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**Mercy Wangechi Kanyingi-Maina (PhD)**

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# Influence of Career Guidance Programmes on Change of Programme of Study among First-Year Undergraduate Students in Kenyan Universities

Mercy Wangechi Kanyingi-Maina (PhD)

School of Education and Social Sciences, Africa International University

E-mail: [mercy.gichohi@gmail.com](mailto:mercy.gichohi@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

Change of study programme is a common phenomenon among university undergraduate students across the world. However, in Kenya, change of study programme has not been studied extensively revealing a knowledge gap. This study therefore sought to establish the influence of career guidance programmes on change of study programme among first-year undergraduate students in Kenyan universities. The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey method. It was conducted in selected seven universities where 68,545 first year undergraduate students were targeted. Out of this, samples of 397 students were selected. Pearson correlation and regression analyses were used to establish the relationship between the variables. The correlation findings indicated that the P value was less than 0.05, resulting to rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, career guidance programmes have a significant influence on students' change of study programme. Based on the findings, the study concluded that career guidance programmes had a positive and significant influence on students' change of programme of study. In particular, career day/exhibition/conference, guest speakers talk and career information from universities, KUCCPS website and google search were found to be the key influential factors of change their programmes of study among first year undergraduate students. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education to hold national dialogues on career guidance to gather information on practice gaps to inform possible solutions or interventions. Another suggestion is the training of qualified career guidance personnel across learning institutions from basic through higher education. This can be initiated at teacher training programmes or teacher professional development programmes.

**Keywords:** Career guidance programmes, programme of study, career choices, first-year undergraduate students

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Changing courses in a programme of study happens where a student has made an initial choice from a list of what is available but revokes the decision and makes an entirely different choice. Global patterns among undergraduate students on change of courses indicate that the phenomenon is widespread in the United States, Canada, the Middle East, but little is documented in Africa except for one study in South Africa. The preference of study programme or course is referred to as majors in the USA. The rate of change of majors once or several times before graduation is confirmed by several studies:

Foraker (2012) recorded about 50 percent; Freedman (2013) about 75 percent; Ohio State University, Enrolment Services (2013) between 50 and 75 percent; Leu (2017) 38 percent; Astorne-Figar and Speer (2017) 43 percent and Wright (2018) 50 percent. In Canada, Li and Li (2013) 62 percent, in the Middle East, Cheema, Farman and Qasim (2017) percent; Jaradat and Mustafa (2017) 36 percent and Jaradat (2017) 28 percent respectively. In South Africa, Seymour and Serumola (2016) used qualitative method and reported that some students changed from commerce to information system.

What causes this change, then? Lee (2009) and Pabalinas et al. (2015) suggest that many students fail to make decisions because colleges and professions in today's world have a wide range of study programmes. It is often exacerbated by too many forces that exert strain on the decisions of students. As such, many students do not make independent decisions with confidence, resulting in delayed choices. Delay in making decisions and indecision is likely to lead to changes in courses inside or beyond a programme of study. Firmin and MacKillop (2008) and Drysdale et al. (2015) affirm that for many university students, change of courses is a normal occurrence. This could include one or more instances prior to graduation (Wright, 2018).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

One of the least studied topics in Kenya, except for unpublished studies, is the transfer of study programmes and courses from one to another among university students. Ayiro (2016) unpublished research showed that about 20 to 50 percent of university-enrolled undergraduate students change their courses they had originally picked. Studies performed in other areas of the world indicate that study programmes aligned to students' interests have far-reaching effects for communities, colleges, and marketplace (Robst, 2007; Domadenik et al., 2013; Baik et al., 2015). Programmes of study integrated with an opportunity for students to identify their talents, motivations, and passions before enrolment can boost decision making, graduation on schedule, decreased study tension and reduced skills mismatch in the work sector. On the other hand, programmes of study ignorant of the place of students' discovery of their interests more often lead to indecision on what to study, delay in graduation, additional costs of university education, delay in accessing jobs, and often waste of remittances by taxpayers to the exchequer where government partially funds university education. Indecision at the person level may affect their access to their desired programmes of study, contributing to emotional distress (Robst 2007; Ryan, 2017; Van Wie, 2017; Wright, 2018; Alkather et al., 2019). Since this phenomenon has been confirmed globally with little empirical evidence in Kenya, this study bridges the knowledge gap by establishing the influence of career guidance programmes on change of study programme among first-year undergraduate students in Kenyan universities.

