



SELF-ESTEEM AND CAREER CHOICE AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF  
MKWAWA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION IN IRINGA, TANZANIA

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**Abstract**

*The study investigated the relationship between self-esteem and career choice among undergraduate students in Mkwawa University College of Education in Iringa region, Tanzania. The purpose of the study was to assess the self-esteem of students and its influence on career choice. Convergent parallel research design was adopted in this study. Sample size of the study was 199 undergraduate students from Education and Science faculties for quantitative and qualitative data. A stratified sampling technique was used to separate males and females and then simple random sampling was applied to get the sample size for quantitative data. Self-esteem adapted standardized instrument developed by Rosenberg (1965) scale of ten items to collect data. Validity for qualitative instruments was obtained through triangulation and rich or thick description. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 23 and qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. The results showed that students have positive attitude of self-esteem towards themselves. Also the findings indicated that there was a relationship between self-esteem and career choice among students.*

**Keywords: Self-esteem, career, choice, undergraduate student**

**I. Introduction**

Self-esteem refers to an individual's sense of worth or extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates or likes oneself (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1991, Bacerra et al, 2021). Rosenbery (1965) cited by Abdel-Khalek (2016) stated that, self-esteem refers to an individual positive evaluation to the self. He added that, high self-esteem consists of an individual respecting himself or herself and considering himself or herself worthy. Self-esteem is a major element that influences the level of expertise in all fields of effort; has relationship with job success, school accomplishment, interpersonal compatibility and common happiness (Redenbach, 1991, Malik, 2013). Thus, self-esteem is an attitude about the self and is related to personal beliefs about skills, abilities, social relations and future outcome (Kharsal and Latada, 2016).

Sedikides and Gress (2003) cited by Abdel-Khalek (2016) stated that self-esteem refers to individual's perception or subjective appraisal of one's own self-worth, one's feeling

of self-respect and self-confidence and the extent to which the individual holds positive or negative views about the self. Self-esteem among students is the feeling they have about themselves that affect how they view themselves. The way themselves might have been affected by the choice they made. Students lack confidence and positive attitude to express their opinions during career choice (McLeod, 2012). In schools those students who doubt about their abilities is said are those students who have low academic self-esteem and those who think are popular than other and well liked have high self-esteem or have social self-esteem.

Self-esteem is important to provide the required motivation in order to be academically successful (Ferkany, 2008, Prihadi and Chuo, 2012). Also self-esteem might be a part that supports the school's academic goals, without making it as an academic priority (Ferkany, 2008). Career choice is one of the domains that need to be developed by students (Mahad et al, 2015)), and explained that career selection process is a very complex process and it involves a wide range of applications such as knowledge, skills and experiences related to career decision-making. One of the important aspect in the career-related decision making process is the important regarding the profession concerned (Rusli and Nur Naha, 2010). There is paucity information on self-esteem and career choice among undergraduate students in Iringa region which made the importance of this study.

Career choice is an expression of the personality style of an individual including one's self-esteem (Wangia, Waswa and Waudu, 2019). Career decision-making is important for adolescents, as they don't have enough information to make an informed decision that will be suitable for their talents, abilities and personality (Abomah & Togoe, 2021). Thus, preparation for career choice is a crucial stage. According to Ogutu, Odera and Maragia, (2017) in America 20% to 60% of new students joining institutions of higher learning are usually undecided over their supposed career choices. Individual challenges among other variables (Koumenou, 2012). In Tanzania, Vaghela and Matimbwa (2019) realized that, career choice has been a difficult decision for students on which to major since it determines the kind of profession that students intend to pursue in their lives due to lack of confidence. Due to these challenges facing new students, the research in the current study investigated the relationship between self-esteem and career choice among undergraduate students of Mkwawa University College of Education in Iringa region, Tanzania. Thus, this study was guided by two objectives:

- i. To examine the influence of self-esteem on career choice among undergraduate students.
- ii. To determine personal interest on career choice among undergraduate students.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **The influence of self-esteem and career choice among undergraduate students**

