Extent to which academic performance influences re-careering among working-class students in selected Kenyan Public Universities

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Abstract
Re-careering is a phenomenon where by already trained individuals seek a total shift to a new and different work field, demanding a new set of skills. While re-careering presents new opportunities to those re-careering, it affects employees and organizations in different, ways due to shifts that impact negatively on either organizations or the individual. The rate of re-careering continues to rise in Kenya. This study adopted a mixed – research design (i.e. quantitative and qualitative) to collect and analyze data. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to the targeted population sample. This study revealed that additional training, age and experience by working students positively influence re-careering. Majority of the respondents, 60.0% agreed that the decision to re-career is influenced by the individual secondary school level performance as well as individual expectations of easy avenues to further their education level while in the new career. The high score in academic qualification explain the simple reasons why the respondents were furthering their education at the time of the study.

Keywords: academic performance, re-careering, working-class students, Kenyan public universities

1. Introduction
Globally, re-careering represents an important component of workers turnover. Researchers estimate the total costs of re-careering workers turnover at between 100% to 200% of the annual salary depending on their career experience, skills acquired, and level of employee position in the organization. Re-careering costs have far reaching impact to any organization doing business today (Faiza, 2014). Re-careering costs involve workers relocation, selection, training and placement of new workers (Davidson, Timo, & Wang, 2010) [3] and this can result to reduced productivity or actual loss when employees exit employment (Jain, Giga, & Cooper, 2009) [9]. Pepe (2012) [21] found re -careering costs to be significant to any company, ultimately ranging from 100% of an employee's annual salary based on the scope and complexity. Re-careering has a universal effect on the employee's turnover, productivity and also organizations profitability.

According to Spradley (2012) [22], Johnson, Kawachi and Lewis (2010) [26], re-careering affects families, organizations profitability as well the economy of a country, thus becoming a global agenda. Since re-careering is not just a job change, but a move to a different career, there is need to explore the triggers. Studies show a paradigm shift from the traditional perspective to a more dynamic view of career. Literatures distinguishes two new emerging paradigms (Bassot, 2012) [1] to examine professional careers, the protean career and the boundary less career both of which concerns the concept of having multiple careers (Hall, 2004; Chikomba, 2014). Boundary less view refers to a career that transcends boundaries which limits a person to work in one place thus holding one or two careers over a lifetime (Verbbroggen, 2012).

In Kenyan public universities prospects of re-careering is manifested through interfaculty transfers which are rampant and on the rise (Muindi, 2011) [14]. For example, in 2017Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement had given students who wished to change institutions and courses an opportunity to do so within a given period of time. The Chairman was quoted saying that, "5,747 of the 69,151 candidates who scored a c+ did not secure placement to their degrees of choice. Of these 2,128could not competitively compete to change in their respective universities, and therefore they had to settle for the courses they were admitted for and hence, they may have to re-consider changing their careers later. These imply that Interfaculty and inter university transfers as well a switch from one course to another is attributed partly to lack proper career guidance at the initial career choice stage (Chacha–Nyaigoti, 2004) [15]. It is therefore important to promote career guidance which is lacking (Gachohi, 2015) [7]. Okango (2011) found that most students in public universities failed to get neither admissions of courses which they applied for nor the University of Choice. Graduating students are forced to take jobs which they have not trained in and this triggers re-careering (Onsongo, 2009) [17].

In Kenya the students who meet the minimum admission requirements apply for their preferred degree choices and university through the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Services (KUCCPS) under government sponsorship. Alternatively, they apply for their degree choices directly to the public universities of their choice under self-sponsorship. Despite the effort to reduce the rising trend, the rate of re-careering continues to rise. Whilst a lot of research has been done in understanding employee attrition little is known about what triggers re-careering among working –class students. Therefore exploring the triggers of re-careering is important to support mitigation.