### **1.2 Objective of the Study**

This study sought to establish the influence of career guidance programmes on change of study programme among first-year undergraduate students in Kenyan universities.

### **1.3 Research Hypothesis**

H0: Career guidance programmes have no significant influence on students' change in programme of study.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Social Learning Career Theory**

Social Learning Career Theory (SLCT) explains factors that influence career choice and tries to facilitate the process of choice of programmes of study. The main factors are genetic endowments and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills (Zunker, 2006). These were postulated by Krumboltz (1978). This study focused on task approach skills. According to SLCT, task approach is the ability for a person to have the necessary skills to perform a job efficiently and effectively. It also includes the ability to have good work habits and solve problems needed in the world of work (Gelso & Fretz, 1992). In this study, task approach was considered to be career readiness skills which are facilitated in career guidance programmes in high schools and universities. The career guidance services, and their constructs were investigated to ascertain their influence in change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students.

### **2.2 Career Guidance Programmes**

Career guidance is an expert service with activities intended to assist individuals, of any age to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers (Hansen, 2006). Career guidance programmes are part of school-wide career guidance and counselling programmes that helps students make clear, careful, and individual choices for programmes of study, courses and careers based on their interests, passion and abilities (Neeley, 2004, Van and Loan, 2016, Oigo and Kaluyu, 2016).. The choices are best enhanced through career awareness, exploration, planning and decision making activities (Balas-Timar et al., 2015). In this research, these activities were itemized in the following ways: career assessment tests, career days and expos, speaking to guest speakers visits to universities or company, job shadow experience or volunteer work, and web-based search for career information from university websites or internet search engines such as Google or Kenya Universities and Colleges Placement Service (UNESCO, 2002) They all have provisions in Social Learning Theory of Career Choice and were investigated to ascertain their influence of change of programme of study among first-year undergraduate students in Kenyan universities.

#### **2.2.1 Career Assessment Tests**

Career assessment tests or surveys are tools used to help students identify and clarify their interests and then these interests are matched to their possible programmes of study, courses and careers (Schiersmann et al. 2012, Karp 2013). They further affirmed that when students know their strengths, they make programmes of study and career choice with more confidence. Therefore, students need to be encouraged to take career tests when making choices or when changing their programmes of study, courses or careers.

Several studies support that career tests facilitate career choice and programmes of study among students. Karp (2013) cited several studies: Hughes and Karp (2004), Gore and Metz (2008); D'Achiardi-Ressler, 2008; Stephen (2010) and Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, and Peterson (2011) who all reported that self-assessment were useful and improved course selection and decision making among students. Fizer (2013) reported that career test were used to help students when changing their majors or programmes of study. The University of Toledo (2017) career services department administered career tests to undergraduate students who wanted to change their majors or courses. The studies above showed that career tests play a role in the change of career or programmes of study.



### 2.2.2 Career Days and Expos

Career days and expos also known as or career fairs are an informational tool used to help students know more about programmes of study, courses and careers (Fizer, 2013). Bangser (2008) report advocated for career days as a career awareness tool because often high school students lacked information on post-secondary educational requirements and careers. Morris (2014) affirmed that career days increased awareness of career opportunities and understanding of post-secondary education requirements. He encouraged universities to organise career days and invite high schools to attend. In that way, they can receive information on universities' programmes of study, courses and the departments that host them. Empirical studies affirm their role. Rashid and Bakar (2009) in their study that targeted 104 school career counsellors rated career fairs at 96.8% as an important career awareness and information tool. VanMeter-Adams et al. (2014) reported that students were motivated or inspired to pursue STEM after attending career days/fairs. Amoah et al. (2015) study too revealed that career days helped students choose their programmes of study.

### 2.2.3 Guest Speakers Talks

Guest speakers are a valuable resource in the career choice as well as programme of study process. Their main role is to provide information about different careers, courses by sharing their experiences in their career fields with students (Balas-Timar et al. 2015). The information students receive facilitates choice and decision of programmes of study as well as careers. According to Bangser (2008), guest speakers or lecturers can be drawn from the business community, industry or universities. These guests help build connections between learning institution and the local community; share on latestes labour market information and build linkages between academia and industry practitioner (Lang, 2008, Ward 2011 & Balas-Timar et al. 2015)

Several studies support the role of guest speakers as a tool for gathering information on career choice. Downey et al. (2011) study reported that guest speakers who had a broad knowledge of industry influenced students' choice of business course. Ward (2011) study reported that speakers from different professions talked to students and the talks helped them clarify their career aspirations. Merle and Craig (2017) indicated that students benefitted from guest speakers face to face interaction, sharing of their personal experiences and career tips. These reports show evidence that guest speakers influence choice of programmes of study and careers. However, there is insufficient evidence on change of programmes of study among students. Hence, the need for this study to establish their influence in change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students in Kenyan universities.

