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Abstract

The study investigated factors that contribute to students' change of programmes of study among first year undergraduate students. This article focuses on the influence of personal factors on change of programme of study among first-year undergraduate students in Kenyan universities. It was anchored on Humanistic Theory of Curriculum, Social Cognitive Career Theory, and Social Learning Career Theory. Its study method was quantitative, a cross sectional survey with a causal comparative research design. It was conducted in selected seven universities and sampled 398 first year undergraduate students. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Kruskal Wallis, Pearson correlation and Regression analysis were used to compare different groups of students and test relationship between personal factors and students' change of programme of study, respectively. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyse the data. Results were presented in form of figures and tables. The findings indicated a strong positive and significant relationship between personal factors and students' change of programme of study. This was supported by a correlation value of 0.587 and p-value of 0.000. Further, results indicated that majority of the respondents identified personal interest, personal preference, academic abilities, personal goals, and opportunity for growth as influential factors in their change of programme of study. Regression results concluded that personal interest ($\beta=0.404$), personal preference ($\beta=0.223$), opportunity for growth ($\beta=0.19$) and personal goals ($\beta=0.17$) were students' determinants of their change of course or programme of study. The study recommended that students joining first year undergraduate university education should be encouraged

to carry out self-assessments to have a better understanding of their interests, abilities, preferences, among others. This can facilitate informed choice of courses or programmes of study and avoid changing from one programme of study to another.

Keywords: *Personal factors, programme of study, career choices, first-year undergraduate students, Kenyan universities*

1.0 Introduction

Kenya's goals of education are to provide a framework for which quality of education is delivered to learners at all levels. Curriculum is one of the mediums through which these goals are achieved. Curriculum experts organize these goals into programmes of study and plans for how learners' experiences, teaching methodologies and assessment will be delivered (KICD 2016, Syomwene, Nyandusi, and Yungungu 2017). Goals of university education contribute to skilled manpower to steer economic growth, disseminate research findings, knowledge, and solutions to problems societies face. As such, curriculum experts arrange programmes of study that responds to the needs of the society so that universities can fulfil their mandate. They further break down programmes of study into courses from which students choose what to study. These studies help them solve societal problems and also advance their career (Madanji 2014, Burgess, Senior, and Moores 2018; Odhiambo 2018). A career is a sequence of jobs, occupations or professions pursued by an individual throughout their life including life roles and leisure activities (Zunker 2006). For students, a career is a consideration they make when choosing a programme of study, academic programmes or courses offered in a university such as law, medical studies, education, human and social sciences. The list can go on (Ooro 2017). Programmes of study therefore helps them develop their careers, professions, or occupations throughout their life. But how do students choose these programmes of study so that they can develop their careers or professions?

Anderson (2018) suggests three ways: first, students can choose programmes of study because they lead to a career; for example, a study in nursing may lead to a career in nursing. Second, students may choose a career first, then match it with a programme of study, then choose a specific course that aligns to their choice. Third, others can begin with an end in mind by looking at their future lifestyle and then work backwards by choosing programmes of study and specific courses that interest them then decide which has the highest match. In view of this, a student can follow any option which makes sense to them. Unfortunately, despite the options, some students have difficulties in making the choice (Pabalinas, Teves, and Teves 2015). For this reason, they change from one programme of study to another. Lee (2009) and Pabalinas and colleagues (2015) suggests this may be attributed to a wide variety of programmes of study offered by the universities and careers in today's world as well as too many influences exerting pressure on students' choices.

Change of programme of study and course in a programme occurs when a student has made an initial choice from a list of what is available but changes that decision and makes a new choice altogether. Global trends on change of programme of study among undergraduate students show that the phenomenon is common in USA, Canada, Middle East but little is reported in Africa except for one study in South Africa. In the USA, the choice of programme of study is referred to as major. Several studies support the rate of change of majors once or more times before graduation: Foraker (2012) reported a

range from one-third to one-half; Freedman (2013) about 75%; The State University of Ohio, Enrolment Services (2013) between 50 to 75%; Leu (2017) 38%; Astorne-Figar and Speer (2017) 43% and Wright (2018) 50%. In Canada, Li and Li (2013) 62%. In the Middle East, Cheema, Farman and Qasim (2017) 77%; Jaradat and Mustafa (2017) 36% and Jaradat (2017) 28% respectively. In South Africa, Seymour and Serumola (2016) used qualitative method and reported that some students changed from Commerce to Information System (IS).