This article discussed the extent to which academic performance influences re-careering among working-class students in selected Kenyan public universities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Re-careering has become a major challenge globally due to its effects on the families, organization labor force productivity, organizations profitability and economy of a country as a whole (Safiah, & Noordin, 2013) [23]. Re-careering has been made a worldwide agenda due to intensity of re-careering challenges and the frequency of career change (Kim & Kim, 2015). In the year 2011 and 2012, 40% and 57% respectively of the staff resigned from the organization. Between 2013 and 2017, 51% of the workers globally, switched their career and also advanced their studies by studying in different courses.

Despite the much effort being put to reduce the rate of s re-careering in Kenya the trend continues to increase making the situation very worrying. For example, the banking industry in Kenya is drastically experiencing the effects of high rates of re-careering (Standard Bank, 2012) [23]. It is well known that a workforce can either boost or lower the performance of commercial banks in Kenya (Verbruggen, 2012). First Community Bank in Kenya is an example of a bank whose performance has been affected due to high re-careering rate of its employees (First Bank Community, 2014) [6]. The numbers of employees who have left the institution form a total of 150 employees within the last two years .This is rather threatening to the economy of any growing nation because workers turnover can generate administrative cost leading to actual output losses or quality reductions. A study carried out by Muindi (2011) [14] and Okango (2012) [19] to estimate the level of job satisfaction and careers path progression among professionals in Kenya revealed that only 7% were satisfied while 66% were dissatisfied and as a result 51% of the employees had re-careered. This has subsequently led to lowering of the organization employees productivity and the profit of the organization such as Africa community bank by 40%.In Kenyan public universities interfaculty transfers are rampant with 30% of the working students indicating that they have at a particular time applied for the transfer from one course to another (Standard Bank, 2012) [23]. The attempt to have interfaculty transfers shows a sense of lack of satisfaction in the career trained and this can trigger re-careering in the future (Jain, 2013) [3].

There have been scholarly attempts to examine the factors influencing re-careering in Kenya but none has studied on determinants of re-careering among working students in public universities in Kenya. Ojenge and Muchemi (2007) [16] studied the level of satisfaction with the tasks and nature of their careers among professionals in Kenya revealed that only 7% were satisfied in their careers and 66% were dissatisfied but did not consider the determinants that triggered the workers to re-career. Gachohi (2015) [7] study looked at the factors influencing degree choice and university placement in public universities in Kenya. Lack of career information was found to be key factor affecting career choice among the students. Gachohi study did not identify triggers of re-careering among working class group in the public universities, hence leaving a gap to be addressed. Chikomba (2015) study found that professionals switched careers in pursuit of greater challenges, better opportunities, and career growth. A survey of 117 professionals across various disciplines where each had received some professional training informed the study. Each respondent was asked whether or not she or he had changed career. An integrated theoretical framework drawn from prominent career development theories was used to compare, profile, predict and distinguish career switchers and non-switchers. Findings showed that whilst age and the level of education were associated with career change, professionals with a boundary less mindset and high curiosity were likely to switch career compared to their counterparts who scored low attributes However Chikomba study used working professionals while this current study used working -class students who were engaged in furthering their education as respondents of the study, hence creating a conceptual and theoretical gap to be filled. Faiza (2014) study examined the relationship of ICT, workers role and employer turnover in the First Community Bank. The findings showed that ICT played a significant role in workers turnover which led to low performance and productivity of FCB. It was further ascertained that work role ambiguity among employees was a major contributor to workers turnover. However, Faiza study failed to address other triggers of workers turnover as has been done in this study.