### 2.2.4 Visit to Universities or Company

Visits to universities and companies in this study were conceptualized as career field trips. According to Dykeman et al. (2001), in their '*Taxonomy of Career Development Interventions For American Schools*', career field trips were activities designed to help students gather information on careers and programmes of study in universities. As such they encouraged schools, parents and students themselves to organise or participate in visits to a university or a company.

A visit to a university help students gain knowledge through direct experiences as they gather first-hand information on courses offered in different departments including entry requirements, professional and vocational outlook in the job market (Shakil et al. 2011,

Behrendt & Franklin, 2014, Gacohi et al., 2017a, Eremie & Ibifari, 2018). Amri (2013) added that a visit to university helps students witness first-hand experience of the higher education environment. They view physical facilities, interact with faculty members and witness campus life from continuing students. Such interactions are helpful because students gather information that can facilitate choice of programmes of study.

Trips or visits to a company allow students to experience first-hand what professionals do in the world of work (Rogers-Chapman and Darling-Hammond, 2013). According to Brown and Associates (2002) and Balas-Timar et al. (2015), students learn about work settings, job titles held by different professionals, tasks for different jobs, professional dressing, entry educational requirements, employee reward systems and any information they would be interested to gather. Besides, Hughes and Karp (2006) indicated that students can learn about the skills gap in the job market so that they can select courses that meet job market needs. The reports described on career field trips to universities and companies show that information gathered can influence choice of programmes of study among university students. However, there are limited studies to show their influence on change programme of study among first year undergraduate students in Kenya.

### **2.2.5 Participation in Job shadow experience or Volunteer work**

Job shadow or volunteer work or job try out are career exploration tools used to increase career awareness and opportunities among students (Balas-Timar et al., 2015). According to Engineering Career Services (2017), the University of Illinois, *Job Shadow* is a programme that offers students an opportunity to explore career options by spending a day in a company or site. The student spends the day alongside professionals in a career field of interest by observing how they go about their work. The programme has several advantages: students learn what professionals do in a work environment on a daily basis and their challenges. It also provides the students a chance to gain exposure to specific applications of their programme of study for university students and others for making choice of what to study. Rogers-Chapman and Darling-Hammond (2013) affirms that job shadow prepares students for higher education options and careers by connecting what they learn in the classroom to real-life experiences in workplaces. This approach provides students with skills needed to prepare for higher education and choice of programmes of study.

A few studies show evidence of job shadow and their influence in choice of programmes of study and careers. Amoah et al. (2015) study cited Levinson, Peterson, & Elston (1994); Black & Langone (1997) and Pumpian, Fisher, Certo, & Smalley (1997) who expressed that job experiences and volunteer work contributed in discovering vocational interests, abilities, and traits. They further suggested career interests were inspired through short-term job try-out experiences and job shadowing experiences. Fizer (2013) acknowledged that job shadowing is a useful programme for students to engage in when choosing or changing a career.

### **2.2.6 Career Information**

Career information is one of the services of career guidance programmes given to students in learning institutions (Van and Loan, 2016). Career information exists in various forms: print format such as career catalogues, university catalogues, journals, newspapers, books, magazines, brochures among others. Electronic formats included web-based career guidance systems, university websites, videos, and CD ROMs (*Compact Disc, Read Only Memory*) either as open resources or on purchase (Jigau 2007, McMahon and Palmer 2000). Career information is the bedrock of career guidance services in all

educational settings. It provides information on courses, occupations and career paths, education and training, job prospects, labour market and industry information including changing nature of work and trends (Hansen, 2006 and Zunker, 2006). Career guidance programmes ensure that career information is accessible by organizing it, systematizing it and making it available when and where people need it (Hansen, 2006). As such, learning institutions have a responsibility to provide career information in whatever format so that students can use it to choose and decide on their programmes of study (Balas-Timar et al., 2015).

In practice, Abubakar (2013) supported that career information is necessary for decision making so long as students have access to the right information in an understandable format. Kumar and Arulmani (2014) suggested that career practitioners should provide timely and quality information. As such, practitioners are required to maintain accurate and updated resources in all formats. In quest to be abreast with the latest information, Sweet (2001) noted that career practitioners are increasingly utilizing internet resources and computer-assisted guidance systems in order to fulfil their mandate.

