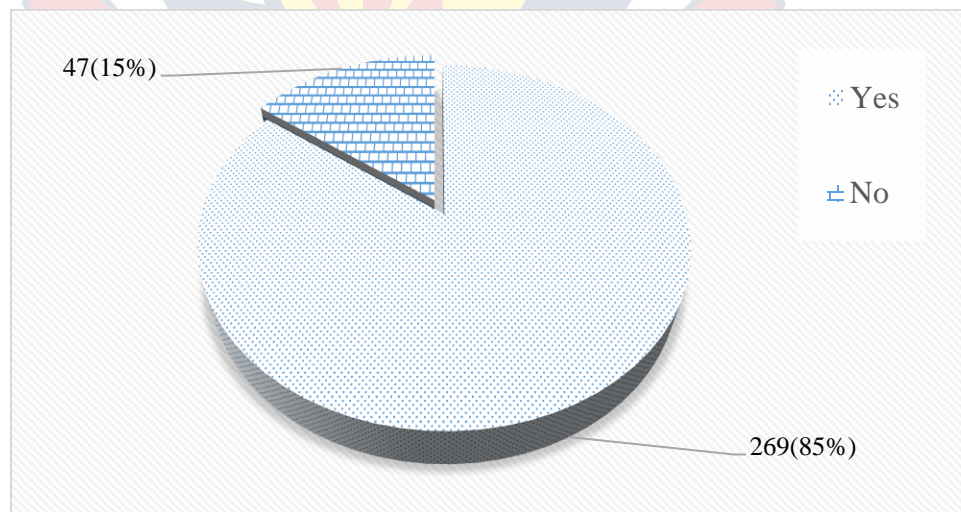


Figure 4- Participants' Desire to Attend Senior High School

Figure 4 presents data on whether the pupils had plans to attend SHS. The data showed that a larger proportion of the pupils had in mind of attending SHS (85%) with a few saying they would not attend SHS. This can be inferred

from the analysis that most of the respondents planned to attain SHS education.

Table 1 further provides details on the category of senior high education and programme the respondents preferred to enroll on.

Table 1- *Pupils' Choice of Senior High School Type and Programme (n=316)*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Category of senior high		
Normal SHS	148	46.8
Secondary/Technical	104	32.9
Technical/Vocational	64	20.3
Total	316	100.0
Programme selected		
Business	83	26.3
Home Economics	55	17.4
General Science	44	13.9
Visual Art	74	23.4
General Art	21	6.7
Pure Technical	39	12.3
Total	316	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2019)

As shown in Table 1, 148(46.8%) of the respondents planned to attend normal SHS, 64(20.3%) of the respondents planned to attend Secondary/Technical SHS, and 104 representing 32.9% planned to attend Technical /Vocational School. This can be inferred that most of the respondents planned to attend normal SHS.

Again, the data in Table 1 showed that 83 of the respondents representing 26.3% have selected business, 55(17.4%) have selected Home

Economics, 44(13.9%) have selected General Science, 74(23.4%) have selected Visual Art, 21 representing 6.6% have selected General Art and 39 (12.3%) have selected purely Technical. This can be said that a larger percentage of the respondents selected Business as their programme to offer at the SHS. From the above account, it can be established that at least each pupil chose a programme but how it can assist them in selecting a career need to be evaluated.

Demographic Characteristics of Teachers/Counsellors

The demographic data of the respondents were the gender of the teacher/counsellor, age distribution, and position. Details of each demographic descriptions have been shown in Table 2.

Table 2- *Demographic Characteristics of Teachers/Counsellors (n=100)*

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	68	68.0
Female	32	32.0
Age range		
20-30 years	20	20.0
31-40 years	30	30.0
41-50 years	35	35.0
50 years & above	15	15.0
Status		
Combining teaching and counselling	15	15.0
Teaching only	85	85.0

Source: Field Survey (2019)

The data, as shown in Table 2, showed that there were more male teacher/counsellors than females who participated in the study. Specifically, the males were 68% whereas the remaining 32% were females. The age

distribution revealed that most of the teachers/counsellors were within the age brackets of 41 and 50 years (35%). Other respondents said they were between the ages of 31 and 40 years (15%) and a few of the participants were 50 years and above. Also, a larger percentage of the participant were teachers (85%).

Research Question One

What challenges do JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the home in choosing a programme in the SHS?

This research question sought to identify the challenges from home that JHS pupils face in the selection of a programme in SHS. The findings are presented first in a quantitative form followed by qualitative data. The home challenges are discussed around the lines of the father's role, mother's role, peers, stereotypical orientation from the home, and finances of parents or guardian. Information was obtained from both pupils and teachers/counsellors to address the issue of the challenges from home encountered by pupils to make programme decisions. Tables 3-5 present the details of the analysis.

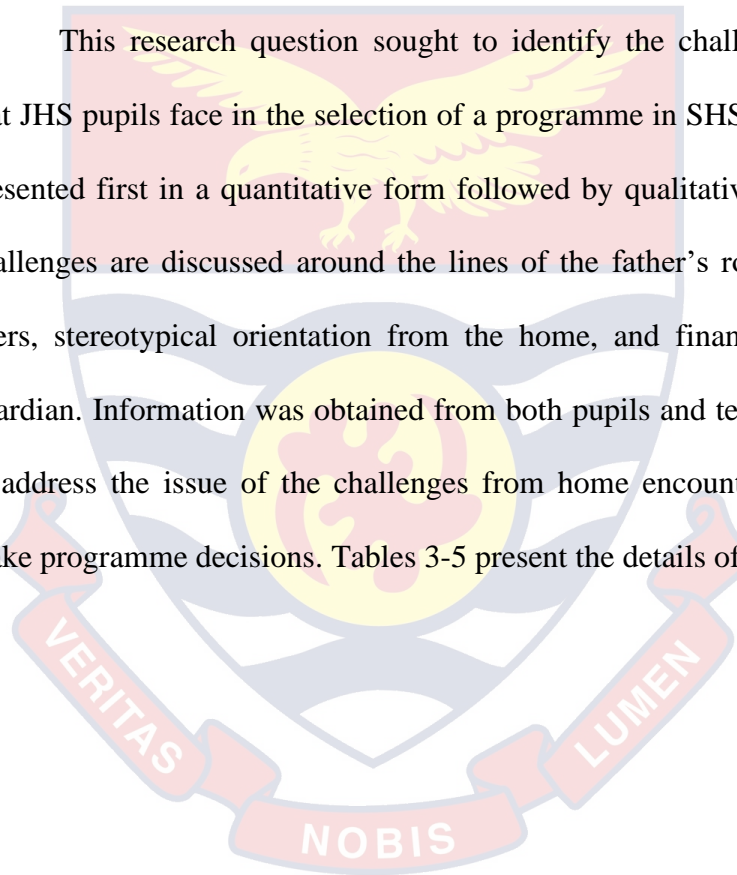


Table 3- *Frequency Analysis of Home Challenges faced by JHS Pupils Programme Selection (n=316)*

	YES	NO
	Freq(%)	Freq(%)
My father influenced me to select his preferred programme	299(94.6)	17(5.4)
My father considered the programme I preferred to do	155(49.1)	161(50.9)
My father gave me the chance to select a programme of my choice	143(45.3)	173(54.7)
My mother influenced me to select her preferred programme	120(38.0)	196(62.0)
My mother considered the programme I preferred to do	189(59.8)	127(40.2)
My mother gave me the chance to select a programme of my choice	163(51.6)	153(48.4)
My siblings influenced me to choose a specific programme	213(67.4)	103(32.6)
I had disagreements with my siblings on the choice of my programme	248(78.5)	68(21.5)
My siblings agreed with me to select a programme of my choice	117(37.0)	199(63.0)
My friends at home influenced me to select a particular programme	42(13.3)	274(86.7)
I believe that some SHS programmes are for only males or females	198(62.7)	118(37.3)
My parents believe that some SHS programmes are for only males or females	211(66.8)	105(30.7)
The level of my parent's finances made me choose a particular programme	219(69.3)	97(30.7)
There are some programmes I cannot do because of finances	203(64.2)	113(35.8)

Source: Field Survey (2019)

The analysis shown in Table 3 represents the views of JHS final year pupils on the challenges they faced in selecting a programme to pursue in SHS. Among the responses, it was found that fathers influenced their wards in selecting a programme the fathers preferred (94%). The majority of the pupils

indicated that their fathers failed to consider the programmes they had an interest in (50.9%) and thus, their fathers did not give them the chance to make their own choice (54%). A follow-up interview was carried out on the role the fathers play which serves as a challenge to the selection of their programme selection. The interviews confirmed how the fathers try to influence their wards against their will. In an interview, one of the pupils said:

When I was choosing my schools and programme, my dad took charge and did everything without my consent. I had earlier thought of a programme to choose from but he says I don't know anything about secondary education. He told me he wants the best for
(Excerpt from Xerk)

