

ABSTRACT

The task of choosing a degree programme to study in the university by students is a significant career task in which the outcome is influenced by various factors such as; family, career interests, financial resources, career information, among others. The students are either satisfied or dissatisfied with the outcome of their choices and this may affect their ability in handling future career tasks. This study aimed at determining the influence of family, financial resources, career interests, and career information, on choice of degree programme and placement of students in public universities in Kenya. The study used ex post facto-causal comparative research design that targeted regular and self-sponsored students in public universities in Kenya. The target population was 47,294 first year students from which a sample of 500 students was selected using stratified, cluster and simple random sampling procedures. Data was collected using a comprehensive questionnaire with both open and closed questions. A pilot study conducted to establish the reliability obtained Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.83. The supervisors and experts from the department assisted in determining the content and construct validity of questionnaire items. Frequencies, percentages and means were used to organize and present the quantitative data. Means and standard deviations were used to analyse the qualitative data. Independent samples t-test was used to analyze the data and to test hypotheses. Data was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for windows version 20. The results of the study revealed that career interests and career information had a high influence whereas family and financial resources had moderate influence on the choice of degree programme and university placement of students in public universities. Analysis of the results indicated that no statistically significant differences existed between the mean scores of career interests and career information, although self-sponsored students had slightly higher means than regular students. The results also showed that statistically significant differences existed in the mean scores of influences of family and financial resources between regular and self-sponsored students, in which the self-sponsored students had a higher family influence in their choice of degree programme and university placement than regular students. Conversely, financial resources exerted a higher influence on the choice of degree programme for regular students than self-sponsored students. The study concluded that career interests and career information were significant factors in influencing the choice of degree programme and university placement of regular and self-sponsored students in public universities. Moreover, the public universities placement service through Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement

Services (KUCCPS) was found to have played a major role in placing students into degree programmes and universities that they had not selected.

Keywords

Degree choice and placement -- Regular and self-sponsored students