

**CERTAINTY IN CAREER CHOICE AMONG KENYATTA  
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR CAREER  
COUNSELING.**

**By**

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**DECLARATION**

I SUBMIT THAT THIS PROJECT IS MY ORIGINAL WORK AND HAS NOT BEEN PRESENTED FOR A DEGREE IN ANY UNIVERSITY OR ANY OTHER AWARD.

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## ABSTRACT

While the career development process is life-long, choices made during the college years are particularly significant in setting the foundation for future professional options. Selecting a career can be a daunting task for many University students who must balance their own interests with what is available in the various Universities as with their academic performance. It is in this view that the researcher aimed at investigating the career certainty of the university students.

Stratified sampling was used to enhance representation of the student population while the academic advisors were randomly sampled. The main research instruments utilized in the study were questionnaires and interviews. The data gathered was both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative was thematically presented in narrative form while quantitative statistics involved the use of frequencies, totals, percentages, and tabulation. Correlation techniques by Pearson's product-moment correlation ( $r$ ) were carried out to analyze the degree of relationships between the variables while Chi-square and analysis of variance were done to determine the significant differences between the variables.

It was found out that though the students claimed to have high level of career certainty, this fact was disputed by their academic advisors and their other results in the other variables of the study. There were many factors that affected the students' career choices amidst them being their level of occupational information, their decision-making ability and their level of clarity in their personal attributes and resources. The need for career counseling across all the levels of education was highly revealed by the findings of this study.

**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CDS:	Career Decision Scale
CDP:	Career Decision Profile
CCDAP:	Centre for Career Development And Attachment Programmes.
DfES:	Department for Education and Skills
JKUAT:	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.
JAB:	Joint Admissions Board
KCSE:	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination.
KU:	Kenyatta University
NICEC:	National Institute for Careers Education and Counseling
SSP:	Self Sponsored Programme.
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

Giving young people the tools and knowledge to realistically plan for their futures is a primary goal of education globally. Career development is vitally important for today's youth, who are more than ever "motivated but directionless" (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999). While the career development process is life-long, choices made during the college years are particularly significant in setting the foundation for future professional options. During the college experience, academic and career choices are complex as they integrate two major considerations: individual development along with ongoing self-discovery and the current and future work environment. Better understanding of the career development process can enhance linkage of academic and career experiences and improve career preparation and management. (Northwestern University Career Services, 2007).

The Education and Skills White Paper (2005) by the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) in the government of UK outlined the need for young people to make their own career choices and set out the subsequent need for the provision of quality, impartial advice to ensure young people make well-informed choices. The Paper also stated that young people need the skills to make sound career decisions. The (2006) Implementation Plan by the same department (DFES) followed and emphasized the necessity of schools, colleges and training providers working together to provide appropriate support to young people. In a briefing paper published in March 2004, the National Institute for Careers Education and Counseling

(NICEC) identified a need for careers specialists to work with senior management to set policy and resource priorities for careers education and guidance, to support those involved in its delivery, to constantly review the provision of careers education, and to develop and evaluate careers work.

Blenkinsop, McCrone, Wade and Morris (2006) report noted some incidences of students struggling to cope when faced with unanticipated changes indicating that most university students are poorly prepared for major life decisions such as career choice. The first year of college is crucial to college success where student retention and career indecision are important factors.

The report on the Kenyan public universities Vice Chancellors committee on causes of disturbances/riots in public universities (2000) stated that University Academic Advisory services are scantily offered due to; large numbers of students; lack of office space for most lecturers who also leave campuses soon after delivering their lectures and unavailability of the Dean of students and head of departments who by nature of their positions are not easily available. The committee however noted that lack of academic advisory services was one of the major problems particularly for the first year students who spent a lot of time deciding which programmes and courses to pursue.

According to the study by Mwangi (1991) at Kenyatta University on students' problems, students rated academic/career issues as their most prevalent problems. Karihe (2006) found that Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology students rated academic problems highly amongst other problems. Some of such academic problems included irrational course selection

procedures, low academic grades and poor relationships with their lecturers all which point to the need for academic and career guidance and counselling.

Perrone (2002 P.1) quotes; “The College years are a crucial time for career-related decision-making. College students are faced with the need to choose an academic major as well as to develop career goals for the future. Career indecision is often thought of as a developmental phase through which college students pass on the road to making a career choice and is negatively related to adjustment and well-being for college students.”

People typically make their first career related decisions during adolescence. Such decisions may have lifelong consequences for the individual's vocational future, psychological well-being, health, and social acceptance (Mann, Harmoni, & Power, 1989). With the Kenyan University student belonging to the category between late adolescence and early adulthood according to the Kenyan public universities Vice-Chancellors’ committee report (2000), assistance by professional career specialists is necessary. This stage of life is characterized by periods of instability, conflict, anxiety and tension. Some of its manifestations include idealism, experimentation, risk taking, emotional instability and inner turmoil. All these affect rational decision-making.

Like the times of Industrialization when vocational guidance was birthed, a lot of changes have occurred in the labour market today. More than any other single factor, technology and economic competition have had mutually accelerating effects (UNESCO, 1996). Echoing the same, the report by the vice-chancellors committee on causes of disturbances/riots in public universities (2000) states that; the advent of technology and the media revolution has had long-term significant effects on University Education. Competition has created opportunities for

some, and hardships for others. The committee says, for better for worse, technology is one of the primary causes of the growing polarization of the work force, of increasingly glaring inequities.

Though there have been technological shifts that have impacted to the labour market greatly, Education programmes may not have reflected this change. Some University programmes have become more marketable while others have lost market due to these changes. This has complicated career decision-making. Faced by the fear of unemployment, students joining the University are confronted with the challenge of flocking in the most marketable programmes at the expense of their own best-placed occupations.

According to the Education symposium on re-engineering University Education for National development (2003), Universities were challenged to develop curricula that are sensitive to technological developments and the need of the industry and society. The Universities were also challenged to inculcate the idea that one was not being educated for a job but for life and to be able to survive in an increasingly competitive and sometimes hostile environment. Such an understanding would only be reached if students were equipped with both up to date labour market information as well as individual personal awareness both of which are basic for mature career decision-making.

In secondary schools where career guidance have been emphasized over time, teachers have heavy teaching workloads and so many students to attend to especially with the introduction of free primary education in Kenya. Kinyanjui (1990) recommended proper guidance and counselling services should be offered to students in secondary schools from as early as when

they join form one. She suggested that such services would help students to adjust their career aspirations to the realities and prevent future frustrations. In his research on career aspirations of form four students in some Kenyan schools, Mwangi (2002) noted that majority of the students (64.9%) appeared not to have specific orientation to careers. Most of these students (50%) intended to join the university though. This implies that most students at University entry have no specific career aspirations.

Adolescent occupational choice is influenced by many factors, including life context, personal aptitudes, and educational attainment. Whether college-bound or work-bound, meeting the challenge of this developmental milestone is critical in adolescents' lives (Ferry, 2006). The career choice that young adults make is embedded in their perceptions of the "ideal job" and their career decision-making maturity. In a 1996 NICEC briefing paper, it was reported that young people's career decisions are influenced by a range of factors and issues, including parents and other relatives, friends and peer-groups, careers specialists, subject teachers, contacts with employers and direct experiences of employment, and individual interests and values. Blenkinsop et al. (2006), in addition, identified perceptions of a subject and financial issues as influencing factors. This indicates the dire need for assistance through this process for most young people.

With the 8-4-4 System chances of pursuing courses of personal interest are limited due to the stiff competition for the few vacancies in the Universities. Besides, those joining the universities are younger and less specialized than in the previous 7-4-2-3 Education system in Kenya. Academic/career issues have therefore increased and become more complex unlike in the days when Mwangi (1991) carried out his study. There is a mismatch between the job market needs and the university admission process where in spite of decline in the demand for some degree programmes, there is still increase of students admitted to them as is indicated by

the University chancellors' committee report on causes of disturbances in public universities (2000). The committee observed the need to emphasize individual choice and academic ability to guide admission to University programmes.

Kenyatta University has had counselling services offered since the early 90s at the counselling centre. Professional counsellors were however first employed in the University in 2005. The counsellors deal with all the psychological issues of the students but refer them to their Academic advisors for academic/career issues. Last year, June 2006 saw the Vice-Chancellor of KU Professor Olive Mugenda establish the first ever Centre for Career Development in the Kenyatta University. The Center, which doubles up as, the attachment-coordinating unit serves the students and alumni of the university in the career development and job-placement services. The Centre has no fulltime employed career specialists by the time of this proposal writing.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Most students who join the Kenyan Universities through the University joint admissions board (JAB) are hardly admitted to pursue degree programmes of their choice. This leaves most of them confused about the choices to make in the available degree programmes. Efforts to seek assistance are quite frustrating for most of them with some settling down for whatever is easily available half-heartedly. The report by the Vice chancellors Committee on causes of riots in public universities (2000) proposed that interaction between informed lecturers and students could alleviate the situation and help students make the best out of the available options. While this is a good suggestion, the same lecturers lack office space, time and the relevant training to do so.

Adding to these complexities is the problem of unemployment and the technological transitions in the labour market, which have made some courses more marketable than others. This causes students to overcrowd such courses without considering their personal potentials resulting to high cases of exam failure and lack of motivation. The unavailability of parents and teachers to facilitate career decision-making complicates this even more. This places the need for professionals to take up the challenge of facilitating University students' career decision-making process. Currently most Public Universities in Kenya have neither Career Centres where students can seek assistance for career related issues nor do they have Counsellors or educators to assist students in this area.

There is a lot of apathy among the University students today. Many students lay more emphasis on other issues than they do to their education while at the University. Other students pursue courses in other colleges some of which are hardly related to their degree programmes. All these could be associated to career indecision. A study of apathy among a sample of 310 Japanese and 252 Korean high school students indicated that vagueness of motivation and career indecision are predictors of apathy in Japanese and Korean high school students (Lee, 2004).

Studies carried out in the area of career decision making of secondary school students in Kenya such as Mwangi (2002) have noted that majority of the students appeared not to have specific orientation to careers yet most of these students intended to join the university. It is not clear due to lack of research whether these students attain their career aspirations while at the University or not.

My observation as a Volunteer Career Counsellor at the Centre for Career Development and Attachment Programmes (CCDAP) in KU between the months of July and December 2006 was that very many students across all the years of study at the University sought assistance on

career decision-making. About 45% of them were first years most of whom had no idea which degree programme to select. About 20% were finalists who sought both personal and labour market information relevant for their careers. The remaining 35% were from the other years including the postgraduate students. This indicates the need for a systematic study on the area of career certainty of University students to fill in the research gap and to enable making necessary recommendations.

### **1.2.1 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to create awareness on the status of career certainty among university students and the reasons related to their levels of certainty. The influence of the mode of University admission to the students' career certainty was also investigated. The study was used to extend the existing knowledge of the university students' problems and provoke new ways of dealing with them. The results of the study were also be used to make the necessary recommendations on career decision-making of university students.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- i. Assess the level of career choice certainty amongst University students.
- ii. Investigate the factors related to career choice certainty levels among the University students.
- iii. Establish how comfortable university students are with their career decisions.
- iv. Determine the influence of mode of University admission on career certainty.
- v. Determine the influence of gender in career certainty levels of students.
- vi. Compare the level of career certainty of students in the four academic years.
- vii. To make recommendations based on the findings of the study

#### **1.4 Research Questions of the study included**

- i. What is the state of University students' level of career certainty?
- ii. What factors related to career choice certainty levels of the university students?
- iii. How comfortable are university students with their career choices?
- iv. How does the mode of university admission influence the career certainty of the University students?
- v. What is the influence of gender on career certainty of students?
- vi. What is the effect of progress in academic years on the career certainty of the University students?

#### **1.5 Research Hypotheses of the study included**

Ho1. There is no relationship between the students' level of self-knowledge and their level of career choice certainty.

Ho2. There is no relationship between the students' level of occupational information and their level of career choice certainty.

Ho3. There is no relationship between students' decision-making ability and their level of career choice certainty.

Ho4. There is no significant difference in the level of career choice certainty of students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years.

Ho5. There is no significant difference between the JAB and SSP students in their career choice certainty.

Ho6. There is no significant difference between male and female students in their career choice certainty.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

KU is the prime beneficiary of this study, as it explains the real situation of career certainty of its very students. This way, the University management will be in a better place to create and enforce the necessary strategies to deal with the career issues of its students. The lecturers will be in a better position to understand their students while the academic advisors will gain a better working knowledge of those whose career and academic issues they deal with. CCDAP will also gain profound information that will guide its operations as the Centre that deals with the career development of the students and alumni of the university.