In Xerk's view, the father is seen to force the child to choose a programme against what he originally decided to choose. Xerk's statement suggested that he just had to accept the decision to choose a particular programme to please the father. A similar instance is seen in the case of other pupils who were interviewed. Another pupil shared this:

At first, I did the selection of schools and programmes myself with the help of my mother because my father had travelled. Errmmm...upon his return he came to my school and did the selection again after my mother informed him of what we have done (Excerpt from Ylowt)

Another pupil indicated that:

My father discussed with me that I have to do the science programme because none of my siblings did science. And since I am the last born, he advised me to do the programme. I just have to

agree to it even though I preferred the General Art programme

(Excerpt from Wiplot)

Also, Dialeley said:

As for Mr. Appiah, hmmmmm..., he always wants his children to do things he did. He sometimes says I (i.e. the father) attended a boys school, so my male children will go to a male school. The last time we talked about programmes to read in SHS, he told me that he read science and he is now an engineer and he wants me to follow his path (Excerpt from Dialeley)

The excerpts above is a clear demonstration of the dominance of fathers. In the case of Xerk, the father selected a programme without the consent of the child. From Xerk's excerpts, the statement "...my dad too charge and did everything without my consent" is sufficient evidence to underscore the role the father played. This is also similar to a statement by another excerpt, "upon his return he came to my school and did the selection again after my mother informed him of what we have done". A similar case was found for another interviewee who mentioned that "he told me that he read science and he is now an engineer and he want me to follow his path". These lines from the excerpts speak volumes of the influence of the fathers.

The result, as shown in Table 3, also showed that a greater proportion of the pupils indicated that their mothers did have little influence on the selection of their programme (62%), considers their children's decision (59.8%), and gave their children's the chance to select their programme (51.6%). Investigating these responses, it appeared that mothers were not much of a problem with the choice of their children except only when their

husbands convinced them. The following are some excerpts from the follow-up interviews conducted:

...for my mother she is fine with any choice I make. She will definitely support any programme I want to read. Although she is sometimes convinced by my father to side with him (Excerpt from Zacki)

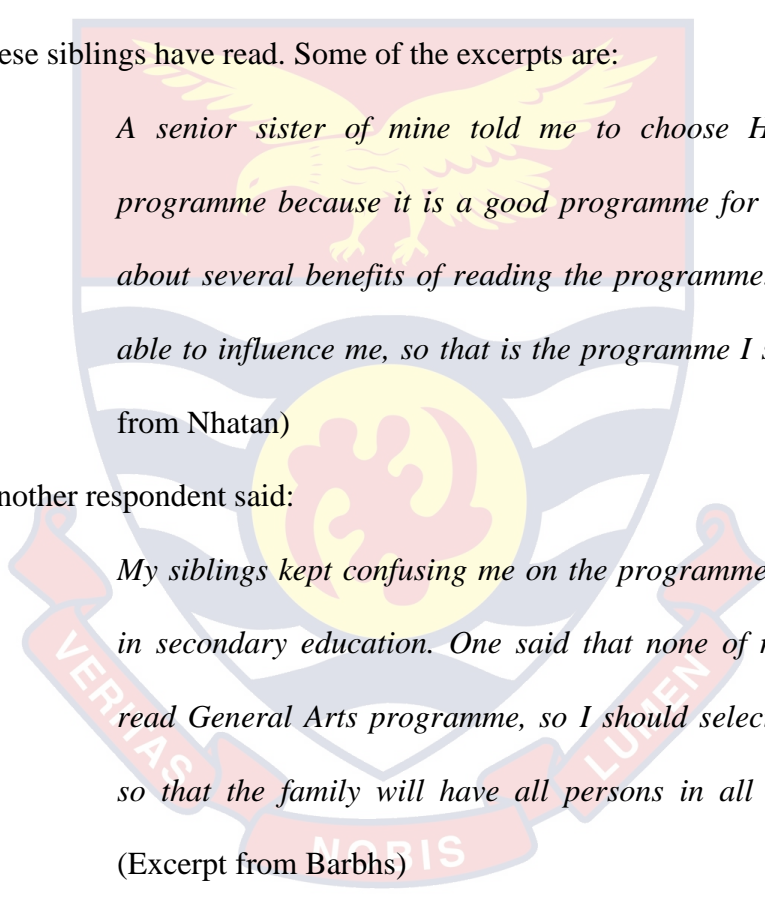
Maame Essoun (that is the name of my mother) do not have any problem with whatever I want to do. I remember telling her I wanted to be a fashion designer, she was like ‘my dear, if this will make you happy and a better person, I will pray for you’. My dad, however, rubbished all those ideas. So, my mother accepts any decision I make (Excerpt from Ylowt)

...when I say I want this or that, all that I have to do is to explain and convince my mum. If I am able to get her, then we (i.e., my mum and I) will try to convince my dad since he is a difficult person unlike my mum (Excerpt from Jupita)

It appeared that mothers gave a listening ear to their wards and supported them in whatever way they wished to pursue. This is evident from the selected lines from the excerpts like: “*She will definitely support any programme I want to read*”, “*all that I have to do is to explain and convince my mum*”, “*I remember telling her I wanted to be a fashion designer, she was like ‘my dear, if this will make you happy and a better person, I will pray for you’*”.

As presented in Table 3, the pupils indicated that their siblings influenced their choice of a specific programme to pursue (67.4%). According

to the pupils, they encountered some disagreements with their siblings on the choice of their programme (78.5%). In most cases, there were no agreements between the pupils and their siblings on the programme to choose (63%). In addition, the qualitative data revealed how siblings served as a challenge to the pupils in making their programme decision. In some instances, older siblings forced the younger siblings to select some programme against their wish. Other siblings too encouraged their sisters/brothers to select a programme that these siblings have read. Some of the excerpts are:



A senior sister of mine told me to choose Home Economics programme because it is a good programme for me. She told me about several benefits of reading the programme. I think she was able to influence me, so that is the programme I selected (Excerpt from Nhatan)

Another respondent said:

My siblings kept confusing me on the programme I should choose in secondary education. One said that none of my siblings have read General Arts programme, so I should select the programme so that the family will have all persons in all the programmes (Excerpt from Barbhs)

In another case, Jaina said:

Each of my sisters would want me to decide on a programme they read in senior high schools. The one who did science says I should do science; the other who did General Arts says I should enrol in the area and the third who read Business is also telling me to select the Business programme (Excerpt from Jaina)

These lines from the excerpts reiterate that siblings interfered and influenced the decisions of pupils in choosing a programme of study: *“I remember telling her I wanted to be a fashion designer, she was like ‘my dear, if this will make you happy and a better person, I will pray for you’”, “My siblings kept confusing me on the programme I should choose in secondary education.”, “The one who did science says I should do science; the other who did General Arts says I should enrol in the area”.*

It was also found that peer pressure was found that a larger proportion of the pupils believed that some SHS programmes are for males or females (62.7%). Furthermore, the respondents postulated that their parents believed that some SHS programmes are for males or females (66.8%). The data from the interviews conducted revealed that the pupils had been oriented with some stereotypical thinking that some programmes like Home Economics are for females, whereas a programme like Visual Arts is for males. A respondent voiced:

I had an interest in cooking at home and I did virtually everything at home, even kitchen job at home although I have female siblings. I, one day, jokingly told my parents that I will read Home Economics. I remember my parents telling me that this kind of households are for females and that I should not have any interest in pursuing a programme in Home Economics (Excerpt from Kayr)

In another interview, Pieror said:

At home, my siblings and I have been made aware by our parents of the jobs which best-fit males and those that best-fit females. He (my father) will normally say, Kwabena should be a medical

doctor, Kwadwo will be an engineer, Ama will do foodstuffs... (the respondent smiling) because Ama likes cooking (Excerpt from Pieror)

The findings of this study, as shown in Table 3, again found that the financial level of parents influenced their wards in choosing a programme (69.3%). Coupled with this, the respondents averred that there are some programmes they couldn't select because of financial issues at home (64%). This suggests that finance was a challenge to them in terms of deciding to select a programme. This issue was raised by the pupils who were interviewed by sharing how their financial status prevented them from selecting their preferred programme. The following are some of the excerpts from the pupils when they narrated their ordeal:

I know and was also informed by my father, that science and home economics programmes usually demand more money because of the practicals. He just advised me to pick a programme that he can take care of (Excerpt from Diale)

I told my parents I wanted to read Visual Arts. He replied that his friend's son is doing the same programme and according to the friend, the cost involved in the programme is too much so I should pick a reading programme (Excerpt from Wiplot)

I had numerous challenges with finances going to school to this stage and so my father decided that I should pick a school close to the home and a programme which will not demand a lot of money. I called my Uncle to guide me with this decision. So he finally assisted me (Excerpt from Silow)

I'm coming from a poor home so I don't even know whether I can go to secondary school. I don't think my parents can afford that. I have planned with my father and mother to learn a trade after school. But I have selected some schools and programmes (Excerpt from Nhatan)

Clearly, the result shows that the financial status of parents is a challenge the JHS pupils face in choosing a programme of study in SHS. The first excerpt (from Dialey) revealed that the parents were of the view that programmes that will demand consistent buying of materials for practical works would put the burden on them. As such the parents preferred programmes that would not require such materials. In the second excerpt (from Wiplot), there was a categorical statement which was reported by the child that the cost involved in the visual art programme is too much. A similar line of thought was highlighted in the third excerpt (from Silow) which the parents cautioned the child to select a programme that will not be financially demanding.