In Kenya, unpublished reports show students change their programmes of study. Lugulu and Kipkoech (2011) observed that several first-year undergraduate students after orientation week revise and change courses. Ayiro (2016) commented in a weekly newspaper that about 20 to 50% of undergraduate students enrolled in the university in Kenya change their courses they had initially chosen. Due to insufficient empirical literature on change of programmes of study among undergraduate students in Kenya, this research sought to contribute to the body of knowledge by establishing its prevalence, when change occurs and contributing factors.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Change of study programme among university students is one of the topics least researched in Kenya. However, several studies reveal that change of programme of study has far-reaching consequences for students, families, universities, industry, and the society at large both positively and negatively. If the change of programme of study is positive in such a way it aligns to students' interest, abilities, passion, and preferences, it has several advantages. Among them are graduation on time, connectedness to university, satisfaction with the programme of study experience, reduced study stress and reduced skills mismatch in the world of work (Robst 2007, Domadenik et al. 2013, Baik et al. 2015).

If the change is negative and not addressed early, it can cause a delay in graduation, and add to college education expenses thereby becoming expensive for families. For universities, it can affect how such students get started in their academic journey, adjustment to university life and motivation to study. For industry, the change of programme of study may delay in entry into the job market. For government and society, it can lead to a waste of taxpayers' money especially when university education is partly funded by the government. For students, it can cause frustration especially where there is a limitation in access to their preferred programmes of study or courses. This may affect their energy and enthusiasm which is part of the academic rigour needed to succeed and graduate. Upon graduation, students get into another challenge of unemployment due to course/programme of study mismatch. This may be characterized by graduates working in careers unrelated to their programmes of study leading to lower earnings compared to well-matched peers (Robst 2007, Ryan 2017, Van Wie 2017, Wright 2018, Alkather and AL-Ghamdi 2019).

Several studies done in the USA, Canada, Middle East, and South Africa confirm that the phenomenon of change of programme of study is common among university undergraduate students. In countries like America the rate of change ranges between 50-75%, Canada about 60%, the Middle East about 38% (McGaha 2005, Firmin and MacKillop 2008, Foraker (2012), Marade 2015, Jaradat 2015, Cheema et. al 2017, Seymou and Serumola 2016, Wright 2018). In Kenya, change of programme of study has not been studied extensively revealing knowledge and contextual gaps. Therefore,

this study bridges the knowledge gap through establishing the influence of personal factors in change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The study aimed at investigating the influence of personal factors on change of study programme among first-year undergraduate students in Kenyan universities.

1.3 Research Questions

This study was directed by the following research questions: 1) What is the prevalence of change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students? 2) To what extent do personal factors influence change of programme of study?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Humanistic Theory of Curriculum

Humanistic Theory of Curriculum (HTC) was espoused by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. Humanistic theory of curriculum contends that education succeeds when learners needs, interests, talents and aptitudes are developed (Sharp and Seel 2012, Syomwene, Nyandusi, and Yungungu 2017 & Alsalem 2018). The aim of education is to develop self-directed and motivated learners who have self-awareness and ability to choose the type of content they are interested in. Hence, the learning environment should facilitate achievement of learners' full potential, personal growth, self-actualization, self-understanding, and awareness. Teachers should encourage and guide learners exploit their interests, talents, potentials and abilities (Jingna 2012, Al-Khalidi 2015, Firdaus 2017). While the theory has been found to support discovery of students interests, potential and abilities, Firdaus (2017) contends that education systems do not always cultivate and develop learners potential. They often fail to prepare them for specific interests and so learners struggle to make independent choices of their programmes of study and courses and often change their programmes of study. Thus, the need to explore the extent to which personal factors constructed in terms of interests, preferences, personal growth, and abilities were influential in change of programmes of study.

2.1.2 Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) explains the way social cognitive variables such as self-efficacy principles, expected outcomes and how goals of an individual interact with individual characteristics of gender, environment and learning experiences (Patton and McMahon, 2006). These interactions are assumed to influence programmes of study and consequently career choice. In this study, self-efficacy and individual goals explored, established how they influence change of programmes of study. Self-efficacy refers to people's decision making based on their aptitudes and abilities to arrange and perform actions essential to accomplish their desired performance (Alexander et al. 2010). As such, self-efficacy plays a role in advancement of student's interest and goals (Zunker 2006). Personal goals propel an individual to undertake a task to meet the expected level of performance (Lent, Brown, and Hackett 2006). So, making personal goals helps individuals manage and hold up their own performance (Brown and Associates 2002). For this reason, students should be encouraged to create

goals that are aligned to their personal abilities (Lent, Brown, and Hackett 1994). Consequently, this should help students choose programmes of study that are aligned. In total, the constructs of self-efficacy and personal goals namely: interests, abilities, career goals form part of personal factors which were investigated to establish their influence on change of programme.