The results of this study will also be very significant to the all the stakeholders of the Kenyan Universities. The University administrators will be in a better position to make the necessary adjustments in order to address the career issues of their students. The University students will also benefit by gaining more awareness into their career certainty and the factors influencing it. This will help them seek relevant assistance where and if need be and at the appropriate time.

The results will also be utilized by the ministry of Education in the formation of policies that affect the area of career guidance and counselling especially for the secondary schools and tertiary colleges. The study will also offer significant feedback to JAB on the influence of their system of University admission criteria to the students involved, the university Education and to the labour market. In this way, the study will be expected to serve as a justification for evaluation of the Joint Admission Board.

## 1.7 Scope and Delimitations

The study was carried out exclusively at Kenyatta University where 617 students from the four academic years and 12 academic advisors will be involved in the study. The study focused only on the self and occupational information and decision-making ability factors related to career certainty. This was due to financial and time constraints as the study was self-funded and for academic purposes.

## 1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

**Career certainty-** refers to one's degree of certainty of having made a career decision.

**Career uncertainty-**refers to the degree to which one is not sure of having made a career choice or Decision

**Career decisiveness/decidedness-** refers to how capable one is in making career decisions.

In this study career decisiveness, decidedness and career certainty have been used interchangeably.

**Career decision status-** refers to the certainty or indecision about one's career choice

**Career indecision-** refers to the inability to make a decision about the career that one wishes to pursue

**Career decision-making-**This is the process of making informed career choices based on one's Personal knowledge and experience as well as occupational information one has.

**Mode of University Admission-**refers to the two different ways by which students are admitted tot the university, JAB and SSP.

**Joint Admission board (JAB) -** refers to students admitted to the university by the government which pays part of their fees

**Self-Sponsored Programme (SSP)**-refers to the students who initiated their own admission to the university and hence are responsible of paying their own fees.

**Career guidance** — the portion of the guidance program focused on students' career development; this can include career counseling (below) or other career related services.

**Career counseling** — the portion of the guidance program in which trained professionals interact with students to assist them with their career development.

**Academic counseling** —also referred to as academic advisement. It refers to trained professionals counseling students on their academic plans, for course-taking while in secondary school as well as for postsecondary education.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter gives a summary of relevant literature used to conceptualize the research theme. The review first elaborates on Career development and decision-making theories and the factors that influence it. It then explains the role of career counselling in facilitating career decision-making. Some studies on career decision-making have also been highlighted.

#### **2.1 Theories on career development and career decision-making**

Career theory provides a foundation for personal and career development interventions. These interventions aim to help people find answers to personal and career development questions that stem from the societal context in which they live.( Jean Guichard & Janet Lenz, 2005).

##### **Frank Parson's Trait and Factor Theory**

Frank Parson's original work blossomed into a theory of occupation choice known as the trait and factor theory. It incorporates facets of personal analysis, job analysis and matching scientific advising for occupational choice making. The trait and factor theory is the foundational model for career development work in a majority of college and university career Centres (Parrott & Parrott, 1995). It is in this context that the trait and factor theory is relevant for this study that is dealing with college students.

##### **Donald Super's Developmental Career Theory**

Donald F. Supper developed the developmental career theory. He promotes a loosely unified set of theories dealing with specific aspects of career development, taken from developmental,

differential, social, personality and phenomenological psychology and held together by self-concept and learning theory. His theory emphasizes six life roles; homemaker, worker, citizen, student and child. Each role plays apart in the development lifespan of an individual and is a significant factor in the development of career maturity. Career maturity involves a constellation of physical, psychological and social characteristics and incorporates elements of planning, exploration, information, decision-making and reality orientation as an individual moves through the passages of childhood to adulthood. This forms the basis for this study, which by investigating the career certainty of university students will determine the level of career maturity manifested at this developmental stage. Elements incorporated in career maturity such as information and decision-making will also be examined in the study.

### **Ginzberg, Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma theory**

Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma theory– 1951. This theory proposes that it is a development path that leads to career choice. Starting in preteen and ending in young adulthood, individuals pass through three stages: fantasy, tentative and realistic. In the fantasy stage, the child is free to pursue any occupational choice. Through this process the child's preferred activities are identified and related to future career choices. Beginning in the preteen years and continuing through high school, the young person further defines their interests in, capacity for and values of an occupational choice. The cumulative effect of the process is the transition process in which the adolescent begins the career choice process, recognizes the consequences and responsibility of that choice (Savickas & Lent, 1994).

The realistic stage, spanning from mid-adolescence through young adulthood, has three sub-stages: exploration, crystallization and specification. In the exploration stage the adolescent begins to restrict choice based on personal likes, skills and abilities. In the crystallization stage an occupational choice is made. Followed by the specification stage where the individual pursues the

educational experiences required achieving his career goal. The University students this study focuses on are in this realistic stage and mostly between crystallization and specification stage. It is therefore expected that they should be certain of their career choices.

### **Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory Of Career Choice And Counselling**

Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Choice and Counselling is focused on interacting with the environment in making career decisions, with the emphasis on the learning resulting from those interactions. The Learning Theory employs two types of learning: instrumental and associative. Outlined are four factors influencing the career paths of individuals: innate genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. These four factors interact and result in the formation of generalizations about self and world. It is only then that individuals identify interests, skills, work values, etc. Career decision-making is affected as one begins to internalize interests, skills, and work values, and, as a result, initiates career decisions (Swanson & Fouad, 1999). By testing the career certainty of the university students in this study, it will be more evident how the students interact with current educational and social environment to initiate career choices as is proposed by Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory.

### **2.2. Career Development and Decision-making**

Key elements of the career development process as outlined by the North-western University Career Services are: Individual self assessment as foundation for career planning; Exploring and researching options; Deciding and Setting Goals; Developing a Plan and Taking Action and, Reflection and Evaluation.

Career work suggests that people progress, either formally or informally, through these development stages: 1. Exploration 2. Personal assessment 3. Analysis 4. Decision making 5. Planning 6. Implementation or development 7. Life-work management. A person's progression through the stages is seldom linear because predictable and unpredictable life factors can occur at any time and in many ways (Dubois 2000)

Making career decisions is all about exploring and experiencing the world of work. It is also about understanding one's abilities, interests, skills, and values and combining these to create a meaningful framework for life. The Decision making goals defined during the analysis stage are then reviewed and subjected to the decision-making process of the person. He or she must decide which goals to pursue and over what time period (Dubois, 2000). One will have many opportunities to discover and rediscover careers that match his/her changing lifestyle. It is important that one is an active participant in this decision-making process. Career decision-making begins with self, one's awareness of the world around him/her and the ability to understand what is important to him or her (Georgia Career Resources Network, 2005).

### **Factors influencing Career decision-making**

Like other major decisions in one's life, Career decision-making is a complex process that is influenced by various factors. Some of these factors are related to career choice certainty. These include;

#### **a) Information Factors:**

To make sound decisions it is important for one to gather enough information to evaluate his/her options. Progress in career development becomes blocked when there is a lack of information about self, the world of work (occupational information), and ways of obtaining information.

Students who lack career information may enter college and quickly find that their career goals are unobtainable or unsuitable (Larson, Heppner, Ham, & Dugan 1988 in Gaffner et al., 2002). Those who have an adequate amount of self-information and occupational knowledge will make better decisions whereas those without this information will make poor decisions. Lack of Information includes four categories of difficulties: (a) lack of knowledge about the steps involved in the process, (b) lack of information about the self, (c) lack of information about the various alternatives (i.e., occupations), and (d) lack of information about the ways of obtaining additional information.

In a wise choice of a vocation, there are three broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts (Phillips & Paziienza, 1988, p.2).

#### **b) Decision-Making Experience:**

Confidence in decision-making abilities comes from having made successful decisions in the past. According to Gaffner et al. (2002), some students that are undecided about their careers have trouble with decision making. Several studies suggest that some students could be termed vocationally immature and not ready to begin the career planning process. The way Students handle initial career decisions may have an effect on the way they will deal with future career decisions.

#### **Role of the career counsellor in career decision-making**

The role of Career counsellors is to facilitate career decision-making process through provision of career information, enhancing clarity of personal values, interests, skills and abilities confidence decision-making all which boosts self-confidence and ability to make sound career decisions. For most young adults this is not an easy process. Career counsellors serve as teachers, confidants, and advisors to their clients. They help people examine their interests, styles, and their abilities to find and enter the profession that best suits them. They can be helpful to people who are yet to choose a career and those who are unhappy with their choice. Services of career counsellors differ, depending on the counsellor's level of competence, the setting, client needs, and other factors. Fellows, Master Career Counsellors, Master Career Development Professionals, Registered Professional Career Counsellors (California, only), and other professional career counsellors help people make and carry out decisions and plans related to life/career directions.

Career counsellors also assist people in learning new skills and abilities related to managing and directing their careers and work life. Parrott and Parrott (1999) say that vocational counsellors invest enormous amounts of time, energy and expertise in dispelling the mystery of career decision-making and assisting people in career discovery. They can also help clients identify potential role models with whom they might develop supportive, high-quality relationships. Career counselors may also serve as role models themselves, through the use of self-disclosure or by demonstrating appropriate career exploration and decision-making behaviors. Since the same-gender parent is often an important role model, counselors may focus on parent-child relationships as well. Such secure relationships may decrease career indecision for college students or other career counseling clients.( Perrone, 2002).

### **Measures of Career Choice and Development**

According to Career Development Theory, People pass through variety of stages during the course of their lives. Each stage has developmental tasks that must be mastered for one to go to the next stage. Some of the Measures of Career Choice and Development that evaluate the achievement of these tasks include: (1) Career Beliefs Inventory which Identifies beliefs that may block career goals. (2) My Career Thoughts Inventory, which measures dysfunctional thinking in career problem solving and decision-making process of high-school and traditional-age college students. (3) Career Decision Scale (CDS) which can be used to explore possible causes of a client's indecision. (4) Adult Career Concerns Inventor (ACCI) that Measures concerns associated with the different developmental stages of adults. (5) Career Development Inventory (CDI), which is designed to assess students' readiness to make sound educational and vocational choices and (6) the Career Decision profile (CDP) amongst others.

The Career Decision Profile (CDP) is useful in career counselling. The CDP was developed from a three-dimensional model of career decision status (Decidedness, Comfort, and Reasons). The CDP can be used by counsellors to (a) explore clients' career indecision, (b) screen for readiness, (c) determine the appropriate level of career services needed, and (d) evaluate counseling outcomes (Jones, 1998).

### **2.3 Previous Studies on Career decision-making**

Based on the findings of her study Rowland (2004) concluded that for Bahamian adolescents, the type of school, the grade level, and a visit to the school guidance office were significant factors that influenced one's level of confidence in career decision-making. Winnie and Jey carried out a study on Factors influencing the career decision status of Chinese American youths (2005). In a 1996 NICEC briefing paper, it was reported that young people's career decisions

are influenced by a range of factors and issues, including parents and other relatives, friends and peer-groups, careers specialists, subject teachers, contacts with employers and direct experiences of employment, and individual interests and values. (Blenkinsop et al., 2006) carried out a study on Factors Influencing Career Choices of Adolescents and Young Adults in Rural Pennsylvania.

High school students who took a career-decision making course had less career related indecision at the end of the course than did a comparison group (Savickas, 1990). Participants also improved their long-term perspective as compared to the comparison group, meaning that the career course helped them understand the relationship between the present and the future, and to plan for and be motivated to achieve long-term goals.

Blenkinsop et al. (2006 p.4.) report found that young people brought different mindsets to the decision- making process, which can be summarised as:

- a. Determined realists – those with a clear idea of what they want to do and have a realistic view on how to achieve it.
- b. Comfort seekers – those with no clear picture of their future plans.
- c. Long-term preparers – those who have a clearly defined progression plan, though not necessarily aware of the field in which they wish to work.
- d. Defeated copers – settle for what's in front of them.
- e. Confident aspirationalists – optimistic, self-assured and spurred on by ambition.
- f. Indecisive worriers – overly anxious about the future and struggle to envisage career options.

- g. Unrealistic dreamers – believe they will succeed, but feel their success will be the result of luck rather than hard work.

In addition, the study noted that young people's decisions frequently fluctuated over time, even among those who were very decided about their options in the first instance. The report recommended that young people would benefit from personalized and individualized support.