Further responses were obtained from teachers/counsellors. First, the teachers/counsellors were asked to identify, from their experiences, the agents at homes of pupils who serve as a challenge to the child's selection of a programme. The details of the analysis are shown in Table 4.

Table 4- Responses from Teachers/Counsellors on Home Challenges Pupils Face in Programme Selection

Agents at Home	N	Percent	Ranks
Father	87	34.1%	1 st
Mother	43	16.8%	2 nd
Siblings	31	12.2%	3 rd
Uncles	29	11.4%	4 th
Aunties	20	7.8%	5 th
Media (TV/Radio) at home	16	6.3%	6 th
Elderly persons (no relations)	12	4.7%	7 th
Friends	12	4.7%	8 th
Religious leaders at home	5	2.0%	9 th
Total	255*	100.0%	--

*Multiple responses ($n=100$); Source: Field Survey (2019)

The teachers/counsellors indicated that fathers were the greatest challenge to the child in choosing a programme (34.1%). This was followed by mothers (16.8%) and sibling (12.2%). These three agents were listed as persons who interfered with the decision-making process of the child and in some cases, this interferences leads to conflicts. Other agents of influence who interfered with the child's selection of programme were uncles, aunties, media, friends, and other elderly persons. In a follow-up interview, a teacher who doubles as a counsellor with 15 years' experience, said:

Some parents force their wards to do certain programmes. We have one gentleman who was forced to select the General Science programme even though the boy insisted on picking Home

Economics programme. This gentleman is now performing poorly in school (Excerpt from Madam Zori)

Another participant, with eight years of experience, reiterated that:

Some parents really give us a headache when they are supposed to pick a programme for their ward. In some cases you see a parent select a programme, say, General Arts, when such a child is opting for Home Economics programme. Sometimes, the mothers don't even have a say let alone a teacher, a counsellor or headteacher (Excerpt from Poala)

Other participants shared a similar concern:

...As a teacher, you can identify a child who from all indications, like the performance in school, can do well in Technical programme. If you try to suggest this to the child, family relatives will prevent the child from selecting such a programme. All that you hear is that their child cannot do a Technical programme because that programme is for pupils with low achievement (Excerpt from Itearyt)

The narration from the teachers/counsellors is a clear indication that parents and other family relatives interfered with the selection of the programme to pursue at SHS. Excerpts from Madam Zori, for example, make reference to a pupil who was forced to select a particular programme by the parents. A statement from the excerpt of Poala indicates some level of friction between the parents and teachers; “*Some parents really give us a headache when they are supposed to pick a programme for their ward*”.

Research Question Two

What challenges do JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the school in the choice of a programme to pursue in the SHS?

The research question sought to examine the challenges JHS pupil at La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality faces from the school in selecting a programme to pursue in the SHS. Both quantitative and qualitative were obtained from the pupils who were sampled. The respondents were first required to identify the agents or factors in the school settings which posed constraints to their decision to select a programme. Table 5 present the details of the results.

Table 5- *School Challenges Pupils face in the Section of SHS Programme*

School Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers/counsellors	391	33.9
Headteachers interference	328	28.5
Peers in schools	226	19.6
Performance in schools	207	18.0
Total	1152*	100.0

*Multiple responses (n=316)

As presented in Table 5, teacher/counsellor (33.9%) and headteacher (28.5%) interference were found to be the major challenge pupils faced in selecting a programme to pursue in SHS. A follow-up from the interview revealed that these agents (i.e. teachers/counsellor/headteachers) do their subjective evaluation of pupils and try to influence them to choose a particular programme. Some teachers/counsellor based their evaluation of the performance of pupils. Some excerpts are:

My English teacher said I should pick the General Arts programme which I did not like. She told me the benefits of doing General Arts. She added that since I am good at English language subject. I refused and selected a business programme which my parents agreed to. From then, she has been cold towards me (Excerpt from Kayr)

I initially thought of choosing the Science programme but my teacher discouraged me and advised me to pick Visual Art. He said I cannot perform well if I pick Science because I am not a good student. He later said since I am good at drawing (Excerpt from Jaina)

A similar concern was raised by other interviewees:

I had a passion for Home Economics programme in senior high school. My teachers laughed at me! They said am funny. Most of the teachers advised that I do a Science or Business programme since I am good at mathematics. I went home to inform my parents and they were ok (Excerpts from Barbs)

After agreeing with my parents to select the Agricultural science programme, I was called by my headteacher together with other teachers to bring my father to school the next day. On the next day, I brought my father and I was told to excuse them. After some time, they called for me and told me Visual Arts has been selected for me. I was not happy! (Excerpt from Jupita)

The excerpts show that there are some elements of teacher interference when pupils are choosing a programme of study to pursue at SHS. In one of

the excerpts (from Kayr), the respondent said *“My English teacher said I should pick the General Arts programme which I did not like..... I refused and selected a business programme which my parents agreed to. From then, she has been cold towards me”*. In another excerpt (from Jaina), the line *“I initially thought of choosing the Science programme but my teacher discouraged me and advised me to pick Visual Art. He said I cannot perform well if I pick Science....”* is enough justification to pinpoint the influences from teachers. A similar issue was found in the excerpts from Barbs and Jupita which precisely talked about the interferences from teachers and headteachers; *“Most of the teachers advised I do Science or Business programme since I am good at mathematics.....”*; *“....I was called by my headteacher together with other teachers to bring my father to school the next day..... After some time, they called for me and told me Visual Arts has been selected for me. I was not happy!”*

The analysis, as shown in Table 5, again revealed that peers in schools (19.6%) serve as a challenge for pupils in choosing a programme. From the interviews, it appears that peers stigmatised and influenced their colleagues in selecting a specific programme. Excerpts from the various interviews conducted were:

My friends and I had long decided to select a science programme...(smiling)...We all wanted to do the same programme and pick the same schools so that we can keep our friendship for such a long time. We have come to be a family now (Excerpt from Kayr)

I remember the day I told my friends that I wanted to do Home Economics programme in senior high, they really laughed at me 'papaa'. Some even insulted me for saying that because I was a male. I just kept quiet and decided to think about a different programme (Excerpt from Barbhs)

In the case of one participant, he concealed the programme which he had selected from his friend for fear that he would be teased. Perhaps, his friends held several perceptions regarding the programmes offered at the senior high school. This interviewee said:

I have not been able to tell my friends about the programme I selected. I know them! They will look at me with 'some eyes'; I think they might not like the programme but that is the programme myself and my parents have decided on. I selected Visual Arts. That is what I want, you see, my friends all want the business (Excerpt from Pieror)

It was found from the excerpts that friends influenced and interfered with the selection of programme. Lines like “*My friends and I had long decided to select science programme...(smiling)...We all wanted to do the same programme....*”, “*I remember the day I told my friends that I wanted to do Home Economics programme in senior high, they really laughed at me*”, provide a highlight regarding the peer influence in choosing a programme.

Results, as shown in Table 5, further revealed that pupils' performance in schools was also a challenge to pupils in the selection of the programme to pursue (18%). Data from the interviews conducted revealed that the pupils largely considered their performance before they made a choice. The

understanding is that there were some subjects in the JHS which were related to the programmes offered at the senior high school. The data showed that in circumstances that the pupils had difficulties in a subject, say Mathematics, such pupils would hesitate to choose a mathematics-related programme in the senior high school. One of the participants, for instance, said:

...yess! I looked at my performance in school for some subjects before agreeing to choose the Business programme. I have a passion for journalism so I wanted to do General Arts but I also knew that I was not excellent in the English Language subject. I'm an average student in English (Excerpt from Xerk)

In another situation, a participant voiced:

I admire medical doctors but am afraid of elective mathematics. Even the mathematics we do here (JHS) that they say it is not difficult, I struggle with it. With that, I couldn't select the Science programme! I talked to my parents and we agreed on the General Arts. I'm ok! (Excerpt from Silow)

A similar ordeal was shared by other participants regarding the consideration of performance as a criterion for the selection of a programme in SHS. The following are some of the excerpts:

...our teachers, especially, would want to compare your performance in specific subjects to see if it will match. Me, for instance, one teacher advised me that since I am good at science and mathematics, I should do Science in SHS even though I wanted to do General Arts. Upon thinking through I understood that I

since I wasn't too good in English subject, I may not do well on General Arts (Excerpt from Ylowt)

I am a person I don't like reading subjects. I rather enjoy calculation subjects. Although my role model is a journalist and wished to become one, I had to go in for the one I will do and do very well if I go to senior high school (Excerpt from Diale)

It is clear from the excerpts that the performance of the pupils served as a considerable challenge in choosing a programme of study at the SHS level. These lines from the excerpts support this claim: *"I looked at my performance in school for some subjects before agreeing to choose the Business programme.....", "I admire medical doctors but am afraid of elective mathematics. Even the mathematics we do here (JHS) that they say it is not difficult, I struggle with it.....", "I am a person I don't like reading subjects.....I had to go in for the one I will do and do very well if I go to senior high school".*

Research Question Three

What measure can be put in place to address the challenges faced by JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality in the choice of a programme in SHS?

