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Course Content and Career Choice Among Students in Secondary Schools in Uganda

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Abstract

This study about course content and career choices among students in secondary schools, was carried out in Wakiso District in central Uganda. The main purpose of the study was to generate in-depth understanding of how course content influences career choices among students, so as to provide effective guidance to students in career choice decision-making. The study adopted the descriptive research design, with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data was gathered from 315 respondents, who included the District Education Department staff, headteachers, deputy headteachers, career-teachers, students and student leaders in the selected public and private secondary schools. Additional data was collected from staff of UNEB and NCDC. The respondents were selected using purposive and simple-random sampling techniques. Data were collected using validated and pre-tested self-administered questionnaire (SAQs), interview guides and document analysis. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. The study findings according to the respondent teachers indicated that course content accounts for 13.4% of the decisions relating to career choice among students, at.134; p=.006 < .05; while according to the respondent students, course content accounts for 17.2% of the decisions relating to career choice among students and at .172; p=.028 < .05. The study concluded that there is a significant influence of course content on career choice among students. The study recommended among other things, that teachers should always arrange course content in a manner that generates students' interest in the intended outcome of each course unit. This could ultimately lead to improvement in their career choice decision making.

Keywords: Course Content, Career Choice, Students, Secondary Schools, Uganda.

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Background to Study

Globally, all countries have witnessed several changes in the economy, technology and the world of work (UNDP, 2015). The education systems around the world must provide opportunities for learners to adapt to the changes through lifelong career choices (UNESCO, 2010). For the education systems to provide requisite opportunity for learners to adopt to the changes, they have to consider aligning course content implemented in schools, to the careers of the 21st century. This is because course content can be a powerful lever for preparing learners to thrive in the contemporary world. Students should have the option to select their own careers based on the course content; be encouraged to discover their interests and sense of purpose in order to decide on a profession (UNDP, 2015). Contrarily, course content may stifle innovation, especially if it lacks the appropriate materials, is improperly implemented, and is not properly reviewed (Kwamena, 1975).

Course content is considered as a collection of everything that has to be studied in school. In other words, course content should provide the logical arrangement of what is to be taught in an organized, balanced, well-articulated sequence, providing integration and continuity (Herrick, 1965). The deepening, broadening and integration of the logical arrangement may possibly be determined by the philosophy (Johnson, 1969) and model (subject-centered, problem or learner-centered).

The concept of career choices is frequently misunderstood and can be nebulous, ranging from abstract fancies to specific aims and objectives. However, the typical definition of a person's career is what they aim to accomplish or become in the future (Armstrong, 2009). Career decisions also take into account both the present and the future. According to that viewpoint, Quaglia and Cobb (1996) describe 'choices' as a person's capacity to

recognize and establish future goals, while being motivated in the present to strive toward those goals. Furthermore, Quaglia and Casey (1996) define a career choice as identifying and setting goals that can inspire someone to make the effort to achieve those goals in the present, bearing in mind that they will affect the future. In fact, early influences on a child's profession choices are significant, but experience and environment also have an impact (Gutman & Akerman, 2008). Students' career choices have a tendency to decline as students mature, in response to their growing understanding of the world and what is conceivable (Gutman et al, 2008). Simply put, a person's career choice reveals their interests and aspirations, untainted by reality (Watson et al., 2002).

Uganda's educational system has undergone a number of changes over the years. The design of the curriculum, particularly for lower secondary school, is one of the most recent changes. Several arguments were made in favor of changing the lower secondary school curriculum at the World Bank's First Regional Conference on Secondary Education in Africa (SEIA), which was held in Kampala and hosted by the Ministry of Education and Sports (World Bank, 2003). The same explanations are given in the 2007 report on Uganda's roadmap for curriculum reform in lower secondary education (CURASSE, 2007). The reasons put forth in the CURASSE (2007) report included the following: (i) the teaching methodologies built into the existing syllabuses do not promote effective learning and the acquisition of skills; (ii) the existing curriculum is significantly overloaded for historical reasons; (iii) the existing curriculum does not adequately address the social and economic needs of the majority of students now entering secondary education; and (iv) the existing secondary curriculum does not adequately address the needs of the minority of students now entering secondary education. Aziz (2014) argues that curriculum should be created to connect education with the demands of the labor market and potential career paths. The influence of various determinants on job choice has also been explored in multiple studies conducted in Uganda (Nsereko, 2012; Tuyizere, 2017; Otwine and Oonyu, 2018), with a focus on students enrolled in universities but not in upper secondary.

Students take the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) exams after completing two years of Advanced-Level curriculum. The results of the students in the examinations depend on the theoretical nature in which the assessment is carried out. After the UACE examinations, the students submit applications for university courses based on their preferred job path. However, the Joint Admission Board (JAB, 2018) indicated that performance is the key determining factor when allocating a particular course, rather than the choice made by the students. During the university admissions selection exercise, the choice of a course is subjected to a weighting system by considering the essential subjects to the course (weight 3), relevant subject (weight 2) and desirable subject (weight 1). The weighting is boosted by the students' performance in the UCE examinations by allocating a weight to the distinctions (weight 0.3), credits (weight 0.2) and passes (weight 0.1). After weighting is done, a cut-off point is determined for different courses. For instance, in the 2021 intake, the cut-off point for Medicine was 48.4; Architecture was 47.3; Pharmacy was 48.1; Civil Engineering was 47.5 while Mechanical Engineering was 47.2.

In his study, Nsereko (2012) found out that several students leaving upper secondary school were not sure of the right career. After admission to various courses, students were found to apply for a change of course after realizing that they had not been offered the courses that would lead them to their dream careers. According to research by Tuyizere (2017), more than 68% of Ugandan university freshmen admitted that they were enrolled in courses that would steer them away from the jobs of their choice. Similarly, Otwine and Oonyu (2018) concluded that claiming to be doing a course for a career not of one choice arises from the subject combinations when one is in advanced secondary. This suggests that the issue of choosing a vocation begins in secondary education, and specifically in advanced level. There are, however, very few studies on how curriculum design affects students' career choices. It is in this regard that this study sets out to investigate the influence of course content on career choices among students in secondary schools in Uganda using secondary schools in Wakiso District1.1

Statement of the Problem

Academics such as (Boo and Kim, 2020; Chinaza, et al., 2021; and Greenhaus, 2003), posit that education is the primary driver behind social advancement and career choices that exist in the social context. Boo et al (2020) opines that course content of a given education systems determines the various careers of the learners. Uganda is one of the many countries in Sub Saharan Africa implementing a subject-centred curriculum and also one of the countries that have implemented course content changes. The changes were not only to raise secondary school teaching standards and better match content with labour market demands but also to cater for student career choices (SEIA, 2019).

The career choices of Ugandan secondary school students have historically been out of touch with reality,

notwithstanding advances in curriculum design. The students' preferred careers are often not fulfilled. Numerous students in the higher secondary school level have been found to be taking subject combinations that do not lead to the initial career choices they wished to pursue, according to studies (Nsereko, 2012; Tuyizere, 2017; Otwine and Oonyu, 2018). Similarly, a survey by Tuyizere (2017) found that more than 68% of Ugandan undergraduates admitted that they were enrolled in programs that would lead them away from the careers of their choice. Additionally, Okurut (2019) noted that a large number of students in Uganda's higher secondary institutions drop choices they earlier preferred. Other research in Uganda (Walala, 2015; Mugimu et al., 2013) on career choice did not focus solely on the course content. There are hardly any studies in Uganda that have investigated the influence of course content on career choice among students in secondary schools. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the influence of course content on career choice among students in secondary schools in Uganda.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to investigate the influence of course content on career choices among students in secondary schools in Uganda, using secondary schools in Wakiso District in central Uganda.

Specific Objectives

i. To examine the status of course content presentation in secondary schools in Wakiso District in central Uganda.
ii. To assess the status of career choices among students in secondary schools in Wakiso District in central Uganda.
iii. To determine the influence of course content on career choice among students in secondary schools in Wakiso District in central Uganda.

Significance of the Study

The study's successful conclusion will be beneficial to many education management stakeholders in various ways. Policymakers, for instance, will benefit by way of thinking through the necessary considerations and interventions worth engaging in order to offer a remedy to issues relating to course content. These could be in amending existing laws and policies. To the designers, the findings may lead to improvement in course content for better implementation by the teachers, so that the learners and parents can benefit in making appropriate subject combinations and ultimately taking on careers of their choices. Other stakeholders like secondary schools, NCDC, MoES, NGOs like UWEZO, will be offered opportunities to use the study to offer appropriate interventions, which will aim at improving the course content for learners' better career aspirations. The study will also offer a good benchmark for further research by those interested in fields of course content and choice of career in the management of education systems in general.

Scope of the Study

The study was undertaken in secondary schools in Wakiso District in central Uganda and the focus was on students at the advanced level. The choice of secondary schools in Wakiso District was due to the fact that 68% of students who were found to have made unintended career choices at university entry (Tuyizere, 2017), the majority were from secondary schools in Wakiso District. Of these, thirty-three (33) were government-aided and over five hundred and fifty (550) were private schools. Being a peri-urban district, Wakiso has rural public & private and urban public & private secondary schools. In addition, many secondary schools in Wakiso pass many candidates at Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) examinations implying that majority of the students entering university in Uganda are from secondary schools in Wakiso District.