A sample of female college seniors experiencing career indecision participated in a career group counseling (n: 16), a wait-list control group (n: 8), and an additional career-counseling group (n: 11). Participants were administered the Career Decision Scale and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory at pre-test and post-test. Analysis of covariance of state anxiety scores and career indecision scores yielded significant main effects for treatment. Participants in the career-counseling groups showed a decrease in scores on state anxiety and career indecision (Peng, 2001). Gaffner et al. (2002) after their study on Factors related to indecisiveness and career indecision in undecided college students proposed that Proper interventions, which are more personal and intense, may result from a better understanding of what factors have strong relationships with a student's level of indecisiveness.

Kenyan studies have focused more on career aspirations of secondary school students such as Kinyanjui (1990) and Mwangi (2002). Studies on the university students by Mwangi (1991) at Kenyatta University and that of Karihe (2006) at JKUAT indicate students need assistance in career issues which were ranked high amongst other most prevalent university students' problems. Karihe suggested counseling to be considered as both a preventive and curative measure of students' problems and recommended mentorship as one way of assisting students with course selection. Mwangi (1991) suggested that with the introduction of the 8-4-4 system

(the current Kenyan Education system) academic/ career issues will weigh more heavily on the university students.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

The framework illustrated below describes how the variables are inter-related. The career certainty of university students is influenced by factors such as self and occupational information the student has as well as his/her decision making experience. The year of study determines the students' level of Knowledge about occupations and may be about the self. Progress in years also exposes the students to decision making opportunities hence increasing the decision-making ability. SSP students are assumed to be pursuing courses of their personal choice more than the JAB students and are likely to have gathered relevant information before enrolling in them hence influencing their career certainty levels.

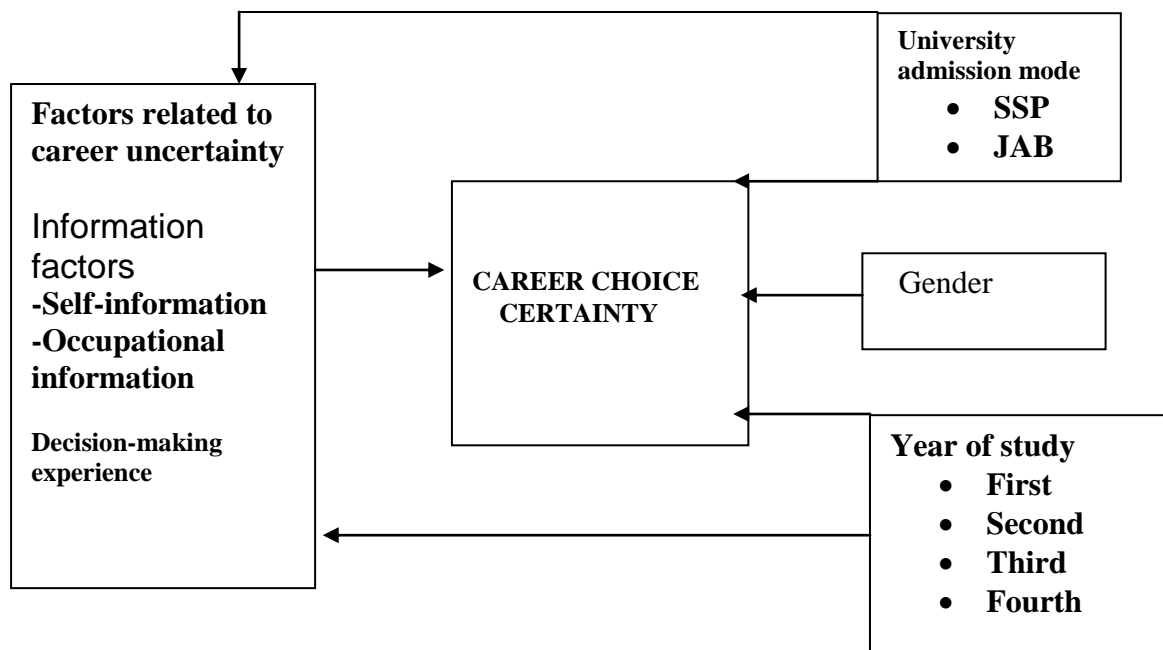


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The chapter discusses the procedures and strategies that were used in the study. Research design, locale, target population, the sample and sampling procedures, data collection, data analysis and presentation are also discussed.

#### **3.1 Research design**

This study adopted a descriptive case study design. The major purpose of a descriptive research is description of the state of affairs, as it exists (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). While this study sought to explain the status of career choice certainty as it is through use of interviews and questionnaires, it was done only in Kenyatta University hence a case study. Payne and Payne (2004) describe a case study as a detailed study of a single social unit mostly by single researcher without substantial research funding.

#### **3.2 Variables**

The independent variables in this study included the students' year of study, Mode of University admission, Decision-making ability, Gender, Comfort and the factors that relate to career certainty. The dependent variable on the other hand was the career certainty of the students. The study assessed the implication of the independent variables that is mode of university admission, Gender, year of study and reasons related to career uncertainty on the dependent variable (level of career certainty).

### **3.3 Locale**

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), the selection of the research site is essential as it influences the usefulness of the information. Kenyatta University was selected as the site for this study because of its accessibility to the researcher and also due to time and financial limitations. KU being one of the large public universities in the country has such a large population of students both JAB and SSP where the sample was derived from. KU is also typical of other Kenyan public universities in its administration and management, running of semesters, students' admission and learning and all other operations. This as well as the in-depth investigation of the problem enabled generalization of findings to the other public universities.

### **3.4 Target population**

The target population for this study included all the JAB and SSP 1<sup>st</sup>, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students in the full-time degree programmes and the school/departmental academic advisors of KU. (School based, diploma, Open learning and part time students are not included in the study).

### **3.5 Sample and sampling procedure.**

Webster 1985 in Kombo and Tromp (2006) define a sample as a finite part of the statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. Stratified sampling technique was used in selection of the student sample. The student population was first sub-divided into strata according to year of study and school. 720 students were selected from the four years. 12 academic advisors on the other hand were selected for the study through

a random sample of two advisors per school. The total sample therefore added up to 732 subjects (720 students + 12 academic advisors)

**Table 3.1: Distribution of student samples**

	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> Years</b>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> Years</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> Years</b>	<b>4<sup>TH</sup> Years</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Humanities and social sciences</b>	30	30	30	30	120
<b>School of business</b>	30	30	30	30	120
<b>Environmental studies and human sciences</b>	30	30	30	30	120
<b>School of health sciences</b>	30	30	30	30	120
<b>School of pure and applied sciences</b>	30	30	30	30	120
<b>School of Education</b>	30	30	30	30	120
<b>Total</b>	180	180	180	180	720

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

This study used questionnaires and interviews data collection methods because they provide greater depth of response and consequently greater understanding. The use of the two methods enabled maximum effectiveness in data collection and in reduction of biases. (Mugenda, 2003). Darlington and Scott (2002) say that a thorough understanding can be gained from combining a number of qualitative data collection approaches. The following instruments were used to collect data:

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were used to gather information from the students since a questionnaire is an instrument that gathers a large sample (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The questionnaires contained

two sections A, and B. A gathered the demographic information of the respondents while B entailed the Career Decision Profile, which measured the level of their career decisiveness and investigated the reasons related to the students level of career certainty.

### **3.6.2 Interviews for academic advisors.**

The randomly sampled academic advisors were interviewed one on one in focused semi-structured interviews. Questions were formulated in advance to structure the interviews. Darlington and Scott (2002) suggest that no matter how free flowing an interview is in terms of topics; the order in which they are covered must have some structure.

### **3.7 Validity and reliability**

Validity is the truth as interpreted at the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers. (Morse,1994). Reliability on the other hand is being confident that the way data were gathered could be repeated without the methods themselves producing different results (Brannen and Nilsen 2002 in Payne and Payne 2004). Validity and reliability was enhanced in this study through the use of a Career Decision Scale (CDP), which is a standard test in collection of the data. (Borg and Gall, 1989 in Orodho 2005 p.179) state that an advantage of using standardized tests in one's research project is that if significant research findings are produced, other researchers can be able to replicate and expand the same work because they can create the same conditions of administrations by consulting the test manual. A pilot study was however carried out to find out any possible shortcomings during the actual study.

### **3.8 Data collection procedures.**

Permission to carry out the research was obtained from the relevant offices as required by law. The researcher used research assistants in administering the instruments to the respondents. This helped achieve a good return ratio. For the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students the questionnaires will be distributed to them in their core-unit classes. For the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years who have specialized their courses, the students were picked at random from specific departments in each school. Interviews with academic advisors will on the other hand were conducted orally one on one.

### **3.9 Data analysis Procedures**

This study generated both qualitative and quantitative data; hence descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis of data. Qualitative analysis considered the inferences that were made from the opinions of the respondents. This analysis was then thematically presented in narrative form and where possible tabular form. Descriptive statistics involved the use of frequencies, totals, percentages, and tabulation.

These data was further subjected to significance tests using correlation techniques and other tests to establish linear relationships between the variables.

1. **Pearson Product-Moment correlation (r)** was used because some of the data collected in this study was changed to dichotomous variables such as the decision-making ability, level of personal and occupational knowledge and comfort in decision-making and was measured at ratio or interval scales.

### **Chi-Square**

Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was also used to determine if there was any independence between students' gender, mode of university admission and their year of study with their career certainty using the following formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where: O- the observed frequencies  
E-the expected frequencies

This is because there were no rigid assumptions necessary in regard to the type of population, there was no need for parameter values and relatively less mathematical details were involved.

Chi-square also uses data on lower scales of measurement such as nominal and ordinal.

### **Analysis of Variance**

T-tests (one way analysis of variance) were used to test whether there were any significant differences between means of the male and female students and those of JAP and SSP students.

ANOVA (two way analysis of Variance) was used to compare the means of career certainty of male and female students in the four academic years.

In all these cases the null hypotheses will be tested at a level of significance of 0.05 or 95% level of confidence

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis have been presented, analyzed and discussed in a systematic way. The Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used for the data analysis. First, the descriptive statistics have been given in form of frequencies, percentages, means and totals. These have been presented in tables, charts, and graphs as well as in narrative form. Findings from the hypotheses tests have then been presented in line with the study's hypotheses as stated in chapter one.

The total number of student respondents who returned their questionnaires was 621, which was about 85.25% of the total sample.

#### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS OF THE STUDENT RESPONDENTS**

The demographic information of the student respondents has been presented in this section in accordance to the questions asked in part A of their questionnaire. It outlines the demographic factors that relate to students' career decision-making.

##### **4.2.1 Distribution of the Students by Gender, Year of Study School and Mode of Admission**

The distribution of the students was investigated in relation to each student's gender, year of study and the mode by which he/she was admitted to the University. It was established that out of the entire student respondents, 51.7% were females while 48.3% were males. These were distributed in the years of study and schools of the university as indicated in the tables 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.

**Table 4.1: Distribution Of Students According To Their Years Of Study**

Year of study	Frequency	Percent
First	142	22.9
Second	145	23.3
Third	153	24.6
Fourth	181	29.1
Total	621	100.0

**Table 4.2: The Distribution Of The Student's Sample According To Their Schools**

Schools	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Humanities	123	19.9	19.9
Business	110	17.8	37.8
Pure and applied sciences	80	13.0	50.7
Education	111	18.0	68.7
Environmental and human sciences	76	12.3	81.0
Health sciences	117	19.0	100.0
Total	617	100.0	

Further findings of the study indicated that 505 (87.7%) of the students were admitted through Joint Admissions Board while 113 (18.3%) were self sponsored as is shown in Figure 4.1.below.