Edward and Quinter (2011) [5] study explored the factors that influenced students' career choices in Kisumu Municipality. This was a descriptive survey design .The findings showed the availability of advancement and learning experiences were the most influential factors affecting students career choices. The study failed to address other factors like personality dispositions and social interactions and therefore could not comprehensively explain future re-careering prospects as is done in this study. Masdonati, Fournier and Lahrizi (2017) study explored the reasons behind a career change through vocational education and training among adults. This was a qualitative study .The findings showed dissatisfaction arising from health conditions of workers was a reason for career change. The study presented a contextual gap since it did not focus on university students. Furthermore the study was a qualitative study whilst the current study adopted a mixed research design (quantitative and qualitative method). Ebyan (2011) [4] study explored factors influencing career choices among students in tertially colleges in Garissa Municipality. Ebyan's study employed ex-post facto research design; the study presented a methodological gap and was found inadequate to explain re-careering of working students in Kenyan public universities. The current study employed a casual and descriptive explanatory research design.

While re-careering presents new opportunities to those who are re-careering, it also affects employees and organization in different way. Re-careering individuals forfeit their earnings, in addition to facing the challenges of re-adjusting in the new career sought. To the organization re-careering generates cost in terms of time taken to hire and training of new workers. This in turn lowers the output for the organization. While re-careering is important, little is known about the triggers of it. Knowing such triggers will help support mitigation. It is against this background that this study sought to explore the triggers of re-careering among working class students in selected Kenyan public universities.

2. Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is a belief about the way in which data about a phenomenon should be gathered, analyzed and used (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008) [13]. The term Epistemology (what is known to be true) as opposed to

doxology (what is believed to be true) encompasses the various philosophies of research approaches (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) [2]. Two major research philosophies have been identified as positivists and interpretivists (Galliers, 1991).

2.1 Research Design
This study adopted a mixed – research design (i.e. quantitative and qualitative) to collect and analyze data, therefore, it qualifies the research to be a mixed research. The mixed – research design was preferred because some of the objectives in the study required qualitative data while others needed quantitative data. In this study for instance, open ended questions yielded qualitative data while the close ended questions generated quantitative data.

2.2 Location of the Study
The study was carried out in Kenyan public universities, whereby the research comprised of twenty two public universities in Kenya. The study had two populations, one at university (organization level), and another population at the working class student level. The study population was drawn from 22 public Universities in Kenyan, in addition 10,080 working class students drawn from selected public universities were also considered for the study. The study participants were self-sponsored working students enrolled in the evening program in the five selected public universities. This study was conducted in five public universities in Kenya, that is; University of Nairobi (UON), Moi University (MU) - Nairobi campus, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology Kenyatta University (JKUAT) and Egerton University, Main Campus.

2.3 Target Population
Population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query and to which the researcher is interested in generalizing the conclusions (Castillo, 2009).

Population studies are more representatives because everyone has equal chance to be included in the final sample according to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). The study has two populations, one at university (organization level), and another population at the working class student level. The study population was drawn from 22 public Universities in Kenya and from 10,080 re-careering working- class students drawn from selected public universities. The unit of analysis included undergraduates, Masters and PhD, self-sponsored working –class students enrolled for evening programme in selected Kenyan public universities.

2.4 Sample Size and Techniques
Sampling is the process of selecting units (people, organizations) from accessible population to generalize results to the target population (Castillo, 2009). According to Orodho (2009) sampling is the process of selecting units (people or organizations) from accessible population so as to fairly generalize results to the targeted population. A sample is therefore a subset of a population (Kothari, 2004) [11]. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) [12] observe that 10% or more of a population may be adequate for a survey study. The study settles on 20% of the population of universities, which yielded 4.4 (approximately 5 universities).

In determining the sample size, the study employed Newman (2011) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + Ne^2)}$$

Where n= the desired sample size.
N= the population size

$$N = \frac{10080}{(1 + 10080 \times 0.05^2)}$$

Using a margin of error of 5%, the sample size was 384 students
Stratified random sampling technique was used categorize students into 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th years accordingly.