The research focused on coverage of course content, nature of students' career choices and influence of course content on students' career choices. According to Mugimu et al (2019) the choices students make depend on the suitability of the course content and the way it is delivered and assessed. The ability for students to score marks that qualify them for specific courses at university relates to the course/subject content, the methodological strategies used during the teaching and the nature of assessment at the end of the programs.

The study was based on the years 2017 to 2021. This is the time range in which many students failed to enter courses of their career choices, according to Tuyizere (2017). At the same time, it is during this period that the government expanded educational institutions to cater for the increased student population and demands for the 21st century skills for self-employment upon completion.

Conceptual Framework

The study was undertaken on the basis of the conceptual framework illustrated in Fig. 1.1, outlining the interaction between the constructs of course content and students' career choices.

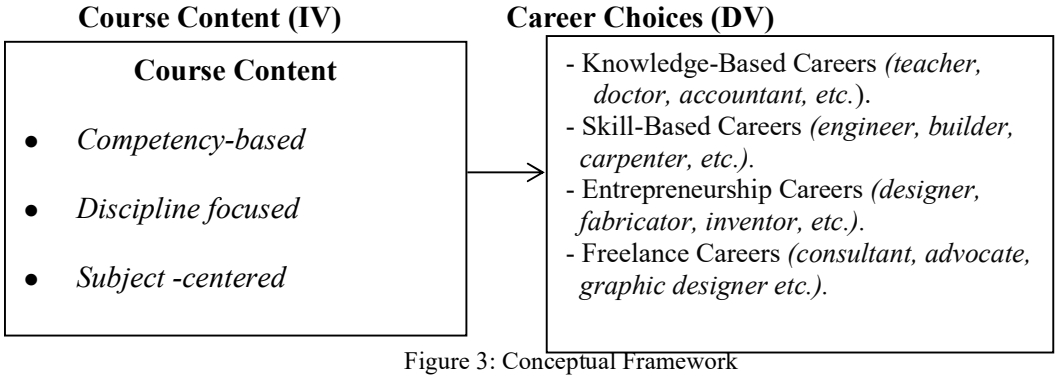

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

Source: Herrick (1965), Fer, (2011) and Jefferson (2021) modified by researcher

In the conceptual framework (Fig. 1.1), course content is the independent variable. According to Herrick (1965), course content can be competence-based, discipline-based or subject-based; the subject matter or content refers to what is included in a given course. The researcher hopes that if well implemented, the elements can lead to what is desired as outcomes in terms of careers which can be knowledge careers, skills careers, entrepreneurship careers or freelance careers developed in the learners.

Theoretical Review

The study was underpinned by the Holland Theory of Career Choice. According to this theory, the degree to which students are driven to select a career path depends on a variety of factors. It is important to remember that there is no one theoretical explanation that can account for all aspects of students' desire—or lack thereof—toward a certain career choice. The reasons why some students are more inclined to pick specific vocations than others are clarified by various theoretical explanations.

One of the popular ideas that explains the variables influencing students' career choices is the Holland Theory of Career Choice. John L. Holland, a professor and psychologist who worked at John Hopkins University, is the source of information for this idea. Holland conducted extensive research on topics related to occupational fulfillment and choice. In order to help people make wise career decisions, he created Holland's Theory and a number of examinations and supporting tools. According to Holland (1992), a person's work interests are an indication of their personality. He said that the selected leisure activities, academic disciplines, hobbies, and commercial decisions shape the characters, and every person is classified into one of the six personality types, which are realistic (R), investigative (I), artistic (A), sociable (S), entrepreneurial (E), and conventional (C) (Holland, 1992). These six kinds are frequently abbreviated as RIASEC.

According to Holland (1992), people, like the students in this study, seek out places where they may demonstrate their attitudes and values while also putting their knowledge and experiences to use. The Holland Theory is predicated on the following presumptions, as previously mentioned and presented in chapter one (Smart et al., 2013); Holland assumed that interests are divided in the same way as likes and dislikes in the individual/psychological component, which focuses on what the individual likes or dislikes. The environmental/social component of the theory, which focuses on the consistency of the individual and his environment in relation to the six personality types it describes, is the second premise. The third premise focuses on congruence (similarity), which indicates an individual's inner harmony in accordance with the configuration in the hexagon (Smart, et al. 2013).

The Holland Theory has made significant contributions as seen from the numerous research that accepted and applied the theory to explain problems with career choice among various groups of people. For instance, Kamasak and Bulutlar (2010) evaluated the compatibility of academic staff members' career choices and personalities in their study, concentrating on the connection between a career and accomplishments within the framework of Holland's Theory. Their research found no correlation between teacher and research assistant performance and personality types or corporate sponsorship.

Practical considerations are the basis for Holland's Theory's applicability to this investigation. The first benefit is that it may be used to measure academic or professional performance, which is one of the main goals of this study (Holland, 1959). Second, comprehending career stability, academic success, and achievement (Holland, 1959), which the current research shed light on; the theory equally emphasizes psychological and sociological factors. Furthermore, the theory, according to Holland (1959), aims to correct the imbalance in current initiatives where attention to psychological considerations (student predispositions and choices) is prioritized over attention to sociological considerations (school, community, and family environments). The theory also balances individual characteristics (interests) with the fundamental characteristics of their educational systems (emphasis on the type of combination) in order to explain the degree of career success. The second idea that this study perceived as acceptable for understanding how curriculum design might actually influence students' career choices is reviewed in the following subsection.

Empirical Review

Behar-Horestein (2014) revealed that course content is the wholeness of what is taught in a school system. Thomson (2012) adds that the entirety of the significant facts, principles and concepts to be taught are the content component of the teaching-learning scenario. The topics must relate to the learning experiences and each lesson must have a specific goal to be attained at the conclusion. Learners may be exposed to it in the form of knowledge, skills, attitude, and values. The Content consists of subject matter chosen based on issues, concepts or topics that cross traditional subject boundaries (Smith, 2014). It is significant to note that proper criteria should be implemented to guarantee the inclusion of relevant content in the curriculum design. Behar-Horestein (2014) states that in order for course content to be appropriate, it must pass tests for relevance, interest, learnability, validity, self-sufficiency, and coherence with social reality.

Children learn a variety of topics in school that might affect their lives in the long run, particularly in choosing a career, because content controls what is taught in schools. The inference is that how pupils are taught has some bearing on their decisions regarding their career paths. People are influenced by the lives of those around them when making their job decisions. Individuals have a career choice window through which they can examine the opportunities in their social environment in this regard (Ray, 2021). The options available to them in their community are typically the basis for the career decision window, with their peers serving as a benchmark for comparison. The idea of high versus low career options is therefore arbitrary. There is a widespread belief that people who choose careers and educational paths with higher aspirations are more motivated than people who choose careers and educational paths with lower aspirations. However, decisions that are high for one person in a given set of circumstances may be low for a different person in a different set of circumstances. As a result, the significance of a person's career choice differs, depending on both the society in which they live and their own unique traits and stages of development.

As already mentioned, one of the most significant decisions students must make in their lives is choosing a career. It is important to remember that nobody wants to feel powerless over their own lives in this regard (Weiler, 2020). Students want to feel in control over their own lives; thus, they should be able to choose a career that interests them. However, Siddiky and Akter (2021) pointed out that students' career decisions are not solely influenced by their hobbies. There are a number of variables that have been thought to affect students' career decisions. Research shows three broad characteristics that affect student career decisions: environment, personality, and opportunity (Ferrar et al., 2021; Howard et al, 2015). Numerous research has accelerated the countless components within each category (Auger et al., 2005; Nazli, 2007; Schmitt-Wilson & Welsh, 2012; Walls, 2000). Most research is conducted in developed nations, however when it comes to student career choices, the influence of curriculum design, a major factor in the educational system, has not been adequately considered.

Azizi (2014) noted that numerous redesigns of the educational systems' curricula occurred in various countries during the previous few decades. The output of the educational systems carried out in most of these countries, however, lacked the necessary abilities and potentialities of the workplace, according to a critical analysis of the status and performance of graduates in the workplace and the assessment of clients' satisfaction in various sectors. On the other hand, the high unemployment rate among graduates reflects an unfavorable level of external effectiveness and the inability of the educational system in these nations to achieve an acceptable rate of efficiency (Fresh, 2021). Any educational system's curriculum design should improve the connection between learning and labor market demands for developing qualified personnel. Aziz (2014) proceeded on to say that there is a need to create curricula that connect education with labor market demands and that numerous economic and social changes that take place in societies due to the quick advancements in science and technology necessitate a review and revision of educational objectives, curriculum content, and instructional

strategies.

On the other hand, it is crucial to remember that the majority of kids start day-dreaming about possible career paths as early as kindergarten or first grade (Seligman, 1994). However, many children are compelled to change their adult career choices after they reach the fourth year of high school. According to a survey conducted by Gore et al. (2015) in Australia, many advanced level students—the equivalent of senior five and six in Uganda—were found to be taking subject combinations that did not lead to the careers they had originally hoped to pursue. Liu (2021) reports that more than 80% of students who finish senior four drop out of the careers they had planned. According to Liu (2021), many students were having career crises and were applying for combination modifications to ultimately undertake combinations that would lead to the career choices they had made previously, while they were in primary school. If the kid changes their mind about their career after entering senior four and before senior five, it would be smart to look into any potential causes in the educational system at this time.

According to Edward and Quinter's (2012) analysis, a person's preference for particular school topics affects their decision for a future employment, which affects their career path. Since Quinter's study was conducted outside the context of Uganda, it is unclear whether this holds true for the situation among secondary school pupils in Uganda. Quinter's study may not have used the same type of course material as the Ugandan curriculum design, which justifies doing a special study there to get further data.