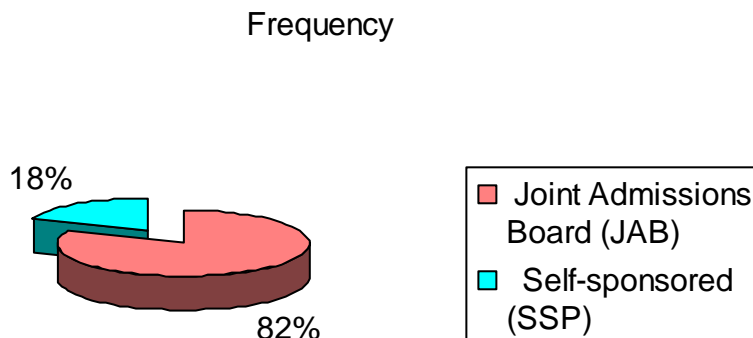


Figure 4.1: **Distributions of the Student Respondents According to Mode Of Admission**

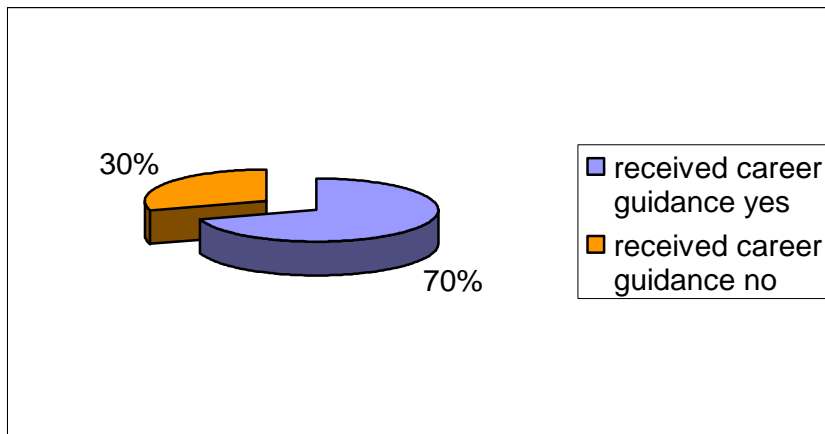
#### 4.2.2 Distribution of the Age of the Student Respondents

Age is an important factor in career decision-making as the literature reviewed indicates. The respondents' age was investigated and the findings are presented below.

Out of the 581 respondents who responded to the question of age, 49.4% of them were below 23 years of age while 50.6% of them were above this age. The minimum age was 18 while the maximum was 45. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were in the realistic stage according to Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma theory– 1951, which spans from mid-adolescence through to young adulthood. It is therefore expected that the students should have made their career choices according to their personal likes, skills and abilities and hence are pursuing educational programmes aimed at meeting these career choices.

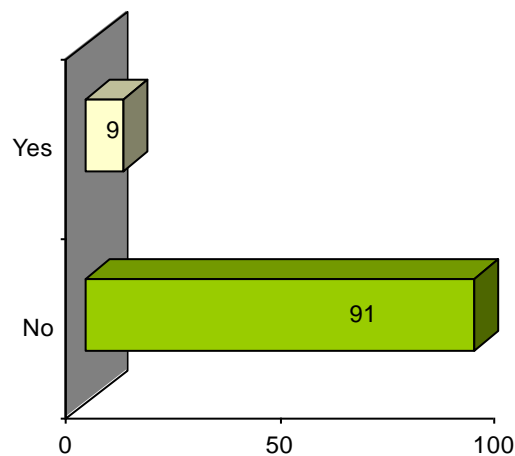
#### 4.2.3 Information on Students Who Received Career Guidance

The respondents were asked to state whether or not they had received any assistance in career decision-making at any point in their Education life. The results indicated that majority (70.3%) of the students had received career guidance at one point of their Education life or another. 30% of the respondents had never received career guidance however as Figure 4.2 indicates.



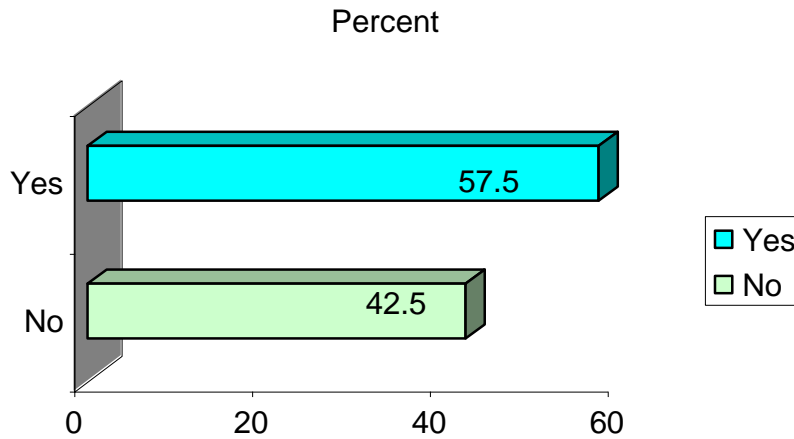
**Figure 4.2: Distributions of Those Who Did/Did Not Receive Career Guidance**

However, further findings showed that most of the respondents received career guidance at secondary school as compared to primary and university levels.



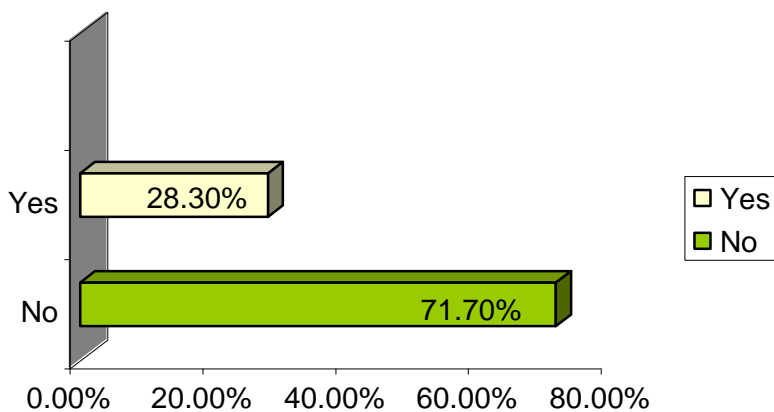
**Figure 4.3: Percentage Of Respondents Who Received Career Guidance At Primary School Level**

As Figure 4.3 above that for most students Career guidance starts late as those graduating from primary school are already in their teenage years and hence in the age of career decision-making.



**Fig 4.4: Percentage Of Respondents Who Received Career Guidance At Secondary School Level**

According to the study findings as shown in figure 4.4 above, 57.5% of the respondents received career guidance in secondary school level while 42.5% did not. This indicates that there is more career guidance taking place in the high schools than in the primary school level or even the university level as the Figure 4.5 below confirms.



**Figure 4.5: Respondents Who Received Career Guidance At The University Level**

The above findings indicate that students hardly get career guidance while in the fantasy and in the realistic stages of career decision making. According to Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma theory (1951), career decision making starts in preteen and ends in young adulthood. They suggest that individuals pass through three stages: fantasy, tentative and realistic. Career guidance is however necessary to facilitate this process in all the three stages. In fantasy stage, the career guidance is necessary to help the young persons define their interests in, capacity for and values of an occupational choice, In the tentative stage, to help students explore and learn to restrict choice based on personal likes, skills and abilities until the occupational choice is made and in realistic stage where the individual pursues the educational experiences required achieving his career goal.

It is also worth noting that even in high schools where most of the assistance is given, it is only given to just about half of the students. As earlier studies done suggest, high school teachers have quite a high teaching workload while others lack the relevant training thus cannot sufficiently offer career guidance (Mwangi 2002).

#### **4.2.4 Response on Whether the Course Being Pursued Was Personally Chosen**

Respondents were asked to state whether or not they had chosen the Degree Courses they were doing personally. This was intended to establish if there were students who did courses that were imposed on them by others. Such students would definitely have obstacles in their career decision-making process.

An overwhelming majority 76.9% claimed that the courses they were pursuing were personally chosen as opposed to 23.1% who felt otherwise as is indicated in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Respondents Who Chose Their Courses Personally and Those That Did Not**

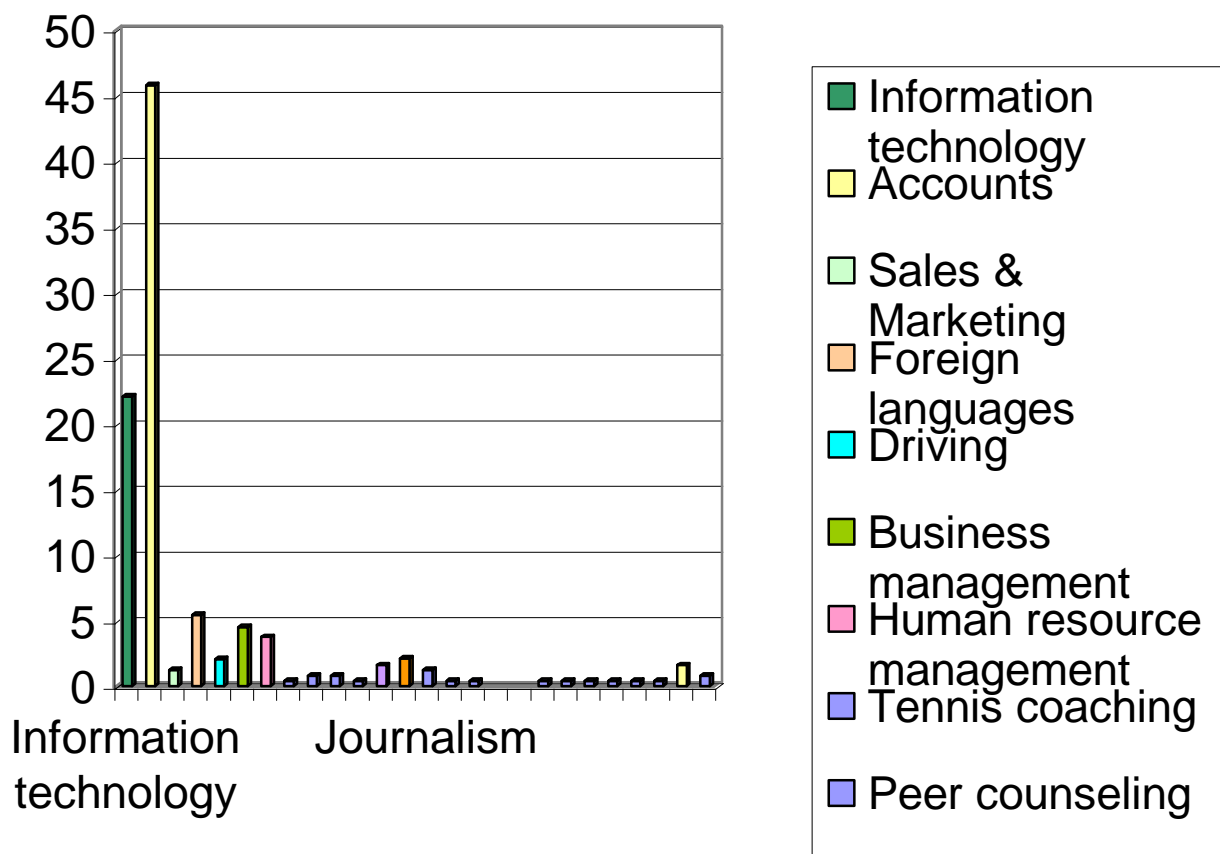
	Frequency	Valid Percent
<b>No</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>23.1</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>76.9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This shows that there are high chances of the respondents being certain about their careers. According to the literature reviewed, selection of college programmes comes in the specification stage where the individual pursues the educational experiences required for achieving his career goal.

#### **4.2.5 Responses on Courses Taken Other Than the University Degree Course.**

Many University students are known to pursue other courses outside their degree courses. Some do so to strengthen their degree and raise their marketability while for others; it is an alternative route to their preferred careers.

Findings reflected that 61.4% of the respondents did not take any other courses outside their degree programmes. 38.6 % of the respondents on the other hand pursued other courses outside the university degree course. 45.8% of these took Accounts related courses while 22.08% of them took computer related courses as shown in Figure 4.6.



**Figure 4.6: Major Courses Pursued Outside the University**

This indicates that most of these students taking other courses outside the university go for the current marketable courses. This may be a sign that the University needs to re-engineer its courses to meet this need. According to the Education symposium on re-engineering University Education for National development (2003), Universities were challenged to develop curricula that are sensitive to technological developments and the need of the industry and society.

### **4.3 RESPONSES AS PER THE STUDY OBJECTIVES**

In this section of the chapter, the findings from the student respondents have been presented and discussed in relation to the objectives of the study. The following are the objectives that guided this study.

- i. Assess the level of career choice certainty amongst University students.
- ii. Investigate the factors related to career choice certainty levels among the University students.
- iii. Establish how comfortable university students are with their career decisions.
- iv. Determine the influence of mode of University admission on career certainty.
- v. Determine the influence of gender in career certainty levels of students.
- vi. Compare the level of career certainty of students in the four academic years.
- vii. To make recommendations based on the findings of the study

The responses of the career decision profile items were distributed on a likert scale of 8 responses, which were numbered 1-8 where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 8 strong agreements to the statements given. The responses were finally grouped into two main groups with 1-4 representing a below average score and 5-8 representing an above average score for the positive responses. For the negative responses 8-5 indicated a below average score and 4-1 an above average score.