Several studies show evidence of the value of career information to students, teachers, schools and parents. Gacohi et al. (2017a) reported that universities in Kenya prepare catalogues, brochures and publicity materials such as calendars containing their programmes and courses and also have websites. Moreover, more information on universities and colleges courses and their requirements is provided by the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) a body mandated by law to place students in universities and colleges (Nyamwange 2016, KUCCPS 2014a).

Jaradat (2015) study supported that university catalogues were a source of information and influenced students when choosing careers or majors. The study cited Beggs, Bantham and Taylor (2008) who reported that brochures or flyers and catalogues were influential source of information to both students and parents. Karp (2013), in a document on students' entrance programme to college reported that students benefitted from information that described courses and occupations.

Change of programmes of study has been supported by several studies who revealed that students changed because they lacked adequate information when they initially made their choice. Hughey et al. (2009) reported that about 75% of students change their major. One of the reasons was due to lack of information about themselves and the world of work. Firmin and MacKillop (2008) interviewed undergraduate students who had changed majors and found out that they lacked information on their chosen a major. Once they learnt the requirements, they changed to what was relevant to them. This means lack of information influenced change of majors among the students sampled.

Lugulu and Kipkoech (2011) observed that first-year students after orientation week revised and changed courses from the ones they were admitted to do into new ones. The fact that they changed after orientation, was an indication that new information gathered from orientation week influenced the students to change their courses or programmes of study. Similarly, Marade (2015), Jaradat and Mustafa (2017) and Astorne-Figar and Speer (2018) studies reported that some students changed their courses due to new information about themselves and programmes of study requirements. Once they realised there was a mismatch either on abilities or preferences, the students changed to their preferred course. The above studies show evidence that career information influences change of programmes of study, courses or majors among university students.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method was quantitative specifically a cross sectional survey with a causal comparative research design. It was conducted in selected seven universities where 68,545 first year undergraduate students were targeted. Out of this, a sample of 397 students was selected. The research used questionnaires to collect data. Pearson correlation and regression analyses were used to establish the relationship between the variables.

### 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis Results

This section provided descriptive data on the influence of career guidance programmes on change of programme of study before and after joining the university and no change at all. The respondents were asked to rate the career guidance programmes activities which may have influenced their change of programme of study before joining the university. Results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Career Guidance Programmes: Change before Joining University**

|                                                                          | Not at all % | Very small extent % | Small extent % | Large extent % | Very large extent % | Mean       | Std. Dev   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|------------|------------|
| Career test                                                              | 45.9         | 2.7                 | 8.1            | 24.3           | 18.9                | 2.7        | 1.7        |
| Career day/ exhibition/conference                                        | 54.1         | 8.1                 | 5.4            | 10.8           | 21.6                | 2.4        | 1.7        |
| Guest speakers talk                                                      | 40.5         | 13.5                | 16.2           | 16.2           | 13.5                | 2.5        | 1.5        |
| Visit to a university/ or company                                        | 56.8         | 8.1                 | 10.8           | 16.2           | 8.1                 | 2.1        | 1.4        |
| Participated in volunteer work/ Job Shadow                               | 54.1         | 2.7                 | 0.0            | 21.6           | 21.6                | 2.5        | 1.8        |
| Career Information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search | 24.3         | 5.4                 | 16.2           | 10.8           | 43.2                | 3.4        | 1.7        |
| <b>Average</b>                                                           |              |                     |                |                |                     | <b>2.6</b> | <b>1.6</b> |

Results from Table 1 reveal that 45.9% of the respondents rated not at all career test as having influenced their change of course/programme of study; 54.1% rated not at all career day/exhibition/conference; 40.5% rated not at all guest speakers talk; 56.8% rated not at all visit to a university/ or company; 54.1% rated not at all participation in volunteer work/ job shadow. Further, 43.2% rated to a very large extent the influence of career information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search in their decision to change course/ programme of study before joining the university.