Similar to this, a 2007 study by Zing found that a person's preference for a particular subject influences their choice of job. Furthermore, investigations by Shertzer and Stone (2003) and Fatima et al. (2015) showed that a student's enthusiasm in a certain subject will probably influence the career they choose to pursue. Alexander et al. (2011) looked into how students' employment choices were impacted by their information technology classes. Their research revealed a substantial relationship between students' preferences for the information technology course and their professional aspirations. Every subject contains a substance, as was already mentioned, and the content of a particular subject determines whether pupils like or despise it. The above studies are closely related to the present study objective, focusing on content in the subjects students undertake. Subject content is actually what this study considers as curriculum content. However, the studies cited here above were all carried out in developed countries and outside Uganda. Secondly, the category of students investigated is not the same as that in this study. Therefore, whether their finding hold true for the situation among Uganda students deserves an empirical investigation, thus, the choice of the present objective.

Al-Lawati et al. (2017) came to a conclusion that one's career path begins in school, since the subjects studied in school have an impact on the course to be enrolled at the university, thus preparing people for the working world. The scenario in Uganda, where the subject combinations chosen by students at advanced level (higher secondary) dictate the courses the students can enroll in while at university, is closely related to the conclusion by Al-Lawti et al. (2017). The university courses that students enroll in later influence the occupations that they choose to pursue in life. However, the study by Al-Lawati et al. (2017) did not specifically consider subject-specific course content. Second, there may not be a direct correlation between the circumstances at the schools used in the Al-Lawati study. Therefore, the present study objective seeks to examine the impact of the course content on students' career choices in Uganda.

Learners can acquire particular learning experiences and skills by studying a specific subject. According to a study by Edwards and Quinter (2011), students' career choices are highly influenced by the learning opportunities they receive from studying particular subject material. They clarified that the students desired to use their acquired knowledge and skills in the workplace (Edwards et al., 2011). With the exception of the fact that this purpose is specifically related to the course material and the students' profession choice, their study closely corroborates the current study objective under consideration. Edwards et al. (2011) conducted a study in Oman, a country with a unique cultural background that might have functioned as a confounding factor. The gap in the above studies is that both were done outside Africa and Uganda in particular, where the conditions are quite different. Therefore, to verify their findings, it is imperative to expedite the influence of course content on career choice among students in secondary schools in Uganda.

Choosing a career has recently grown to be fairly difficult because it is influenced by so many different aspects (Nyamwange, 2021). To live fulfilling lives, be motivated at work, and have tremendous success, it is important to make sure that people choose their careers wisely, according to researchers and practitioners. In light of this, it is advisable that researchers and academics should keep investigating the effects of many factors on career

choice to continue guiding people in making informed career decisions. However, the significant gap in the literature is that while many studies have been done in developed countries, very few have been done in developing countries like Uganda. Furthermore, the factors Nyamwange (2021) considered that influence career choice were not closely related to curriculum design, whose influence the present study intends to expedite. That leaves a knowledge gap that this study on curriculum design and career choice among Uganda secondary school students hopes to fill.

The landscape of careers is constantly changing, mainly due to globalization, demographic shifts, the advent of new technology, and the emergence of new jobs (Reitman and Schneer, 2013). In light of this, there is an increasing need for students to give appropriate career options, enabling them to adapt and function well in the altered workplace with careful consideration. If course material is essential, secondary school teachers should consider adjusting the curriculum to the emerging professions to make education applicable to the workplace (Stephen, 2017). According to Laughland-Booy, Mayall, and Skrbis (2015), each student should take course material seriously to make the best professional development decisions.

According to Laughland-Booy et al. (2015) Students who are taught information technology will aspire to work in technology-related organizations; in other words, students tend to choose careers related to the content they study in school. The major gap is that there are scanty studies, if any, on what Laughland-Booy et al., (2015) and Stephen (2021) contend in their respective works. Therefore, it is prudent for this study that focuses on curriculum design and career choice among students in secondary schools to be expedited, to allow for generalization.

Methodology

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Through interviews and focus groups, the respondents' perspectives about curriculum design and career choice among secondary school students were gathered, analyzed, and described, using qualitative methodologies. Through the use of structured questionnaires, numerical data were gathered, examined, interpreted, and presented using quantitative methodologies.

The study's participants included employees of Wakiso District Education Department, secondary school headteachers, deputy headteachers, career-teachers in both public and private secondary schools, student leaders, and students in the selected secondary schools. Based on information gathered from the Wakiso District Education Department, 1,481 people formed the target group for the study because they met the inclusion criteria. (DEO Office, 2023). Using the Sloven (1960) formula and a target population of 1,481 respondents, 315 respondents made up the study's sample.

All members of the Education Department employees and headteachers were taken into account. The Education Department staff were included in the census because, in accordance with Kothari (2006), they were assumed to be knowledgeable about the study's goals and are the district's custodians of all matters relating to education. The professional teachers and the student leaders in this study were chosen using simple random sampling. The study gathered data using a variety of tools and data collection techniques. The study used the survey method to gather empirical data in order to ascertain the impact of curriculum design on students' decision to attend secondary schools in Wakiso (Saunders et al., 2009). Interviewing was also used as one of the qualitative approaches in this study because it likewise aimed to get respondents' opinions on the variables being examined. The document analysis method was also crucial in supplying information for triangulating with information obtained from surveys.

The validity and reliability of the data-gathering instruments were examined to guarantee quality control. Supervisor consultation was used to validate the study instrument, and the result was a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.86, indicating good validity. The reliability was ascertained by first piloting the instrument on a small number of respondents who were excluded from the final sample. This was done using the split-half technique, and the results showed a good level of reliability, as indicated by the Chronbach reliability coefficient of 0.824, which was interpreted using the George and Mallery (2003) scale.

Analysis of findings was done using descriptive and inferential statistics generated by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for quantitative data. The descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. From the descriptive statistic (means), the inferential statistics, i.e. simple linear regression that formed the basis of the conclusion, was generated. For qualitative data analysis, collected data were transcribed, coded, and categorised, and themes were built through content analysis. Specifically, the

narrative method was used to weave together a sequence of events from several individuals to form a cohesive story. This was done to improve the research findings' readability and comprehension for a wider audience with an interest in course content and career choice among students in the secondary schools in Uganda

Findings

Demographic data of respondents is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 13: Demographic data of Respondents

Gender of Respondent Career Teachers			Gender of Respondent Students		
Characteristic	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Characteristic**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	24	42.9	Male	96	57.1
Female	32	57.1	Female	72	42.9
Age Bracket of Respondent career Teachers			**Age Bracket of Respondent Students**		
25-34 years	9	16.1	15-19 years	30	17.9
35-44 years	46	82.1	20-24 years	132	78.6
45-55 years	1	1.8	25-29 years	6	3.6
Education Level of Respondent Career Teacherss			**Class of Respondent Students**		
Diploma	12	21.4	Senior Five	66	39.3
Bachelors	17	30.4	Senior Six	102	60.7
Masters	25	44.6			
PhD	2	3.6			
Distribution of Respondents by Duration of Teaching in the School			**Distribution of Respondents by Duration of student-hood in the School**		
Less than 1 years	16	28.6	Less than one year	30	17.9
1 - 5 years	40	71.4	1 - 2 years	138	82.1

Source: Primary data (2023)

From *Table 1*, it was found out that 42.9% ($^{24}/_{56}$) of the respondent teachers were male while 57.1% ($^{32}/_{56}$) of them were female. This indicates a ratio of approximately 3:2 of male to female career teachers in the secondary schools in Wakiso district. In other words, for every three male career teachers, there were two female career teachers in the secondary schools in Wakiso district. This ratio was a true reflection of the proportion of male to female career teachers in the secondary schools under study. This implies that the sample of the study was representative of the career teacher population in the secondary schools in Wakiso district.

From the results in *Table 1,* 82.1% ($^{46}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers were in the age bracket of 35-44 years, while 16.1% ($^{9}/_{56}$) of them were in the age bracket 25-34 years. Only 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) of the career teachers were in the age bracket 44-55 years. This implies that most of the teachers who participated in the study were in their prime years of service. This means that the data they provided can be relied on with respect to curriculum design and students' career choices in the secondary sub-sector.

From the data in *Table 1*, it was found out that 44.6% ($^{25}/_{56}$) of the respondent teachers had masters degrees in education, which implied that most of the respondent teachers had upgraded their qualifications as required by the National Teacher Policy. Another 30.4% ($^{17}/_{56}$) of them had bachelors degrees while 21.4% ($^{12}/_{56}$) of them had diplomas in secondary education. At least 3.6% (2/56) of the respondent teachers had Doctoral degrees (PhDs) in education. Currently, many teachers across the country are engaged in furthering their education qualifications as required by the National Teacher Policy (NTP, 2018). The distribution of the teachers by their education qualifications implied that all of them were qualified to teach in the secondary schools. Therefore, it is hoped that the data they provided was reliable enough for the researcher to make critical conclusions about the study.

The results in *Table 1* also revealed that 71.4% ($^{40}/_{56}$) of the respondent teachers had served in the secondary schools under study for a period between 1-5 years. However, 28.6% ($^{16}/_{56}$) of them had served in the secondary schools for less than one year. This means that they had recently been transferred from some other secondary schools, rather than being newly recruited, because the responsibility of career teacher comes with prior experience in service. This implies that the majority of the teachers had served for a reasonable period as career teachers, making them knowledgeable enough about issues of career choice among students. Therefore, it can be taken that the data the respondent teachers provided were reliable enough for this study to draw concise conclusions.

