

**DETERMINANTS OF STUDENTS' CHOICES OF VOCATIONAL
SUBJECTS AT ORDINARY LEVEL
IN JINJA DISTRICT**

BY

NKOOLE GODFREY

15 / U / 14506 / GMED /PE

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF EDUCATION IN POLICY, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF
KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY**

AUGUST 2020

DECLARATION

I Nkoole Godfrey hereby declare that the content of this dissertation “*Determinants of students’ choices of vocational subjects at ordinary level in Jinja District*” is entirely my original work, except where acknowledged, and has never been submitted or presented to any University or institution of higher learning for an academic award.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

NKOOLE GODFREY

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation titled “*Determinants of students’ choices of vocational subjects at ordinary level in Jinja District*” has been completed under our supervision. All the suggested corrections have been made, and it is ready for submission to the Examination Board of the Graduate School of Kyambogo University, with our approval.

Signature _____ Date _____

Dr. Okello Benson

Supervisor

Signature _____ Date _____

Dr. Edith G.M. Mbabazi

Supervisor

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late father Mr. Musaabi Valerian, may his soul rest in perfect eternal peace and my mother Mrs. Beatrice Musaabi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would have been impossible for me to succeed in this task of carrying out this research if left to struggle alone. With this in mind, I wish to most sincerely acknowledge the input of my Supervisors, Dr. Okello Benson and Dr. Edith G.M. Mbabazi who guided me in all stages of carrying out this research.

Thanks go to my lecturers at Kyambogo University for their guidance and encouragement during the programme. I appreciate the guidelines given by the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees Committee. I am grateful to my course members for always encouraging me. I wish to extend sincere thanks to the management, staff and students of the schools that took part in the study.

Special thanks go to Mr. Lambert Okure Drata, Branch Director YMCA Jinja who released me for study and continued to extend moral and material support to me during the period. I extend thanks to Ms Harriet Chandiru, Human Resource Officer YMCA Jinja for the advice and assistance rendered during the study. Appreciation goes to the staff of YMCA Jinja for their encouragement and support.

I wish to most sincerely thank my parents, late Musaabi Valerian (may his soul rest in perfect eternal peace) and Beatrice Musaabi, who sacrificed their meager resources to pay my school fees. Appreciation goes to my dear wife Esther Nabirye who gave me encouragement, morale and material support throughout the course, my children; Cathy, Clare and Carlos who missed paternal care while away for the course. I am also grateful to my relatives for the moral and spiritual support given to me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|--------------|
| Title | i |
| Declaration | ii |
| Approval | iii |
| Dedication | iv |
| Acknowledgement | v |
| Table of contents | vi |
| List of tables | xi |
| List of figures | xiii |
| List of acronyms | xiv |
| Abstract | xv |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background of the study | 1 |
| 1.1.1 Historical perspective | 1 |
| 1.1.2 Theoretical perspective | 5 |
| 1.1.3 Conceptual perspective | 7 |
| 1.1.4 Contextual perspective | 9 |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem | 11 |
| 1.3 Purpose of the study | 12 |
| 1.4 Objective of the study | 12 |
| 1.5 Research questions | 12 |
| 1.6 Hypothesis | 12 |
| 1.7 Scope of the study | 13 |
| 1.7.1 Geographical scope | 13 |

| | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| 1.7.2 | Time scope | 13 |
| 1.7.3 | Content scope | 13 |
| 1.8 | Significance of the study | 13 |
| 1.9 | Conceptual framework | 14 |
| 1.11 | Operational definition of key elements in the study | 16 |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW | | 17 |
| 2.0 | Introduction | 17 |
| 2.1 | Factors influencing students' choices of subjects | 18 |
| 2.2 | Government policies and students' choices of vocational subjects..... | 20 |
| 2.3 | Students' aspirations and choices vocational subjects | 21 |
| 2.4.1 | School resources/ policies and students' choices of vocational subjects..... | 22 |
| 2.4.2 | Teachers' influence on students' choices of subjects | 24 |
| 2.4.3 | School policies and students' choices of subjects | 25 |
| 2.5 | Summary of the Reviewed Literature | 25 |
| CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY | | 26 |
| 3.0 | Introduction | 26 |
| 3.1 | Research design | 26 |
| 3.2 | Study population | 26 |
| 3.3 | Sampling techniques and procedure | 27 |
| 3.4 | Sample Size | 29 |
| 3.5 | Sources of data | 30 |
| 3.5.1 | Primary data | 30 |
| 3.5.2 | Secondary data | 30 |

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|----|
| 3.6 | Data collection instruments | 30 |
| 3.6.1 | Questionnaires | 30 |
| 3.6.2 | Observations | 31 |
| 3.6.3 | Documentary analysis | 31 |
| 3.7 | Validity and Reliability | 31 |
| 3.7.1 | Validity | 31 |
| 3.7.2 | Reliability | 32 |
| 3.8 | Procedure of data collection | 33 |
| 3.9 | Data analysis | 33 |
| 3.9.1 | Analysis of qualitative data | 33 |
| 3.9.2 | Analysis of quantitative data | 34 |
| 3.10 | Ethical considerations | 35 |
| 3.11 | Limitations of the study | 35 |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|-----------|
| CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS | | | 36 |
| 4.0 | Introduction | | 36 |
| 4.1 | Response rate | | 36 |
| 4.2.0 | Description of background information of respondents | | 37 |
| 4.2.1 | Analysis of gender of respondents | | 38 |
| 4.2.2 | Analysis of age of respondents | | 38 |
| 4.2.3 | Analysis of number of students offering vocational subjects | | 39 |
| 4.3.0 | Empirical findings | | 40 |
| 4.3.1 | The factors that influence students' choices of vocational subjects | | 40 |

