

## The Status of Career Counselling Services in Higher Learning Institutions in Tanzania

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### Abstract

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*Despite the wide range of careers available in the world of work choosing appropriate career has been identified as one of the common challenges to many students. In this article, we assessed the status of career guidance and counselling services in four universities in Tanzania. It had four objectives: (a) to identify and document the career counselling services offered (b) to identify the career counselling needs of undergraduate students (c) to explore the level of support of universities for students' transition to the world of work and (d) to identify the challenges which hinder effective provision of career guidance services. This study was conducted in Iringa, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam and Dodoma regions. It was informed by interpretive paradigm using the qualitative research approach. The study revealed four major career counselling needs: Knowledge of the self and world of work; employment opportunities; job requirements and salary prospects as well as preparation for joining the world of work. Moreover, it was found that in most universities career services are at a fairly elementary. Students in all fields receive occupational information except those in the field of education. Furthermore, the findings revealed that low students' self-awareness, lack of both enough professional counsellors and a clear policy for implementing career guidance and counselling services at both university and national levels are the most fundamental barriers to effective provision of career guidance and counselling in Tanzania. Based on the findings of the study we argue for establishment of career resource centres at institutional level to provide occupational information and training necessary for successful future career development.*

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**Key Words:** Career Counselling, Higher Education, Undergraduate Students, Tanzania

### 1. Introduction

Despite the wide range of careers for students to choose from; guidance and counselling is still needed to help them choose effectively. In many developed countries, career guidance and counselling is well planned in the entire school system (Varalakshmi & Moly, 2009). There are career counselling centres with adequate resources to enable students access and use career information independently. This freedom helps students to make sound and informed career decisions (UNESCO, 2002). Indeed, self-interest and personality inventories enable students to make self-assessment about their career interests and personality at a very early stage. In many developing countries and sub-Saharan in general and Tanzania in particular career guidance and counselling of students at higher education level is very important and perhaps is urgently needed due to its perceived implications for future life.

One of the rationales for career guidance and counselling in higher education is to help students choosing their fields of study (training programmes) in accordance with employment opportunities. This can be achieved by doing a self-assessment in relation to their chosen major subject of study, giving students access to information about the world of work in terms of various occupational structures and requirements. It also helps students to meet the unique needs of various sub-populations since individuals have unique needs based on their different experiences (Biswalo, 1996; Herr & Crammer, 1992; UNESCO, 2002; Varalakshmi & Moly, 2009).

Realizing the need for and importance of informed career decision making, the government of Tanzania through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training plans to institutionalize counselling services as an integral part of the country's education system (Biswalo, 1996). For example, in teacher training curricula career guidance featured as one of the compulsory courses aims at preparing teachers to gain more knowledge of issues relating to occupations (URT, 1995). Furthermore, the government directive requires the heads of secondary schools to appoint career masters and mistresses, whose responsibility is to advise secondary school heads on career-related matters, such as students' job applications, placements for further education and training, collecting and disseminating occupational information, and assessing students' talents and capabilities (Biswalo, 1996). This was informed by the need to help students make long-term career plans, including the choice of fields of study in tertiary and higher education where the students receive advanced training before joining the world of work (URT, 1997). However, it is not clear, to what extent career guidance and counselling services are provided in schools as stipulated in the Education and Training Policy. Nevertheless, there is no empirical evidence available to unearth the policy's practicability.

Overwhelming of research findings have shown that lack of proper career guidance and counselling in most African schools constitutes a major career barrier for post-secondary education (Biswalo, 1996; Mwamwenda, 1996; Mvungi, 2007; Mbilinyi, 2012; Lugulu & Kipkoech, 2011). Most university students' career choices in Africa are accidental, imposed by external forces or circumstances (Dabula & Mukara, 2013; Lugulu & Kipkoech, 2006; Winston & Lawrence (n.d). This implies that students are not prepared enough to identify which fields best suit their abilities and interests. The scenario is also revealed in a recent study by Amani (2014) which showed that most undergraduate students' career motivations are external, henceforth; students are less likely to join their future careers upon completion of their studies. In view of this, the immediate assumption is that, there is little or perhaps no career counselling services in higher education institutions, including universities. Students are either unaware of them, or do not have access to the information they need to know before joining the world of work. Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to career preparation and development as far as students' knowledge about prospective employers, possible links and associated challenges are concerned. There is inevitably a need for an inquiry that would explore the status of the provision of career guidance and counselling in Tanzanian universities with a view to recommending the best practices for effective career guidance and counselling services. Hence, this study is guided by four main questions: (a) What are the career counselling needs of university students? (b) What career guidance and counselling services are available to university students? (c) How do universities support students' transition from colleges to the world of work? (d) What challenges hinder the effective provision of career guidance and counselling services in Tanzanian universities?

