



## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

## Psychology

### ATTITUDE TOWARDS CAREER COUNSELING SERVICES AMONG STUDENTS IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

**KEY WORDS:** Career, Career Counselling, Career decision making, Career Services, Students

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the attitude students have towards Career Counselling services in Kenyan universities including its usefulness in preparing graduates for the job market. In an attempt to examine this, a sample size of 462 final undergraduate students from two public and two private universities in Kenya and 4 Career Counsellors was used. The study was guided by the Learning Theory of Career Counselling by Mitchell & Krumboltz (1996). The study found that student's had a positive attitude towards the career counselling services. The study recommended that universities provide professionally trained Career Counsellors to help students reframe their indecision through learning experiences.

#### INTRODUCTION

Career counselling is one of the strategies universities have put in place to improve academic achievement and personal development Oluremi (2014) by alleviating student's problems such as decision making. The importance of career counselling is reflected in The United States National Career Development Association (NCDA, 2016) which states that every individual has freedom of occupation and career choice as an important birth right. Studies by (Swanson 1996; Owino 2005; Muriithi 2007) shows minimal use of services due to factors such as inaccessibility of services, previous experiences and lack of knowledge of the services. Attitude is likely to be a factor in decision making and more so in shaping behavior of individuals. Studies by Koydemir-Ozden & Erel, (2010) suggest that attitude is a factor in utilization of services by students in universities.

In Kenya, a study done by Nyaga (2011) and Ogada (2010) found that the negative attitudes to counseling in secondary schools was attributed to by inadequate counseling services and unavailability of resources. Attitude as a factor seems to stand out as influencing utilization of career counseling by influencing behavior and therefore needs further interrogation.

#### Theoretical framework and literature review.

##### John Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Counselling

The study was guided by John Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Counselling which a long is standing Career development theory applied to college students. It was developed by Krumboltz and Mitchell (1996). It comprises of two related parts. The first part focusses on explaining the origins of career choice and it is the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (SLTCDM) Mitchell and Krumboltz, (1996). The second part focusses on Career counselling and is the learning Theory of Career Counseling (LTCC) Mitchell and Krumboltz, (1996) and it explains what Career Counsellors can do to help people make effective career decisions. These decisions include helping students to make use of their special abilities and learning experiences to shape their beliefs about themselves and the world and offer interventions by training students to achieve congruence, reframing indecision, negative attitudes to open mindedness by stimulating student's towards activities that make them engage in new learning experiences consequently changing their attitudes to new and exciting experiences. University students are surrounded by such social and academic services appropriate for resolving any issues including career decisions. This study has implications to university students who are surrounded by lecturers, Counsellors and coaches who are likely to share personal experiences that influence students' decisions.

#### Literature review

Review of literature indicated that attitude played a big part in determining whether students will seek professional help or not. Most university students felt that they should be able to make decisions on their own without professional help. Factors such as negative self- perception and perception of services are obstacles

to Career Counselling (Vogel, Wade, & Hackler 2007). Other researchers established that career concerns were affected by lack of self-confidence, independence and assertiveness (Anderson & Nile, 1995). Regionally, Oluwole (2003) and Olufunmilayo (2009) concurred in their studies that some Nigerian student's Career Counselling had been done on trial and error basis thus affecting student's attitude towards using the services.

In Kenya, students are likely to find support systems from friends and relatives on issues that affect their social and career lives instead of using the career services. Studies by Mtemeri, J (2017) stated that Parents and families have been a source of inspiration for many students in terms of counsel. This agrees with previous studies such as Amani (2013:191) in Tanzania and Ogunyewo et al. (2015:28), and Egunjobi et al. (2013:302) in Nigeria where relatives were found to impact students' choices of careers. This is because Students hold their parents and other family members who are successful in high esteem and are likely to see them as role models.

#### Research Methodology

The target population for the study was 462 university students from two public and two private universities in Nairobi County. Purposive sampling was employed to identify four career counselors each from the selected universities based on their perceptual experiences in dealing with students. Purposive sampling was used to identify the focus group. The subjects were fourth year undergraduate respondents.

#### Research instruments

Questionnaires and interview guides for focus group discussion were used.

Content validity of the questionnaires were enhance by instrument for career counselors.

#### Findings and discussions

##### Student's attitude towards career counselling

**Table1. Students Attitude towards Career Counselling**

|          | N   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|----------|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| Attitude | 451 | 4.089 | 0.66512        | 0.03132         |

Attitude of students was found to be 4.09 with a standard deviation of 0.665 this displays that attitude was high.

##### Differences in Attitude between Public and Private Universities

**Table 2. Differences in attitude between Public and Private Universities.**

| Type of University            | N   | Mean   | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------------------------------|-----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Public universities Attitude  | 249 | 4.1133 | .72559         | .04598          |
| Private Universities Attitude | 159 | 4.1887 | .91014         | .07218          |

Mean scores in attitude in public and private universities were found to be 4.1133 and 4.1887 respectively with a standard deviation of 0.72559 and 0.91014 respectively. Attitude scores in both the private and public universities rated high.

Qualitative data from students corroborated with data from career counsellors.

**Student 1.** Yes Career Counselling services are useful as they help university students to prepare for their resume and application letters. As one applies for employment opportunities, the career counsellors help them make good application "

**Student 2.** Yes Career Counselling services are useful as they help university students to be exposed to job offers by getting to know the prospective employers and organisations that need to employ.

**Student 3** No. Career Counselling services are not useful to university students as some of the services have been inadequate. "

Qualitative data from Career Counsellors indicated that freshmen were oblivious, however in the final years, they gain interest.

## DISCUSSIONS

Results from this study is related with the previous studies by Egbochuku & Alika (2010) that students have varying attitudes towards services. With positive attitude, it is also possible that insufficient representation of Career Counselling led to negative attitude towards the services. This is because students who had a negative attitude towards career counselling services were unlikely to find the services useful as recommended by Ludwikowski, Vogel & Armstrong (2009.) This study affirmed that Career Counsellors should be prepared to help university students cope with career related trends (Mitchell and Krumboltz 1996 by adopting Strategies such as reinforcement's and role modeling.

## Conclusions.

The study found that student's attitude was high therefore students had a positive attitude towards career services. Other findings however showed that services were inadequate.

The study recommended that career counselors should engage students in more stimulating activities in order to help students achieve congruence by helping them to reframe indecision and negative attitudes to open mindedness through new learning experiences.

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