This research question sought to explore the strategies aimed to address the challenges faced by JHS pupils in the choice of a programme in SHS. Data used to provide answers to this research question was obtained from teachers/counsellors. Table 6 shows the analysis of the data.

Table 6- *Strategies to Address the Challenges faced by JHS Pupils*

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Orienting parents on what to consider in helping their wards to make a good decision	28	28.0
Headteachers should organise counselling sections for pupils	22	22.0
Seminars should be organized for final year pupils at JHS before the time of choosing programmes	19	19.0
School counselling department must build their human resource capacity during the period of programme choices	12	12.0
Teacher-pupil relationship should be encouraged to help direct pupils	11	11.0
The general public through the media should be educated on making a consensus decision	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2019)

As presented in Table 6, a number of suggestions were given by the teachers/counsellors. Among the responses, it was suggested by the teachers/counsellors that orientation programmes should be organised for parents how to help their wards to make a good decision (28%). It was also suggested that headteachers should organise counselling sections for pupils (22%). Additional strategies which were suggested include the organization of seminars by the schools for final year pupils at JHS before the time of choosing programmes (19%); school counselling department must build their human resource capacity during the period of programme choices (12%); teacher-pupil relationship should be encouraged to help direct pupils (11%); and finally, the general public through the media should be educated on making a consensus decision (8%).

In a follow-up interview conducted, several strategies were highlighted by the teachers/counsellors. Some of the suggestions focused on handling or assisting pupils to make better decision without compulsion. These strategies are highlighted in the following excerpts:

Having open house dialogue for students using past students who have gone ahead to advise them. These past students can enlighten the present pupils on what to consider in deciding on a particular programme to select. The experiences of these past students can be a lesson for the present ones (Excerpt from Uyirew)

Pupils' opinion should be well evaluated in terms of their abilities. Sometimes, the pupils know what they want and that should be taken into consideration. Therefore, their view should only be examined scientifically and through diverse means to confirm that the child is making the right decision (Excerpt from Erame)

Organising individual counselling by the counselling department for the students to determine their strength and abilities. This can be done by administering career inventory to find out which area or field these pupils can function effectively. This will help know each person's abilities and which SHS programme will fit their abilities (Excerpt from Bonoro)

Other strategies to help pupils in the selection process focused on equipping persons in the immediate environment (e.g., parents and teachers) to empower them in helping pupils make appropriate decisions regarding the choice of programme in the SHS. The following are some excerpts from the interview:

School counselling departments should engage both parents and teachers to come to a consensus on what is good for their wards in terms of SHS programmes. In some instances, there are conflicts between the parents and the child or among the parents, the child and headteacher on the programme the child should take (Excerpt from Shaloe)

Parents should be made aware by school counsellors on how to guide their wards on how to make a better decision. Parents are not to force their children in making a selection against their will. Sometimes, you see parents forcing their children to select a programme because the parent likes the programme (Excerpt from Quartey)

The excerpts highlight several measures suggested by the teachers/counsellors. From the excerpts, these measures were provided by assigning roles to teachers, counsellors, parents, and all relevant stakeholders.

Discussion

Research Question 1: What challenges do JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the home in choosing a programme in the SHS?

The results from the study revealed that challenges which emanate from the home in the decision of final year pupils' choice of programme in SHS were interferences from the fathers, mothers, siblings, financial status of parents and stereotypical orientation of pupils at home. In Ghanaian society, the father is deemed as the leader of the family. As such the majority of the decisions made concerning the home and the children are spearheaded by

fathers. This result portrays the dominance of fathers in the career decisions of their children. This probably might be as a result of the father taking care of the children in school. The mothers are always oriented to be washing, cooking and taking care of the home whereas fathers are been made to believe that they have to toil and provide for the family. Previous studies have averred that fathers play a critical role in decisions concerning their children (Acheampong, 2014; Awan et al., 2017; Ankoma-Sey et al., 2019; Boateng & Gaulee, 2019).

Again, the findings of this study confirm those of Quansah et al. (2020) who found that socio-economic status is a significant predictor of the choice of science-related programmes. Students from a high socio-economic background had higher odds of choosing science-related programmes in their further education. Students from a high socio-economic background had higher odds of choosing science-related programmes in their further education. There is a general impression that educating people in science-related fields are expensive such that parents who struggle to take care of their children in school do not usually encourage their children to pursue STEM programmes (Anderson & Kim, 2006; Herrera & Hurtado, 2011).

The findings of this study, that socio-economic status serve as a challenge to JHS pupils choice of SHS programme, is consistent with several studies in Ghana and beyond. Extensively, studies have proven that students who are from a less-privileged background struggle to be admitted to a “grade A” school than their richer colleagues (Ajayi, 2012; Hoxby & Avery, 2012). This remark possibly shows a cause of inadequacy in the school structure if there are motivated or talented learners from deprived homes who do not have

access to better education. Just like the findings of this study, Akomolafe (2003) also confirmed that one factor which inherently affects JHS pupils' choice of school and programme at the SHS level is the income of the students' family.

The findings of this research offer evidence to the effect that the social interaction and environment of the individual play a major role in students in deciding whether or not to enrol in Home Economics programme. In various homes and families, for example, students' desires to read a particular programme are shaped by their interaction with the family. In this study, for one, siblings, family relatives, stereotypical thinking and fathers were found as agents who influenced peoples' decision to enrol in a particular programme. This finding is consistent with what has been found in previous literature. In Ode, Babayeju, and Onalowu's (2013) study, it was found that parents discouraged their wards from choosing Home Economics programme. Supporting the views of Ode et al. (2013), Eze (2001) explained that parents' discouragement of their wards stems from the fact that there are different socialisation patterns of boys and girls an early phase of life; non-existence of career education for young people; and femininity of Home Economics programme.

Research Question 2: What challenges do JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality encounter from the school in the choice of a programme to pursue in the SHS?

The study revealed that teacher/counsellor and headteacher interference were the major challenge pupils faced in selecting a programme to pursue in SHS. This finding agrees with research by Ankoma-Sey et al.

(2019) which revealed that JHS teachers influence students' enrolment in the Home Economic programme. The authors further indicated that teachers motivated weak students to pursue the Home Economics programme.

The study showed that peers in schools serve as a challenge for pupils in choosing a programme. In school, peers are the immediate social influence outside the family in which the child gain recognition and acceptance. In the midst of their cohorts, children form associations and discuss issues that older persons may not share with them, like fashion and secular music, sex and drugs (Harris, 1977). It is not surprising that such peers influence the choice of their colleagues in selecting a programme in SHS. Previous studies corroborate with the findings of this study. Adler and Adler (1998), for example, revealed that children move beyond the home boundaries to search for new things and discover opportunities to make their self-expression and direction more apparent. Other studies have discovered that the decisions of children and adolescents are largely dependent on their friends, their ability, advice from teachers, family and cultural background of peers (Gaviria & Raphael, 2001; Navin, 2009; Palos & Drobot, 2010; Webber & Walton, 2006).

The findings of this study are consistent with that of Gaviria and Raphael (2001) who noted that negative peer effects are explicitly. Also, Navin (2009) noted that dating is another factor that might influence the career search of a teenage. This study stipulates that friends and peers possess a significant challenge to pupils in their choice of programme to pursue in the SHS. Friends and peer have a substantial drive toward academic decisions and career choices (Akyina et al., 2014). However, looking at the part that parents play in the personality growth and socialisation process, they regularly play

the original principal role in the value transmission but friends and peer appear to have the utmost role in the variation of decision making, appearances, lifestyle and academic choices (Mau & Bikos, 2000). Moreover, both peers and parents dominate in academic decision-making and career choices (Marjoribanks, 1997). Though several scholars have confirmed how other variables like occupational, prestige and community values affect students' career decisions, numerous findings, among others provide sufficient evidence of the huge influence of peer group and parent (covertly or overtly) on the adolescents' career choice. Therefore, the majority of students select programmes based on advice from peers without examining their weaknesses and strengths (Miller, 1992).

The study further revealed that pupils' performance in schools was also a challenge to pupils in the selection of the programme to pursue. This study is consistent with that of Jackson (2015) who found that among one of the few countries in the world in which performance in examination becomes the basis for which JHS pupils progress to SHS and it further influences the programme to choose is Ghana. Perhaps, this may be the reason why the teachers and pupils themselves do some evaluation of pupils' performance before they choose a particular programme.