## **2 Methods**

### **2.1 The Research Approach and Design**

The basic assumption guiding this study is that undergraduate students, counsellors and academic officials have formed some perspectives about the provision of career guidance and counselling due to their experiences gained from their stay in the universities/colleges. These perspectives need to be explored in order to develop an in-depth understanding of their perceptions of the problem under study. Therefore, the study was grounded by a qualitative approach in which hermeneutic phenomenology is the dominant design to information gathering. This is the type of phenomenology which helps to gain an understanding of problem based on participants' lived experience together with its meaning in a given context (Laverty, 2003; Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Thus, participants were engaged collectively and individually to discern their varied and common experiences of the provision of career guidance and counselling services in their respective contexts.

### **2.2 The Setting, Sample and Selection Procedures**

We conducted this study in four universities located in four regions in Tanzania. The universities include: University of Dar es Salam Mwalimu JK Nyerere campus (UDSM), University of Dodoma (UDOM), University of Iringa (UI) and Muslim University of Morogoro (MUM).

Higher learning institutions were preferred because at the university level students need to match their chosen fields of study with the career opportunities in the labour market. It is the final level of schooling upon which its completion obligates one to gain employment. Thus, it was important to have a clear understanding of the status of the career counselling services offered in the sampled universities so as to ascertain how university students are helped to find out about their training programmes, prospective employers and other career-related opportunities. Also, a mix of private and public universities is worth qualifying for justification of trustworthiness. Other factors that guided the choice of the universities include: different location, oldest and popularity, and the degree programmes. The sample for this study was 109 whereby 7 were counsellors, 14 were academic officials and 88 were undergraduate students in four selected universities. The participants were purposively and conveniently selected.

### **2.3 Methods of Data Collection**

We employed two methods of data collection namely; personal interviews and focus group discussion. Personal interviews were particularly conducted with counsellors and academic officials so as to get insightful information on the role of the university and the resources available to enable students understand their careers in particular and the world of work in general. The interviews were conducted to obtain information on whether or not the universities provide students with occupational information and preparatory skills training. On the other hand, focus group discussions were conducted with students in each participant university. This technique facilitated an interaction among people of similar backgrounds talking about their attitudes and experiences about a phenomenon in ways that would not easily be achieved in a one to one interview (Bryman, 2004). A total of 14 focus groups with membership of between six and eight participants were engaged in all the four universities. The discussions took between 45 and 90 minutes. With respect to access procedures, research clearance was obtained before embarking on data collection. Participants' consent was received in all cases. For confidentiality purposes, the actual names of the participating universities were assigned letters A to D, that is, university A, B, C and D.

### **2.4 Data Management and Analysis Procedures**

The proceedings were conducted in Kiswahili and recorded verbatim using a tape recorder. Thereafter, they were translated into English. The transcription was an on-going process which started during data collection. This was informed not only by the need to become familiar with the data but also to get a few participants to validate the initial codes generated. Thematic analysis framework informed the data analysis in which themes were identified and illustrated using participants' voices.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1 Career Counselling Services Offered in Tanzanian Universities**

The study identified career counselling services offered in the participating universities. It was revealed that most of the universities have not officially institutionalized career guidance and counselling as an integral part of their programmes. In most cases, students were guided more on the academic and social welfare than career-related matters. However, it was noted that in all universities, the services were in place but at very elementary stage. The following views from the counsellors justify the argument.

One counsellor maintained that:

Apparently the services are in their infancy stage I can say. Counselling services are provided under the counselling unit. However, issues relating to careers, course selection and others are handled by the Dean of Students' Office and at the departmental level. Some students want to know about better courses than the ones they had selected and/or even to change....this information is available to them through the Dean of Students (Counsellor, University C).

Similarly, another counsellor held that:

The counselling services offered here are less to do with career-related matters. Students are just told about how to excel in their academic endeavour (Counsellor, University B).

Another one had this to say:

Career counselling services are not officially offered here; what we have is just counselling about social problems. We are facing difficulties because there is not a well-structured programme for career issues may be because no personnel has been trained for such service (Counsellor, University D).

