



Higher secondary student's perception towards acquiring the degrees in eastern province of Zambia

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ABSTRACT

The young student's community of every society and all part of the world is aspiring to get the degree. But everyone is not the same as one another, each one is differed in getting degree as the result of what they wish to become in their life. In this context the College or University plays major role for providing/ offering degrees depends on the society's need. The government's role on the part of youths is to provide Education, Economy, Employment, formation of culture and utilizing manpower to nation. The colleges which has got sophisticated and produces the good result then it's attracted many students. The same not much facility, poor quality of teaching and poor results of examinations is less attractive. Sometimes parent's interest plays an important role for choosing degree of a candidate. The African country of Zambia has taken for the study area as one of the researchers is belonging to the study area. The sample of 10 higher secondary schools students (Grade 12 level) were taken for this study using stratified random sampling method. The questionnaire was converted into numerical data state in order to analyze the student's interest in acquiring degree. The students were analysed with reference to location of student, type of institution. The data was analyzed by using SPSS software. The appropriate results were drawn and suggestions made to improve their perception on acquiring degree.

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Introduction

Education is a form of social policy; a means by which society distributes power and privilege. The level of entrance into the occupational world is significantly determined by the level that is attained in the educational world. This study will identify the challenges that learners of higher education. According to Davies (O'Neill, K. Singh, G., O'Donoghue, J. 2004) education has become a commodity in which people seek to invest for their own personal gain, to ensure quality of opportunity and as a route to a better life. It is further indicated that the demand for higher education is expanding exponentially throughout the world and by 2025 as many as 150 million people will be seeking higher education. In this situation there is mass entrant in one course in one region and some place there is the same course is less attractive due to regional demand and employment opportunity too prevails.

The increased demand to higher education can be attributed to the knowledge driven society. It is argued that society requires higher levels of skills and qualifications to fill the same worthwhile jobs (O'Neill, K. Singh, G., O'Donoghue, J. 2004). Maximizing the realization of these possibilities is still problematic as evidenced for example that to date in Africa (Maliyamkono et.al 2006) there are still a great number of people who are missing out on higher education. It also notice that the family members also influenced the selection of a degree course in Zambian situation in the way of availability of financial sources and interest on the profession of a candidate's parents.

Almost all the institutions in Zambia have got guidance and counseling staff which is very much essential in an institution is appreciated. But those teachers are not updated to suit to the present society. As the result students struggle lot to decide when they are confused in choosing the degree course.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the availability of Institutions in Eastern province.
2. To study the courses offered in different institutions in Eastern province.
3. To find out the difference between the students of government and private schools, rural and urban schools, Co-education and single sex schools and girls and boys school in acquiring degrees.
4. To study the perception on private colleges and universities in Eastern province of Zambia.
5. To study the perception on catholic institutions in higher education in Eastern province of Zambia.

Statement of the problem

Higher education contributes the maximum level in nation's economic growth rather than basic education. Basic education provides fundamental set up to the nation and gives the way to the higher education. Herein when we say higher education it starts from degree level till doctoral degree. For the better management, production and utilization of our country's resources higher education is important. But the same monotonous degrees of all or majority of youth turns in one degree then unemployment problem starts, as when they reaches

more than required in certain period. This also will lead the graduates to work in under employment. So choosing the degree of a candidate not only by his own interest and also need of the nation's growth, employment opportunity, availability of financial support for the education cost and mental health /reasoning skill of a candidate.

The case study of Zambia is peculiar in this respect and more prevalent too. Nation's responsibility is to serve the society by giving better and affordable education and the education is for self and a family development too. So it is better if adequate measures have taken to eradicate this issue to save, preserve the future generation and lead in a right path in choosing a right degree.

Hence keeping all these things in mind the researcher decided take up the study on "Higher secondary student's perception towards acquiring the degrees in Eastern province of Zambia".

Literature review

Employers are now looking for graduates with a range of transferable skills (Finer, 1996; Mason, 1998). In addition to the skills mentioned above, those of numeracy, the ability to acquire further knowledge and good interpersonal skills are desirable qualities in a graduate. However, many of these skills may be absent. In order to facilitate a more immediately effective transition into the world of work upon graduation, students need to have acquired the skills of critical thinking and be able to tackle unfamiliar and/or open-ended problems (Belt et al., 2002).

Once they begin to fall behind scholastically, they lose confidence in themselves and either feel defeated and withdraw (physically or emotionally) or begin to resent school because of repeated failure. When teachers fail to recognize the needs of these students, then the classroom becomes a place of inequity where these students struggle along while feeling somewhat deprived or confused, and others just drop out (Oxford & Anderson, 1995).