2.1.3 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 genetic endowments and special abilities whose impact either limits or expands choice of programmes of study (Shepard 2008). These were constructed as personal factors specifically elements of academic achievements, abilities, and interest. They were investigated for their influence on change of programmes of study among undergraduate university students.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Personal factors on change of programmes of study

Personal factors entail how personal or individual interests, personal goals, personal preference, opportunity for personal growth and academic achievement play a role in informing students when changing their programmes of study, individual courses and consequently careers (Zunker 2006). Several studies bear witness to how these factors influence change of programmes of study.

2.2.1.1 Personal interest and preference

Knowledge of personal interests is helpful to students. It helps them consider what careers to pursue and consequently choose programmes of study and courses aligned to their higher education (Shepard 2008). Morgan et al. (2001) conceptualized interests as “patterns of likes, dislikes, preferences and indifferences regarding to career-relevant activities and occupations”. These patterns play a role in what students choose to study. Studies show that choices made aligned to students interests, leads to higher success compared to those whose choices are inconsistent. Ahmed and colleagues (2017) agree that inconsistency in misaligned choice leads efforts and resources into unwanted trajectory including change of programmes of study. McMillan’s (2005) reported that 67% of the students changed their initial courses due to interest and preference in the new area of study. Malgwi and others (2005) indicated that 52% changed their major because of interest. Marade (2015) study reported that interest played a role when students changed their academic major. Drysdale et al. (2015) reported that 30% changed because the new major was more interesting. Jaradat and Mustafa (2017) study revealed that students changed majors because their initial courses were not interesting. Seymou and Serumola (2016) study confirmed students changed from commerce to IS after losing interest in the initial choice. McKenzie et al. (2017) reported that 40% changed after losing interest in their initial major. Wright (2018) study indicated that preferences and interests were the main influencing factors in students’ change of major.

2.2.1.2 Personal career goals

One of the strategies used by career counselling practitioners to assist individuals in career choice is through personal career goal identification (Balas-Timar, Bugariu, and Niță 2015). According to Lent et al. (2006) and Brown and Associates (2002), personal career goals are an expression of career interest in action. They elucidate that a student's career choice starts with an interest in a programme of study and then to actualize it, they set goals. These goals are a proposition of SCCT, and their influence helps students organize, guide, and sustain their own performance in the chosen programme of study. Unfortunately, Balas-Timar, Bugariu, and Niță (2015) contended that this activity is not so easy for students especially if they lack information on available careers, career paths, courses, majors or programmes of study. For this reason, some students change their career goals hence change their programmes of study. This phenomenon has been supported by the following studies: Marade (2015) reported that students choose majors in haste and often with insufficient information; then realized the choices made were not good and conflicted with their career goals and so they changed. Drysdale et al. (2015) reported that 23% of the respondents in their study changed their current major because it would impact negatively to their future career goals. McKenzie et al. (2017) in their study targeted third year students and reported that students changed their major because of change in career goals.

2.2.1.3 Personal growth

Personal growth is linked to self-efficacy SCCT's variable. According to Lee (2009), the influence of personal growth is an intentional process which is derived from an individual's interest in a career field. As such students are encouraged to carefully assess their interest when making their choice of programme of study. Sharma and Rani (2013) in their study found that the desire for personal growth influences choice of programme of study and ultimately a career. Marade (2015) outlined the advantages of changing majors among university students and reported it promoted positive development leading to personal growth. This suggests that personal growth influences change of programme of study.