2.5 Data Collection Instruments
Burns and Grove (2003) defines data collection as the precise, systematic gathering of information relevant to the research sub-problems, using methods such as interviews, participant observations, focus groups discussion, narratives and case histories. The study sought to generate quantitative and qualitative primary data. Primary data, also known as raw data or original data, is new data obtained from the sample of participants of the research study. According to Kothari (2008) [13], primary data is information that a researcher gathers from the field directly while secondary data refers to information received from others sources like literature review, case histories books and the others. In this study, the researcher utilized questionnaires and interviews to generate data for the purposes of answering the research questions. This study used….1, 2, 3, etc. as discussed below…guide the reader

A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to the targeted population sample. The questionnaires were developed according to the research questions and in line with the research hypotheses. Each of the above research questions (sections three, four, five, and six) were measured using a likert scale that of 1-5 where 1 indicated strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 moderately agree, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree.

The researcher considered the maximum, and adopted the 30 participants approach recommendation in determining the pilot sample size. A Pilot study of 30 working –class students in two of the selected Kenyan public university that were not in the main study was conducted to detect weaknesses in design and tools applied and to provide proxy data for selection of a sample. The results were 0.799 for academic performance.

2.6 Quantitative Data Analysis
In case of the quantitative data a Likert type scale having ranges from 1 up to 5 was applied where 5 represented strongly agreed while 1 was for strongly disagreed. The editing of the data was done by checking the questionnaires that were completed. Editing of the data assisted in errors detection and omissions by indicating where correction was necessary.

3. Analysis of the Findings
3.1 Gender of the Respondents
The study sought to establish the gender characteristics of the respondents. The results are as presented in Figure 1.
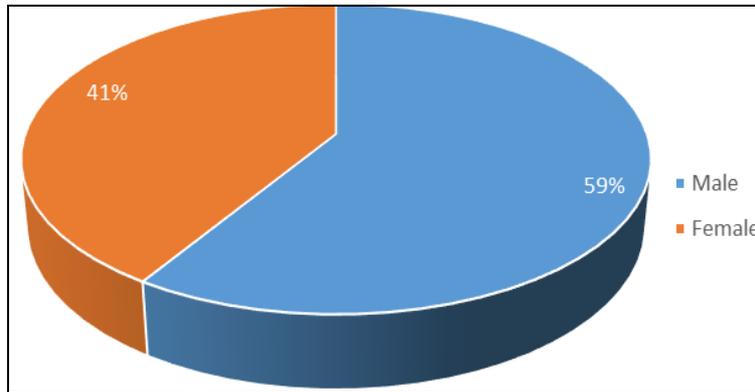
Fig 1: Gender of the respondents

The results indicated that 59% of the respondents were males while 41% of the respondents were females in the study. The reason of having more male than female participants in the study could be that more male would prefer careers that are more rewarding in short run and they tend to become dissatisfied easily than women.

Males change their career more frequently than females (Parrado, 2007) [20] and are more likely to report their intentions to change careers (Fauzi, 2014; Suzuki, 2015) [24]. In contrast, other studies have reported that woman's career decision remains more complex than men's because of their multiple family and work related roles.

3.2 Influence of Academic Performance on Re-careering
The first objective of the study was to establish the extent to which academic performance determines re-careering among working class students in Kenyan public universities. The study sought to answer this question, "What are the perceptions of working-class students on the influence of academic performance in selected Kenyan public universities?" The study sought to find out whether the decision to change career is influenced by an individual's academic performance (high school performance), skills acquired and expertise in the relevant fields. The results are represented in figure 2.
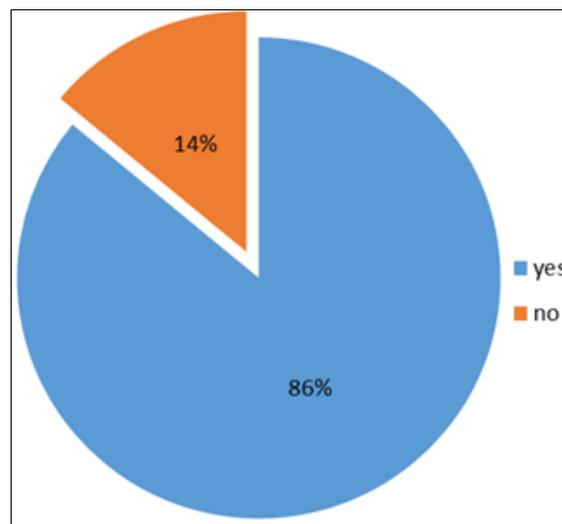

Fig 2: Academic Performance

The findings in figure 4.5 indicate that majority of the participants, 86%, indicated that the decision to re-career is influenced by academic performance and skills acquisition. Only 14% of the participants indicated that academic performance has no influence in an individual's decision to re-career.