Research Question 3: What measures can be put in place to address the challenges faced by JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality in the choice of a programme in SHS?

The study revealed a number of suggestions to help pupils in the selection of their programme. Among the responses, it was suggested by the teachers/counsellors that orientation programmes should be organised for

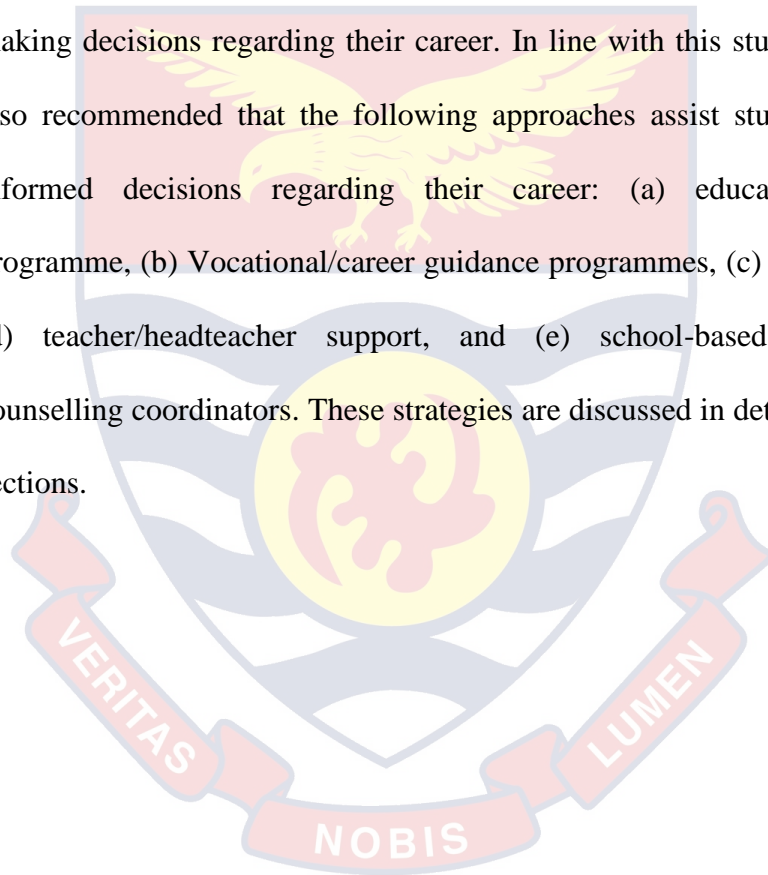
parents how to help their wards to make a good decision. It was also suggested that headteachers should organise counselling sections for students. Additional measures suggested include the organization of seminars by the schools for final year pupils at JHS before the time of choosing programmes; school counselling department must build their human resource capacity during the period of programme choices; teacher-pupil relationship should be encouraged to help direct students; and finally, the general public through the media should be educated on making a consensus decision.

The findings of this research are in agreement with the suggestions from the literature. From the view of Kelechi and Ihuoma (2011), school counselling departments should be granted the opportunity to know and understand the abilities of the students and what could be their preferred career choices. Consistent with the findings of this study, Karen-Lyn. (2011) identified that open house dialogue with predecessors in SHSs and those working in various institutions as an intervention to help JHS pupils to choose the right programmes. JHS pupils tend to make decisions based on what their direct seniors who are ahead of them may tell them and that can help them to make the right programme choices.

The findings are also consistent with the views of Dotong (2014) mentioned open discussion and dialogue with college alumni, and friends which particularly influences the decision of the students. Similarly, Asuru (2007) believed that teacher supervision should target refining instructional quality and the excellence of achievement outcome and guaranteeing that schools inform specific learners with such attitudes, skills and knowledge. This helps them to live fulfilling and meaningful lives, provide inputs,

contribute their quota to societal development; improvement of practices and eventually improve learning outcomes through SHS programme or course choices. Instruction supervision should target refining the quality and quantity of basic education programme.

Just like the findings of this study, Ohixlwerei and Nwosu (2009) also expressed that support groups, if well-executed, can assist students in their choice of career. This form of support system helps sustain the students in making decisions regarding their career. In line with this study, Kelly (2006) also recommended that the following approaches assist students in making informed decisions regarding their career: (a) educational guidance programme, (b) Vocational/career guidance programmes, (c) parental support, (d) teacher/headteacher support, and (e) school-based guidance and counselling coordinators. These strategies are discussed in detail in subsequent sections.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study looked at the challenges facing JHS pupils in choosing SHS programmes from the perspectives of pupils and teachers/counsellors. Based on the data analysis conducted the summary, conclusion and recommendation could be expressed as follows.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges JHS pupils face in choosing programmes in their transition to SHS using a case of La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality. Precisely, this research sought after achieving the following specific objectives:

1. to investigate challenges JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the home in choosing a programme in the SHS
2. to identify challenges JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the school in the choice of a programme to pursue in the SHS
3. to come out with suggested solutions to address the challenges faced by JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality in the choice of a programme in SHS.

The explanatory sequential design, which is a mixed type of design, was employed for the study. The explanatory sequential design is a form of mixed design where the investigator starts by carrying out a quantitative

investigation and follows up on some selected results using a qualitative approach with the aim of explaining the results from the quantitative phase. The reason for the implementation of the qualitative inquiry is to clarify the earlier quantitative results in detailed. The primary intent of this design is to utilise qualitative data to clarify earlier quantitative results. The explanatory design is appropriate when the investigator seeks qualitative data in an attempt to explain positive-performing exemplars, quantitative significant and/or nonsignificant results, confusing or surprising results or outlier results (Bradley et al., 2009; Morgan, 2014; Morse, 2003).

The population for this study consist of all the final year JHS pupils and teachers/counsellors handling the final year pupils in the JHS in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality. Precisely, teachers/ counsellors and the pupils were considered to provide the relevant information required for the study. The La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality has 56 public basic schools which were all considered for the Study. The number of pupils was 8418 in total, the teachers/counsellors were 117.

The sample size for this study was in various forms due to the design employed (explanatory sequential design). First, a cluster sampling procedure was employed to select 10 schools from the 56 schools. Afterwards, 368 pupils were sampled through a systematic sampling procedure. Based on the assertion by Creswell and Clark (2018), 12 pupils and 8 teachers/counsellors were estimated to be part of the study.

Two data collection tools were used for this study. First, a questionnaire was used to take quantitative data from pupils and teachers/counsellors and an interview guide was further again used to take

follow up data. A letter of introduction was accessed by the investigator from CoDE, UCC and sent to the various institutional and departmental heads to seek permission to carry out the study. The introductory letter opened access to the research as the heads of the various group read it and understood the objective of the research. After initial arrangements were made with the gatekeepers, further visits were followed up to the institutions before finally the data were taken. The investigator considered all ethical issues throughout the conduct of the study.

Key Findings

What challenges do JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the home in choosing a programme in the SHS?

The study revealed that fathers influenced their wards in selecting a programme the fathers preferred. The majority of the pupils indicated that their fathers failed to consider the programmes they had an interest in and thus, their fathers did not give them the chance to make their own choice. A follow-up interview confirmed how the fathers try to influence their wards against their will.

It was also discovered that a greater proportion of the pupils indicated that their mother did have little influence on the selection of their programme, considers their children's decision (59.8%), and gave their children's the chance to select their programme. Investigating these responses, it appeared that the mothers were not much of a problem with the choice of their children except only when their husbands convinced them.

The study found that the siblings of the pupils influenced their choice of a specific programme to pursue. According to the pupils, they encountered

some disagreements with their siblings on the choice of their programme. In most cases, there was no agreement between the pupils and their siblings on the programme to choose. Also, the qualitative data revealed how siblings served as a challenge to the pupils in making their programme decision. In some instances, older siblings forced the younger siblings to select some programme against their wish. Other siblings too encouraged their sisters/brothers to select a programme that these siblings have read.

It was also found that peer pressure was found that a larger proportion of the pupils believed that some SHS programmes are for males or females. Furthermore, the respondents postulated that their parents believed that some SHS programmes are for males or females. The data from the interviews conducted revealed that the pupils had been oriented with some stereotypical thinking that some programmes like Home Economics are for females, whereas a programme like Visual Arts is for males.

The teachers/counsellors indicated that fathers were the greatest challenge to the child in choosing a programme. This was followed by mothers and sibling. These three agents were listed as persons who interfered with the decision-making process of the child and in some cases, these interferences lead to conflicts. Other agents of influence who interfered with the child's selection of programme were uncles, aunties, media, friends, and other elderly persons.

What challenges do JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality face from the school in the choice of a programme to pursue in the SHS?

Teacher/counsellor and headteacher interference were found to be the major challenge pupils faced in selecting a programme to pursue in SHS. A

follow-up from the interview revealed that these agents (i.e. teachers, counsellors, headteachers) do their subjective evaluation of pupils and try to influence them to choose a particular programme. The results showed that peers in schools serve as a challenge for pupils in choosing a programme. Results further revealed that pupils' performance in schools was also a challenge to pupils in the selection of the programme to pursue. Data from the interviews conducted revealed that the pupils largely considered their performance before they made a choice.