Becerra, Arias and Becerra (2021) conducted a study on self-esteem among college students: Inter-sectionality of psychological distress, discrimination and gender among college students of the California state university. Similar study was conducted by Prihadi and Chua (2012) investigating self-esteem at school: The risk, the challenges and the cure. The study applied quantitative cross-sectional research design. Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg's self-esteem scale. Findings showed that high self-esteem positively associated with goals, expectances coping mechanisms. Even previous studies have noted that higher levels of self-esteem positively predicted psychological and physical health were related to academic gains, such as critical thinking and self-understanding (Bowman and Hill, 2013; Stupnisky et al, 2013). The findings also found significant associated with low levels of feeling satisfied with self and thinking positively of self and the presence of distress was

associated with low levels of feeling satisfied with self and thinking positively of self and the presence of distress was associated with low levels of feelings of having good qualities, satisfaction with self and positive thoughts about self. The previous study concentrated on self-esteem among students and psychological distress, discrimination and gender but the current study concentrated on self-esteem and career choice among students.

Park, Kim, Kwon and Lee (2018) conducted a study in the relationship of self-esteem, future time perspective, positive affect, social support and career decision in Korea. The study employed longitudinal survey research design which took 21 days to finish collecting data. The findings showed; first, positive affect was associated positively with career decision-making self-efficacy and negative with other choice anxiety. Second, social support had a synergy effect with positive affect to influence career choice anxiety. Third, self-esteem was related positively to career decision-making self-efficacy and negatively to career choice anxiety. The current study employed mixed method design contrary to the previous study which was a longitudinal survey study, a pure quantitative study.

Lin, Wu and Chen (2015) conducted a study to explain why students with high self-esteem have low career uncertainty than students with low self-esteem in Taiwan universities. The study employed quantitative method with survey research design. A total of 7,418 respondents were sampled from 92 different universities using a proportional stratified sampling procedure. The findings supported the proposed model by showing those students with high self-esteem had lower career uncertainty because they chose a major for self-concordant reasons and had a strong motivation to learn, both of which contribute to lower career uncertainty. Previous research by Komarraju et al (2013) stated that finding a job and building a career are primary goals for undergraduate students after they finish their education and graduate from school but not all students are certain about which career to pursue, as some have higher uncertainty than others. Given that career uncertainty is detrimental to career development and personal growth and usually has a negative impact on psychological and physical adjustment (Daniels et al, 2011). One important factor which can explain the level of uncertainty among students is the link between indecision and self-esteem. Those with high self-esteem feel good about themselves while those with low self-esteem feel bad about themselves which can affect various aspects of life, such as decision making, occupation and job performance.

Abomah and Togoe (2021) conducted a study to investigate the influence of self-esteem and peer pressure in career choices of adolescent boys and girls in Greater Accra, Ghana. Cross-sectional and descriptive was the research design. The results indicated that self-esteem positively correlates with career choice of adolescents. The results correlated with the study by Javed and Tariq (2016) in Pakistan, that individuals with a high self-esteem are more likely to choose challenging goals than those with low self-esteem. The study was also in line with the study by Ogutu et al (2016) in Kenya, that there was a significance of peer pressure on career decision making among students. There are no gender differences in peer pressure and career choice of adolescents. Challenges of career choice among adolescents were lack of guidance, the influence of family general indecisiveness, the desire to pursue a career that earns much and the opinion of their peer concerning career choice.

Eremie and Chikweru (2015) conducted a study to investigate self-esteem among private and public secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study employed descriptive survey design. The study selected 6 secondary schools (3 public and 3 private) all in Port Harcourt Municipality. The findings of the study revealed that private secondary schools male students scored above 2.50 in all items, indicating high self-esteem, while public schools male students scored 2.50 in item 7 and 8 only. Thus, their overall average was 2.32 which were below 2.50, demonstrating low self-esteem. Private school female students scored above 2.50 in all items, while public schools female students scored below 2.50 except item 7 and 3. Female in private schools demonstrated high self-esteem. Similarly,

the study by Olea et al (2012) in Philippine, concluded that both male and female respondents showed positive perception of their self-esteem and low correlation with their academic performance. Again, Farid and Akhar (2013) conducted a study on self-esteem and the findings showed that gender difference was found in the self-esteem level of students, while boys showed higher self-esteem level than girls. Also, urban students showed higher self-esteem level than students from rural areas.