The overall mean of 2.6 indicates that majority of the respondents rated to a small extent the influence of career guidance programmes activities in their decision to change course/programme of study before joining the university. The responses were varied as indicated by a standard deviation of 1.6. The respondents were also asked to rate the career



guidance programmes activities which may have influenced their change of the course/programme of study after joining the university. Results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Career Guidance Programmes: Change after Joining University**

|                                                                          | Not at all % | Very small extent % | Small extent % | Large extent % | Very large extent % | Mean | Std. Dev |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|------|----------|
| Career test                                                              | 33.3         | 8.3                 | 19.4           | 22.2           | 16.7                | 2.8  | 1.5      |
| Career day/ exhibition/ conference                                       | 33.3         | 13.9                | 8.3            | 30.6           | 13.9                | 2.8  | 1.5      |
| Guest speakers talk                                                      | 35.7         | 11.4                | 22.9           | 15.7           | 14.3                | 2.9  | 1.4      |
| Visit to a university/ or company                                        | 25.7         | 17.1                | 20.0           | 20.0           | 17.1                | 2.9  | 1.5      |
| Participated in volunteer work/ Job Shadow                               | 41.7         | 13.9                | 22.2           | 16.7           | 5.6                 | 2.3  | 1.3      |
| Career Information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search | 11.1         | 13.9                | 11.1           | 25.0           | 38.9                | 3.7  | 1.4      |
| Average                                                                  |              |                     |                |                |                     | 2.9  | 1.4      |

Results presented in Table 2 illustrate 33.3% of the respondents rated not at all career test as having influenced their change of course/programme of study; 33.3% rated not at all career day/exhibition/conference; 35.7% rated not at all guest speakers talk; 25.7% rated not at all to visits to a university/ or company; 41.7% rated not at all participation in volunteer work/ job shadow. Further, 38.9% rated to a very large extent the influence of career information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search in their decision to change course/programme of study after joining the university.

The overall mean of 2.9 indicates that majority of the respondents rated to a small extent the influence of career guidance programmes activities in their decision to change course/career after joining the university. The responses were varied as indicated by a standard deviation of 1.4. The respondents were further asked to rate the career guidance programmes activities which influenced their choice of programme of study/course. Results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Career Guidance Programmes: Choice of Programme of Study**

|                                                                          | Not at all % | Very small extent % | Small extent % | Large extent % | Very large extent % | Mean | Std. Dev |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|------|----------|
| Career test                                                              | 29.4         | 9.5                 | 19.4           | 19.4           | 22.2                | 3.0  | 1.5      |
| Career day/ exhibition/conference                                        | 24.1         | 11.9                | 20.6           | 22.9           | 20.6                | 3.0  | 1.5      |
| Guest speakers talk                                                      | 22.5         | 12.6                | 16.2           | 23.3           | 25.3                | 3.2  | 1.5      |
| Visit to a university/ or company                                        | 39.8         | 13.5                | 13.1           | 17.1           | 16.3                | 2.6  | 1.5      |
| Participated in volunteer work/ Job Shadow                               | 39.7         | 14.7                | 15.1           | 16.7           | 13.9                | 2.5  | 1.5      |
| Career Information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search | 19.0         | 9.9                 | 11.1           | 26.6           | 33.3                | 3.5  | 1.5      |
| Average                                                                  |              |                     |                |                |                     | 2.9  | 1.5      |

Results from Table 3 depicts 29.4% of the respondents noted that career test factor did not influence their choice of programme of study/course, 22.2% noted that it influenced their choice of programme of study to a very large extent while 19.4% cited a large extent. Further, over 40% of the respondents noted that career day/exhibition/conference influence of their choice of course/ programme of study to a large extent, 25.3% rated guest speakers talk to a very large extent, 39.8% rated not at all Visit to a university/ or company; 39.7% rated not at all participation in volunteer work/ Job Shadow, while 33.3 % rated to a very large extent the influence of career information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search in their choice of programme of study. The overall mean of 2.9 indicates that majority of the respondents rated to a small extent the influence of career guidance programmes activities in their choice of programme of study. The responses were varied as indicated by a standard deviation of 1.5.

#### **4.2 Correlation Analysis Results**

The study sought to establish the extent to which career guidance programmes influence change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students. The results were used to test the null hypothesis that career guidance programmes have no significant influence on students' change in programme of study. The findings correlation analysis is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Correlation Results: Career Guidance Programme and Change of Programme of Study**

|                                         |                        | Change of<br>Programme of Study | Career guidance<br>programme |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Change of Career                        | Pearson<br>Correlation | 1.000                           |                              |
|                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)        |                                 |                              |
| Career guidance<br>programme activities | Pearson<br>Correlation | .401**                          | 1.000                        |
|                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)        | .000                            |                              |

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

Based on the results presented in Table 4, the P value was less than 0.05. Since the P value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, the study concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between career guidance programmes and change of programme of study among first-year undergraduate students. In particular, career day/ exhibition/conference, guest speakers talk and career information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search were found to be critical in students' choice and change of course/programme of study.