What measures can be put in place to address the challenges faced by JHS pupils in La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality in the choice of a programme in SHS?

A number of suggestions were given by the teachers/counsellors. Among the responses, it was suggested by the teachers/counsellors that orientation programmes should be organised for parents how to help their wards to make a good decision. It was also suggested that headteachers should organise counselling sections for pupils. Additional measures which were suggested include the organization of seminars by the schools for final year JHS pupils during the first term before the time of choosing programmes at the second term; school counselling department must build their human resource capacity during the period of programme choices; teacher-pupil relationship should be encouraged to help direct pupils; and finally, the general public through the media should be educated on making a consensus decision. Other strategies to help pupils in the selection process focused on equipping persons in the immediate environment (e.g., parents and teachers) to empower them in

helping pupils make appropriate decisions regarding the choice of programme in the SHS.

Conclusions

The study identified specific difficulties that affect pupils when choosing SHS programmes. It is at this point important to state that pupils struggle to decide on what career path to pursue and which programme to read in SHS. It can be concluded that the social circles of the child play a significant role in the success of the child's decision. This conclusion is made because the agents who served as a challenge for the pupils were peers, teachers, parents, family relatives, counsellors and headteachers. This is obvious since the child, when born, is placed in a social environment where several interactions go on. Once the child goes to school, another society is created for them.

In the researcher's view, the interactions around the social milieu of the child create a particular psychological state for the child. That is why issues of indecisiveness and stereotypical thinking and self-confidence were found to be a challenge for the JHS pupils making the decision. The father, mother, siblings, coupled with the ability of their parents to get money to pay their fees, interference from other family members and teachers are all challenges pupils face in making an effective decision on the specific programme to choose, the choice between pupils personal interest and what parents wish for the pupil to pursue creates conflicting ideas that become a challenge to the pupil.

Counselling Implications

The results of the study gave way for counselling implications. First, school counsellors should have a regular seminar for fathers, pupils and teachers to enlighten them on the choice of career paths for pupils. The implication is that once fathers are enlightened, they will be cautious in helping their children make such decisions and not to force them.

Secondly, it will be advisable for counsellors to have a career inventory for evaluating the potential abilities, interest and skills of pupils to help them make appropriate decisions. This will reduce the extent of indecisiveness among the pupils.

Lastly, counsellors should design programmes to enable pupils at the basic education level to become more aware and self-understanding so that they can better plan more meaningful career paths for themselves. This will better inform them regarding the career paths that will be useful to them.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that school authorities should give each pupil the chance to meet with a particular teacher who will be considered as a mentor of the pupils to help identify specific interest areas of the pupils by the third term in the first year at the JHS. That will shape the mindset of the pupils before getting to the third year.
2. Organising individual counselling by the counselling department for the pupils to determine their strength and abilities. This can be done by administering career inventory to find out which area or field these

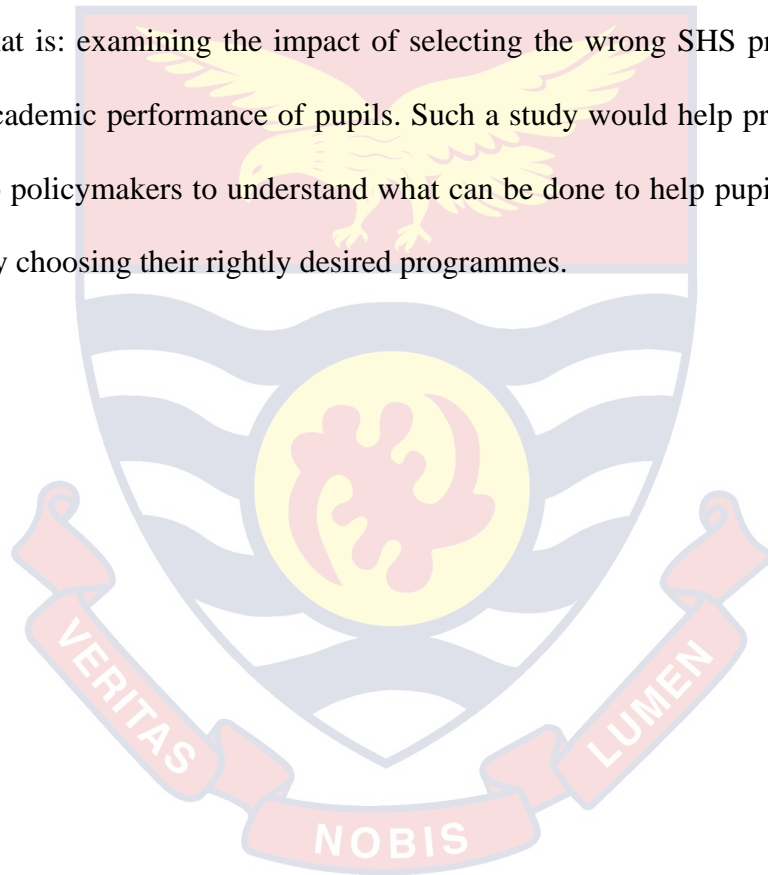
pupils can function effectively. This will help know each person's abilities and which SHS programme will fit their abilities

3. It is also recommended that parents and guardians should be enlightened by school heads to educate them on the relevance of pupils pursuing their interest rather than the parents imposing programmes on pupils to pursue at the SHS level. Parents should be made aware by school counsellors on how to guide their wards on how to make a better decision. Parents are not to force their children in making a selection against their will. Sometimes, you see parents forcing their children to select a programme because the parent likes the programme.
4. School counselling departments should engage both parents and teachers to come to a consensus on what is good for their wards in terms of SHS programmes. In some instances, there are conflicts between the parents and the child or among the parents, the child and headteacher on the programme the child should take. Parent and teachers should evaluate pupils' opinion in terms of their abilities. Sometimes, the pupils know what they want and that should be taken into consideration. Therefore, their view should only be examined scientifically and through diverse means to confirm that the child is making the right decision.
5. School counsellors should have open house dialogue for pupils using past pupils who have gone ahead to advise them. These past pupils can enlighten the present pupils on what to consider in deciding on a

particular programme to select. The experiences of these past pupils can be a lesson for the present ones.

Recommendations for Further Studies

This study looked at challenges facing JHS pupils in choosing SHS programmes and suggested solution. However, the focus did not consider the impact that selecting a wrong SHS programme have on the performance of SHS students. This becomes an area that further research can be conducted; that is: examining the impact of selecting the wrong SHS programme on the academic performance of pupils. Such a study would help provide a direction to policymakers to understand what can be done to help pupils perform better by choosing their rightly desired programmes.



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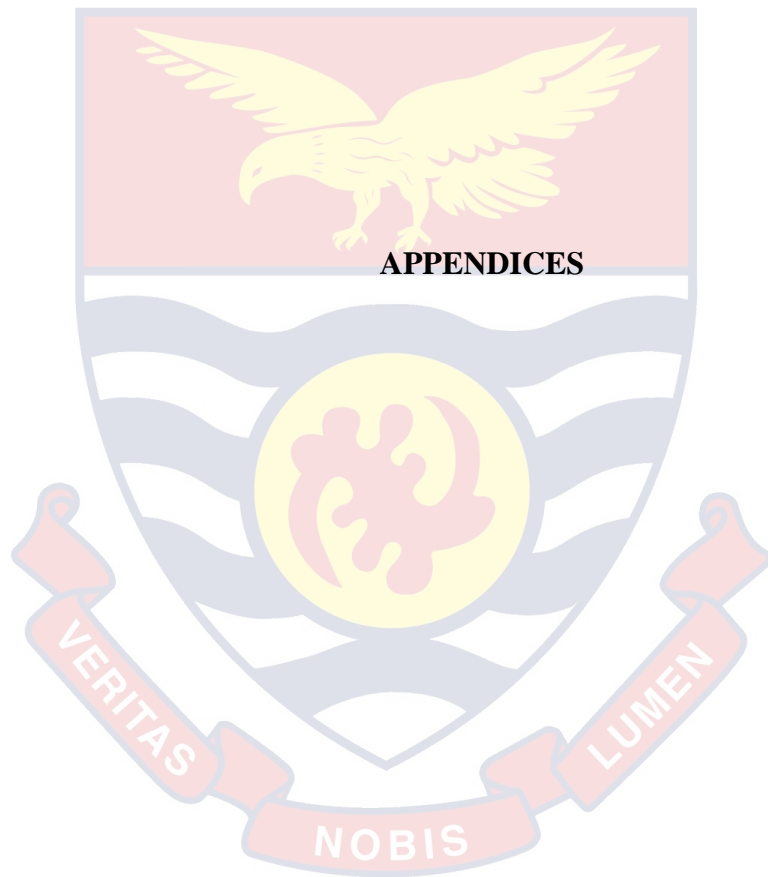
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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

Introduction

This questionnaire is designed for gathering data for a study on “**Challenges facing Junior High School pupils in choosing Senior High School programmes**” The data are for academic purpose only and so confidentiality is highly assured. Kindly give your candid opinion on every item of the questionnaire. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Instruction:

Select the most appropriate answer by ticking [] the box provided in front of each option

1. Gender: Female []; Male [].
2. Age: 10-12 years []; 13-15 yrs []; 16-19 yrs []; 20-22 yrs []; 22 above [].
3. Do you plan to attain Senior High School education? Yes []; No [].
4. Which category of Senior High Education do you plan to attend?