#### **4.3.1 Student Respondents' On Level Of Career Choice Certainty**

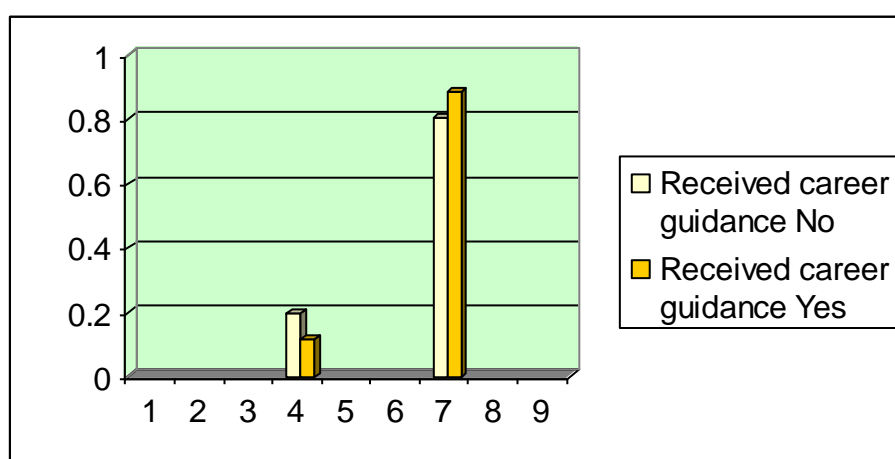
The career certainty index measures how decided one is or how certain one is about their career choice. It was worked out from responses to items 1 and 16 of the career decision profile. The percentage of those below average was only 21.71% and an overwhelming majority of 78.29% was above average as in table 4.4 below.

**Table 4.4:** Career Certainty of the respondents

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Below average	132	21.71
Above average	476	78.29
Total	608	100.0

This indicates that most of the university students are certain about their career choices. This is commendable considering the observation by the Vice-Chancellors Committee on causes of riots in public universities (2000) that most students admitted to the University through JAB were hardly admitted for Courses they had personally chosen. This shows that despite the challenges student face at admission; they are quick to either transfer to their career related courses or they quickly adjust to the courses they are admitted for. However, the group of students who scored below average is not decided about their career choices. Such students require assistance to enable them establish the reasons for their indecision and gain skills to make sound career decisions.

The Career Certainty of the respondents who had received career guidance and those that had not was later compared and the findings are shown in Figure 4.7



**Figure 4.7:** The Career Certainty Level Of Those Who Received Career Guidance and Those That Did Not

Savickas, 1990 noted in his study that High school students who took a career-decision making courses had less career related indecision at the end of the course than did a comparison group. In the same way, the respondents of this study who received career guidance had higher levels of career certainty than their counterparts who did not receive any career guidance. This confirms that career counseling enhances career decision-making.

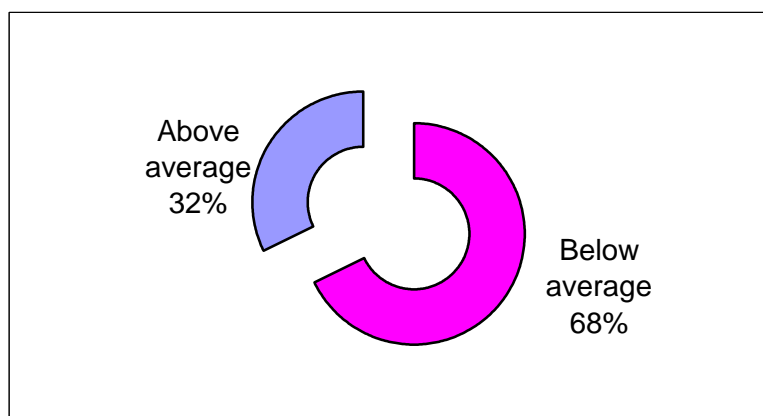
#### **4.3.2 Responses on Factors Related To Career Choice Certainty of the Respondents**

As is explained earlier in this report, the study was limited to three factors relating to career choice namely Self-clarity, Occupational information and Decision-making ability. The Self-Clarity scale measures how clearly one understands his/her interests, abilities, and personality, and how those characteristics fit with different occupations. The Knowledge of Occupations and Training Scale measures how well informed one believes he/she is about occupations and educational programs that will fit his/her interests and abilities. (iii) Decision-making ability scale measures how capable one believes he/she is in making decisions.

##### **Self-clarity**

This was measured through three items on the career decision profile. These include; I wish I knew which occupations best fit my personality; I need to have a clearer idea of my abilities, my major strengths and weaknesses and I need to have a clearer idea of what my interests are.

After working out the self-clarity index, it was evident that only 32% of the respondents felt that they clearly knew their interests, abilities, strengths and weakness while 68% felt otherwise as is indicated in Figure 4.8.



**Figure 4.8:** The Respondents Level of Self –Clarity

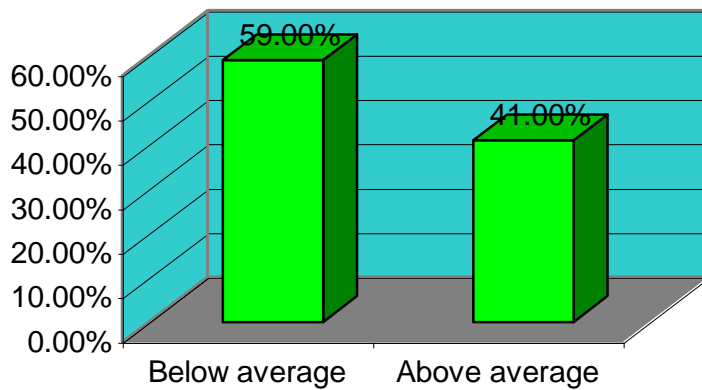
Literature indicates that Career decision-making begins with the self, one's awareness of the world around him/her and the ability to understand what is important to him or her. (Georgia Career Resources Network, 2005). These findings therefore contradict the reviewed literature. It appears most respondents made their career decisions without first internalizing their personal interests, skills, work values, strengths and weaknesses. There are high chances then that the career choices of these respondents are not realistic and not easily achievable. On the other hand, these findings may imply that other people such as parents, teacher or peers imposed the career choices on the respondents.

### **Occupational Information**

The following three items of the career decision profile were used to measure the occupational information of the respondents; I need information about educational programs I want to enter; I do not feel I know enough about the occupations that I am considering and I know what my interests and abilities are, but I am unsure how to find occupations that fit them. The results in Figure 4.9 showed that only 41% had sufficient knowledge about occupational and Educational

programmes that fit their interests and abilities. 59% lacked sufficient occupational knowledge.

See Figure 4.9.

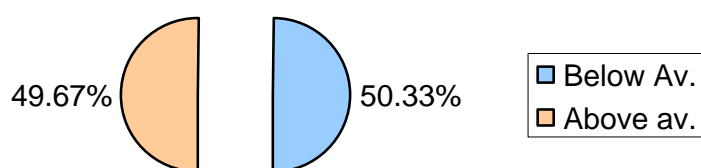


**Figure 4.9: Occupational information**

Although almost 80% of the respondents were certain about their career choices, only 41% had sufficient occupational information to facilitate this kind of decision making. This is a contradiction to the literature reviewed. It would have been expected then only the 41% who had sufficient occupational knowledge would have been certain about their careers. Larson, Heppner, Ham, & Dugan 1988 in Gaffner et al. (2002) state that progress in career development becomes blocked when there is a lack of information about self, the world of work (occupational information), and ways of obtaining information. Students who lack career information may enter college and quickly find that their career goals are unobtainable or unsuitable.

### **Decision-making ability**

Decisive people do not feel comfortable while others make decisions for them. They do not have difficulty in making personal decisions neither do they delay making such decisions. The results of this study show that half of the respondents are indecisive. Out of those who responded to the item on the career decision profile stating that ‘I feel relieved when someone makes the decision for me, 65.2% strongly agreed while only 5% strongly disagreed. The aggregate score on the three items used to measure this scale is shown in Figure 4.10 below.



**Figure 4.10: Findings on the respondents' decision making ability**

According to Gaffner et al. (2002), some students that are undecided about their careers have trouble with decision making. The fact that half of the respondents have trouble with decision making contradicts their results on career certainty level and on whether the course being pursued was personally chosen or not.

The findings of this study show that the students scored low generally in all the three factors that affect career decision-making. This definitely implies that their career certainty is low unlike what their results on the career certainty index shows. The possible reasons for these contradictions include;

- i. Majority of the respondents did not tell the truth about their career certainty.
- ii. The career decisions of most of the respondents may have been imposed on them by other significant people such as parents, peers, teachers etc because their decision making ability is low as the findings indicate.
- iii. The career decision-making of the respondents is influenced majorly by other factors besides the ones studied.

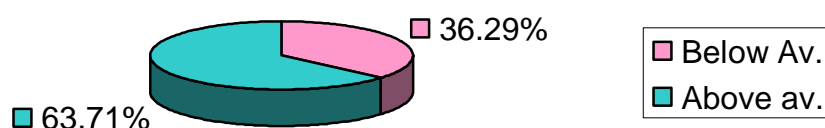
It is therefore possible that the career choices made by the respondents of these studies are not realistic or may be unwise as they do not march their potentials and other personal attributes. Phillips & Pazienza (1988), state that in a wise choice of a vocation, there are three broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts.

Most of the respondents will find Job searching quite difficult as they are not aware of the occupations they best fit in. This is a possible explanation for the high rate of University graduates' unemployment. Chances are that most of the respondents will change their careers later in life when they fully discover their personal attributes.

Gaffner et al. (2002) after their study on Factors related to indecisiveness and career indecision in undecided college students proposed that Proper interventions, which are more personal and intense, may result from a better understanding of what factors have strong relationships with a student's level of indecisiveness. Proper interventions for the students involved in this study will have to rotate around increasing their self and occupational knowledge and to empower their decision making ability.

#### **4.3.3 Respondents Level of Comfort with Their Career Decisions.**

The respondents indicated a high level of comfort with their progress in career decision-making. By having shown a high career certainty index, it would have been contradictory for the same students to say they are uncomfortable with their career decisions. As is indicated in Figure 4.11 below, 63.71% of the respondents were comfortable with their career decisions.



**Figure 4.11:** The respondents' level of comfort with their career choices

These findings show that majority of the students are comfortable with their career decisions and hence are not worried about their career choice. Literature shows that most college students' level of comfort ranges from 56.25% to 68.75%. This shows that Kenyatta university students fit within this range too.

#### **4.3.4 Influence of the Mode of University Admission on Career Certainty**

This study attempted to find out whether the mode of admission to the University had an effect on their career decision-making process and hence their career certainty. According to the report by the Vice chancellors Committee on causes of riots in public universities (2000), students admitted through JAB were hardly admitted for their selected courses. It was therefore assumed that the SSP students would be more certain about their career choices than the JAB students. On the contrary as is indicated by the results shown in Table 4.5, the JAB students are slightly more certain about their career choices as compared to the self-sponsored students.

**Table 4.5:** The Career Certainty Of JAB/SSSP Respondents

	Mode of admission	
Certainty	Joint Admissions Board (JAB)	Self-sponsored (SSP)
Below average	23.2%	27.7%
Above average	76.8%	72.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

This trend relates to findings on other aspects tested in this study such as occupational information, level of comfort and decisiveness but differs in levels of the respondents' self-clarity and importance of the career choice as is shown in the differences of their means in Table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.6:** Comparisons Of JAB And SSP Respondents' Means

		Occupational information	Level of comfort	Decisiveness	Self-clarity	Importance
Means on each	JAB	49.15	<b>65.95</b>	<b>51.84</b>	<b>41.95</b>	<b>82.04</b>
	SSP	47.52	<b>64.60</b>	<b>46.37</b>	<b>45.63</b>	<b>84.42</b>

This indicates that though the self-sponsored students are less certain about their career choices, they possess higher knowledge of their personal attributes and consider the decision about their careers more important than the JAB students.

This is an indication that the self-sponsored students are likely to have been more sincere in responding to this study. It also suggests that there is more external influence on the career choices of the SSP students than the JAB students.