Wangia, Waswa and Waudo (2019) conducted a study investigating the determinants of self-esteem, Personal performance and career prospects among secondary school students in Navakholo Constituency, Kakamega, Kenya. A study applied a social survey design using closed and open-ended questionnaires to gather data. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study showed that students' self-esteem is mainly negatively influenced by demeaning comments from both class teachers and parents, thus, have low self-esteem by depending on their parents and Teachers. Previous study by Otta and Okwuonu, (2012); Emerie and Ikpah, (2017) found that students with high self-esteem turned to choosing scientific and professional courses while those with low self-esteem turned to choosing mechanical and artistic type of careers. The study recommended that evaluation of teachers and parents by students should be encouraged albeit confidentially so that appropriate counselling should be extended to those inter-related tripartite stakeholders in pursuit of better learning environment, educational outcomes and ultimately career choices.

Migunde, Othuon and Mbagaya (2016) conducted a study on adolescents' self-esteem and its effects on career development in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya. The results found that female students scored significantly higher on self-esteem and internal locus of control than male students and those male students scored significantly higher on external locus of control. Self-esteem was found to be positively correlated to career maturity and internal locus of control and negatively correlated to external locus control. The results demonstrate that self-esteem has a significant role to play in adolescents' career development. Similarly, previous study by Akinleke (2012) in Nigeria, found that self-esteem is an important factor which strengthens the prediction of academic achievement among students

### **Personal interest on career choice among undergraduate students**

Mckenzie, Jo and Palmer (2017) carried a study aimed to better understand the career aspirations and expectations of tertiary IT students, so that future curriculum and career development activities are better aligned with their beliefs and needs. Previously, Ona (2014) conducted a study to investigate the occupational aspirations of students with technical talented that have gone beyond teenage years and are on the verge of materializing a choice of the technical profession in Romania. The findings in both phases students reported similar skills they expect to build during their time at University as well as comparable ways in which they plan to progress towards career and skill building. The overall results indicate that students have valid career aspirations which were realistic; the criteria they have regarding achievement of their career goals are not realistic. To pursue their chosen career path, students need to prepare themselves for the employment by building their career competencies, employability skills and adding to their profession identity as profession skills for employability has become a key requirement of tertiary course design (Qenan et al. 2014).

Deniz, Ture, Uysal and Akav (2014) carried a research investigating career interest and preferences on terms of gender and social-economic status in two universities, from Ankara and Yirdirim Beyazit. Findings showed that there is significant difference with regard

to gender of the individuals in terms of field they study and their interests. Also the result affirmed that goals and conventional field are less affected by personal interests but are more environmental opportunities or societal influence. Low and Round (2007) in their study found that women and men tend to be interested in vocations and activities which are stereotyped for their gender. The previous study concentrated on relationship between vocational interest and preferences students make but the current study wants to assess how students are guided by their personal interest in choosing careers for their future life. Also Telpasand and Keshaavarzi (2012) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between help-seeking avoidance on social achievement goal orientation, perceived social competence and autonomy among Iranian university students. The findings of the study demonstrated that social achievement goal orientation in mastery dimension had a significant negative correlation with and was the best predictor of, avoidance of help-seeking. Furthermore, there was positive correlation between the social performance goal orientation and the perceived social competence. Thus, the findings confirmed the Ryan model to explain avoidance of help-seeking and extending Ryan model to social achievement goal orientation.

The study by, Saini and Hasan (2016) aimed to determine the career choices and the factors that influence undergraduate medical students to choose a particular medical specialty. The results of the study showed that the most preferred specialty expressed by male students was medicine, surgery and Orthopaedic while for female students were more interested in Radiology, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Little interest was shown in other specialties. Personal interest was found to be the most common factor that influenced the choice of specialization. Similarly, the previous study by Kumar et al (2014) on factors influencing medical students' choice of future specialization, found that students preferred most Anatomy, Biochemistry and Physiology. Students were interested to pursue surgery in future. The most preferred future specialty was surgery, internal medicine and paediatrics with gender variation; Males preferred surgery and females in obstetrics and gynaecology. The study concluded that there are various factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic playing role in the specialty selection among the medical graduates.