The findings in *Table 1* also showed that 57.1% ($^{96}/_{168}$) of the respondent students were male while 42.9% ($^{72}/_{168}$) of them were female. This indicates a ratio of approximately 4:3 of male to female students in the secondary schools in Wakiso district. In other words, for every four male students, there were three female students in the secondary schools in Wakiso district. This ratio was a true reflection of the proportion of male to female students in the secondary schools under study. This implies that the sample of the study was representative of the student leadership population in the secondary schools in Wakiso district.

Furthermore, the results in *Table 1* revealed that 78.6% ($^{132}/_{168}$) of the respondent students were in the age bracket of 20-24 years of age while 17.9% ($^{30}/_{168}$) of them were in the age bracket 15-19 years of age. Only 3.6% ($^{6}/_{168}$) of the students were in the age bracket 25-29 years of age. This implies that most of the students who participated in the study were of mature age. This means that the data they provided can be relied on especially in respect of curriculum design and students' career choices in the secondary sub-sector.

From the data in *Table 1*, it was found that 39.3% ($^{66}/_{168}$) of the respondent students were senior five students while 60.7% ($^{102}/_{168}$) of them were senior six students. This implies that a substantial proportion of the students were in their final year of study in secondary education; thus, their next stage (tertiary education) would require them to make choices leading to specific life careers. This means that the data they provided can be relied on since the students at advanced secondary level were in a category that were almost in the process of making such important lifetime decisions.

The results in *Table 1* finally revealed that 82.1% ($^{138}/_{168}$) of the respondent students had studied in the secondary schools under study for a period between 1-2 years. However, 17.9% ($^{30}/_{168}$) of them studied in secondary schools for less than one year. This means that they had recently been admitted from some other secondary schools. This implies that the majority of the students had studied in the schools for a reasonable period of time to really understand the implementation of the curriculum design and other aspeccts relating to career choice. Therefore, it can be taken that the data the respondent students provided were reliable enough for this study to draw concise conclusions.

Empirical Findings

Objective one of the study sought to establish the status of presentation of course content and *Table 2* presents the descriptive statistics generated from the completed self-administered questionnaires of the respondent career teachers.

Table 14: Descriptive Statistics on presentation of Course Content from Career Teachers

Items on Course Content	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Before teaching, I always clearly define the purpose of what I am going to teach the students.	32.1	3.6	1.8	62.5	2.95	1.407
I always ensure that I build the course content around essential related topics to the subject matter to achieve learning goals	53.6	3.6	8.9	33.9	2.23	1.401
I always indicate the different activities that students will have to be engaged in throughout the course.	58.9	3.6	00	37.5	2.16	1.449
I choose materials (books, etc.) that speak to selected topics to enable attainment of learning objectives	71.4	1.8	00	26.8	1.82	1.336
I organize course content in a chronological	69.6	1.8	8.9	19.6	1.79	1.246

Items on Course Content	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
sequence to accomplish a particular set of objectives.						
I organize the content so as to provide sufficient practice - hands-on for students.	83.9	1.8	1.8	12.5	1.43	1.024
I sometimes organize the course from concrete to abstract or vice versa to improve students' learning.	87.5	00	00	12.5	1.38	1.001
I often organize the course content from theory to application to enable students to apply what is learned to everyday life situations	87.5	00	12.5	00	1.25	.667
I endeavour to sequence the topics such that learning of later skills are built on the first skills.	89.3	00	10.7	00	1.21	.624
I also ensure that I sequence the topics in a manner that enables students to integrate new ideas with the preceding ones as the course proceeds	42.9	7.1	10.7	39.3	2.46	1.388
I know that the content I teach to students shapes their future ambitions, so I ensure proper packaging of the content to help students make appropriate choices	1.8	1.8	7.1	89.3	1.37	1.001
I always ensure that the content is logically arranged to provide continuity in learning for a purposeful career	7.1	8.9	32.1	51.8	1.43	1.024
Overall Mean					**1.79**	

Source: Primary data (2023)

Legend

0.0 - 1.0 = Not well presented; 1.1 - 2.0 = Fairly presented; 2.1 - 3.0 = Moderately presented; and 3.1 - 4.0 = Well presented

The findings in *Table 2* revealed that 62.5% ($^{35}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed, while 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) of them agreed that before teaching, they always clearly defined the purpose of what they were going to teach the students. This implies that most of the respondent career teachers acknowledged that they always clearly defined the purpose of what they were going to teach before really starting to teach the learners. However, 32.1% ($^{18}/_{56}$) strongly disagreed as 3.6% ($^{2}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that before teaching, they always clearly defined the purpose of what they were going to teach the students. This implied that a significant proportion of the teachers in the secondary schools in Wakiso district did not begin by clearly defining what they taught the students. This could have an influence on the students' interest in what the teachers taught and any desire to take interest in their choices for the future.

The findings in *Table 2* further revealed that 53.6% ($^{30}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed as 3.6% ($^{2}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that they always ensured that they build the course content around essential related topics to the subject matter to achieve learning goals. On the other hand, 33.9% ($^{19}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed while 8.9% ($^{5}/_{56}$) of them agreed that they always built the course content around essential topics related to the subject matter, to achieve learning goals. This implies that most of the career teachers did not endeavour to build course content around essential topics related to the subject matter in order to achieve learning goals. This may mean that in most cases, the learning goals were not achieved, which ultimately could influence career choices among students.

The findings furthermore showed that 58.9% ($^{33}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed as 3.6% ($^{2}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that they always indicated the different activities that students would have to be engaged in throughout the course. Only 37.5% ($^{21}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed that they always indicated the different activities that students would have to be engaged in throughout the course. This implies that in most cases, the career teachers were not keen to indicate the various activities that students would engage

in throughout the course. Similarly, the findings indicated that 71.4% ($^{40}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed while 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that they chose materials (books, etc.) that speak to selected topics to enable attainment of learning objectives. However, only 26.8% ($^{15}/_{56}$) of them strongly agreed that they chose materials (books, etc.) that speak to selected topics to enable attainment of learning objectives. This implied that while majority of the career teachers did not choose materials that speak to selected topics, some few of them did.

The findings also revealed that 69.6% ($^{39}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed as 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that they organized course content in a chronological sequence to accomplish a particular set of objectives. At least 19.6% ($^{11}/_{56}$) strongly agreed while 8.9% ($^{5}/_{56}$) of them agreed that they organized course content in a chronological sequence to accomplish a particular set of objectives. This implied that only a few of the career teachers organized course content in chronological sequence to accomplish set learning objectives. Similarly, 83.9% ($^{47}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed while 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that they organized the content so as to provide sufficient practice - hands on for students. At least 12.5% ($^{7}/_{56}$) strongly agreed as 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) of them agreed that they organized the content so as to provide sufficient practice - hands on for students. This implied that majority of the career teachers did not organize content to provide sufficient practice for students.

Data in *Table 2* further revealed that 87.5% ($^{49}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed that they sometimes organized the course from concrete to abstract or vice versa to improve on students' learning. However, 12.5% ($^{7}/_{56}$) of them strongly agreed that they sometimes organized the course from concrete to abstract or vice versa to improve on students' learning. This implied that most of the career teachers did not organize content from concrete to abstract or vice versa. This reflects some weakness in the format in which most teachers organize the course content while teaching students in the secondary schools in Wakiso district.

Similarly, majority (87.5% - $^{49}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed that they often organized the course content from theory to application to enable students apply what is learned to everyday life situations. Only 12.5% ($^{7}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers agreed that they often organized the course content from theory to application to enable students apply what is learned to everyday life situations. This further implied that most of the teachers in the secondary schools in Wakiso district did not organize the course content from theory to application to enable students apply what they learn to everyday life situations. This could limit students' development of interest in practical life skills and ultimately the choice of career for their future.

The findings also revealed that 89.3% ($^{50}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed that they endeavoured to sequence the topics such that learning of later skills are built on the first skills. Only 10.7% ($^{6}/_{56}$) of them agreed that they endeavoured to sequence the topics such that learning of later skills are built on the first skills. This implied that most of the teachers in the secondary schools in Wakiso district did not sequence topics such that learning of later skills are built on first skills. This could also contribute to students' failure to make appropriate career choices for life.

Data in *Table 2* also indicated that 42.9% ($^{24}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed while 7.1% ($^{4}/_{56}$) disagreed that they ensured that they sequenced the topics in a manner that enabled students to integrate new ideas with the preceding ones as the course proceeds. However, 39.3% ($^{22}/_{56}$) of them strongly agreed as 10.7% ($^{6}/_{56}$) of them agreed that they ensured that they sequenced the topics in a manner that enables students to integrate new ideas with the preceding ones as the course proceeds. This implied that only few of the teachers in the secondary schools in Wakiso sequenced topics in a manner that enables students to integrate new ideas with preceding ones. This means that only few teachers help students to be innovative which also has a negative implication in development of students' interest in careers that demand constant innovation.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that 89.3% ($^{50}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed while 7.1% ($^{4}/_{56}$) of them agreed that they knew that the content they taught to students shaped their future ambitions, so they ensured proper packaging of the content to help students make appropriate choices. Only 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) strongly disagreed and another 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that they knew that the content they taught to students shaped their future ambitions, so they ensured proper packaging of the content to help students make appropriate choices. This implied that most of the teachers in the secondary schools in Wakiso district ensured proper packaging of content to help students make appropriate career choices.