2.2.1.4 Academic achievement and abilities

Academic ability and achievement are some of the factor students consider when choosing their major or programme of study and eventually a career choice (Fizer 2013). Aminu and Timothy (2014) considers academic performance as the ability of students to accomplish their tasks and studies and meet the standards set out by an examining body. Jaradat (2015) supported this and retaliated that students' abilities, secondary school average grades and points and capabilities play a significant role in students' choice of programmes of study. Marade (2015) study by citing the works of Dunwoody and Frank (1995) and Zafar (2011) found that grades (academic abilities) and personal performance were a factor in changing academic majors. Fizer (2013) contended that academic aptitude and ability were needed to succeed in some programmes such as law, health sciences and engineering. Firmin and MacKillop (2008) found that grades influences decision making and reported that students with low Grade Point Average (GPA) changed their majors. Seymou and Serumola (2016) study confirmed that abilities were a significant factor contributing to students' changing a major. They found that when some students were not able to cope academically in a

major, they changed their courses. Astorne-Figar and Speer (2017) reported that academic performance and grades influenced change of majors. Students who posted low grades switched to a major that better matched their abilities.

3.0 Methodology

The research method was quantitative specifically a cross sectional survey with a causal comparative research design. It was anchored on Humanistic Theory of Curriculum (HTC), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), and Social Learning Career Theory (SLCT) whose propositions provided the independent variable of personal factors against the dependent variable of change of programme of study. The research was conducted in selected seven (7) universities and sampled 398 first year undergraduate students. The research used questionnaires to collect data. Kruskal Wallis test was employed to compare the differences in change of programme of study among the three groups: students who changed before joining the university, after joining the university and those who did not change their programme of study at all. Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used test relationship between personal factors and students' change of programme of study.

4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Prevalence results

Figure 1 present the results of the change of programme of study/course

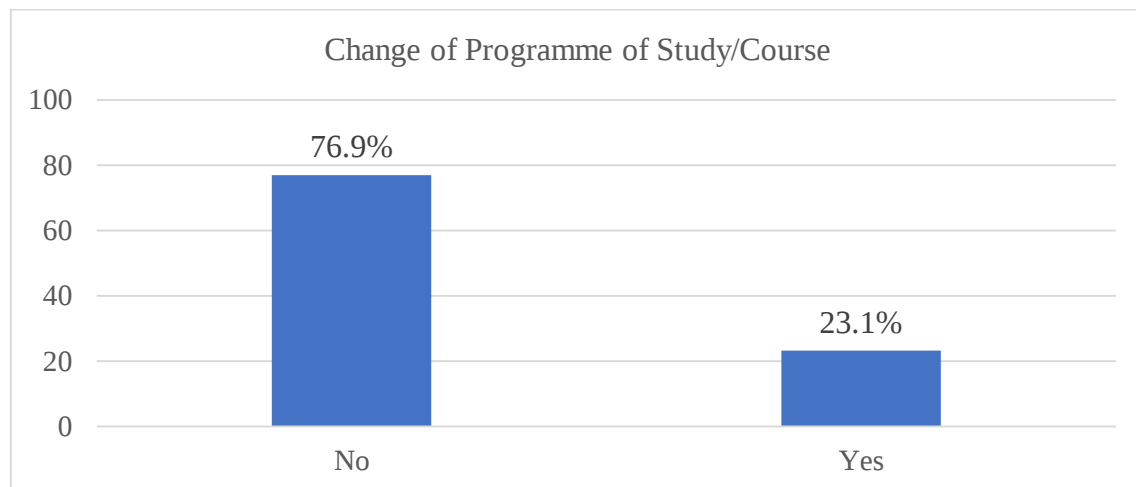


Figure 1: Change of Programme of Study/ Course

Results in Figure 1 reported that 76.9% of the respondents had not changed their course while 23.1% of the respondents had changed their course.

Likewise, the results in figure 2 depict the results concerning when the change of programme of study occurred