Nyamwange (2016) study sought to examine the influence of interest on career choice decision among first year university students. Descriptive survey design method was employed in this study. Participants were selected using purposive and systematic sampling technique within the descriptive survey design. Findings showed that prior knowledge of what career entails is important to develop interest in a career. Having prior knowledge prepares an individual to what is about to enter hence decision will be made with awareness. Lack of prior knowledge and skills lead to lack of positive attitudes due to wrong career choice. A study by Ahmad (2014) concerning the importance to the interest of students in making choice of their careers, noted that interest on a career is according to the pattern of likes and dislike of students. A previous study by Anojan and Nimalathan (2013) on personal factors influencing career choice among business students, found that personal factors were the greatest influential factor in comparison to their family, professional, market oriented factors and factors related to university.

Mpehongwa (2014) conducted a study on career choice of university students in Tanzania and their implications for vision 2025 as a documentary review. The result shows that majority of the students opt for career in arts and humanities. It recommends that incentives offered to science students at tertiary education should be extended to secondary education where students make critical career decisions. Students from secondary schools need to be encouraged to opt for sciences to help the country meet her target expected. This could mean that career choices among university students will affect the composition of the workforce and have bearing on the realization of the vision 2025.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used mixed method approach which allows collecting both quantitative and qualitative data during the same timeframe and with equal weight (O’Leary, 2011). In mixed approach the researcher used convergent parallel design to collect quantitative and qualitative data concurrently on the same phenomenon (Creswell and Crack, 2007). The researcher used specifically cross-sectional design for quantitative and phenomenology for qualitative which allows face-to-face interviews with the participants for in-depth and relevant information (Creswell, 2012). For the study 175 third year participants from Mkwawa University College of Education were sampled randomly and 24 second year participants were purposively sampled to participate in focus group discussion. For validity; triangulation, writing with rich and bracketing for biases awareness were considered. Since the study used mixed research design, analysis procedures were applied to both quantitative data and qualitative data. For quantitative data were analysed using descriptive analysis and for inferential data were analysed using correlation and regression. For qualitative data content analysis was used to analyse.

### IV. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The researcher presented and discussed the findings according to the objectives

#### Self-esteem among undergraduate students

Self-esteem is a cognitive process of evaluating one’s abilities, values, knowledge and overall capacity especially when an individual attempts to define himself or herself as a unique person (Eremie and Chikweru, 2015). A university student is supposed to positively value him or herself that he/she is capable and deserves to be in a college by accepting oneself, respecting oneself and believing oneself. The feeling of a student can affect positively or negatively his or her views about oneself. To know the states of self-esteem among university students the study adapted the measures of self-esteem developed by Rosenberg (1965). Rating was categorized in five options; namely (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The findings are summarized in Table 1 for students from MUCE.

**Table 1 Self-esteem among undergraduate students**

Items	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I feel that I am a person of value, at least on an equal basis with others	6	3.5	6	3.5	5	2.9	48	28.2	105	61.8
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	6	3.5	4	2.4	5	2.9	44	25.9	111	65.3
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	62	37.8	44	26.8	21	12.8	23	14.0	14	8.5
I am able to do things as well as most other people do	7	4.1	4	2.4	6	3.5	69	40.6	84	49.4
I feel that I have much to be proud of	4	2.4	8	4.7	11	6.5	46	27.1	101	59.4
I take a positive attitude	4	2.4	4	2.4	4	2.4	38	22.4	119	70.0

about myself										
On the whole I am satisfied with myself	5	2.9	6	3.5	11	6.5	48	28.2	99	58.2
I wish I could have more respect for myself	5	2.9	5	2.9	5	2.9	41	24.1	114	67.1
I certainly feel useless at time	61	35.9	30	17.6	7	4.1	40	23.5	32	18.8
At times, I think I am no good at all	59	34.7	32	18.8	7	4.1	36	21.2	36	21.2

Source: Rosenberg 1965

The findings from Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents 105(61.8%) strongly agreed. Most of the respondents 48(28.2%) agreed to be persons of values as other people. Minority of the respondents 6(3.5%) strongly disagreed and 5(2.9%) respondents remained undecided. The findings show that majority of the students agreed (i.e strongly agree and agree) that they feel to be persons of values, on an equal basis with others. Minority of the students disagreed (i.e strongly disagree and disagree). During focus group discussion one respondent state that;

No doubt that I am a person of values that’s why am here. I know am a valuable girl, I value myself the way I am and like to be valued. I have never thought negatively about myself. I thank God for creating me the way I am. I think humanly speaking no body is more valuable than others; we all are equal with the same value. I believe that all human beings are equal. (Participant, focus group discussion, December 6, 2021).