The findings also showed that 51.8% ($^{29}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed as 32.1% ($^{18}/_{56}$) of them agreed that they always ensured that the content was logically arranged to provide continuity in learning for

a purposeful career. However, 8.9% ($^{5}/_{56}$) of them disagreed while 7.1% ($^{4}/_{56}$) of them strongly disagreed that they always ensured that the content was logically arranged to provide continuity in learning for a purposeful career. This implied that apart from a few of the teachers, most of them always ensured that the content was logically arranged to provide continuity in learning for a purposeful career. This can have a positive influence on their career choice in the future.

The overall mean for all the items on course content was 1.79 and according to the legend, this implied that as far as course content was concerned, the respondent career teachers indicated that the course content in the secondary schools was only fairly well presented to the students. On a percentile scale, this implies that presentation of course content in the secondary schools was in the second quartile (26% - 50%). Data in *Table 2* only presented career teachers' responses on course content. However, their responses were triangulated with data from students on the same concept of course content. These data are presented in the next sub-section.

Descriptive Statistics on Course Content from Respondent Students

The self-administered questionnaires for the respondent student leaders had 12 items on course content. Each of the respondent students was required to indicate by ticking whether he/she strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed or strongly agreed to each statement. Analysis of their responses as percentage, mean and standard deviation generated by use of the SPSS is presented in *Table3*.

Table 15: Descriptive Statistics on Course Content from Respondent Students

Items on Course Content	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Before teaching, the teachers always clearly define the purpose of what they are going to teach us.	32.1	7.1	00	60.7	2.89	1.423
The teachers always outline the subject matter that we expect to learn during the teaching-learning sessions	50.0	7.1	17.9	25.0	2.18	1.307
The teachers tell the us the kind of knowledge we expect to gain at the end of the learning session	60.7	7.1	00	32.1	2.04	1.401
The teachers inform us of the skills we will gain by learning what they will teach us	78.6	3.6	00	17.9	1.57	1.168
Our teachers focus their teaching on developing useful attitudes among us students through the subject matter	85.7	3.6	00	10.7	1.36	.951
The teachers focus on making us value what we are learning in class for application in our future lifetime	85.7	3.6	00	10.7	1.36	.951
The teachers ensure that they balance the content so that we can ably gain the requisite skills for sustainability in our future lifetime	100	00	00	00	1.00	.000
During teaching the teachers always try to articulate the importance to the knowledge we will gain to our lifetime careers	100	00	00	00	1.00	.000
The teachers also ensure that during their teaching, they sequence the subject matter to ensure that it speaks to our future career dreams	100	00	00	00	1.00	.000
Since the curriculum content is broad, the teachers try to integrate the various sub-contents to motivate us to learn the content.	32.1	00	14.3	53.6	2.89	1.370
Teachers know that the content they teach us shapes our future ambitions, so they ensure proper packaging of the content to help us make appropriate career choices	00	00	14.3	85.7	3.86	.356

The teachers always ensure that the content is logically arranged to provide us with continuity in learning for a purposeful career	3.6	00	21.4	75.0	3.68	.670
Overall Mean					**2.07**	

Source: Primary data (2023)

Legend

0.0 - 1.0 = Not well presented; 1.1 - 2.0 = Fairly presented; 2.1 - 3.0 = Moderately presented; and 3.1 - 4.0 = Well presented

The findings in *Table 3* revealed that 60.7% ($^{102}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed while 32.1% ($^{54}/_{168}$) of them strongly disagreed and 7.1% ($^{12}/_{168}$) disagreed that before teaching, their teachers always clearly defined the purpose of what they were going to teach them. This implies that most of the respondent students acknowledged that their teachers always clearly defined the purpose of what they were going to teach before really starting to teach them. However, few of the students indicated that some of their teachers did not always clearly define the purpose of what they were going to teach them. This could have influence on the students' interest in what the teachers taught and any desire to take interest in their choices for the future.

The findings in *Table 3* further revealed that 50.0% ($^{84}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed as 7.1% ($^{12}/_{168}$) of them disagreed that their teachers always outlined the subject matter that they expected to learn during the teaching-learning sessions. On the other hand, 25.0% ($^{42}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed while 17.9% ($^{30}/_{168}$) of them agreed that their teachers always outlined the subject matter that they expected to learn during the teaching-learning sessions. This implies that most of the teachers did not always outline the subject matter that the students expected to learn during the teaching-learning sessions. This may mean that in most cases, the learning goals were not achieved, which ultimately could influence career choices among students.

The findings furthermore showed that 60.7% ($^{102}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed as 7.1% ($^{12}/_{168}$) of them disagreed that their teachers told them the kind of knowledge they expected to gain at the end of the learning sessions. Only 32.1% ($^{54}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed that their teachers told them the kind of knowledge they expected to gain at the end of the learning sessions. This implies that in most cases, the teachers were not keen to tell the students the kind of knowledge they expected to gain at the end of the learning sessions. Similarly, the findings indicated that 78.6% ($^{132}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed while 3.6% ($^{6}/_{168}$) of them disagreed that their teachers informed them of the skills they would gain by learning what they taught them. However, only 17.9% ($^{30}/_{168}$) of them strongly agreed that their teachers informed them of the skills they would gain by learning what they taught them. This implied that while majority of the teachers did not inform the students of the skills, they would gain by learning what they taught them, a few of the teachers endeavoured to inform students of the skills they would gain by learning what they taught them.

The findings also revealed that 85.7% ($^{144}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed as 3.6% ($^{6}/_{168}$) of them disagreed that their teachers focused the teaching on developing useful attitudes among the students through the subject matter. Only 10.7% ($^{18}/_{168}$) of the student leaders strongly agreed that their teachers focused the teaching on developing useful attitudes among the students through the subject matter. This implied that only a few of the teachers focused the teaching on developing useful attitudes among students through the subject matter, most of the teachers did not. Similarly, 85.7% ($^{144}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed while 3.6% ($^{6}/_{168}$) of them disagreed that their teachers focused on making their students value what they learned in class for application in their future lifetime. At least 10.7% ($^{18}/_{168}$) of the students strongly agreed that their teachers focused on making the students value what they learned in class for application in their future lifetime. This implied that the majority of teachers did not focus on making their students value what they learned in class for application in their future lifetime.

Data in *Table 3* further revealed that 100.0% ($^{168}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed that their teachers ensured that they balanced the content so that students could ably gain the requisite skills for sustainability in their future lifetime. At the same time all the respondent students (100% - $^{168}/_{168}$) strongly disagreed that during teaching their teachers always tried to articulate the importance of the knowledge the students would gain to their lifetime careers. Similarly, 100% ($^{168}/_{168}$) of the students strongly disagreed that their teachers also ensured that during the teaching, they sequenced the subject matter to ensure that it spoke to their

future career dreams. This implies that the teachers in the secondary schools in Wakiso District were less bothered about balancing the content, articulating the importance of the content to the knowledge or sequencing the subject matter to ensure that it spoke to the future career dreams of the students. This definitely can have negative influence on career choices of the students as it limits their knowledge about available careers.

Majority (53.6% - $^{90}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed while 14.3% ($^{24}/_{168}$) agreed that since the curriculum content was broad, the teachers tried to integrate the various sub-contents to motivate the students to learn the content. However, 32.1% ($^{54}/_{168}$) of the student leaders strongly disagreed that since the curriculum content was broad, the teachers tried to integrate the various sub-contents to motivate students to learn the content. Furthermore, 85.7% ($^{144}/_{168}$) of the students strongly agreed while 14.3% ($^{24}/_{168}$) of them agreed that the teachers knew that the content they taught to the students shaped students' future ambitions, so they ensured proper packaging of the content to help students make appropriate career choices. Similarly, 75% ($^{126}/_{168}$) of the students strongly agreed while 21.4% ($^{36}/_{168}$) of them agreed that the teachers always ensured that the content was logically arranged to provide students with continuity in learning for a purposeful career. Only 3.6% ($^{6}/_{168}$) of them strongly disagreed in this regard. This implied that most of the teachers were conscious about the future of the students, and they tried to ensure proper packaging of the content and the logical arrangement for purposeful career development among the students.

The overall mean for all the items on course content was 2.07 and according to the legend, this implied that from the perspective of the students, the course content in the secondary schools was moderately presented by the teachers to the students. On a percentile scale, this implies that presentation of course content in the secondary schools was in the base of the third quartile (50% - 75%). The question that the study sought to answer was, 'what was the influence of course content on career choice among students?' Answering this question required analysis of the dependent construct and the related findings are presented in the next sub-section.

Descriptive Statistics on Career Choice from Respondent Teachers

Like in the case of course content, the self-administered questionnaires for the respondent career teachers had 10 items on career choice. Each of the respondent career teachers was required to indicate by ticking whether he/she strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed or strongly agreed to each statement. Analysis of their responses as percentage, mean and standard deviation generated by use of the SPSS is presented in *Table 4*.