### **4.3.5 Influence of Gender on Career Certainty**

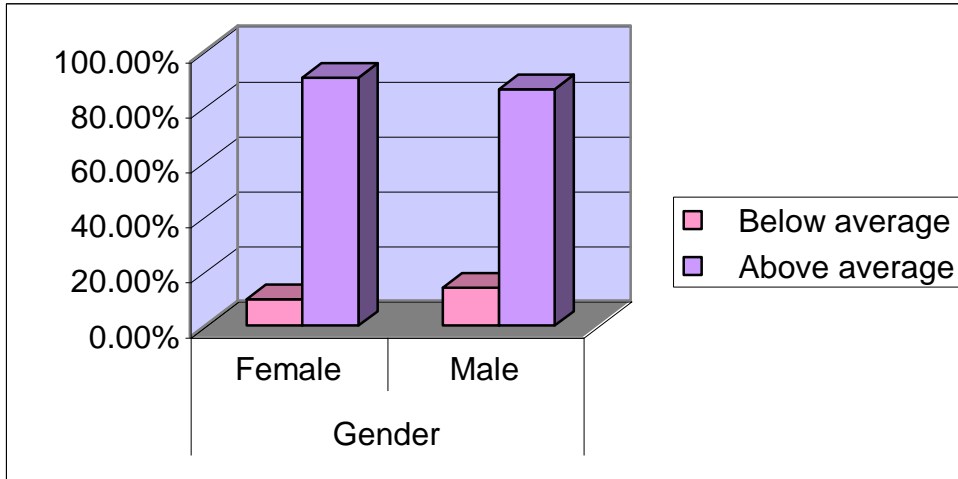
The influence of gender on career decision-making was investigated in this study through comparing male and female scores in the various variables tested.

3.1% and 15.1% more males scored above average in certainty and comfort of their career decisions respectively as compared to the females as indicated in Table 4.7.

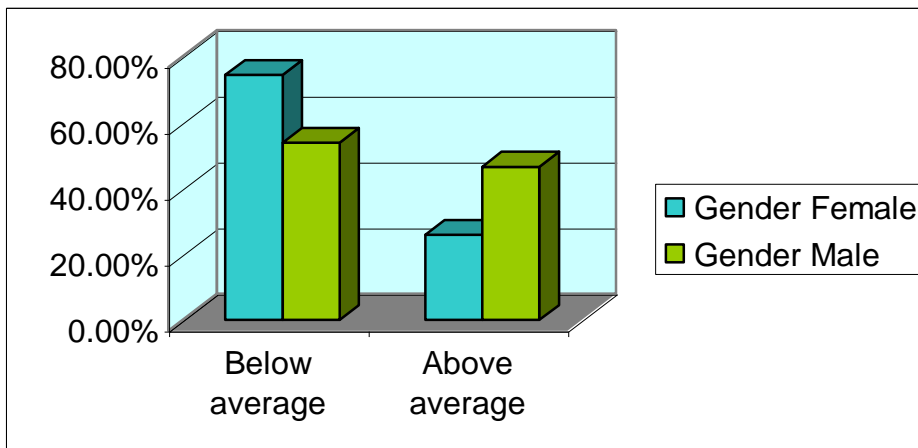
**Table 4.7: Comparison Of Male And Female Respondents' Results On Career Certainty And Comfort**

	MALES		FEMALES	
	Below average	Above Average	Below Average	Above average
CERTAINTY	6.9%	93.1%	9.7%	90.3%
COMFORT	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>89.3%</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>74.2%</b>

Slightly more female respondents consider their career decision important than the male respondents as shown in Figure 4.12.



**Figure 4.12:** Results On The Importance Of Career Choice To Male And Female Respondents



**Figure 4.13:** Results On The Knowledge About Occupations in comparison to Respondents' Gender

More males on the other hand have relevant knowledge of their occupations as compared to females as is indicated in Figure 4.13.

The above findings show that despite the female respondents considering their career decision more important than the males do, they are less knowledgeable about occupations. The females are as well less certain and comfortable about their career choices than the males. This shows there is an influence of gender on career decision-making. The females' scores are lower in more

aspects of career decision-making than those of the males. Further studies may be necessary to investigate the reasons for this.

#### 4.3.6 The Level of Career Certainty and the Year of Study.

The findings on career certainty of respondents were compared along their years of study to find out if the year of study determined one's level of career certainty.

Table 4.8: Comparisons Of Results Of Career Certainty And The Year Of Study

		Year of study				
		First	Second	Third	Fourth	
<b>Certainty</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>49</b>
		<b>% Within Year of study</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>21.19 %</b>	<b>27.07%</b>
	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>132</b>
		<b>% Within Year of study</b>	<b>72.7%</b>	<b>79.4%</b>	<b>78.81%</b>	<b>72.93%</b>

From Table 4.8 above it is clear that the level of career certainty was different in the four years of study. The second year respondents are more certain of their career choices followed by the third, fourth and finally first years. It was expected that the fourth years would have been more certain than all the rest given their long duration in the school.

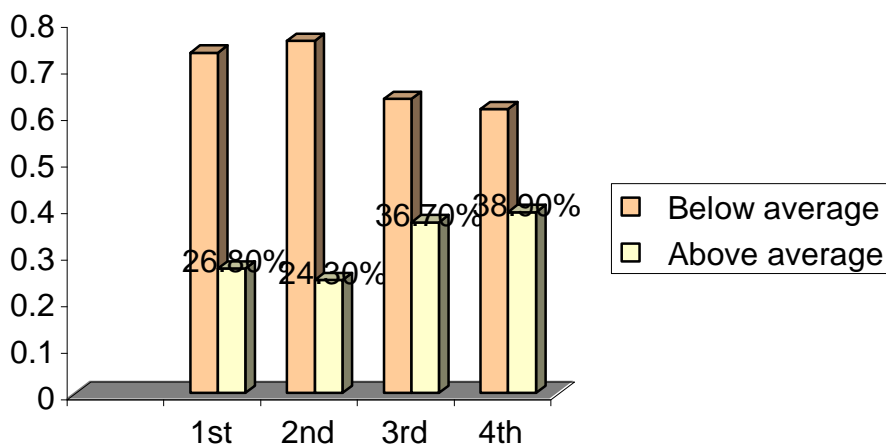
When the level of occupational knowledge is compared to the year of study, the trend is opposite that of career certainty. That is, those who scored below average were more than those who scored above average as Table 4.9 below shows.

**Table 4.9: Comparisons Of Results On Level of Occupational Knowledge And The Year Of Study**

		Year of study				
		First	Second	Third	Fourth	
<b>Knowledge Of Occupations</b>	<b>Below average</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>101</b>
		<b>% Within Year of study</b>	<b>68.1%</b>	<b>63.9%</b>	<b>49.3%</b>	<b>56.1%</b>
	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>79</b>
		<b>% Within Year of study</b>	<b>31.9%</b>	<b>36.1%</b>	<b>50.7%</b>	<b>43.9%</b>

The level of occupational knowledge seemed to rise as the students advanced in year of study except in the final year. It is expected that the occupational knowledge should be highest in the fourth year and lowest in first year. The fact that this is not the case with the fourth years in this study is contradictory. This implies that the students about to be absorbed in the job market are not aware of places where they should be absorbed are likely to find job searching quite challenging.

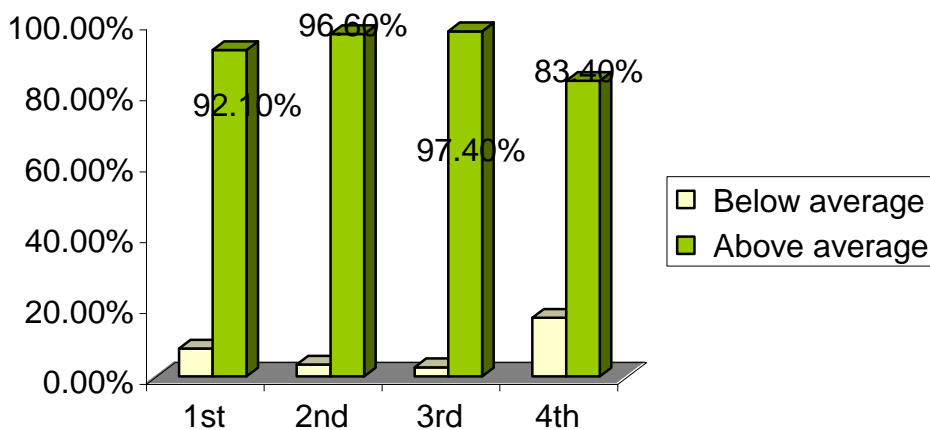
This trend relates to that of self-clarity shown in Figure 4.14 below.



**Figure 4.14: Self-Knowledge (Clarity) And The Year Of Study**

The only difference in this case was that the second year students' level of self-knowledge was lower than that of the first year students. However the fourth year students seemed to be clearer of their personal attributes than the rest of the students, which should be the case. All the same the percentage of those above average was lower than the percentage of those below average in the level of clarity of their personal attributes.

All the students in the four years considered the choice of a career quite important. The third years scored the highest followed by second years, first years and finally the fourth year as Figure 4.15 indicates. This again sends a negative signal about the final year students. It was expected that they should have found the choice of a career more important than the rest after all they were more advanced in age and were closer to searching for jobs than the rest.



**Figure 4.15: Importance Of The Respondents' Career Choice And Their Year Of Study**

The only explanation to this is would have been if the fourth years had made their career decisions properly and were quite contented to consider it important any more. This however

would have been the case if they were well versed with both self and occupational information and were quite decisive but this was not the case. The other possibility is that they are defeated copers who settled for whatever was in front of them. On the other hand, the rest of the students may have received more career guidance making them more certain about their career choices than the fourth year students. Further research should be carried out on the fourth years to establish the exact explanation for this trend. In the mean time, they require a lot of career counselling, self-awareness building as well as to be equipped with occupational information.

#### **4.4 RESPONSES AS PER THE STUDY HYPOTHESES**

The data collected was further subjected to hypothesis testing using correlation techniques, Chi-squares and the T-tests. The null hypotheses of the study included;

Ho1. There is no relationship between the students' level of self-knowledge and their level of career choice certainty.

Ho2. There is no relationship between the students' level of occupational information and their level of career choice certainty.

Ho3. There is no relationship between students' decision-making ability and their level of career choice certainty.

Ho4. There is no significant difference in the level of career choice certainty of students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years.

Ho5. There is no significant difference between the JAB and SSP students in their career choice certainty.

Ho6. There is no significant difference between male and female students in their career choice certainty.

The Findings on the hypotheses are presented in section 4.4. In the first part of this section,

Pearson product –Moment correlations was used to establish the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

#### 4.4.1 Relationship between Students' Level of Career Certainty and Other Variables

The findings on the first three hypotheses have been presented in table of correlations 4.10 below and discussed in this section.

Table 4.10: **Pearson Product-Moment correlations between the independent variables**

	Certainty	Clarity	Knowledge	Comfort	Decisiveness	Importance
Certainty	1	.094(*)	.145(**)	.272(**)	.225(**)	.168(**)
Clarity		1	.342(**)	.148(**)	.177(**)	-.075
Knowledge			1	.203(**)	.246(**)	-.033
Comfort				1	.122(**)	.011
Decisiveness					1	.230(**)
Importance						1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

As the table 4.10 below shows, the coefficient of correlation between the level of career certainty and that of clarity of self-knowledge is 0.094 indicating that there is a weak positive relationship between the two variables; the level of career certainty and level of personal information. According to these findings, career certainty related to knowledge of one's attributes to a very minimal level. The null hypothesis, which stated that there is no relationship between the two variables, was therefore rejected.

According to the literature reviewed, those who have an adequate amount of self-information and occupational knowledge will make better decisions whereas those without this information will make poor decisions (Larson, Heppner, Ham, & Dugan 1988 in Gaffner et al., 2002). Investigations were done to find if this applied to the respondents of this study.

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation between Occupational information of the respondents and the other independent variables was calculated to find out if there were any relationships existing. The findings as indicated in the table of correlations (Table 4.10) showed a weak positive relationship between the respondents' level of occupational information and career certainty. This indicates that the respondents had a higher level of career certainty if they possessed more occupational knowledge. The null hypothesis was hence rejected.

On correlating the respondents' level of decision-making ability and the rest of the independent variables, a Pearson's correlation value of 0.225 at the significance level of 0.01 was achieved. This indicated that the relationship between the students' Career Certainty level and that of Decisiveness or their ability to make personal decisions is a weak positive one. The null hypothesis was then rejected.

The rejection of the three null hypotheses is support of literature that suggests that one requires both self and occupational knowledge to make good career decisions. According to Larson, Heppner, Ham, & Dugan 1988 in Gaffner et al. (2002), Progress in career development becomes blocked when there is a lack of information about self, the world of work (occupational information), and ways of obtaining information.