Students in the universities are expected to have a good number of qualities, such as intelligence, relationships, discipline, respect and many others. The findings indicate that most of the respondents 111(65.3%) strongly agreed and 44(25.9%) respondents agreed with the statement. Minority of the respondent 6(3.3%) strongly disagreed and 4(2.4%) of respondents disagreed. Another minority group of the respondents 5(2.9%) remained undecided. The results show that majority of the students agreed (i.e. strongly agree and agree) that they feel as to having a number of good qualities. This means that majority of the students have high and positive self-esteem. During focus group discussion one respondent admitted that;

I agree to have a number of good qualities. Myself, I am a confident person on what am doing; am disciplined, responsible and have positive attitude towards myself and others. These good qualities I possess help me to live peaceful with other people. They help to relate well with my fellow students whom we study together. I believe that everyone here has a number of good qualities which can help to succeed in life. We need to continue enhancing our good qualities in order to be trusted as students as a preparation for our future life (Participant, focus group discussion, December 7, 2021).

According to Rosenberg (1965) measures of self-esteem, there is the aspect of students to feel that they are a failure. The findings indicate that minority of the respondents 11(6.5%) strongly agreed to have the feeling that they are a failure in the university while and 12(7.1%) of respondents agreed. Majority of the respondents 75(44.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement and 65(38.2%) of respondents disagreed. Also minority of the respondents 7 (4.1%) failed to decide. Majority of the respondents disagreed (i.e strongly disagree and disagree) that are inclined to feel they are a failure. This shows that they have a high self-esteem attitude towards themselves. During focus group discussion one respondent had to say;

How can one feel as a failure while has reached this academic level? There is no way that I can feel am a failure, and I don’t like to fail though sometime it happens. To feel

that I am a failure means losing hope which I will never accept. I am not a man of failure and as I go up academically I gain more confidence. Now by reaching this stage am more confident and I think will do better in future. Let us feel proud of ourselves (participant, focus group discussion, December 6, 2021).

The results correlate with the study carried out by Eremie and Chikweru (2015) who admitted that students demonstrated high self-esteem due to their strong belief about themselves. Students of Mkwawa University College have positive feeling about themselves in academic progress they have made.

The ability to do things as other people does give confidence and minimizes the gap of inferiority complex among students. The researcher wanted to know whether respondents feel to have the same ability as other people; the findings indicate that most of the respondents 84(49.4%) strongly agreed and 69(40.6%) agreed that they are able to do things as well as most other people do. On the other hand, minority of respondents 7(4.1%) strongly disagreed and 4(2.6%) disagreed. The minority of respondents 6(3.5%) remained undecided. The results indicate that majority of the students agreed (i.e strongly agree and agree) that they were able to do things as well as most other people do. This means that students are more positive on what they are doing as they feel capable of doing whatever other do. This result correlate with the findings of Irhin and Amoako (2019) who used the same Rosenberg scale and students agreed to the statement 'I am able to do things as well as most other people do'.

The study sought to assess whether students have much that may make them feel proud of in association with self-esteem. The findings show that majority of the respondents 101(59.4%) strongly agreed and most of the respondents 46(27.4%) agreed. Minority of the respondents 4(2.4%) strongly disagreed and 8(4.7%) of respondents disagreed. There were 11(6.5) of respondents remained undecided. The results show that majority of the students agreed (i.e. strongly agree and agree) that they have much to make them feel proud of. Such feelings show that many students have high self-esteem with ability to do what they want. For those few student who disagreed (strongly disagree and disagree) are supposed to boost their self-esteem so that they may be proud of themselves. One respondent during focus group discussion had this to say;

There are many things I feel proud of in my life. I am proud of the way I am. I am proud of with my family because they support me a lot. I am proud by reaching this stage in education because not all managed to reach this far (participant, focus group discussion, December 6, 2021).