Generally, the results indicate little or no provision of career guidance and counselling in higher education institutions is provided. The counselling services provided were broad and unstructured to meet students' career needs.

### 3.1.1 Provision of career induction programmes

The study assessed the career induction programmes provided in each university with the purpose of revealing whether or not they give students details of the courses they have chosen. This was informed by the findings of previous studies (Mvungi, 2009; Mbilinyi, 2012) which clearly established that the majority of Tanzanian secondary school students complete their education without received proper career guidance. Thus, it was important to explore whether or not students are helped to know about their chosen fields at university level. Content analysis showed that the majority of students receive orientation once they have joined the university. However, many students reported that they are provided with general guidance about social welfare and university by-laws, but little information is given regarding the chosen course. Despite the information received during orientation concerning the courses, many students are not allowed to change their course except for special reasons. The following quotes from students elaborate the argument.

We are provided with information about our courses, departments in which the courses are hosted, the number of units per programme, etc. However, this information comes too late as there is little room to change from one programme to another (Student, University A).

In some fields of study, like business from University D, several respondents complained that they did not receive any kind of orientation prior to or upon their arrival at the university, except that fellow students in second and third year guided them. For instance, one of the respondents argued that:

.....we were not provided with any kind of induction by the College but what I remember is that we just met second-year students and finalists in the same course (Small business and entrepreneurship). They told us some stuff about the course, how to study it, how we should prepare ourselves to become entrepreneurs, etc., but nothing was done under the initiative of the College management (Student, University D).

Another respondent had this to remark:

I don't think if there is any induction programme under any office. What they do here is general guidance on how to conduct ourselves but they do not approach students in their respective colleges and schools depending on the courses they are studying. Everything here is shallow.... However, finalists, under the students' organisation, usually organise a talk with first years, and from there we learn many things including about our degree programmes (Student, University C).

To corroborate the information from students, we conducted interviews with academic officials (deans/principals) of the respective schools and colleges. The results confirmed the fact that prior to students' entry into the university, an induction programme was partially carried out. Most of the universities usually conduct it when students enter the university, although some colleges/schools within universities, for example, the College of Engineering at Universities A and D, and the Business School at Universities A and C were found to have planned an induction programme for students both prior to and after they joined the university. However, the findings revealed that career induction programmes were not provided in the fields of education and law. This implied that the provision of induction programmes varied in colleges and universities. Academic officials had this to explain:

We normally have an outreach programme where we visit science –based secondary schools located at Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Shinyanga regions. For example, we tell students what engineering is all about. However, it is not done frequently due to financial constraints. We also have a special College orientation day (4 hours) where tell student are oriented about the engineering, available specializations so that they know what they will get out of engineering as a profession. In that programme the curriculum content of all specializations within engineering and the academic activities are shown to students (Academic official, University A).

Another academic official from university D had this to say:

In fact, before joining the University we don't provide any orientation but conduct orientation once they have reported at the university. There is a general orientation whereby students are guided on how to conduct themselves after which the College elaborates on the major courses, elective courses, number of units and learning styles in the College and general course directions (Academic official - University D).

Furthermore, in the field of education, the academic official had this to add:

...we have two major orientation programmes. Prior to students joining the university, we orient prospective students at the TCU and Sabasaba exhibitions. The majority of students (though not all prospective university students) visit us and we inform them about the courses we offer and the programme requirements. After they have joined we do not have a detailed structured induction programme as such.... They are told about the different specializations available in the respective departments. However, it is not that comprehensive (Academic official - University A).

However, a different explanation was given by the Dean of the same school (education) but in a different university as shown below:

Honestly we don't have an induction programme in our Faculty. We just advertise our courses and so the students choose the courses they value and know what they are all about (Academic official - University C).

Notably, in the same University (University C) different opinions were given by the academic officials in the Faculty of Business, as illustrated below:

Before they come we send our instructors to secondary schools (A-level) during teaching practice to provide information about our programmes. Apart from this, we advertise our programmes through different media. Upon their arrival we clearly explain the courses we offer, the ethics and learning style in business studies. After being given this information they re-think and if they are not satisfied with it or they do not meet the requirements that is when they change the course. This is done at faculty level in collaboration with heads of departments (Academic official - University C).