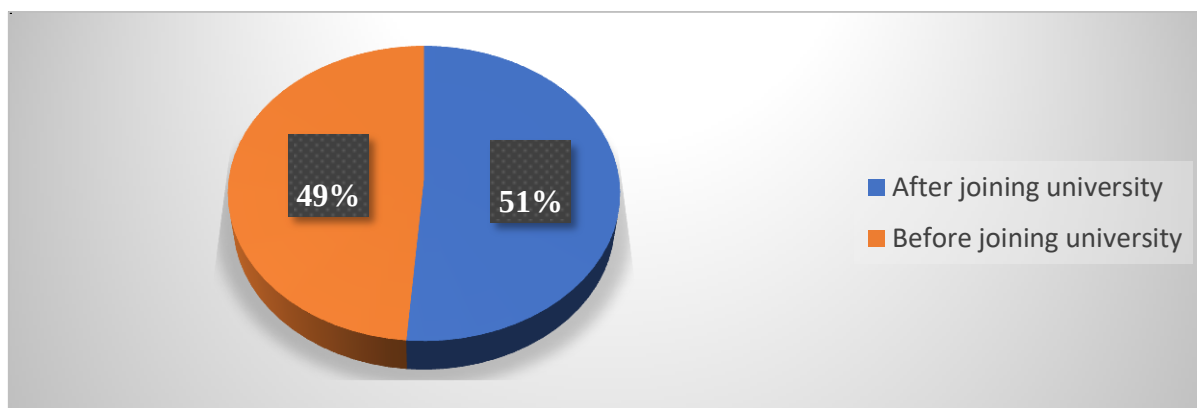


Figure 2: When Change of Programme of Study Occurred

Results in Figure 2 demonstrate that 51% of the respondents changed their programme of study after joining university while 49% changed before joining the university.

4.2 Kruskal Wallis Results

Table 1 present the Kruskal Wallis Test

Table 1: Kruskal Wallis Test

	Category	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square
Change of Course	No Change of Course	260	130.5	Chi2(336.714 P (0.000))
	Changed before	41	281.5	
	Changed after	37	319.45	
	Total	338		

Results in Table 1 showed there was a statistically significant difference between the students who changed their programme of study before joining university, after joining university and those who did not change their course at all. This was supported by a p value of $0.000 < 0.05$.

4.2.1 Least Significant Difference (LSD) Post Hoc Test and Difference between Groups

To further establish which group was significant in changing the course or programme of study a post hoc test was done. The results of LSD Post Hoc Test is presented in Table 2

Table 2: LSD Post Hoc Test

(I) category	(J) category	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
no change	changed before	-1.000*	0.009	0.000
	Changed after	-1.973*	0.009	0.000
changed before	no change	1.000*	0.009	0.000
	Changed after	-.973*	0.012	0.000
Changed after	no change	1.973*	0.009	0.000
	changed before	.973*	0.012	0.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Findings in Table 2 indicate that students were more likely to change their programmes of study after joining University compared to before joining the university and not changing at all.

4.3 Change of Programme of Study before Joining University

Table 3 depict the outcome of personal factors that contribute to the change of programme of study before joining university

Table 3: Personal Factor: Change of Programme of Study before Joining University

Statement	Not at all %	Very small extent %	Small extent %	Large extent %	Very large extent %	Mean	Std. Dev
Personal interest	11.1	2.8	19.4	19.4	47.2	3.9	1.3
Academic ability to do well in the course	14.3	5.7	5.7	45.7	28.6	3.7	1.3
Course matches with my personal preference	2.8	2.8	22.2	25.0	47.2	4.1	1.0
Personal career goals	8.3	13.9	13.9	22.2	41.7	3.8	1.4
Opportunity for personal growth	13.9	11.1	13.9	19.4	41.7	3.6	1.5
Average						3.8	1.3

Results presented in Table 3 indicate that 47.2% of the respondents rated '*personal interest*' to a very large extent as having influenced their change of programme of study. Further, 45.7% of the respondents rated '*academic ability to do well in the course*' to a large extent as having influenced their change of programme of study; 47.2% rated '*course matches with my personal preference*' to a very large extent; 41.7% rated '*personal career goals*' to a very large extent; and 41.7% rated '*opportunity for personal growth*' as having influenced their change of programme of study to a very large extent. The overall mean of 3.8 indicate that majority of the respondents rated to a large extent the influence of personal factors in their decision to change course before joining university. The responses were varied as indicated by a standard deviation of 1.3.

4.4 Change of Programme of Study after Joining University

The researcher sought to examine factors that contribute to the change of programme of study after joining university. The personal factors that led to the change of programme of study after joining university are presented in Table 4

Table 4: Personal factors: Change of Programme of Study after Joining University

Statement	Not at all %	Very small extent %	Small extent %	Large extent %	Very large extent %	Mean	Std. Dev
Personal interest	0.0	2.6	5.1	15.4	76.9	4.7	0.7
Academic ability to do well in the course	7.7	0.0	10.3	28.2	53.8	4.2	1.2
Course matches with my personal preference	0.0	2.6	7.7	7.7%	82.1	4.7	0.7
Personal career goals	0.0	2.6	2.6	15.4	79.5	4.7	0.6
Opportunity for personal growth	5.1	2.6	17.9	20.5	53.8	4.2	1.1
Average						4.5	0.9

Results presented in Table 4 indicated that 76.9% of the respondents rated '*personal interest*' to a very large extent as their influence to change programme of study after joining university. Further, 53.8% of the respondents rated '*academic ability to do well in the course*' as having influenced their change of programme of study to a large extent; 82.1% rated '*course matches with my personal preference*' to a very large extent; 79.5% rated '*personal career goals*' to a very large extent; and 53.8% rated '*opportunity for personal growth*' as having influenced their change of programme of study to a very large extent. The overall mean of 4.5 indicate that majority of the respondents rated to a very large extent the influence of personal factors in their decision to change programme of study after joining university. The responses were varied as indicated by a standard deviation of 0.9.