Keeves (1992) asserted that attitude towards science are known to decrease as students progress through their schooling years. He further submitted that attributes such as enthusiasm, respect for students and personality traits have been shown to influence students' attitude towards science as well as in other subjects. The implication of Keeves' findings is that attention should be given to science teaching early so as to enable students have favorable disposition towards science later in life.

Within global context, though with little exceptions, the programs that epitomize the Arts and, or Humanities Faculties among others, though not exhaustive, has the English Language as a strong prerequisite admission condition as against numerical qualification (University of Manitoba, 2007; National University of Lesotho, 2007, University of Ibadan, 2007). For instance at the University of Ibadan, the admission requirements among others states that admission through UME which is conducted by the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) for 100 level courses (i.e. first Year Programs) is available to all the Faculties.

The General Entry Requirement is that candidates have credits in five relevant subjects at one sitting or six relevant subjects at two sittings. A Credit Pass in English Language is compulsory for all while a Credit Pass in Mathematics is also compulsory for those seeking admission to Science based Faculties, but a Pass in Mathematics shall be allowed in the case of Faculty of the Social Sciences for all courses except Economics where a credit in Mathematics is compulsory. Candidates seeking Admission to the Faculties of Arts, Law and Education for Arts based Teaching subjects need not pass

Mathematics except for the Departments of Guidance and Counseling and Educational Management where a Credit Pass is compulsory.

The research findings from Tamilenthi et al(2011) suggest that more research institutions to be established and which will be managed by women community so that they could develop the managerial skills and encouragement too. Every university should start the department of women studies to eradicate regional problems besides the national and global problems. Recommended and proposed gender reservations and equality should be followed in all sectors including private to eradicate male domination so that women's skills could be utilized.

The Research Design

Methodology

Stratified random sampling method was adopted in this study. The present study area covers the higher secondary schools of Chipata District, Eastern Province of Zambia. There are numbers of schools were found in this area but it is limited to 10 schools with 100 students from Chipata district, Zambia is taken for the study due to financial and accessibility reason.

The following tool was used in this study.

The questionnaire consist of 20 questions in 4 sections in each section 5 questions which was constructed and validated by the investigator.

The data sheet was used to collect information about Type of the school, Type of Management ,Locality, Parents qualification, Parents income, other information relevant to their desire to get the degree and Sources of educational information.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample with reference to the variables taken for the study. Statements were converted in to simple statistical tables. In differential analysis the significance of difference between groups was studied using 't' test.

Analysis of the data.

The analysis of the data in this chapter is based on the questionnaire collected from the high schools have been summarized in the following tables with reference to Higher secondary student's perception towards acquiring the degrees.

1)The 't' value is significant at 0.01 level for urban and rural school students perception. It is concluded that the urban and rural school students differ towards acquiring their degrees.

2)The calculated 't' value is significant at 0.05 level of significance. It is concluded that the boarding school and day school students differ towards acquiring their degrees.

3)The calculated 't' value is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It is concluded that the government and private school students differ towards acquiring their degrees.

4) The 't' value is not significant at 0.01 level for the girls / boys schools and co-education. It is concluded that the girls/boys and co-education school students differ towards acquiring their degrees.

5) The calculated 't' value is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence it is concluded that the schools with religious background of Christianity and Non-Christianity school students do not differ in acquiring their degrees.

1)The 't' value is not significant at 0.05 level for Male and female students perception. It is concluded that the male and female students do not differ towards acquiring their degrees.

2)The calculated 't' value is significant at 0.05 level of significance. It is concluded that the perception of the students who have below 18 years and above 18 years are differ towards acquiring their degrees.

3)The calculated 't' value is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It is concluded that the students whose parents qualification is up to Grade -9 and above Grade -9 are differ towards acquiring their degrees.

4) The 't' value is significant at 0.05 level for the girls / boys schools and co-education. It is concluded that the students who parents income is up to K 500,000 and above K 500,000 are differ towards acquiring their degrees.

Findings, Recommendation and Conclusion

Findings

The major findings from the study as follows:

1) Almost all the candidates are aware of the employment opportunity of the desired course for their study.

2) About 22 % of the candidates reported that they get the information relevant to education is through radio and newspaper is 36% which comprises about 58%.This also shows that the economic status of the society.

3) Only 25% students have reported that they have got the institutions nearby them to take up the desired course and others have to move to out of province to seek admission for the desired course.

4) It is desirable thing to note above 70% institutions have counselling staff but still the tragedy is students are not guided well and not explored their talents which lead to higher secondary dropouts.