Content analysis of the interviews with counsellors was similar to that of the academic officials. Only one university reported having an induction programme prior to and upon students' arrival. It was noted that counsellors from University A under the Dean of Students' office organise outreach programmes, whereby they visit secondary schools and guide A-level students on matters relating to their choice of career. Students learn about characteristics of different careers. For example, what does it mean for one to be a lawyer or teacher, and which subject combinations relate to what type of degree programme. However, due to financial constraints the programme has not been sustained. It was further reported that the counselling office provides induction programmes in collaboration with the management of other colleges in the university. To support this argument one counsellor explained:

We had an outreach programme which lasted almost 3 years, whereby we visited secondary schools in Dar es Salaam region with the purpose of providing career guidance. Through that programme we managed to guide secondary school students on how best they could choose their career corresponding to their academic major. However, due to lack of finance the programme was unsustainable. Hence, we are looking for donors to facilitate this programme so that it can take place in many regions and schools (Counsellor - University A).

### **3.5 Students' Career Needs**

This study sought important to find out what should be the focus of career counselling as far as their career needs are concerned? When inquired about this the majority of the students had the view that counselling services should timely cover the provision of knowledge about prospective careers and preparation for the world of work. The following quotations from students in various fields necessitate the reasons for and how career guidance and counselling should be strengthened.

Many misunderstandings arise when joining the university, and sometimes we found ourselves in a dilemma, and so I believe career guidance should focus on helping students overcome such misunderstandings regarding their career paths (Student -University D).

...it is disappointing to graduate without an idea about the nature of the job one has been trained for, job requirements, etc. A little is found out through practical training but still there is need to have up-to-date information. Unlike student teachers whose employment is waiting for them, in other careers it is very difficult to be employed directly by the government. Therefore, we would be grateful if we were informed about prospective careers including salary prospects. Perhaps this could be done by the counselling department and even in our colleges/departments (Student-University A).

Some students went further by saying that career guidance should focus on making them aware of the morals and ethics of their profession. They were of the view that it is good for students to be informed of the ethical practices/codes of conduct so that when they graduate they become role models in their respective professions.

It's good if students are informed about professional morals and ethics. Well, in some programmes there could be various courses for that, but I think it is not enough... something needs to be done as part of guidance, how to behave professionally, codes of conduct, etc. There is a lot of professional misconduct today in various workplaces, and so it is good if students are aware of these issues, especially for finalists (Student, University B).

Another student had this to say:

It is very common for students to graduate without generic skills such as how to write an application letter and curriculum vitae and the like. I think career guidance should also serve this purpose...it is our common problem and I believe some people are facing difficulties finding a job because they lack some of these important skills (Student, University C).

Furthermore, other respondents thought that the provision of career guidance should help students prepare for and enter the world of work. For example, one respondent asserted that:

For me, career guidance should also help and prepare students to enter the world of work. We have some teachers who do not report at their work station and I guess lack of guidance could be one of the reasons for their inability to adjust/adapt maximally to the working conditions. If they were counselled effectively before they graduate they would be psychologically prepared to face the challenges involved in their work environment (Student, University B).

With respect to the right time for effective guidance and counselling, the majority of students had the view that career guidance should start in secondary school before students are streamed in various fields of specialization. They need to know their strengths and weaknesses as well as interests and personalities. This will help them to make better decisions. They further added that it should not stop at secondary school level but continue into higher education because it is the transition stage from college to the world of work.

Career guidance should start earlier (say in secondary school – ordinary level) before students specialise in their fields (Arts, Business or Science). There is a close link between what subjects students major at lower levels and what they want to become, and so if a careful and informed choice is made then, there will be no regrets (Student-University A).

Similar views from another student were given as follows:

Well, it is better if it starts earlier (secondary school or even at primary school level) than here, and if someone missed it before, then the need becomes more acute than ever...I think it should be provided at all levels but more constantly here (university) as students are in the transition from education to the world of work and perhaps we need to know a lot about the world of work than a primary school student (Student-University C).

Generally, from the above views it is evident that the majority of students in all programmes believed that counselling was needed in five main areas. It should focus on helping them gain more knowledge of their chosen major field, prospective employers, employment opportunities and professional codes of conduct and it should prepare them for entering the world of work.

### **3.6 The Role of Universities in Facilitating Students' College to Work Transition**

#### **3.6.1 Provision of Occupational Information**

The Education and Training Policy clearly denotes that one of the objectives of tertiary and higher education in Tanzania is to prepare students to join the world of work (URT, 1995).