4.5 Descriptive Results: Personal Factors

The descriptive results of personal factor that enhance the choice of programme of study is shown in Table 5

Table 5: Personal Factor: Choice of Programme of Study

Statement	Not at all %	Very small extent %	Small extent %	Large extent %	Very large extent %	Mean	Std. Dev
Personal interest	5.20	1.60	7.10	22.60	63.50	4.4	1.0
Academic ability to do well in the course	1.60	1.60	3.60	33.60	59.70	4.5	0.8
Course matches with my personal preference	2.00	2.40	10.30	35.70	49.60	4.3	0.9
Personal career goals	3.60	4.80	9.90	28.20	53.60	4.2	1.0
Opportunity for personal growth	3.60	4.80	9.10	30.20	52.40	4.2	1.0
Average						4.3	1.0

Results presented in Table 5 indicate that 63.5% of the respondents rated '*personal interest*' to a very large extent as having influenced their choice of programme of study; 59.7% o rated '*academic ability to do well in the course*' to a very large extent; 49.6% rated '*course matches with my personal preference*' to a very large extent; 53.6% rated '*personal career goals*' to a very large extent; and 52.4% rated '*opportunity for personal growth*' as having influenced their choice of programme of study to a very large extent. The overall mean of 4.3 indicate that majority of the respondents rated to a large extent the influence of personal factors in their programme of study. The responses were varied as indicated by a standard deviation of 1.0.

4.6 Pearson Correlation: Personal Factors and Change of Programme of Study

The research question sought to establish the extent to which personal factors influence change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students. With reference to this research question, a null hypothesis that personal factors have no significant influence on students' change of career choice was tested. Results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Correlation Results: Personal Factors and Change of Programme of Study

Variable		Change of Course	Personal Factor
Change of Course	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Personal Factor	Pearson Correlation	.587**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

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

The findings indicated in Table 6 above shows a a strong positive and significant relationship between personal factors and change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students. This was supported by a correlation value of 0.587 and p

value of 0.000. Since the p value was found to be less than 0.05, we rejected the first null hypothesis and concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between personal factors and change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students. This implies that personal factors construct of *personal interest*, *personal preference*, *academic abilities*, *personal goals*, and *opportunity for growth* have a high likelihood of influencing the decision to change programme of study among first year undergraduate students.

4.7 Regression Analysis: Personal Factors and Change of Programme of Study

The study sought to establish the most influential personal factors on students' change of programme. Univariate regression was used to determine the influence of each of the personal factors on students' change of programme of study. The regression results are summarized in table 7 below.

Table 7: Personal Factors and Change of Programme of Study

Change of Programme of Study	Beta Coefficient (β)	Sig
Personal interest	0.404	0.000
Course matches with my personal preference	0.223	0.000
Opportunity for personal growth	0.19	0.000
Personal career goals	0.17	0.001
Academic ability to do well in the course	0.071	0.319

Based on the above findings in Table 7, all the personal factors except academic ability to do well in the course had a positive and significant influence on students' change of programme of study. Further, results indicated that *personal interest* had the greatest influence on students' change of programme of study ($\beta=0.404$), followed by *course matches with my personal preference* ($\beta=0.223$), *opportunity for personal growth* ($\beta=0.19$), then *personal career goals* ($\beta=0.17$), and lastly *academic ability* ($\beta=0.071$).

5. 0 Discussions

5.1 Prevalence of Change of Programme of Study

5.1.1 RQ1: What is the prevalence of change of programme among first year undergraduate students?

The findings first revealed a prevalence of 23%. Further, students possibly changed their programme of study after joining the university. The outcome of Kruskal Wallis test showed that a statistically significant mean variance among students who changed course before joining university (mean rank 281.5), after joining university (mean rank 319.4) and those who did not change their course at all (mean rank 130.5). The post hoc test indicated that students were more likely to change their programme of study after joining university.