5) About 80% students do not have adequate financial resources to go for college education as it is highly expensive and not affordable by the common people. Till recently it was paid education even from the government schools, but the present government policy which was amended by the effort of the president of Zambia is free education for all the government schools students.

6) It is quite visible by the report of the candidates that only 13% students desired to go for engineering courses, which indicates that the lack of awareness in science education and also reflect the backwardness of industrialisation of the nation.

7)It also interesting scenario to note that about 75 % candidates are desired for their study is other than the teachers and parents.

Recommendations

1)The government should encourage the private sectors and missionaries to invest on higher education in order to have better option to choose the right degree course. Collaborative projects should be carried out with government and private in order to offer the some technical courses for the development of employment opportunity and self employment not only for the survival and also to earn the foreign exchange.

2)The government should take the steps to reduce educational cost so as to produce more number of graduates and to support the skill full manpower to the nation.

3) Government should establish the world class institutes and research activities draw the attention of whole African continent.

4)The universities should start regional study centers in order to produce more number of graduates to utilize local man power.

5)The government should take serious steps to reduce the cost of education specially science education and technology education.

6)Government should stop wasting money on sponsoring the candidates who have crossed above 40 years as they may not be suitable to adopt the latest technique and also gives the way for the youth.

7)Radio broad casting should be at least every 200 kms radius established or transmission centers should be installed for maximum utility of public as most of the people 95% they use as source of information. Besides the charges for educational institutions advertisements related admission, course offered and tuition fees should be announced free of cost, for this government may support financial assistance by the way of tax exception to the private radio stations.

Conclusion

The challenge of higher education to the youth and employment opportunity is like two sides of a coin. Government should take appropriate steps to inculcate the science education in degree level as many of our candidates turned to acquire only in arts education or Diploma / Degree in non-science subjects.

According to the Census(2011) the rural population is 61 % and the road density also very poor which means that most of the settlement is found in the inaccessible areas. People have only means of communication is radio so the clear information's on education and financial support to those broad casting services is necessary and for the private broad casting agencies should be regulated such way that they should dedicate minimum two hours for public utility including education broad cast service so as to benefit for the society.

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Table 1. Data-base: Perception on acquiring degrees of higher secondary school students

Sl. No	Statement										
1	Students wishes to acquire	No. of candidates.									
		Engg.		Degree		Teaching		Law	Nursing	Medicine	
						D.Ed	B.Ed				
		Dip	Deg	Arts	Sci						
5	8	17	6	5	6	5	11	29			
2	Perception on employment opportunity of desired course.	Yes					No				
		75					25				
3	General employment opportunity	68					32				
4	Availability of financial resources.	19					81				
5	Perception on degrees of private university is same.	41					59				
6	Schools providing counselling related higher studies.	72					28				
7	Institutions near by the candidate to take desired course.	25					75				
8	Source of information related to studies.	News paper-36			Radio- 22			Television-42			
9	The person who has inspired to decide to take up the studies.	By the teachers and parents				Others					
		25				75					
10	Perception on Missionaries/Catholic institutions gives better education.	83					17				

Table 2. Students perception towards acquiring the degrees with reference to school Location, Type of Institution, Type of management, Students composition and Religious back ground of the school

Variables	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Value	P
Locality	Urban	62	15.5	2.0	3.8	0.0002**
	Rural	38	17.2	2.3		
Type of Institution	Boarding	36	16.2	1.2	2.16	0.0330*
	Day school	64	16.2	1.4		
Type of management	Government	72	15.2	1.64	4.6176	0.0001**
	Private	28	17.1	2.3		
Students composition	Single sex	56	15.5	1.81	3.9282	0.0002**
	Co-education.	44	16.8	1.40		
Religious back ground of the school.	Christianity	27	15.2	1.2	0.9867	0.3262 NS
	Non-Christianity	73	15.5	1.4		

**significant at 0.01 level, *significant at 0.05 level

Table 3. Students perception towards acquiring the degrees with reference to Gender, Age, Parent qualification and Parent income

Variables	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Value	P
Gender	Male	51	16.2	1.2	1.4180	0.1594 NS
	Female	49	15.8	1.6		
Age	Up to 18 years	57	15.2	1.64	1.9244	0.0572*
	Above 18 years	43	15.8	1.4		
Parent qualification	Up to Grade -9	56	16.2	1.51	3.5224	0.0007**
	Above Grade-9	44	15.1	1.72		
Parent income	Up to K500,000	72	17.2	1.32	2.4949	0.0143*
	Above K500,00	28	16.3			

**significant at 0.01 level, *significant at 0.05 level