The study explored how the university managements prepare their prospective graduates to know the world of work. The intention was to find out if there are any initiatives taken by the respective universities to link students to their prospective employers. Findings from the interviews with Deans of Faculties and Schools revealed that, to some extent, the universities played a major role in providing occupational links to their prospective graduates. However, the extent to which this exercise is effectively implemented differs across fields of study and universities. For example, except students in the field of education, the rest of the Schools/Faculties managed to update their students regarding employment trends and the status of the labour market in the world of work. One of the reasons mentioned by officials in the field of education for not providing occupational links was the high demand for teachers in the country and so almost every graduate from education was likely to secure government employment if he/she really wants to, that is why they assumed that employment for student teachers has not yet become a problem.

However, the experience of other colleges is quite different. Most College/University managements provide their students with relevant career information through networking with different stakeholders, workshops and seminars. However, these services are at an early stage, which questions their sustainability. Examples of companies/stakeholders who work jointly with the University management to provide prospective graduates with occupational information, especially on employment opportunities, are CRDB bank of Tanzania, START OIL Company and telephone companies like TIGO and VODACOM. Therefore, in some colleges these initiatives are in place to make sure that prospective graduates, especially in the fields of engineering and business, know exactly where they would find employment in relation to their college subject majors. One of the academic officials in the field of engineering asserts that:

We (college) and the industry strive to make sure that our students are employed. We have created networks with both local and international organisations that need our outputs (graduates) such as Halbaton from UK, and Shrome from Germany. Local partners include Twiga Cement Company, Mtibwa Sugar Company, and Diamond Motors. These companies usually come to provide our finalists with seminars covering their profiles and expectations. Finally they conduct both written and oral interviews with a few students who qualify (Academic official - University A).

Similarly, another academic official from the field engineering but in a different university maintained that: First of all our programme/course outlines provide information about career opportunities and links for students' attention. Sometimes we are visited by different companies, such as people from Geological Survey of Tanzania (GST) and START Oil, who provide short courses on the application of some theoretical aspects in a specific course. Some of the companies take our graduates for on-the-job training where they get practical experience in the field, after which they employ them. Through this partnership I hope our graduates will have no fear concerning employment issues (Academic official - University D).

Interestingly, students in the field of Law had the added advantage of being provided with career information through a career day. This is evidenced by the Dean Faculty as follows.

We have a Law Day annually when different practitioners from the Ministry, Law School and magistrate's office provide occupational information such as the career opportunities available to them upon graduation (Academic official - University C).

Another link which was explored during the interview sessions in all universities was that of practical training. This is when students go for field training to put into practice the skills they have learnt and experience the real world of work. The duration of practical training is 4-8 weeks. However, this varies with programmes and universities. During practical training students can establish links themselves. If they do what is required it increases the chance of them being employed upon completion of their studies. Therefore, it was noted that practical training was one of the strong and stable links between students and their prospective employers in each sampled university.

Furthermore, the results have shown that despite the fact that some universities managed to provide occupational information but the service seemed not provided to students on a regular basis. Only one university had a special career centre where students could get information regularly.

It was further noted that in the rest of the universities career information was only provided when the counselling office receives an inquiry from different companies seeking an opportunity to talk to students about various career programmes. Nevertheless, among all the participating universities, only two had a career day in which career-related activities were discussed. During career day, students meet together to get some career insights from various stakeholders. This was supported by one of the counsellors who said:

We usually collect career information from different institutions or companies. For example, we distribute brochures to students showing the profiles of different companies. We also have a career day to which different companies such as TCC and CRDB are invited to come and give a seminar and then conduct interviews to interested and some students who show interest are employed through such a programme (Counsellor - University A).

A similar comment was made by another counsellor as follows:

Occupational information is usually disseminated to finalists. We provide information regarding employers' profile and sometimes arrange the interviews here (university D). For example, career information is given about different institutions such as NMB and CRDB. Sometimes the Minister of Education comes and talks to student teachers about matters relating to teaching as a profession (Counsellor, University D).

It was also noted that, unlike other universities where career information was provided by the Dean of Students' Office, at University A there was a special unit for career counselling services. The unit is responsible for guiding students on matters relating to employment prospects. This was explained by the Coordinator of Career Counselling Centre at the Business School.