Table 16: Descriptive Statistics on Career Choice from Career Teachers

Items on Career Choice among Students	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
The curriculum design for secondary education provides knowledge to students about the possible career choices available for them	87.5	00	12.5	00	1.21	.667
Subject combinations students offer at A-level help students to consider specific lifetime career choices	89.3	00	10.7	00	1.21	.624
Subject matter taught to students provides information about what the students can engage in for a lifetime	42.9	7.1	10.7	39.3	1.21	1.388
Content of what is delivered during instruction shapes students' attitude towards particular career choices	1.8	1.8	7.1	89.3	1.21	.532
The activities students engage in during curriculum instruction prepare students to take up specific career options for a lifetime	7.1	8.9	32.1	51.8	1.21	.909
The mode of assessment used in secondary schools helps students to enter their desired programmes for lifetime careers	3.9	3.6	17.9	75.0	1.21	.724
The values gained during instruction determine students' career choices after secondary education	10.7	14.3	35.7	39.3	1.21	.990
The students choose to enter into knowledge-based	30.4	14.3	16.1	39.3	1.21	1.285

Items on Career Choice among Students	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
careers such as medicine, teaching, accounting, because of the level of knowledge they gain during curriculum instruction						
Students who are taught using practical approaches end up choosing skills-based careers such as engineering, construction, performing arts.	28.6	17.9	23.2	30.4	1.21	1.205
The attitudes students gain through instruction influences them to choose entrepreneurship careers such as innovation, invention and fabrication	12.5	5.4	42.9	39.3	1.21	.978
Overall Mean					**1.21**	

Source: Primary data (2023)

Legend

0.0 - 1.0 = Career choice not well influenced; 1.1 - 2.0 = Career choice fairly influenced; 2.1 - 3.0 = Career choice moderately influenced; and 3.1 - 4.0 = Career choice well influenced

The findings in *Table 4* revealed that 87.5% ($^{49}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed that the curriculum design for secondary education provided knowledge to students about the possible career choices available for them. However, 12.5% ($^{7}/_{56}$) of them agreed that the curriculum design for secondary education provided knowledge to students about the possible career choices available for them. This implies that most of the teachers in the secondary schools in Wakiso district indicated that the curriculum design for secondary education did not provide knowledge to students about the possible career choices available for them.

The findings further revealed that 89.3% ($^{50}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed that the subject combinations students offer at advanced level help them to consider specific lifetime career choices. Instead, only 10.7% ($^{6}/_{56}$) of them agreed that that subject combinations student offered at advanced level helped them to consider specific lifetime career choices. This implied that most of the respondent teachers were opposed to the belief that the subject combinations help students to make lifetime career choices.

The findings in *Table 4* indicated that 42.9% ($^{24}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed while 7.1% ($^{4}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that the subject matter taught to students provided information about what the students can engage in for a lifetime. However, at least 39.3% ($^{22}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed as 10.7% ($^{6}/_{56}$) of them agreed that the subject matter taught to students provided information about what the students can engage in for a lifetime. This implied that a moderate proportion of the respondent career teachers acknowledged that subject matter taught to students provides information about what the students can engage in for a lifetime. It means that to a moderate extent, the subject matter can positively influence the students' career choices.

The findings further showed that 89.3% ($^{50}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed as 7.1% ($^{4}/_{56}$) of them agreed that the content of what was delivered during instruction shapes students' attitude towards particular career choices. Only 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed while another 1.8% ($^{1}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that the content of what was delivered during instruction shapes students' attitude towards particular career choices. This further implied that most of the respondent career teachers acknowledged that the content of what is taught at advanced secondary level shapes the students' attitude towards particular career choices.

The data in *Table 4* also indicated that 51.8% ($^{29}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed while 32.1% ($^{18}/_{56}$) of them agreed that the activities students engaged in during curriculum instruction prepared students to take up specific career options for a lifetime. Only 7.1% ($^{4}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed as 8.9% ($^{5}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that the activities students engage in during curriculum instruction prepare students to take up specific career options for a lifetime. This also implied that majority of the respondent career teachers perceived that the activities students engage in during curriculum instruction actually prepare students to take up specific career options for a lifetime.

The findings also revealed that 75% ($^{42}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed while 17.9% ($^{10}/_{56}$) of them agreed that the mode of assessment used in secondary schools helps students to enter their desired programmes for lifetime careers. However, a small proportion of 3.9% ($^{2}/_{56}$) strongly disagreed and 3.6% ($^{2}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that the mode of assessment used in secondary schools helps students to enter their desired programmes for lifetime careers. This further indicates that majority of the respondent career teachers acknowledged that the mode of assessment used in secondary schools has a positive influence in determining students' choices of desired programmes for lifetime careers.

The findings further revealed that 39.3% ($^{22}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed while 35.7% ($^{20}/_{56}$) of them agreed that the values gained during instruction determine students' career choices after secondary education. Another 10.7% ($^{6}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed as 14.3% ($^{8}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that the values gained during instruction determine students' career choices after secondary education. This implies that a greater proportion of the respondent career teachers acknowledged that values gained during instruction of the students positively influence career choice.

Furthermore, 39.3% ($^{22}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed, as 16.1% ($^{9}/_{56}$) of them agreed that the students chose to enter into knowledge-based careers such as medicine, teaching, accounting, because of the level of knowledge they gain during curriculum instruction. However, 30.4% ($^{17}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed as 14.3% ($^{8}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that the students chose to enter into knowledge-based careers such as medicine, teaching, accounting, because of the level of knowledge they gain during curriculum instruction. This implied that a moderate proportion of the respondent career teachers acknowledged that students choose knowledge-based careers because of the knowledge they gain during instruction as advanced level.

The finding also indicated that 30.4% ($^{17}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed while 23.2% ($^{13}/_{56}$) agreed that students who were taught using practical approaches ended up choosing skills-based careers such as engineering, construction, performing arts. However, 28.6% ($^{16}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed as 17.9% of them disagreed that students who are taught using practical approaches end up choosing skills-based careers such as engineering, construction, performing arts. This implied that on the whole, more teachers were of the view that the approaches used during teaching had a positive influence on choice of careers students ended up making after secondary level.

Similarly, 39.3% ($^{22}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly agreed while 42.9% ($^{24}/_{56}$) of them agreed that the attitudes students gain through instruction influence them to choose entrepreneurship careers such as innovation, invention and fabrication. However, 12.5% ($^{7}/_{56}$) of the respondent career teachers strongly disagreed as 5.4% ($^{3}/_{56}$) of them disagreed that the attitudes students gain through instruction influence them to choose entrepreneurship careers such as innovation, invention and fabrication. This implied that majority of the respondent career teachers appreciated that attitudes built during instruction positively influence their career choices in future. The overall mean for all the items on career choice was 1.21 which according to the legend implied that on the whole, career choice was fairly influenced by what goes on in the school setting during the teaching-learning processes in the secondary schools.

Descriptive Statistics on Career Choice from Respondent Students

Like in the case of course content, the self-administered questionnaires for the respondent students had 10 items on career choice. Each of the respondent students was required to indicate by ticking whether he/she strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed or strongly agreed to each statement. Analysis of their responses as percentage, mean and standard deviation generated by use of the SPSS is presented in *Table 5*.

Table 17: Descriptive Statistics on Career Choice from Respondent Students

Items on Career Choice	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Curriculum design for secondary education provides knowledge to us about the possible career choices available for us	100	00	00	00	1.00	.000
The subject combinations we offer at advanced level help us to consider specific lifetime career choices	100	00	00	00	1.00	.000

Items on Career Choice	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
The subject matter taught to us provides information about what the we can engage in for a lifetime	32.1	00	14.3	53.6	2.89	1.370
The content of what is delivered during instruction shapes our attitude towards particular career choices	00	00	14.3	85.7	3.86	.356
Activities we engage in during instruction prepare us to take up specific career options for a lifetime	3.6	00	21.4	75.0	3.68	.670
The mode of assessment used in the schools helps us to enter our desired programmes for lifetime careers	3.6	3.6	10.7	82.1	3.71	.713
The values gained during instruction determine our career choices after secondary education	10.7	10.7	14.3	64.3	3.32	1.056
We choose to enter into knowledge-based careers such as medicine, teaching, accounting, because of the level of knowledge we gain during instruction	46.4	21.4	7.1	25.0	2.11	1.257
If we are taught using practical approaches, we end up choosing skills-based careers e.g. engineering, construction, performing arts.	46.4	21.4	7.1	25.0	2.11	1.257
Attitudes we gain through instruction influences us to choose entrepreneurship careers e.g. innovation, invention/ fabrication	7.1	7.1	25.0	60.7	3.39	.916
Overall Mean					**2.71**	

Source: Primary data (2023)

Legend

0.0 - 1.0 = Career choice not well influenced; 1.1 - 2.0 = Career choice fairly influenced; 2.1 - 3.0 = Career choice moderately influenced; and 3.1 - 4.0 = Career choice well influenced

The findings in *Table 5* revealed that 100% ($^{168}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed that the curriculum design for secondary education provided knowledge to students about the possible career choices available for them. This implies that all the respondent students in the secondary schools in Wakiso district indicated that the curriculum design for secondary education did not provide knowledge to students about the possible career choices available for them. The findings further revealed that 100% ($^{168}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed that the subject combinations at Advanced Level helped them to consider specific lifetime career choices. This implied that all the respondent students were opposed to the belief that the subject combinations help students to make lifetime career choices.