Descriptive statistics (means and chi-squares), standard T-tests and ANOVAs were computed to establish the differences between the male and female respondents, the respondents in the four years of study as well as the JAB AND SSP students. The findings are indicated in the following three sections.

#### 4.4.2 Differences In Career Certainty Levels Of Respondents In The Four Academic Years

A two-way analysis of Variance was computed to establish the difference between respondents in the four years of study and their career certainty. The results in Table 4.11 show that the Career certainty of respondents in the four academic years is significantly different as the significance of the F-value is greater than the set value (0.05).

**Table 4.11: The Difference of Respondents' Career Certainty Within The Four Years Of Study**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Certainty	Between Groups	1267.480	3	422.493	.600	.615
	Within Groups	430671.377	612	703.711		
	Total	431938.857	615			

Further tests using Turkey B show the results in Table 4.12 which confirm the above observation. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

**Table 4.12 : Turkey B test results for Career Certainty within the four years of study**

Year of study	N	Subset for alpha = .05
		1
<b>First</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>76.7986</b>
<b>Fourth</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>77.0373</b>
<b>Second</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>79.2672</b>
<b>Third</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>80.1738</b>



<b>Certainty</b>	<b>Equal variances assumed</b>	.052	.819	.439	.611	.661	1.21449	2.76415	-4.21390	6.64288
	<b>Equal variances not assumed</b>			.483	187.096	.629	1.21449	2.51276	-3.74249	6.17148

#### 4.4.4 Differences Of Male And Female Respondents In Career Choice Certainty

Chi-square test was carried out to establish whether career certainty was dependent on gender.

T-tests were further carried out to establish if there was any significant difference in the two genders on their career certainty.

**Table 4.15: Results Of Career -Certainty Chi-Square Tests On Gender**

	<b>Value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</b>	<b>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</b>	<b>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</b>
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	<b>.152(b)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.697</b>		

Chi-square results on gender versus certainty shown in table 4.15 above indicate that  $P > 0.05$ .

This means that the Certainty in Career choice is independent on gender. The null hypothesis was hence rejected.

**Table 4.16: T-Tests results for career certainty in Gender**

		<b>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</b>	<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>
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		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
<b>Certainty</b>	<b>Equal varianc es assume d</b>	<b>2.414</b>	<b>.126</b>	<b>-.768</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>.445</b>	<b>-4.13</b>	<b>5.38</b>	<b>-14.89</b>	<b>6.63</b>
	<b>Equal varianc es not assume d</b>			<b>-.767</b>	<b>57.33</b>	<b>.446</b>	<b>-4.13</b>	<b>.38</b>	<b>-14.91</b>	<b>6.65</b>

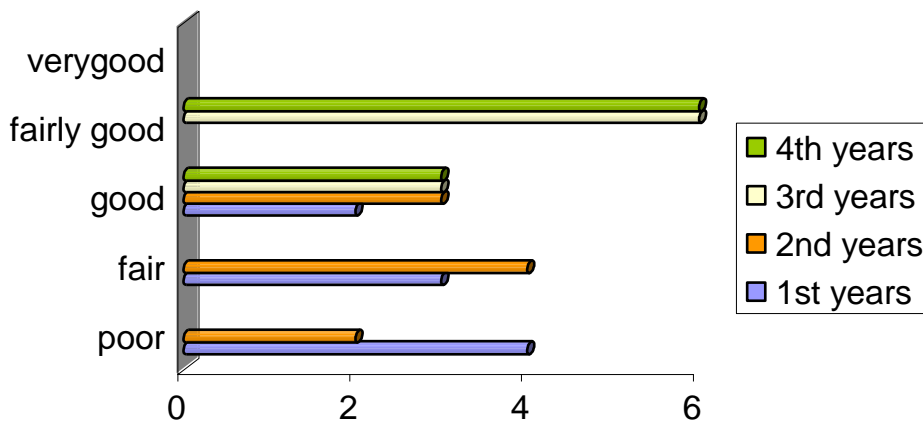
From the t-tests results in Table 4.16 the significant level of the calculated value is greater than the set value hence the means of the males and of the female students are significantly different. The null hypothesis was rejected.

#### **4.5 RESULTS FROM THE ACADEMIC ADVISORS**

The qualitative data gathered through interviews with the academic advisors has been presented in this section mainly in narrative form according to the interview questions. However a few charts have been used to describe their findings. A comparison of the results of the academic advisors and those of the students has been given for each of the sections.

##### **4.5.1 How Would You Rate The Career Certainty Of The Students Across The Years?**

The Academic advisors were asked to rate the career certainty of the students according to their academic years. A range of 1-5 was given to aid their rating where 1 marked the lowest level and 5 the highest. The findings are as shown in Figure 4.16 below.



**Figure 4.16: Career Certainty Of Students In Their Years Of Study**

Majority 33.3% of the Academic advisors felt that the Career certainty of the first year students was generally poor, 25% felt it was fair while 16% felt it was good. Second years students' career certainty was rated from poor to good with a majority of them being considered as fair. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students range between fair and fairly good scores. All the academic advisors seemed to be in agreement that the career certainty does not increase after the third year.

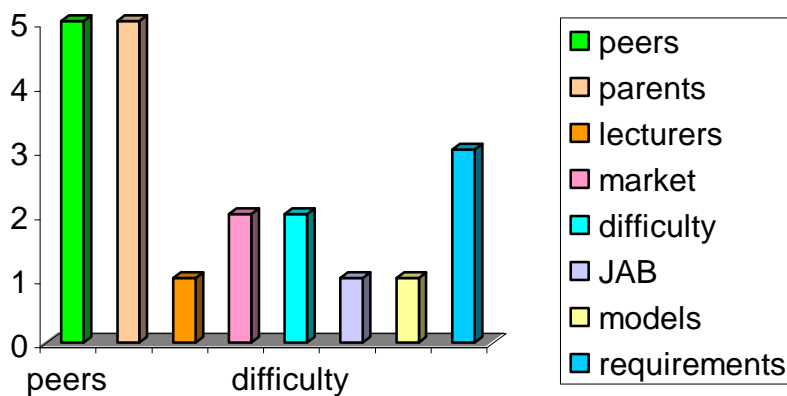
Majority of the academic advisors further explained that the students were quite confused in the first year and sought to change the degree courses they were admitted for. However, most of these students settled for whatever courses they were offered due to the limited opportunities for course transfers. One academic advisor observed that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years lacked interests in their courses unlike the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years who were more interested and committed.

According to the academic advisors, the career certainty was dependent on the year of study. The certainty levels were lower in the junior years but rose as one progressed to the senior years but was never to be rated as very good.

This observation however differed from the students' results who evaluated themselves as very certain with an average of 75.81% in their certainty level. The academic advisors are likely to have given a more objective than the students in their observation. This is because the advisors gave explanations to their views unlike the students. Besides, the academic advisors had no image to protect.

#### 4.5.2 What Are Some Of The Factors That Relate To Career Choice Uncertainty Of The Students?

The academic advisors were asked to state some of the factors that influenced the career choices of the students. They suggested the following factors shown in Figure 4.17.



**Figure 4.17:** Factors That Affect Students Career Choices

About 50% of the career advisors suggested that peers and parents influenced the career choice of the students. It was specifically observed by most of the advisors that the SSP students were influenced most by their rich parents to pursue the prestigious courses such as Bachelor of Commerce. Most of these parents threatened not to pay fees if their sons and daughters defied their advice. One of the 12 academic advisors suggested that some lecturers especially in her

department solicited students to do the courses they taught in order to increase the minimum number of students in their courses and hence increase their chances of promotion.

About 16.7% of the academic advisors reported that either the difficulty of the Course or its marketability influenced most students' choice. Students tended to select courses that were of relatively lower difficulty and those that were more marketable. For other students, it's the course requirements that determined whether or not they pursued certain courses or not while for others role models comprising of people who had successfully pursued certain courses was an influential factor. For some of the JAB students they pursued those courses that JAB selected for them.

The findings by the academic advisors outlined more factors that influenced the students, career decision than those dealt with in the students' questionnaire. This explains why the students may have considered themselves certain of their career decisions despite their low scores on their decision-making ability, occupational and self-knowledge. However the fact that other people such as the peers, parents, and lecturers influenced the decision of the students shows that they had weak decision-making ability.

#### **4.5.3 (A) Comment on the Personal Information Students Possess To Facilitate Their Career Decision-Making**

The academic advisors were asked to give their views on the students' level of self-knowledge (That is the knowledge of their abilities, potentials, personal resources, weaknesses, aptitude, likes and dislikes).

Majority of the academic advisors explained that students lacked personal information and that most of them did not know of the need to match self-information and course selection. Other students were ignorant of how to access their personal information. This therefore implies that most students had not considered their abilities, likes and dislikes values, interests and such personal qualities in their choices.

This findings relate to those of the students that very few students had sufficient self-knowledge to enable them make wise career choices. The academic advisors explained further the reasons to this which included the students' ignorance of how self-clarity related with the choice of their careers and how to gather that clarity. It also appears that the education system did not promote students ability to understand themselves as unique individuals. This may be due to emphasis in performance and competition in schools where every student is supposed to perform well in all the subjects done. Lack of subject specialization also made the students jacks-of-all-trades and master of none.

### **(B) Comment On The Occupational Information Students Possess To Facilitate Their Career Decision-Making.**

The academic advisors' views on the students' occupational knowledge were also sought for and the responses given were as follows.

Some academic advisors felt that SSP students possessed more labour market information than the JAB students. The latter gathered occupational information in the course of their four years in campus. Most students were not aware of their future job options and did not bother getting this information. Many students on the other hand did not know where to gather this information with their interaction with the lecturers being minimal. One of the academic advisors, who

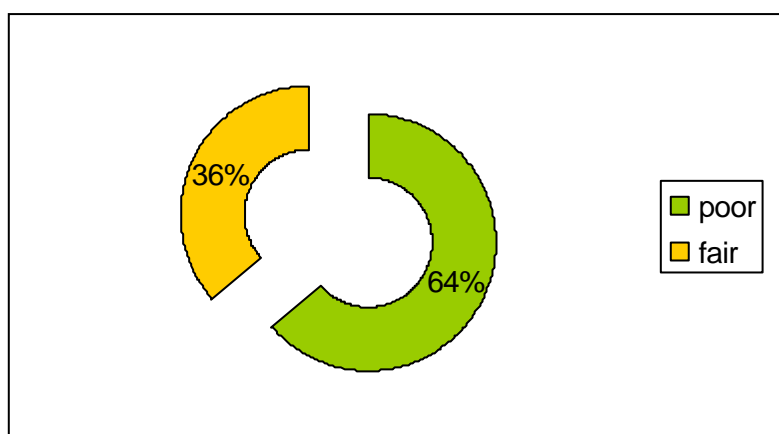
claimed that she hardly advised students, said that in their department they left the students and the parents to seek the relevant places of employment after the completion of Courses.

Just as the student respondents, the academic advisors rated the students' occupational knowledge as low. The academic advisors felt that the students were not exposed to employers and the job market where they could gather the information. They also claimed that the lecturers did not provide the students with this information and may not as well be updated with current labour market information. The students on the other hand did not seek this information from them or from any other sources. It appears that most students did not consider the career issues urgent though they said that the career decision was important to them.

#### **4.5.4 How Would You Rate The Students' Decision Making Ability and Its Implications On Career Decision-Making?**

Opinions on the level of the students' decision-making ability were gathered from the academic advisors. They were to assess this as demonstrated in the way students made other decisions in academic or and social-economic issues. The results were as shown in the Figure 4.18.

**Figure 4.18: Students Decision-Making Ability**



64% of the academic advisors found the students' decision-making ability to be poor while 36% found it fair. One academic advisor went ahead to say that students followed their peers blindly rather than making personal choices. Others consulted lecturers and other professionals for particular decisions. Another academic advisor observed that there was a lot of pampering of student in schools leaving them with little chances for making decisions. This he said hindered their maturity as far as decision-making was concerned. It is because of this that many students depended on their parental/ teachers' career choices and hence the rise of the number of students who opt to change Courses later in the years.

This compares with the students' assessment of their own decision-making ability where only about 50% scored above average. This reflects the need to empower students as decision makers. It is also a reflection of the kind of nurturing that is being done by parents and teachers right from the students' childhood. It indicates the need for educate parents education.

#### **4.5.5 The Effect of the Mode of University Admission on Students' Career Certainty Commitment and Performance.**

Apart of the interview with the academic advisors required them to state if mode of university admission had any effect on the career certainty of the students.