Normal SHS []; Secondary/Technical SHS []; Technical/Vocational SHS [].

5. Which programme have you selected for your SHS education?
Business []; Home Economics []; General Science [];
Visual Arts [] General Art []; Purely Technical [].

SECTION B

Instruction:

For each of the following questions, indicate Yes or No, to show whether it applies to you or not.

	Question	YES	NO
1.	Did your father influence you to select his preferred programme?		
2.	Did your father consider the programme you preferred to do?		
3.	Did your father give you the chance to select a programme of your choice?		
4.	Did your mother influence you to select her preferred programme?		
5.	Did your mother consider the programme you preferred to do?		
6.	Did your mother give you the chance to select a programme of your choice?		
7.	Do you have siblings who influenced you to choose a specific programme?		
8.	Were there some disagreements between you and your siblings on the choice of your programme?		
9.	Did your siblings agree with you to select a programme of your choice?		
10.	Did your friends at home influence you to select a particular programme?		

11.	Do you believe that some SHS programmes are for males or females?		
12.	Do your parents believe that some SHS programmes are for males or females?		
13.	Did the level of finances of your parents make you choose a particular programme?		
14.	Do you think that there are some programmes you cannot do because of finances?		
15.	Did you have in mind any preferred programme you wanted to read?		
16.	Did you leave the decision of selecting a programme to your parents or guardian?		
17.	Were you self-confident about the programme you wanted to do?		
18.	Do you have any health/psychological condition which prevents you from reading a particular programme?		
19.	Did you consider choosing a particular programme based on some health reasons?		

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS/COUNSELLORS

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Introduction

This questionnaire is designed for gathering data for a study on “**Challenges facing Junior High School pupils in choosing Senior High School programmes and suggested solutions**” The data are for academic purpose only and so confidentiality is highly assured. Kindly give your candid opinion on every item of the questionnaire. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Gender: Female []; Male [].
2. Age: 20-30years []; 31- 40 years []; 41- 50years []; 50years and above [].
3. Position: School Counsellor []; Teacher [] Both []

SECTION B

Instruction:

Please indicate which of the following agents at home pose challenges to final year pupils in selecting a programme at SHS. Select as many of them that pose challenges of any magnitude to the pupils when selecting a programme to pursue.

1. Father []
2. Mother []
3. Siblings []

- 4. Uncles []
- 5. Aunties []
- 6. Media (TV/Radio) at home []
- 7. Elderly persons (no relations) []
- 8. Friends []
- 9. Religious leaders at home []

Any other, please specify

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10. For each of the following questions, indicate a Yes or No, to show whether it applies to you or not.

No.	Questions	YES	NO
	<i>Per your interaction with pupils,</i>		
a.	Are pupils decisive of the programme they want to choose?		
b.	Do you encounter pupils who are firm on the programme they want to read?		
c.	Do you have pupils who are decisive of what they want to become in the future?		
d.	Do you think that the pupils have confidence in excelling in the selected programme?		

e.	Do the role models of pupils serve as a challenge to pupils' decision to select a programme?		
f.	Do the health condition of pupils restrict them from selecting a particular programme?		

SECTION C

Instruction:

Please indicate which of the following agents at school pose challenges to final year pupils in selecting a programme at SHS. Select as many of them that pose challenges of any magnitude to the pupils when selecting a programme to pursue.

- 1. Teachers/counsellors []
- 2. Headteachers []
- 3. Peers in schools []
- 4. Performance in schools []

Any other, please specify

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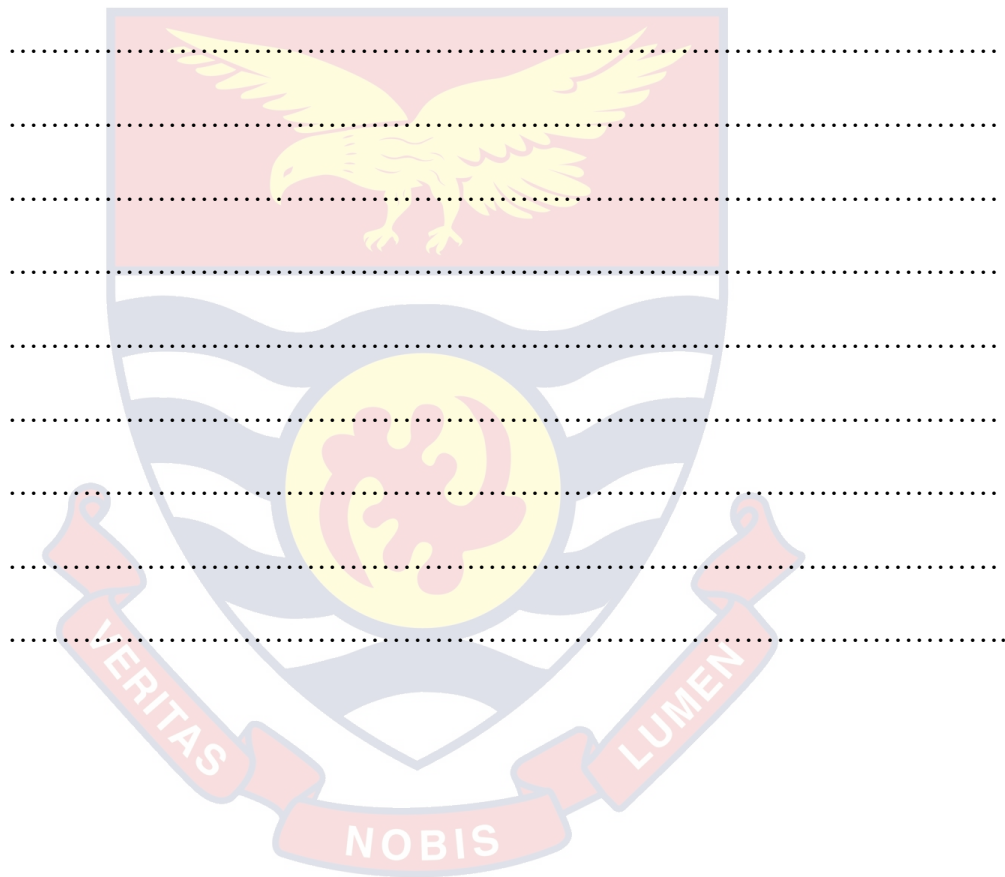
What strategies can be put in place to help pupils overcome the challenges they face in selecting a programme at SHS

.....

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APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUPILS AND
TEACHERS/COUNSELLORS

Instruction:

This interview is designed for gathering data for a study on “**Challenges facing Junior High School pupils in choosing Senior High School programmes and suggested solutions**” It is a follow-up to the quantitative data collected.

1. What role did your father play when you were making a programme choice to pursue at SHS?

Probes:

- a. Fathers’ preferred choice with explanation
 - b. Interference with interest and passion
 - c. Father made choice without any reason given
 - d. Follow fathers’ career path
 - e. Orientation from home
 - f. Wants children to read different programmes
 - g. Issues of finances
 - h. Health issues
 - i. Others which may come up
2. What role did your mother play when you were making a programme choice to pursue at SHS?

Probes:

- a. Mothers’ preferred choice with explanation
- b. Health issues

- c. Mother interference with interest and passion
 - d. Mother made choice without any reason given
 - e. Mothers' career path
 - f. The desire for children to read different programmes
 - g. Issues of finances
 - h. Orientation from home
 - i. Other issues which may come up
3. How did siblings interfere with your decision to select a programme choice to pursue at SHS?
- Probes:**
- a. Preference to read a similar programme read by siblings
 - b. Issue of finances
 - c. Orientation from home
 - d. Health issues
 - e. Siblings desire for you to read programmes different from theirs
4. Were you having a preferred programme you wanted to read? Did you finally choose it? Were you confident that you could excel on the programme? Did you have any doubt of overcoming any challenges associated with the programme?
5. What role did your teacher/counsellor play when you were making a programme choice to pursue at SHS?
- Probes:**
- a. Issues of interest
 - b. Career choice decisions

- c. Performance in school
 - d. Friends at school
 - e. Difficulties in some subjects
6. Describe how your friends influenced your decision in selecting a particular programme?
- a. In school
 - b. At home



APPENDIX D

EXCERPTS FROM QUALITATIVE DATA

Obstacles from home

❖ **Father (i.e. dad's preferred programme)**

When I was choosing my schools and programme, my dad took charge and did everything without my consent. I had earlier thought of a programme to choose but he says I don't know anything about secondary education. He told me he wants the best for.