Concerning whether students can take positive attitude about themselves, their rating were as follows, majority of the respondents 119(70%) strongly agreed that they take positive attitude about themselves and most of the respondents 38(22.4%) agreed to take positive attitude about themselves. Minority of the respondents 4(2.4%) strongly disagreed that they don't take positive attitude towards themselves and 4(2.4%) disagreed. There were respondents 4(2.4%) remained undecided. The findings show that the majority of the students (ie strongly agree and agree) agreed that they have positive attitude about themselves. . During focus group discussion respondents agreed to have positive attitude about themselves and one respondent had to say;

I always have positive attitude about myself in everything I do. I accept positively the way I am which makes me confident to continue struggling with life and daily activities. Having positive attitude about myself helps me to have positive attitude toward others. In our lives we need to be positive about ourselves as students in order



to allow knowledge sink in us for better future life (participant, focus group discussion, December 3, 2021).

The results corresponds with the findings of Burke and Stets (2014) who affirmed that feeling positive is a self-worth of an individual, which is, feeling that they are good and valuable, is a self-acceptance or self-respect. They continued to explain that self-worth is founded in the idea that individuals desire to see themselves favourably, and they act in a way that maintains and enhances this positive self-view. Majority of the students feel good, valuable, they accept and respect themselves the way they are. Again, the study by Becerra et al. (2021) revealed that high self-esteem positively associated with goals, expectances and coping mechanism among university students.

This study also sought to determine whether students are satisfied with themselves. The findings indicate that most of the respondents 99(59.2%) strongly agreed and most of the respondents 48(28.2%) agreed that they were satisfied with themselves. Minority of the respondents 5(2.9%) strongly disagree and 6(3.5%) of respondents disagreed to be satisfied with themselves. On the other hand, minority of the respondents 11(6.5%) failed to decide in either side. The results show that majority of the students agreed (strongly agree and agree) that they are satisfied with themselves. During focus group discussion one participant said; *I am satisfied about myself that am a fully human being and doing a proper thing in a proper way guided by my parents and my lecturers. I always feel positive about myself and about life in general* (participant, focus discussion group, November 23, 2021). The result of the study is in agreement with the previous study by Perveen et al., (2021) who found that the level of life satisfaction among university students was high. Male students demonstrated higher life satisfaction than female students. Similarly, a study conducted by Kachroo et al (2021) on the relationship between life satisfaction and self-esteem, showed a positive relationship between life satisfaction and self-esteem among university students.

The researcher wanted to know whether students have more respect for themselves. The findings show that majority of the respondents 114(67.1%) strongly agreed and 41(24.1%) students agreed that they wish to have more respect for themselves. On the other hand, minority of the respondents 5(3.5%) strongly disagreed and 5(2.9%) respondents disagree. Minority of the respondents 5(2.9%) were undecided. The result indicates that majority of the student respondents agreed (strongly agree and agree) that they wish could have more respect for themselves while the minority disagreed (strongly disagree and disagree). It can be explained that majority of the students are generally satisfied with themselves. During focus group discussion one explained;

We need to be respectful students in our daily life for our bright future. Myself, I don't engage in things or behaviour which will make people doubt and not respect me. I always try to behave well before others. Let people respect us from now as students, this will help us in future when we will be looking for employment. Let us show good behaviour so that people may respect us from now (participant, focus group discussion, November 23, 2021)

On the attitude of feeling useless at times, the findings indicate that, minority of the respondents 12(7.1%) strongly agreed and 11(6.6%) agreed that they certainly feel useless at times. On the other hand, most of the respondents 74(43.5%) strongly disagreed and 66(39.1%) of respondents disagreed to feel useless at times. Minority of the respondents 7(4.1%) failed to decide. The results of the findings show that majority of the respondents disagreed (strongly disagree and disagree) that they feel useless at time. For them they always feel useful. Minority of the respondents accepted that they certainly feel useless at time.