Studies done in the USA, Canada and Middle East confirm that students change of the programme of study in their undergraduate education, but the prevalence differ from one region to another. In the USA, the change has been reported to range between 50-75% McGaha (2005), Firmin and MacKillop (2008), Foraker (2012), Marade (2015), Astorne-Figar and Speer (2017) McKenzie et. al (2017) and Wright (2018). In Canada,

Li and Li (2013) reported a rate of about 60% while in Middle East about 38% by Jaradat (2015) and Cheema et. al (2017). In Kenya, unpublished report by Ayiro (2016) indicated a rate of about 20 to 50%. The studies in America, Canada and Middle East show a contrast to the findings of this study. Ayiro's unpublished report of about 20% seem to agree with this study results of 23%. This confirms change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students.

Change of programme of study after joining university has been supported by Lugulu and Kipkoech (2011) study observed that first-year undergraduate students change courses after orientation week. Seymou and Serumola (2016) reported that students changed their courses after joining the university. Drysdale and others (2015) indicated students change their courses during their first or second year in the university. Bordony and Fu (2015) and Wright (2018) suggested that students' frequent change of majors were done immediately after joining the university and later in their college life. These past studies agree with the results of this current study that students are more probable to change their programmes of study after joining the university. Therefore, universities have a role to support the students in their change of programme of study or courses.

5.2 Influence of Personal Factors on Change of Programme of Study

5.2.1 RQ2: To what extent do personal factors influence change of programme of study?

The research question aim was to establish the degree to which personal factors influence change of programme of study among first year undergraduate students. The descriptive statistics findings indicated that majority the respondents identified personal interest, personal preference, academic abilities, personal goals, and opportunity for growth as essential personal factors that influenced their change of programme of study. The Pearson Correlation findings indicated a robust and significant relationship between personal factors and students' change of career choice. The null hypothesis postulated no statistically significant association between personal factors and change of career choice among first year undergraduate students was rejected. This implied that personal factors including personal interest, personal preference, academic abilities, personal goals and opportunity for growth have a high likelihood of influencing the decision to change programme of study among first year undergraduate students. The regression findings further established that all the personal factors except academic ability to do well in a course had a constructive and substantial influence on students' change of study programme.

These results match with the postulations of theories in which this research was anchored; Social Learning Career Theory (SLCT) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Krumboltz, Mitchell, and Gelatt (1975) Krumboltz (1978) Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990) the proponents of SLCT proposed that inherited endowments and distinct capabilities (such as personal characteristics, gender, interests, and intelligence) influence how people make career choices. These results agree with their proposition that personal factors influence change of career choice. Lent and colleagues (2002), Patton and McMahon (2006) and Alexander et al. (2010) suggested that SCCT variables of ability, self-efficacy and goal influences career choice. Consequently, these results support that the same variables influence change of programme of study among first year undergraduates in Kenya.

The results also agree with Shepard (2008) assertion that knowledge of personal interest helps students consider what careers to pursue and consequently choose courses aligned to that in higher education. Further, these results are supported by other studies on change of majors or programme of study among university students. These are Marade (2015) and McKenzie and others (2017) in USA, Drysdale and colleagues (2015) in Canada, Seymou and Serumola (2016) in South Africa, Jaradat and Mustafa (2017) in Middle East, which agree that students change majors due to interest and preference. Some change after loss of interest in their initial choice or change in interests (Jaradat and Mustafa 2017).

6.0 Conclusion

Unpublished reports had reported that first year students change their programmes of study from their initial choice once they reported to university. This study has confirmed that 23% changed their programmes of study and are likely to change once they join the university. The question of the factors influencing the decisions being made by these students seem insufficiently addressed. This study concluded that personal interest, personal preference, academic abilities, personal goals, and opportunity for growth were critical in influencing the decision of students to change their course or programme of study. The most influential factor was personal interest.

7. 0 Recommendations

The study recommended the following: first, further research prevalence of change of programmes among students in higher classes Second, to policy makers such as university leaders in collaboration with the government educational arms to seek way of providing sustainable career guidance to the student either before joining university education to mitigate changes while in the university specifically early identification and nurturing of interests and talents . Finally, students joining undergraduate university education should be encouraged to carry out self-assessments to have a better understanding of their interests, abilities, preferences, among others. This can facilitate informed choice thus avoid change from one programme of study to another.

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