The findings in *Table 5* indicated that 53.6% ($^{90}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed while 14.3% ($^{24}/_{168}$) of them agreed that the subject matter taught to students provided information about what the students can engage in for a lifetime. However, at least 32.1% ($^{54}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed that the subject matter taught to students provided information about what the students can engage in for a lifetime. This implied that a significant proportion of the respondent students acknowledged that subject matter taught to students does provide information about what the students can engage in for a lifetime. It means that to a great extent, the subject matter can positively influence the students' career choices.

The findings further showed that 85.7% ($^{144}/_{168}$) of the respondents strongly agreed as 14.3% ($^{24}/_{168}$) of them agreed that the content of what was delivered during instruction shapes students' attitude towards particular career choices. This implied that most of the respondent students acknowledged that the content of what is taught at advanced secondary level shapes the students' attitude towards particular career choices.

The data in *Table 5* also indicated that 75.0% ($^{126}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed while 21.4% ($^{36}/_{168}$) of them agreed that the activities students engaged in during curriculum instruction prepared students to take up specific career options for a lifetime. Only 3.6% ($^{6}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed that the activities students engage in during curriculum instruction prepare students to take up specific career options

for a lifetime. This also implied that majority of the respondent students believe that the activities students engage in during curriculum instruction actually prepare students to take up specific career options for a lifetime.

The findings also revealed that 82.1% ($^{138}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed while 10.7% ($^{18}/_{168}$) of them agreed that the mode of assessment used in secondary schools helps students to enter their desired programmes for lifetime careers. However, a small proportion of 3.6% ($^{6}/_{168}$) strongly disagreed and another 3.6% ($^{6}/_{168}$) of them disagreed that the mode of assessment used in secondary schools helps students to enter their desired programmes for lifetime careers. This further indicates that majority of the respondent students acknowledged that the mode of assessment used in secondary schools has a positive influence in determining students' choices of desired programmes for lifetime careers.

The findings further revealed that 64.3% ($^{108}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed while 14.3% ($^{24}/_{168}$) of them agreed that the values gained during instruction determine students' career choices after secondary education. At least 10.7% ($^{18}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed as another 10.7% ($^{18}/_{168}$) of them disagreed that the values gained during instruction determine students' career choices after secondary education. This implies that a greater proportion of the respondent students acknowledged that values gained during instruction of the students also positively influences career choice.

Furthermore, 46.4% ($^{78}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed as 21.4% ($^{36}/_{168}$) of them disagreed that the students chose to enter into knowledge-based careers such as medicine, teaching, accounting, because of the level of knowledge they gain during curriculum instruction. However, 25.0% ($^{42}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed as 7.1% ($^{12}/_{168}$) of them agreed that the students chose to enter into knowledge-based careers such as medicine, teaching, accounting, because of the level of knowledge they gain during curriculum instruction. This implied that a moderate proportion of the respondent acknowledged that students who choose knowledge-based careers is because of the knowledge they gain during instruction as advanced level.

The finding also indicated that 46.4% ($^{78}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed while 21.4% ($^{36}/_{168}$) disagreed that students who were taught using practical approaches ended up choosing skills-based careers such as engineering, construction, performing arts. However, 25.0% ($^{42}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed as 7.1% ($^{12}/_{168}$) of them agreed that students who are taught using practical approaches end up choosing skills-based careers such as engineering, construction, performing arts. This implied that on the whole, more students were of the view that the approaches used during teaching had a positive influence on choice of careers students ended up making after secondary level.

The findings finally revealed that 60.7% ($^{102}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly agreed while 25.0% ($^{42}/_{168}$) of them agreed that the attitudes students gain through instruction influences them to choose entrepreneurship careers such as innovation, invention and fabrication. However, 7.1% ($^{12}/_{168}$) of the respondent students strongly disagreed as another 7.1% ($^{12}/_{168}$) of them disagreed that the attitudes students gain through instruction influences them to choose entrepreneurship careers such as innovation, invention and fabrication. This implied that majority of the respondent students appreciated that attitudes built during instruction positively influence their career choices in future. The overall mean for all the items on career choice was 2.71 which according to the legend implied that on the whole, career choice was moderately influenced by what goes on in the school setting during the teaching-learning processes in the secondary schools.

Inferential Statistics from Career Teachers' Descriptive Statistics

Since objective three of the study sought to establish the influence of course content on career choices among students in secondary schools, it was necessary to generate inferential statistics that would provide an appropriate conclusion to the objective. However, before, considering the influence of one variable to another, it is prudent to ascertain their relatedness. Therefore, the results in *Table 6* show the relatedness of the data from the career teachers regarding course content and career choice among students in secondary schools in Wakiso district.

Table 18: Relatedness of Course Content with Career Choice from Teachers

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.896	.135		6.625	.000
	Course Content	.223	.077	.366	2.886	.006

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

The results in *Table 6* indicated a significance value (Sig) of .006 implying that course content was significantly related to career choice among students in the secondary schools in Wakiso District.

Regression Analysis from Descriptive Statistics from Career Teachers

In order to determine the influence of course content on career choice among students in the secondary schools in Wakiso District, a linear regression was run using the transformed overall means in *Table 2* (i.e 1.79) for career teachers' responses on course content and that in *Table 4* (i.e. 1.21) for career teachers' responses on career choice among students. Therefore, the extent or magnitude of influence of one variable on another as measured by the results from the model summary from the regression analysis is presented in *Table 7* below.

Table 19: Model Summary from Career Teachers' Data

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.366[a]	.134	.118	.586

a. Predictors: (Constant), Course Content

In interpreting the results in *Table 7*, the R square value, which is the coefficient of determination is considered important. This represents the magnitude by which a change in the independent variable influences the dependent variable. From the results in *Table 7*, the R square value was .134 which can be converted to percent (.134 x 100) giving 13.4%. In other words, according to data from the career teachers, course content accounts for 13.4% of the decisions relating to career choice among students from secondary schools. This means that for every unit improvement in the course content, there was a 13.4% improvement in decisions relating to career choice among students in secondary schools in Wakiso District. To determine whether or not such a change causes a significant influence (hypothesis testing), ANOVA results in *Table 8* were considered.

Table 20: Influence of Course Content on Career Choice among Students in the Secondary Schools in Wakiso District (ANOVA

Model		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	2.864	1	2.864	8.331	.006[b]
	Residual	18.564	54	.344		
	Total	21.429	55			

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

b. Predictors: (Constant), Course Content

The data in *Table 8* revealed that the significance (Sig) value from career teachers' data was found to be .006 which was less than 0.05 (the standard). Therefore, at .134; p=.006 < .05 implying that according to career teachers, course content has a significant influence on career choice among students in secondary schools. This implies that there is a positive significant influence of course content on career choice among students in

secondary schools in Wakiso District. Therefore, the original hypothesis that "*Course content has an insignificant influence on career choices among students in secondary schools"* was rejected and is now restated as "Course content has a significant influence on career choices among students in secondary schools".

Inferential Statistics from Respondent Students' Descriptive Statistics

Since two categories of respondents provided data to establish the influence of course content on career choices among students in secondary schools, it was necessary to generate inferential statistics from the second category of respondents i.e. the students, so as to provide an appropriate conclusion to the objective. However, before, considering the influence of one variable to another, it is prudent to ascertain their relatedness. Therefore, the results in *Table 9* show the relatedness of the respondent students' data on course content and career choice among students in secondary schools in Wakiso district.

Table 21: Relatedness of Course Content with Career Choice

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.862	.548		7.045	.000
	Course Content	-.554	.238	-.415	-2.323	.028

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

The results in *Table 9* indicated a significance value (Sig) of .028 implying that according to respondent students, course content was moderately related to career choice among students in the secondary schools in Wakiso District.

Regression Analysis - Extent of Influence of Course Content on Career Choice

In order to determine the influence of course content on career choice among students in the secondary schools in Wakiso District, a linear regression was run using the transformed overall means from respondent students' data in *Table 3* (i.e 2.07) for course content and that in *Table 5* (i.e. 2.71) for career choice among students. Therefore, the extent or magnitude of influence of one variable on another as measured by the results from the model summary from the regression analysis is presented in *Table 10* below.

Table 22: Model Summary from Respondent Students' Data

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.415[a]	.172	.140	1.258

a. Predictors: (Constant), Course Content

In interpreting the results in *Table 10*, the R square value, which is the coefficient of determination is considered important. This represents the magnitude by which a change in the independent variable influences the dependent variable. From the results in *Table 10*, the R square value was .172 which can be converted to percent (.172 x 100) giving 17.2%. In other words, according to respondent students, course content accounts for 17.2% of the decisions relating to career choice among students from secondary schools. This means that for every unit improvement in the course content, there was a 17.2% improvement in decisions relating to career choice among students in secondary schools in Wakiso District. To determine whether or not such a change causes a significant influence (hypothesis testing), ANOVA results in *Table 11* were considered.

Table 23:Influence of Course Content on Career Choice among Student in Secondary Schools in Wakiso District (ANOVA)

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.545	1	8.545	5.397	.028[b]
	Residual	41.169	26	1.583		
	Total	49.714	27			

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

b. Predictors: (Constant), Course Content

The data in *Table 11* revealed that the significance (Sig) value from the respondent students' data was found to be .028 which was less than 0.05 (the standard). Therefore, at .172; p=.028 < .05 implying that according to respondent students, course content had a moderate significant influence on career choice among students in secondary schools. This implies that there is a moderate positive significant influence of course content on career choice among students in secondary schools in Wakiso District. Similarly, the original hypothesis that "*Course content has an insignificant influence on career choices among students in secondary schools"* was rejected and is now restated as "Course content has a significant influence on career choices among students in secondary schools".