The first objective of the study was to determine the effect of academic performance on re-careering was assessed based on level of education, skills acquired and expertise in the relevant fields. There was an indication of the effect of level of education on re-careering .a question on how the skills of the respondents affect the re-careering and also the effect of expertise on re-careering According to Owusu et al. (2015), chi-square analysis are necessary in establishing the nature and magnitude of the relationships between the variables. Thus it was used for that purpose in this study in

data analysis by the researcher. Chi-square was used to determine the relationship strength and its extent. Hypothesis testing was undertaken to enable the researcher to reach to a conclusion of either to accept or reject the null hypothesis that states whether there is significant relationship between independent variables and dependent variable.

3.3 Descriptive analysis of attributes of academic performance
The study sought to establish the perception of the respondents on various statements regarding academic performance and skills. The rating was on a 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagreeing to strongly agree in order of strength. The results are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Attributes of Academic Performance

Statement The decision is influenced by	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean		Std. Dev	Skewness	
						Stats	Std. Error	Stats	Stats	Std. Error
The individuals KCSE performance.	4%	7%	1%	60%	27%	3.53	0.06	0.96	-0.69	0.16
an individual's level of highest academic performance	10%	14%	2%	33%	40%	3.99	0.07	1.12	-0.89	0.16
the level of skills an individual has in that career	24%	7%	2%	52%	14%	3.86	0.06	0.96	-0.86	0.16
the individuals expectations of easy avenues to further their education level while in the new career	5%	7%	21%	50%	16%	4.01	0.06	0.91	-1.17	0.16
by the individuals level of technical knowhow and competency in the career	14%	1%	14%	50%	20%	3.77	0.06	0.93	-0.60	0.16
Average						3.86	0.83			

The findings represented in Table 1, indicate that majority of the respondents, 60.0% agreed that the decision to re-career is influenced by the individuals secondary school level performance as well as individuals expectations of easy avenues to further their education level while in the new career. Furthermore, the results indicate that majority, 52%, of the respondents also agreed that the decision to change career is influenced by the level of skills an individual has in that career while 50% of the respondents indicated that level of technical knowhow influences the re-careering. Working –class students will tend to turn to re-careering after advancing in their studies. Sometimes, the access to academic qualification is restricted by the environment the prevailing circumstance at the time of study thus influencing the re-careering ideas.

Table 2: Academic performance (Chi-square tests)

N	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square 340	2.566	1	.0109
Correction	1.868	1	.172
Likelihood Ratio Linear-by-Linear	2.511	1	.113
Association	2.541	1	.111
N of Valid Cases	340		

Hypothesis Testing: H0
There is no significant relationship between academic qualification and re-careering among the working students in public universities in Kenya

4. Conclusions
Determinants of re-careering investigated include, academic performance, working condition, personal disposition and social interactions. This study revealed that additional training, age and experience by working students positively influence re-careering. Yongo (2011) academic performance triggers re-careering. While on the one hand the re-careering questionnaire revealed that on overall academic performance had a high effect on re-careering, focus group interviews with working students indicated that those with low academic qualification and no extra training go for re-careering. The high score in academic qualification explain the simple reasons why the respondents were furthering their education at the time of the study. This backs the findings of this study that reveals that academic qualifications and training increases the likelihood of getting more pay and ultimately re-careering. However, increase in academic performance in terms of training, advanced learning and exposure, positively influence working-class students decision to re-career.

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