Our centre (Career Counselling Centre) provides guidance to students on how to choose a career and get to know about employment opportunities. We also have a special programme for linking our graduates with prospective employers. Various practitioners train our students in their fields of specialization for 6 months, after which they employ them (Coordinator –Career Counselling Centre –University A).

### 3.6.2 Provision of Preparatory Training Programmes

Content analysis of interviews conducted with counsellors on the provision of preparatory career training programmes to students showed that training is offered in a few universities. For example, the counselling office in collaboration with the management of the College of Engineering at University (A) conducts a preparatory training programme for their students on how to write application letters and their *curriculum vitae* (CV). However, the training is often given to finalists. As noted earlier, only the Business School in University (A) has a career centre where students are provided with all career-related information. Among other things, the centre regularly equips students with the skills needed to apply for jobs and to write a CV. Although in most cases the universities did not have an organised preparatory programme for career-related issues, some generic skills are taught in various courses such as communication skills as explained by counsellors:

.... really we do not have a proper or well organised and formal programme for preparatory training but it is indirectly done through our common programme known as competence-based teaching and assessment. This is a programme whereby every student has to take an oral test which counts for 10% of their course work. This increases their confidence to explain themselves and speak out in front of an audience, which is a very important skill as far as a job interview is concerned. We think that this could prepare our prospective graduates to be to join the world of work. (Counsellor, University B).

Another counsellor commented that:

There is no such programme here but I think there are courses such as communication skills in which students learn things of that kind, but we as the counselling office do not have that programme so to speak (Counsellor - University D).

### 3.7 Challenges that Hinder Effective Provision of Career Counselling Services

This study identified factors that impede the effective provision of career guidance and counselling in almost all of the studied universities. Lack of enough professional counsellors was found to be one of the fundamental problems affecting the provision of career guidance for students.

It was noticed that in the four universities there were only 7 counsellors, 4 of whom came from one university and the rest of the universities had only 1 counsellor. Among these 7, only 4 had been trained as professional counsellors. This limits the scope and performance efficacy in relation to the high number of students. Moreover, lack of a clear policy for implementing career guidance and counselling services at both national and university level was mentioned to be another problem which has implications for the budgeting of counselling offices. Students' lack of awareness was another factor mentioned by counsellors. They argued that counselling has to be an individualised service, whereby students go and talk to them willingly and freely, but this was not the case in many universities. This was evident from the fact that even if the counselling officers organised induction programmes, preparatory skills programmes or career days when various stakeholders come and disseminate information the majority of students do not turn-up. One of the counsellors had this to remark:

We have a very big challenge on self-awareness among students. Some of them do not bother about this service. They need to be conscious of their career needs so that they should not miss any career opportunities whenever they are made available through our offices (Counsellor, University A).

### 3.8 Discussion

The study assessed the status of career guidance and counselling in each sampled university. It specifically explored whether students receive any kind of career induction programme prior to or on joining the university, it also examined the kind of occupational information provided by counsellors and deans of the respective universities. Moreover, it ascertained the kind of support the students obtained from the management in relation to their transition from university life to the world of work. Furthermore, it explored the career counselling needs of undergraduate students to discover the focus of career guidance and counselling for university students. Finally, the study identified the challenges which affect the effective provision of career guidance. The study has informed that career guidance and counselling in most universities in Tanzania is still at a fairly elementary stage. In particular, there is a lack of well-planned and deliberate guidance to enable individual students to plan their careers.

For instance, most universities have not yet officially institutionalized career guidance as an independent service. It was rather done under the patronage of the Dean of students who is not professionally trained for such a post. Also, where the services were officially provided the students were not very responsive. Another clear proof of inadequate career guidance and counselling services is the fact that career induction programmes were not uniformly provided in each sampled university. Some universities reported having provided career information and induction programmes more than others, while some provided no such services either prior to or upon students' arrival at the university. In addition, there are not enough professional counsellors to provide these services in relation to students' needs.

The findings of this study can be compared with previous studies conducted in different contexts. For example, Lugulu and Kipkoech (2011) examined the effectiveness of career guidance in Kenya. The findings of Lugulu and Kipkoech's study showed that career guidance was neither planned nor organized, and so it was inadequate in terms of enabling students to make informed decisions about their career paths. It was found that the ineffective career guidance and counselling meant that students' choice of career was more influenced by external factors than their own interests. In Tanzania, similar studies revealed comparable findings that lack of career guidance and counselling services resulted in varied careers information which in turn affects students' choice of career when joining higher education (Mvungi, 2009; Idd, 2007; Mbilinyi, 2012).