#### 4.3 Regression Analysis Results

The study sought to establish the influence of career guidance programmes on students' change of programme of study. The study used univariate regressions to determine the influence of career guidance programmes on students' change of programme of study. The regression results are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5: Summary: Career Guidance Programmes and Change of Programme of Study**

| Change of Course                   | Beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) | Sig   |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| Career information                 | 0.378                        | 0.000 |
| Job shadow/ Volunteer work         | 0.175                        | 0.000 |
| Career days                        | 0.157                        | 0.000 |
| Career test                        | 0.139                        | 0.001 |
| Visit to the university or company | 0.134                        | 0.001 |
| Guest speakers' talk               | 0.130                        | 0.003 |

Based on the findings in Table 5, career test, career information, career days, job shadow/ volunteer work, visit to the university or company and guest speakers' talk had a positive and significant influence on students' change of career. Further, results indicated that career information had the greatest influence on students' career change ( $\beta=0.378$ ), followed by Job shadow/Volunteer work ( $\beta=0.175$ ), career days ( $\beta=0.157$ ), career test ( $\beta=0.139$ ), then visit to university or company ( $\beta=0.134$ ), and lastly guest speakers' talk ( $\beta=0.130$ ).

#### 4.4 Discussions of the Results

This study sought to establish the extent to which career guidance programmes influence students' change of programme of study. The descriptive results indicated majority of the

respondents identified career day/ exhibition/conference, guest speakers talk and career information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search as critical in influencing students' choice and change of career/ course choice. The results indicated a mean (M) of 2.6 and standard deviation (S.D) of 1.6 for influence before joining the university; M= 2.9 and S.D = 1.4 after joining the university and no change at all of M= 2.9 and S.D=1.4. This showed that the influence of career guidance programmes had a small influence before or after joining the university and when the initial choice of courses or programmes of study.

The correlation results revealed a weak positive and significant relationship between career guidance programmes and students' change of career choice ( $r=0.401$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This implied that career guidance programmes including career day/ exhibition/conference, guest speakers talk and career information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search influence the decision to change course/ career among first-year undergraduate students. Regression analysis results established that career test, career information, career days, job shadow/ volunteer work, visit to the university or company and guest speakers' talk had a positive and significant influence on students' change of courses or programmes of study at  $p$ -value  $<0.05$ . Further, results indicated that career information had the greatest influence on students' change of courses or programmes of study ( $\beta=0.378$ ), followed by Job shadow/ Volunteer work ( $\beta=0.175$ ), career days ( $\beta=0.157$ ), career test ( $\beta=0.139$ ), then visit to university or company ( $\beta=0.134$ ), and lastly guest speakers' talk ( $\beta=0.130$ ).

This study's findings agree with Fizer (2013) who acknowledged that career guidance programmes are useful in providing tools for students to use when choosing or changing a career. These tools include career tests, career days or fairs, and job shadowing. For example, career tests help students understand their strengths by identifying programmes in which they already have skills, abilities, and interests. Özlen and Arnaut (2013), Okiror and Denis (2015), Kimiti and Mwova (2012), Gachohi et. al. (2017b) in their studies on career choice among university students reported that career guidance activities were found to facilitate academic achievement, career planning, choice and decision making. The findings of the study were further supported by Hughey et al. (2009), Fizer (2013), Jaradat and Mustafa (2017), Astorne-Figar and Speer (2018) by citing Itonji (1993) and Arcidiacono et al. (2004) reported that students changed their major due to career information either lack of or availability of information influenced change of career choice. Lugulu and Kipkoech (2011), Marade (2015), Jaradat and Mustafa (2017). Astorne-Figar and Speer (2018) who observed that first-year students changed courses after receiving new information on courses.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concluded that career guidance programmes had a positive and significant influence on students' change of programme of study. In particular, career day/exhibition/conference, guest speakers talk and career information from universities or KUCCPS websites or google search were found to be influential factors of first year undergraduate's decision to change their courses or programmes of study.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that the Ministry of Education need to hold national dialogues on career guidance to gather information on practice gaps to inform possible solutions or interventions. Another suggestion is the training of qualified career guidance personnel across learning institutions basic through higher education. This can be initiated at teacher training programmes or teacher professional development programmes.

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