One academic advisor in the school of Commerce noticed that the SSP students were more aware about the job market as compared to their JAB counterparts. However, she noted that the SSP students were not as committed to their course work as the JAB students were. The latter ended up performing better academically. An academic advisor in the department of exercise, recreation and sports observed that the JAB students are young and energetic and fit in the

Programme faster than the SSP students who are older and just wanted to attain a degree. Otherwise he noted that the young SSP students are competent and purposed.

Other advisors noted that the JAB students remained uncertain for long while SSP students were influenced highly by their parents. In Environmental sciences, it was noted that females performed better than the males in both SSP and JAB. One counselor noted that the SSP students felt inferior due to their lower entry results to the University than did the JAB students. She further explained that there was a general attitude that the SSP students were time wasters because they hailed from rich families and had a lot of money at their disposal. This enabled them to engage in other social activities outside learning hindering their excellence in academics.

Other academic advisors in the Physics and Psychology departments did not notice any difference between the two groups of students especially in their performance.

According to most of the academic advisors, it is clear that the mode of admission to the university affected students' behavior and performance but not necessarily their decisiveness about careers. However, most of them are in agreement that the SSP students possessed higher occupational information. This relates to the students findings that reflected differences in the SSP and JAB students in most of the variables tested. It is now clearer why the SSP students have lower career choice certainty despite having higher self-clarity according to the students and higher occupational knowledge according to the advisors. Their parents and guardians interfered a lot with their course selection.

#### **4.5.6 Issues Students Sought Advice For From The Academic Advisors.**

The academic advisors were requested to state the issues for which students sought their advice. All the Academic advisors noted that most of the students were not aware of the existence of the advisory offices and roles and hence did not seek their assistance. The few who were aware,

sought help on selection and transfer of courses especially in first year. In the other years, students sought assistance in selection of units especially the electives at the beginning of the semester. Others sought help on issues regarding to internship /attachment placement, most of these just seeking for attachment and recommendation letters. Some sought information on relevant places to go for attachment, job search issues and when faced by retake /supplementary examinations. Some regular students sought advice on possibility of changing Degree programmes, employment places or other relevant courses to study outside the University to back up their degrees.

#### **4.5.7 Recommendations by the Academic Advisors**

When asked to make recommendations, most of the academic advisors felt the need to be adequately equipped for the task through relevant training and capacity building. Besides, most of them lacked adequate and appropriate space to meet the students as they shared offices with other colleagues. Most felt that the academic advisory post was neither institutionalized nor structured. They therefore recommended the structuring of the office, provision of adequate space and recognition of the post. Many of the academic advisors noted however that most of the students were just lazy or did not consider their future an urgent matter to address. Most of these were going about the university life as though it was an end to itself only to start rushing up in the last semester of their final year when the issue of job searching dawned on them.

Further recommendations included the need to network the academic advisory services within the schools and departments and also with the centre for career development and attachment programmes. Most of the advisors wished the working environment was made more lecturer-friendly as this would motivate them to give students more than the dictates of the course

outlines. They recommended that students be more exposed to employers and job market through; invitation of employers in public and private sector as guest speakers; visitations to industries; well organized attachment programmes; Use of industrialists as resource persons or as lecturers through exchange programmes with lecturers. This they felt would also enhance feedback on quality of graduates produced as well as on the content taught. The gap between High schools, Universities and Industries should be minimized. This would help those in high school to understand courses offered in the universities and their requirements and jobs offered after University education.

The academic advisors noted that there was need for Career Counseling in the universities, which they recommended should be done by professionals. These they said would enhance students' career development and supplement their academic advisory role.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major findings of this study have been summarized in this chapter after which some conclusions based on these findings have been made. Recommendations have then been given to the various sectors that they relate to. The areas for further research have been suggested at end of this chapter.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Findings.

This is a brief outline of the study's findings from both the students and the academic advisors.

- According to the students' results, their career certainty level was very high with a mean of all students being about 75%. This however was not supported by their results in the level of their self-knowledge as well as that of their occupational knowledge. The Academic advisors did not support the students in this also as they suggested that most students were not certain about their career choices especially while in their junior years in the University.
- Most students are deficient in knowledge of their personal attributes and skills as well as in occupational knowledge, which are basic constituents of mature career decision-making.
- Most of the students pursued degree programmes of their personal choice. Those who were admitted by JAB for other Courses outside their personal preferences and are unable to transfer adjust and become comfortable in the course of time.
- Most of the students were comfortable with their career decisions. Some of those who were not comfortable pursued other courses outside the University in an attempt to bridge to their careers of choice.

- Students who received career guidance were more certain about their careers, more clear of their abilities, skills, potentials and interests, possess higher occupational knowledge and are more contented with their career development as compared to those who had not received any career guidance.
- Career guidance started late for most students as very little was given in primary school. However 50% of the respondents received career guidance in High school and about 30% of them received career guidance in the University.
- The mode of University admission JAB or SSP does not affect career certainty of the student significantly. It is the interference of parents and significant others that lowers their certainty especially that of the SSP students.
- SSP and JAB Male students are slightly more certain of their career choices than are the female student. Though the females considered career choice important, they lacked occupational knowledge and self- clarity as compared to the males and were less comfortable with the decisions they had made.
- Half of the students are indecisive. Their Academic advisors in support of these claimed that the students depended a lot on peer and parental influence.
- Provision and promotion of self and Occupational information is the area of the greatest need for career guidance for most of the respondents. The students admitted that they lacked sufficient self-understanding and occupational information and the academic advisors confirmed this.
- The year of study does not affect the career certainty of the students significantly. However fourth year students' results contradicted the expected trend and instead their career certainty was lower than of the third years.
- Students lack people to seek career assistance from as there is very remote association between them and their lecturers who are also not motivated enough

to do beyond their teaching obligation. The students are not also well informed of the existence of the Academic Advisory services, which are not well publicized.

- Most Academic advisors do not comprehend their roles and expectations and some feel it is just another ‘unnecessary’ load on top of what they have to do. Those who do any advising are those motivated their personal interests in the role or in the general welfare of the students.
- Most of the academic advisors however lack office space and the necessary training to carry out career advising.
- The few University counselors deal mostly with the psychological and social issues of the students and have no one to refer to students with academic or career issues. The attempt to refer to the academic advisors is resisted by the students who claim the latter are hardly available.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The career certainty of most students have been compromised due to their lack of sufficient occupational knowledge as well as that of their personal abilities, aptitudes, and potentials, likes and dislikes and of other personal resources. Lack of awareness about what happens at the universities by many secondary school students limits their University course selection and career decision-making process as a whole. Parents lack sufficient knowledge of their role in the career development of their children. There is need to educate them and to show them the need to empower their children as decision makers. Inadequate trained man power and poor delegation and publicity of academic advisory role mitigate the minimal efforts being made in the area of career guidance. All these are pointers to the dire need for professional career guidance and counseling at all education levels.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

In this section, the recommendations made out of the study's findings have been outlined. These have been grouped according to the various sectors where they have been proposed to.

#### **5.3.1 Education Sector**

- Emphasis should be laid on activities that raise levels of students' self-knowledge.
- Visits to companies, industries and prospective employers, institutions of higher learning, public and private sector as well as inviting employers to schools and colleges would raise the occupational knowledge of the students.
- There is need to empower the female student about career decision-making.
- High school students should be exposed to University programmes early enough to enable them make wise university course selection.
- Invitation of employers and other guest speaker in various forums can help meet the need for students to see more role models and motivate them to make wise career decisions.

#### **5.3.2 Universities**

- Universities should take up the challenge and market their courses and programmes to their potential and future students in high schools. This will reduce uncertainties and course transfers during the first academic year.
- Lecturers should be motivated and their working conditions improved to enable them own up and enjoy working with students hence increase and improve their interactions with them.

- Universities should develop curricula that are sensitive to technological developments and the needs of the industry and society this will reduce the rate at which students take other courses outside the university.
- Career counseling should be promoted in the Universities through involvement of professionals such as career counselors. This will help to change the trend where most students lack career guidance at a time when they need it most.
- Students should be empowered as decision-makers and discouraged from over-reliance on others for decision making.
- Career guidance should centre on provision of self and occupational knowledge, which the students are most deficient in.
- Industrial attachments should be emphasized and made relevant to the students University Education and career development.

### **5.3.3 Academic advisory services in Kenyatta University**

- Academic advisory role in the University need to be well structured and publicized to the students.
- The role of the academic advisors should be made clear and be recognized by the university either by way of remuneration or reduction of the teaching workload.
- Office space should be allocated to the academic advisors to enable them carry out their role effectively.
- Career advising in schools and departments within the Universities should be linked to create harmony and enhance referral of students where need be.

### **5.3.4 Career counseling**

- There is need for well-structured career guidance and counseling services to facilitate the process of career development right from Primary school level through to the University level.
- In secondary school level, career counselors should put more emphasis on raising levels of students' self- knowledge and of occupational information, which are basic to career decision-making.
- Professionals should be hired at all the Education levels to deal with career issues and not be left to teachers who already have high teaching workloads. And very little time to interact with he students.

### **5.3.4 Labour Market**

- Stronger linkage between the Education sector and the labour market should be established and maintained through invitations of employers to school and colleges.
- Industries and other employing firms and institutions should provide attachment opportunities to students. This will promote acquisition of labour market information and raise career decision-making ability of students.
- Employers should give feedback on the quality of graduates being released to the market to enable better teaching and equipping of students with relevant and updated skills.
- Exchange programmes where industrialists are attached to teach some units in the universities can foster linkage with the labour market and hence raise occupational knowledge of students.

#### 5.4 Suggestions on Further Research

Further research is required to:

- Find out factors that limit career decision-making especially in females at the university.
- Establish why the fourth year students despite being exposed to their courses for a longer period have lower level of career certainty, importance of career decision, self-knowledge as well as occupational knowledge.
- Investigate the relationship between students' level of career certainty and of occupational knowledge to the rate of absorption in the job market.
- The relationship between Attachment/Internship Experience and Clarification of Career Choice.
- Find out the extent of parental and others' influence in career choices of the university students.
- Establish the level of career certainty of students in other universities as this study was only carried out in Kenyatta University.
- Establish the extent to which the courses students pursue outside the University are related to the degree courses they pursue within the university and how the university can tailor those programmes to meet this need.

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8. Is the course you are pursuing your personal choice ( ) Yes ( )No

9. Which other course do you pursue outside the University Degree if any?

.....

**SECTION B: The Career Decision Profile**

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions below. Just circle the answer that best fits you. Do not spend too much time on any one statement.

1. I have an occupational field in mind that I want to work in (e.g., Medicine, Agriculture, Management, or Performing arts).

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

2. I don't have strong interests in any occupational field.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

3. I feel relieved if someone else makes a decision for me.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

4. I wish I knew which occupations best fit my personality.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

5. I feel at ease and comfortable with where I am in making a career decision

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

6. My future work or career is not that important to me right now.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

7. I frequently have difficulty making decisions.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

8. I need information about educational programs I want to enter.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

9. I'm not worried about my career choice.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

10. I know what my interests and abilities are, but I am unsure how to find Occupations that fit them.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

11. I do not feel I know enough about the occupations that I am considering.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

12. I am an indecisive person; I delay deciding and have difficulty making up my mind.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

13. I need to have a clearer idea of my abilities, my major strengths and weaknesses.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

14. I don't need to make a vocational choice at this time.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

15. I need to have a clearer idea of what my interests are.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

16. I have decided on the occupation I want to enter (e.g., electrical, engineer, nurse, cook, etc.).

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

**A2. ACADEMIC ADVISORS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How would you rate the career choice certainty of the University students across the four academic years on a scale of 1-5? (Where 1 represents the highest level of uncertainty and 5 represents the most certain students)

First years	1	2	3	4	5
Second years	1	2	3	4	5
Third years	1	2	3	4	5
Fourth years	1	2	3	4	5

2. What are some of the factors that relate to the career choice uncertainty of the students?
3. What is your comment on the personal information (abilities, interests, strengths, weaknesses etc) and occupational information that students possess to facilitate the career decision-making?
4. How would you rate the university student decision-making experience and its implications on the career choices the students make?
5. In your opinion does the mode of University admission affect the students' career choice certainty? Who are more certain JAB or SSP students?
6. Is there any significant difference in the commitment and performance of JAB and SSP students in their courses?
5. Is there any relationship between students' discipline and their career choice certainty?
7. What are some of the career decision-making issues that students seek your help for?
8. Is there need for career counseling for the university students to enhance career decision- making skills? How do you rate this need on a scale of 1-10 (where 1 shows the lowest level of need and 10 the highest level of need)?