Another study conducted in Tanzania by Straton (2013) revealed that only a few career guidance and counselling services existed in VET centres but they were largely not formal because of trainees' indecision, the lack of professional career counsellors and internet services and the varied nature of students joining VET centres. The instructors who provided career counselling were not trained for that post, but were assumed to be capable of serving as career counsellors. Likewise Bojuwoye and Manjwa (2006) found that unsatisfactory career counselling and the lack of proper career information are among the key factors affecting career choices of tertiary students. With respect to the initiatives of the respective universities in providing their prospective graduates with links to occupations, this study revealed that most of the universities reported having tried their best to do so, except in the field of education, as all graduates have an equal chance of being employed by the government because of the high demand for teachers in the country. However, this study argues that career information is still important as it informs students about status of their careers in the world of work.

The fact that teachers are highly demanded should be taken with great caveat as the numbers of graduate teachers are more likely to overwhelm/saturate the labour market in the teaching industry. Currently, education is one of the leading programmes with high enrolment rate in both public and private universities. This came as a response to address the shortage of teachers which prevailed in the country for a long time. With this high enrolment it means that soon the graduate teachers will start striving for an alternative employment. It is a high time to educate student teacher in their respective training colleges and universities about both generic and self-employment/entrepreneurship skills so that they could fit and/or compete in the private sectors.

Furthermore, the study revealed that students' career needs included helping them to know themselves better and the world of work, including employment trends and salary prospects. Also the majority of students inquired information about ethics of their careers and to get a clear understanding of their chosen fields, since they had many misconceptions prior to or on joining the university. These career needs were thought to be important as far as career guidance is concerned. Conclusively, the provision of career guidance and counselling in African higher education in general and Tanzania in particular is limited. This is evident from many studies which substantiated that poor career decision making by youths is the product of inadequate career guidance and counselling being provided for them. Students need proper career guidance and counselling to inform their career decisions.

### **3.9 Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study has revealed the following. First, the universities have not yet officially institutionalized career guidance as an independent service hence; the service is at a fairly elementary stage. Second, all participating universities excluding Faculty/School of education provide occupational information to help students have smooth college-work transition. Third, major students' career needs include; knowledge of the self and world of work, employment opportunities, job requirements and salary prospects. Fourthly, lack of enough professional counsellors, low students' self-awareness, lack of a clear policy for implementing career guidance and counselling services at both national and university level are the most fundamental barriers for effective provision of career guidance and counselling in Tanzania.

On the basis of our findings, we are led to conclude that career counselling among university students is imperative. Despite this, it has not yet received keen attention for effective implementation due to many factors which vary across universities. Also, lack of preparatory training and ineffective career orientation programmes have made students unaware of the course they are pursuing and career opportunities available in the world of work. This affects students' awareness and exploration of careers as they move into the world of work. Henceforth, we recommend that university managements should establish a compulsory course for career-related matters. The course amongst others should train undergraduate students about career choice principles and theories and how to write curriculum vitae search and apply for a job based on their skills and interest. The knowledge gained in the courses like communication skills, is too general for students to get a better understanding of the issues related to career exploration. Also, universities should recruit and train as many career counsellors as possible to solve the prevailing problem. Furthermore, based on analysis of students' career needs, we propose the establishment of career centres at every school/faculty in order to provide occupational information, such as employment opportunities and procedures, contact information of organizations, the current employment situation/or needs and self-employment strategies. Also, the career centres should be responsible for preparing a database for graduates regarding their employment status as a means to provide feedback for continuing students on the status of their professions in various lines of work. This could also be done by inviting graduates employed in various professions to give a talk and share their experiences of the current outlook and need for their respective professions in the labour market. On top of that, the Tanzanian Education and Training Policy states that career guidance should be taught as a mandatory subject in teacher training colleges (URT, 1995.p.49) to enable teachers graduate with skills of career guidance which in turn will help students in secondary schools make informed career decision. However, it is doubtful whether this is being put into practice as most studies still claim that the career services are poor and have detrimental effect on students' career choices. Thus, the study recommends that there should be a guiding policy at national level to inform career guidance and counselling practices at all levels of education in the country. This is because career guidance and counselling services informed by a clear policy and provided with enough resources is likely to be effectively implemented and have positive impact to the needy.

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