The last item of self-esteem required students to rate their feelings on whether at times they think they are no good at all. The findings indicate that minority of the respondents 7(4.1%) strongly agreed and 12(7.1%) of respondents agreed that they sometime think to be no good at all. On the other side, most of the respondents 77(45.3%) strongly disagree and 69(40.6%) disagreed that at times they think they are no good at all. Minority of the respondent 5(2.9%) failed to decide. The results show that those who disagree (strongly disagree and disagree) are the majority than those who agree (strongly agree and agree) that at times they think are no good at all. Those few students according to the findings need to be helped to value themselves that they are potential people. During the focus group discussion one respondent reported;

It is not proper for someone to think he or she is no good at all, meaning she is nothing. I cannot think am no good at all even if things are difficult on my side. I accept that sometimes I fail even in class by getting lower marks than my expectation which can discourage but not make me think am no good. Always try to be positive about yourself even when things go wrong on your side. To remain positive will encourage you to be and do better, otherwise you will fail (participant, focus group discussion, December 1, 2021).

It was concluded that university students had high level of self-esteem which is the cause of all good. Students should be encouraged to remain positive and feel good about themselves and their studies.

### Personal interest in career choice among undergraduate students

Career choice is a significant process students make for their future professions. Any choice they make will impact them all through their lives Table 2 shows the way personal interest influenced the choice of careers among students.

**Table 2 Personal interest in career choice**

Item	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I chose this field because it suits my capability	8	4.7	7	4.1	7	4.1	52	30.6	96	56.5
I chose this profession because it is very marketable in the world today	12	7.1	16	9.4	14	8.2	70	41.2	58	34.1
I chose this field though is not my interest	54	31.8	83	48.8	5	2.9	16	9.4	12	7.1
I chose this field because its working conditions suits me well	6	3.5	15	8.8	6	3.5	66	38.8	77	45.3

In Table 2 on the first item the researcher wanted to find out whether students chose careers according to their capacities. The findings showed that most of the participants 96(56.5%) strongly agreed and 52(30.6%) of participants agreed that they chose the field they are in because suit their interests and capabilities. Minority of the participants 8(4.7%) strongly disagreed and 7(4.1%) of the participant disagreed while 7(4.1%) students failed to decide. The result of the findings indicate that majority of the students agreed (i.e. strongly agree & agree) that they chose the field to study because they are capable. When the second year students were interviewed on the same, many of them said they chose themselves the programmes they are studying. They also admitted that are proud on their choice. Few said were not their choice but family members who chose for them or assisted the process. During the focus group discussion one student admitted that;

The program I am doing was my choice. No body influenced my choice. I am proud, comfortable and confident on what is doing. I am sure many of us we are proud with our programmes as the best choice we made. It is better even those who were assisted in choosing programmes to tune themselves and accept the reality otherwise you will lose everything. (participant, focus group discussion, November 23, 2021).

The findings correlated with the previous findings by Abri and Kooli (2018) who indicated that interest and capability have very strong positive relationship with career choice and are significantly influencing factors. This shows that for the majority are studying what they chose according to their interests.

In addition, the researcher also sought to finds out whether students chose professions in consideration to the markets of the field. The findings show that most of the respondents 58(34.1%) strongly agreed and 70(41.2%) respondents agreed that students chose professions because are very marketable in the world today. Minority of the respondents 12(7.1%) strongly disagreed and 16(9.4%) of respondents disagreed. About 14(8.2%) of respondents remained undecided. These findings indicate that majority of the students chose the profession because of the markets of the field in the world today. Only the minority of the respondents chose profession without considering the market but other factors. During focus group discussion one student from IT department confidently said;

The profession I chose seem to be very good and attractive to many students. It still has many opportunities in many sectors but the course is too difficult and demanding. At the beginning was too heavy to me but now am comfortable. I am sure after finishing my studies will not fail to get employment but even if one fails to be employed can easily start a business once gets capital (participant, focus group discussion, November 23, 2021).

The study wanted to determine whether personal interest has negative effect to career choice, the findings indicated that minority of the respondents 12(7.1%) strongly agreed and 16(9.4%) of respondents agreed that what students are studying are not their interests. Most of the students 54(31.4%) strongly disagreed and 83(48.8%) of respondents disagree that what everyone is studying is according to his or her interest. Also minority of the respondents 5(2.9%) failed to decide.