At first, I did the selection of schools and programmes myself with the help of my mother because my father had travelled. Errmmm...upon his return he came to my school and did the selection again after my mother informed him of what we have done.

My father discussed with me that I have to do the science programme because none of my siblings did science. And since I am the last born, he advised me to do the programme. I just have to agree to it even though I preferred the General Art programme.

As for Mr. Appiah, hmmtttt..., he always wants his children to do things he did. He sometimes says I (i.e. the father) attended a boys school, so my male children to go to a male school. The last time we talked about programmes to read in SHS, he told me that he read science and he is now an engineer and he wants me to follow his path

❖ **Mother (i.e. mum's preferred programme)*****

...for my mother she is fine with any choice I make. She will definitely support any programme I want to read. Although she is sometimes convinced by my father to side with him.

Maame Essoun (that is the name of my mother) do not have any problem with whatever I want to do. I remember telling her I wanted to be a fashion designer, she was like ‘my dear, if this will make you happy and a better person, I will pray for you’. My dad, however, rubbished that idea. So, my mother accepts any decision I make.

...when I say I want this or that, all what I have to do is to explain and convince my mum. If I am able to get her, then we (i.e., my mum and I) will try to convince my dad since he is a difficult person unlike my mum

❖ **Siblings**

A senior sister of mine told me to choose Home Economics programme because it is a good programme for me. She told me about several benefits of reading the programme. I think she was able to influence me, so that is the programme I selected.

My siblings kept confusing me on the programme I should choose in secondary education. One said that none of my siblings have read General Arts programme, so I should select the programme so that the family will have all persons in all the programmes.

Each of my sisters would want me to decide on a programme they read in senior high schools. The one who did science says I should do science; the other who did General Arts says I should enrol in the area and the third who read Business is also telling me to select the Business programme.

❖ **Orientation from home (i.e. boys do engineering, girls do home economics)**

I had an interest in cooking at home and I did virtually even kitchen job at home although I have female siblings. I, one day, jokingly told my parents that

I will read Home Economics. I remember my parents telling me that this kind of households are for females and that I should not have any interest in pursuing a programme in Home Economics.

At home, my siblings and I have been made aware by our parents on the jobs which best-fit males and those which best-fit females. He (my father) will normally say, Kwabena should be a medical doctor, Kwadwo will be an engineer, Ama will do foodstuffs...(the respondent smiling) because Ama likes cooking.

❖ **Finances at home**

I know and was also informed by my father, that science and home economics programmes usually demand more money because of the practicals. He just advised me to pick a programme that he can take care of.

I told my parents I wanted to read Visual Arts. He replied that his friend's son is doing the same programme and according to the friend, the cost involved in the programme is too much so I should pick a reading programme.

I had numerous challenges with finances going to school to this stage and so my father decided that I should pick a school close to the home and a programme which will not demand a lot of money. I called my Uncle to guide me with this decision. So he finally assisted in me.

I'm coming from a poor home so I don't even know whether I can go to secondary school. I don't think my parents can afford that. I have planned with my father and mother to learn a trade after school. But I have selected some schools and programmes.

❖ **Indecisiveness**

I didn't know which school and programme to select. My teacher will say select A, my mother will say "No", do this and daddy too will be saying another thing. But honestly, I was confused about what selection to make.

...Yes! Yes! (Nodding the head in affirmative), at first, I wanted to read the Visual Arts programme, I then decided again that I will select a school who has the technical programme. But I finally settled on General Arts...I don't know but I just felt like changing programmes.

I was confused about what programme and even school to select. But I thought and I selected any of them at random. Myself, I don't know what career I want to go into in future. At the end, I selected General Art because they said that one broad.

❖ **Self-confidence**

Honestly, I had nothing in mind to choose from. I was not able to make my own choice because I was always asking myself that 'Will I be able to do this programme if I pick it? Sometimes, I was anxious about whether I could excel in the programme.

I have heard that the science programme in senior high school is very difficult. The way people say it, I think I cannot do it. So I selected home economics programme, at least I am a female and I like cooking so I think I can do it.

When my school called for the selection of schools and programmes, my father said I should pick a science programme. I didn't agree with him because I was afraid that I could not successfully do the science programme. Our teachers have been saying that the science programme in secondary school is not easy.

❖ **Health condition/phobia/impediment physical or psychological**

I wanted to do visual art or technical but I learnt it demands physical energy and masculine features. I think I should allow my colleague males to do. They can be carrying the heavy materials around and they can do better.

My father said I should not select the Agricultural Science programme because I have not stayed in the village before and do not know anything about farming. I didn't agree with him since I wanted to do it. My mother later told me to I should agree with my father.

Challenges from school

❖ **Teacher/headteacher interference (teachers/headteachers deciding for pupils; class stereotyping)**

I initially thought of choosing the Science programme but my teacher discouraged me and advised me to pick Visual Art. He said I cannot perform well if I pick Science because I am not a good student. He later said since I am good at drawing.

I had a passion for Home Economics programme in senior high school. I teachers laughed at me! They said am funny. Most of the teachers advised I do Science or Business programme since I am good at mathematics. I went home to inform my parents and they were ok.

After agreeing with my parents to select Agricultural science programme, I was called by my headteacher together with other teachers to bring my father to school the next day. On the next day, I brought my father and I was told to

excuse them. After some time, they called for me and told me Visual Arts has been selected for me. I was not happy!

My English teacher said I should pick the General Arts programme which I did not like. She told me the benefits of doing General Arts. She added that since I am good in English language subject. I refused and selected business programme which my parents agreed to. From then, she has been cold towards me.

❖ **Peers from school (ie. Peer influence, stigma from friends)**

My friends and I had long decided to select science programme... (smiling)...We all wanted to do the same programme and pick the same schools so that we can keep our friendship for such a long time. We have come to be a family now.

I remember the day I told my friends that I wanted to do Home Economics programme in senior high, they really laughed at me 'papaa'. Some even insulted me for saying that because I was a male. I just kept quiet and decided to think about a different programme.

I have not been able to tell my friends about the programme I selected. I know them! They will see me with some eyes; I think they might not like the programme but that is the programme myself and my parents have decided on.

I selected Visual Arts. That is what I want, you see, my friends all want the business.

❖ **Performance/ Difficulties in understanding a particular subject in school**

...yess! I looked at my performance in school for some subjects before agreeing to choose Business programme. I have a passion for journalism so I

wanted to do General Arts but I also knew that I was not excellent in the English Language subject. I'm an average student in English.

I admire medical doctors but am afraid of elective mathematics. Even the mathematics we do here (JHS) that they say it is not difficult, I struggle with it. With that, I couldn't select the Science programme! I talked to my parents and we agreed on the General Arts. I'm ok!

.....our teachers, especially, would want to compare your performance in specific subjects to see if it will match. Me, for instance, I one teacher advised me that since I am good in science and mathematics, I should do Science in SHS even though I wanted to do General Arts. Upon thinking through I understood that I since I wasn't too good in English subject, I may not do well on General Arts.

I am a person I don't like reading subjects. I rather enjoy calculation subjects. Although my role model is a journalist and wished to become one, I had to go in for the one I will do and do very well if I go to senior high school.

Solutions

School counselling departments should engage both parents and teachers to come to a consensus on what is good for their wards in terms of SHS programmes. In some instances, there are conflicts between the parents and the child or among the parents, the child and headteacher on the programme the child should take (Excerpt from Shaloe)

Parents should be made aware by school counsellors on how to guide their wards on how to make a better decision. Parents are not to force their children in making a selection against their will. Sometimes, you see parents forcing

their children to select a programme because the parent likes the programme (Excerpt from Quartey)

Having open house dialogue for students using past students who have gone ahead to advise them. These past students can enlighten the present pupils on what to consider in making a decision to select a particular programme. The experiences of these past students can be a lesson for the present ones (Excerpt from Uyirew)

Pupils' opinion should be well evaluated in terms of their abilities. Sometimes, the pupils know what they want and that should be taken into consideration. Therefore, their view should only be examined scientifically and through diverse means to confirm that the child is making the right decision (Excerpt from Erame)

Organising individual counselling by the counselling department for the students to determine their strength and abilities. This can be done by administering career inventory to find out which area or field these pupils can function effectively. This will help know each person's abilities and which SHS programme will fit their abilities (Excerpt from Bonoro)

APPENDIX E

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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University Post Office
Cape Coast
Feb. 3, 2017

Our Ref. No: CoDE/GCP/GA/011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION ON DISSERTATION WORK

The bearer Addadey Justine Abla is a student on our Mphil Distance Education Programme. She has adopted your Institution for her Research/Dissertation work and needs to collect data from your institution.

The research is for educational purposes only and all responses given are expected to be used for that.

We would be most grateful if your maximum support is given.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


Evans Frimpong-Manso

(GT .Accra Regional Resident Tutor)