Qualitative Findings on Course Content and Career Choice from Interviews

Qualitative data from key informants closely corroborated the quantitative data from the completed questionnaires. Most of the key informants acknowledged that curriculum design plays a significant role in shaping the educational experiences of students and can have a direct impact on their future career choices. For instance, in one of the face-to-face interviews with a key informant (KI-01), he said;

> *"Curriculum design is vital in shaping careers among students. Then the curriculum design is good, it helps in broadening career perspectives among students in secondary schools. A well-designed curriculum exposes students to a wide range of subjects and disciplines, providing them with opportunities to explore and discover their interests and talents."*

In another interview, KI-02 further explained and said;

> *"By offering diverse courses and experiences, the curriculum can broaden students' perspectives, help them uncover their passions, and introduce them to potential career paths they may not have previously considered. At the same time, curriculum design helps to focus students' minds on the development of essential skills that are valued in the job market and needed for success in various careers. These skills may include critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and digital literacy. By integrating these skills into the curriculum, students can acquire a strong foundation that can be applied to a variety of career paths."*

Yet in another interview, another key informant (KI-03) said;

> *"Curriculum design helps students to tailor their interests towards specific career fields. This is because curricula may be designed to specifically prepare students for certain career fields or industries. For example, vocational or technical programs can offer specialized courses and hands-on training that equip students with the skills and knowledge required for specific professions such as healthcare, engineering, or information technology. These curricula can provide a direct pathway to career entry or further education in a particular field."*

Furthermore, in a face-to-face interview with another key informant (KI-04) said;

> *"Curriculum design may provide for flexibility and adaptability, thereby helping students make decisions about careers carefully. For instance, in today's rapidly evolving job market, it is important for curricula to be flexible and adaptable to changing industry demands and emerging careers. Curricula should provide students with a solid foundation of knowledge and transferable skills that can be applied across various career domains. Emphasizing lifelong learning, adaptability, and the ability to acquire new skills can prepare students to navigate the dynamic nature of the workforce."*

Further still, the key informants believed that curriculum design really play a significant role in shaping students' career choices. One of them (KI-05) said;

> *"Well designed curricula should incorporate career guidance programs and resources to help students explore different career options and make informed decisions about their future. This can include career counseling, guest speakers from various professions, job shadowing opportunities, internships, or partnerships with local businesses and industries. Such initiatives can provide students with real-world exposure and help them make more informed career choices."*

As far as the influence of curriculum design on student career choices was concerned, the key informants noted that the influence is multifaceted in various ways and can influence students' career paths in several ways. For instance, in a face-to-face with KI-06 said;

> *"The curriculum can expose students to a variety of subjects, disciplines, and career pathways. By offering a diverse range of courses and educational experiences, students can become aware of different career options available to them. This exposure can spark their interest in specific fields or professions they may not have considered before."*

In another face-to-face interview, KI-07 said;

> *"A well-designed curriculum can equip students with essential skills that are valued in the job market. By integrating skill development opportunities into the curriculum, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration, students can develop a foundation of transferable skills that are applicable to various careers. These skills can support students in pursuing their chosen career paths."*

From all the views presented by the key informants, it was clear that curriculum design can influence career choices, individual interests, aspirations, and personal circumstances, thereby playing a significant role. In that regard, students in the secondary schools should be encouraged to pursue their passions and make choices that align with their unique skills, values, and goals. In a nutshell, curriculum design can provide a foundation and support exploration, but ultimately, career choices are highly individual and influenced by a multitude of factors.

Findings from Document Analysis

Data from identified documents in the secondary schools revealed that teachers use written curricula designed by the national Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC). The researcher also accessed documents from the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) in form of syllabi that the teachers use in extracting the course content that they teach in the secondary schools. What was noticed from the various documents was that the course content taught to the students is clearly laid out in order and covering several topical areas. It was also noticed that come of the course content is tailored towards specific career skills.

Furthermore, it was observed from the documents obtained in the schools that the schemes of work made by the teachers were in tandem with course content in the curricula and the syllabi. At the same time, the schemes and lesson plans accessed by the researcher showed that the methods of instruction described in the quantitative analysis are the same as those in the schemes and lesson plans. Furthermore, the sample assessment documents accessed revealed that various assessment strategies were used to assess learning. This provides good triangulation of the data collected.

Discussion of Findings of the Study

The study set out to establish the influence of course content on career choices among students in secondary schools in Wakiso District in central Uganda. The findings from both the respondent career teachers and students revealed that course content accounted for 13%- 18% of the students' career choice decisions in the secondary schools in Wakiso District. These findings were closely corroborated with findings from Fresh (2021) that indicated that students' choices depended on the content of what they learn in the classrooms. Accordingly, Aziz (2014) in his study recommended that there is a need to create curricula that connect education with labour market demands and the numerous economic and social changes that take place in societies. The implication is that when curricula are being developed by bodies such as National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) in Uganda, care should be taken to connect with labour market demands and the numerous economic and social changes that take place in the communities.

Similarly, the findings were in close agreement with those from a study in Oman by Edwards and Quinter (2011), which revealed that students' career choices are highly influenced by the learning content they receive from studying particular subject material. In tandem, Edwards et al. (2011) clarified that such content that the students

learn in the classroom is normally carefully designed to provide students with the requisite knowledge and skills for the future workplace. Indeed, the qualitative data of the study revealed that by offering diverse courses and experiences, the curriculum content can broaden students' perspectives, help them uncover their passions, and introduce them to potential career paths they may not have previously considered. Likewise, course content helps to focus students' minds on the development of essential skills that are valued in the job market and needed for success in various careers.

Furthermore, the findings from both the respondent career teachers and students indicated that course content had a significant influence on career choices among students in secondary schools. The implication was that the original null hypothesis that "*course content has an insignificant influence on career choices among students in secondary schools"* was rejected. These findings were in agreement with Laughland-Booy, et al (2015), whose study revealed that course content significantly contributed to student decisions about career choice. They recommended that each student should take the course content in the various subjects taught seriously, if they are to make the best career development decisions.

The study findings by Laughland-Booy et al (2015) were also in agreement with the qualitative data from the face-to-face interviews for this study. For instance, the key informants in this study commented that; "*course content helps students to tailor their interests towards specific career fields."* The key informants explained that *"course content may be designed to specifically prepare students for certain career fields or industries."* They gave the example of *"vocational or technical programs that can offer specialized courses and hands-on training that equip students with the skills and knowledge required for specific professions such as healthcare, engineering, or information technology."* According to them, such course content *"can provide a direct pathway to career entry or further education in a particular field."*

According to Mudulia (2017), career choice is an integral part of the school curriculum, particularly at secondary school level. This implies that the correct choice of subjects is a key step towards attaining educational objectives and future career placement of the students (Ajidagba, 2010; Mudulia, 2017). Therefore, Mudulia (2017) recommended that schools should have clear policy on course content so as to equip students with knowledge and skills that form the basis for career choice decisions. This was also found to corroborate studies by Birkland (2015) and Singh (2016) where they indicated that in some schools, policies on course content provided the basis for students' determination of subjects to be offered from a list of optional subjects. Put differently, out of a possible 23 subjects, less three compulsory subjects, their studies sought to establish how and what should dictate the best alternatives as a checklist for schools to use while selecting subjects for their students. They found out that the content in the subjects selected eventually led students to choose particular careers in preference to others.

According to the findings of this study, it would be prudent for schools to consider well designed course content to support students with the appropriate knowledge for decision making on career choice. This is because from the findings of the qualitative data gathered from key informants, they recommended that *"Well designed curricula should incorporate career guidance programs and resources to help students explore different career options and make informed decisions about their future.* This implies that course content is a key factor that influences students' career choices at secondary schools. Indeed, the regression test in this study revealed that there was a moderate to strong significant influence of course content on students' career choice in the secondary schools in Wakiso District. According to Stephen (2021), this because course content influences the individual students' interests, aspirations, and personal circumstances thereby playing a significant role in student career choice determination.

Conclusions of the Study

From the findings of the study and the discussion thereafter made, the study concluded as follows:

Teaching in secondary schools in Uganda and specifically in Wakiso District is based on course content extracted from the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) curriculum. The teachers extract the course content for each subject area as detailed in the curriculum. From the findings of the study, course content fairly accounted for career choice decisions among students in the secondary schools in Wakiso District. There is a significant influence of course content on career choice among students in the secondary schools in Wakiso District.

Recommendations

The study proposes the following recommendations:

i. During the teaching sessions, teachers should pay special attention to the course content because it has a significant influence of career choice of students in the secondary schools.

ii. Teachers should consider explaining to the students the importance of the course content before delving into the details of the teaching in order to generate students' interest in the subject. This would eventually inspire students during the time of career choice making.

iii. Teachers should endeavour to arrange course content in a manner that generates students' interest in the intended outcome of each course unit. This could ultimately lead to improvement in their career choice decision making.

Recommendations for Further Research

The education system in Uganda has been arranged in such a manner that the subject combinations selected at senior five entrance often point to specific career outcomes. For instance, selection of Physics, Chemistry and Biology often points to individuals with an ambition of choosing a medical career, while those selecting History, Literature and Divinity are more likely to have the ambition of becoming lawyers or political scientists. It would be prudent for another study to be carried out to investigate the relationship between subject combination selection and future career ambitions among students at ordinary level in Uganda.

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