These findings show that minority of the students agreed (strongly disagree & disagree) that they joined university studies without considering their interest. Majority of the respondents indicated that they joined particular fields of their interests. During focus group discussion one respondent said;

I chose this course due to my capacity and interest. It is not wise to choose a programme or course in order to make other people admire at your courage while you cannot perform. I know some students chose to study business for the purpose to work in banks but they completely failed mathematics in secondary schools. Unfortunately they end up not getting good GPAs and fail to reach their desired goals (participant, focus group discussion, November 24, 2021).

The findings were supported by the idea of Hewitt (2010) who said that student's interest greatly determine the occupational selection. Thus, students' interest played a major role in determining their career choice. Also the finding of the study is in agreement with previous study by Nyamwage (2016) that student's intrinsic factors such as interest, individual's personality, self-concept and attitude is significant in determining career choice decisions for an individual's career.

The researcher also sought of determining whether the choice was due to the working condition of the profession. The findings showed that most of the respondents 77(45.3%)

strongly agreed and 66(38.8%) of respondents agreed that they choose careers because the working condition suits them. Minority of the respondents 6(3.5%) strongly disagreed and 15(8.8%) students disagreed about the working condition as a factor for career choice. There were respondents 6(3.5%) who remained undecided. Working condition is an important factor for an individual to be attracted to join.

The findings showed that most of the students chose careers after considering the working conditions for the profession. From the focus group discussion one participant said; *business work attracted me to choose this career. My plan is to be a business man and I want to become among the big business men in my area* (participant, focus group discussion, November 24, 2021). The study correlated with the previous study by Achim, Badrolhisam and Zulkipli (2019) who stated that students are attracted by salary and benefits, job recruitment and working environment is good can attract workers to give the best performance and enjoy their careers.

### The relationship between self-esteem and career choice among students

The study further carried out some inferential analysis to establish the relationship between self-esteem and career choice among undergraduate students of MUCE.

Table 3  
*Correlation between self-esteem and career choice among students.*

	Self-esteem	Career Choice
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation (r)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed) (p)	.032
	N	.679
		170

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between self-esteem and career choice is (r=0.032) which is weak but positive. The researcher concluded that there was weak positive relationship between self-esteem and career choice among undergraduate students at Mkwawa University College of Education. This means that self-esteem had some influence in career choice among university students. The current finding correlates with the previous study in Accra, Ghana, by Abomah and Togoe (2021) that the results indicated self-esteem positively correlated with career choice among adolescents. Also, the study by Mahadi et al (2015) stated that self-esteem had a relationship to career decision making among technical engineering students. Self-esteem and career choice had positive relationship, thus when self-esteem increases, the career choice confidence increases. Therefore, it is important for undergraduate students to continue building their self-esteem in order to make them more confident in preparing themselves for their future careers.

However in terms of significance, when p-value is greater than alpha or significance level (0.05) means there is no significance relationship. When p-value is smaller than alpha or significance level (0.05) then there is significance relationship. In this study p-value (0.679) is greater than significance level (0.05) therefore there was no significance relationship between self-esteem and career choice among students. Thus, other factors than self-esteem might have affected the career choice among undergraduate students.

## V. Discussion of findings

Self-esteem among students is about accepting oneself, respecting oneself, and believing oneself that he or she is capable about academic activities. The research question aimed at examining the respondents' self-esteem in relation to career choice. The findings showed that majority of the students evaluated themselves having positive self-esteem and are proud of the choice they made. These rated high includes: that they feel having values; they have a number of good qualities; they are able to do things as other people do; they are proud; they take positive attitude about themselves; they are satisfied with themselves; and they denied for higher rate that they are failures; they do not feel useless. The findings show that students had higher self-esteem and as a result they accept themselves, they respect themselves and they believe themselves on what they are doing. Also the results show that many students chose careers according to their interest which makes them feel comfortable on what they are studying. Lastly, the result indicates that there is a relationship between self-esteem and career choice among undergraduate students.

## VI. Conclusion of the study

Keeping in view the findings of the current study it is concluded that students have high self-esteem and rely mostly on their interests for career choices among undergraduate students. Also there exists a positive relationship between self-esteem and career choice among undergraduate students. It can be said that positive relationship between self-esteem and career choice led to good career choice among student. The findings of this study would be beneficial in helping students to deal with the self-esteem in higher education for their future prosperity in life. The study recommended that counsellors need to continue helping students especially those with low self-esteem to have positive self-esteem.

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