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 4.4.0 | The influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable | 42 |
| 4.4.1 | Government policies and students' choices of vocational subjects..... | 43 |
| 4.4.2 | Students' aspirations and choices of vocational subjects | 44 |
| 4.4.3 | School resources/ policies and students' choices of vocational subjects | 47 |
| 4.5.0 | Testing of the hypothesis | 50 |
| 4.5.1 | The influence of Government policies on students' choices of vocational subjects ... | 51 |
| 4.5.2 | The influence of students' aspirations on choices vocational subjects | 53 |
| 4.5.3 | The influence of school resources/ policies on students' choices of vocational subjects | 55 |

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND

| | | |
|-------|--|-----------|
| | RECOMMENDATIONS | 57 |
| 5.0 | Introduction..... | 57 |
| 5.1 | Summary of the findings | 57 |
| 5.2 | Discussion | 57 |
| 5.2.1 | Research Question 1: What are the factors influencing students' choices of vocational subjects | 58 |
| 5.2.2 | Research Question 2: Do Government policies influence students' choices of vocational subjects at ordinary level? | 60 |
| 5.2.3 | Research Question 3: Do students' aspirations influence choices of vocational subjects at ordinary level? | 61 |
| 5.2.4 | Research Question 4: Do school resources/ policies influence students' choices of vocational subjects at ordinary level?..... | 63 |
| 5.3.0 | Conclusions | 65 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| 5.3.1 | Factors influencing students' choices of subjects | 66 |
| 5.3.2 | Government policies and students' choices of vocational subjects | 66 |
| 5.3.3 | Students' aspirations and choices of vocational subjects | 66 |
| 5.3.4 | School resources/policies and students' choices of vocational subjects | 66 |
| 5.4 | Recommendations..... | 67 |
| 5.5 | Areas for further research. | 68 |
| REFERENCES: | | 70 |
| APPENDICES: | | 77 |
| Appendix one: | Questionnaire for students | 77 |
| Appendix two: | Questionnaire for teachers | 82 |
| Appendix three: | Questionnaire for administrators | 87 |
| Appendix Four: | Introductory letter from department of Educational Planning and Management, Faculty of Education, Kyambogo University | 89 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1.1: Subjects taught at O' level and their status across the Country. | 10 |
| Table 3.1: Ownership and type of schools involved in the study | 28 |
| Table 3.2: Target population and the sample size | 29 |
| Table 4.1: Response rate of respondents (students) | 37 |
| Table 4.2: Gender of respondents (students) | 38 |
| Table 4.3: Age of respondents (students) | 39 |
| Table 4.4: Number of students offering or not offering vocational subjects | 40 |
| Table 4.5: Students' responses on the influence of Government policies on students' choices of vocational Subjects | 43 |
| Table 4.6: Students' responses on the influence of students' aspirations and choices of vocational subjects | 45 |
| Table 4.7 Students' responses on the influence of school resources/ policies on Choices of vocational subjects | 48 |
| Table 4.8: Observed frequencies of students responses on the influence of Government policies on students' choices of vocational subjects | 51 |
| Table 4.9: Expected frequencies of students' responses on the influence of Government policies on choices of vocational subjects | 52 |
| Table 4.10: X^2 Observed frequencies of students responses on the influence of Government policies on students' choices of vocational subjects | 52 |
| Table 4.11: Observed frequencies of students responses on the influence of students' aspirations on choices of vocational subjects | 53 |
| Table 4.12 Expected frequencies of students' responses on the influence of students' aspirations on choices of vocational subjects | 53 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 4.13: X^2 Observed frequencies of students responses on the influence of students' aspirations on choices vocational subjects..... | 54 |
| Table 4.14 Observed frequencies of students responses on the influence of school resources/ policies on choices of vocational subjects | 55 |
| Table 4.15 Expected frequencies of students' responses on the influence of school resources/ policies on choices of vocational subjects | 55 |
| Table 4.16: X^2 Observed frequencies of students responses on the influence of school resources/ policies on choices of vocational subjects | 56 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1.1: Determinants of students' choices of vocational subjects at O' level..... | 15 |
|---|----|

LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| BTVET | - Business Technical Vocational Education and Training |
| CV | - Critical Value |
| HESLB | - Higher Education Students' Loan Board |
| ITV | - Independent Television |
| MoE& S | - Ministry of Education and Sports |
| NCDC | - National Curriculum Development Centre |
| O' LEVEL | - Ordinary Level |
| ROU | - Republic of Uganda |
| SES | - Social Economic Status |
| TVET | - Technical Vocational Education and Training |
| UCE | - Uganda Certificate of Education |
| UNEB | - Uganda National Examinations Board |
| UNESCO | - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNEVOC | - International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| VET | - Vocational Education and Training |
| X ² | - Chi- square |

ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to investigate the determinants of students' choices of vocational subjects at O' level in ten selected schools in Jinja district. This was as a result of the small number of students who opt for vocational subjects despite the usefulness of vocational education and the Government desire to give skills for self reliance to learners. The sample size consisted of 270 students, 30 teachers and 10 administrators. The study was guided by four research questions: what are the factors influencing students' choices of vocational subjects? Do Government policies influence students' choices of vocational subjects? Do students' aspirations influence choices of vocational subjects? and do school resources/ policies influence students' choices of vocational subjects? The data was collected using questionnaires, analysed, described and subjected to the chi- square (X^2) test of significance.

The study findings indicated that there was significant influence of the independent variables (government policies, students' aspirations and school resources/ policies) on the dependent variable (students' choices of vocational subjects at O' level). The study concluded that; government policies, students' aspirations and school resources/ policies significantly influence choices of vocational subjects at ordinary level. The study recommends that Government provides the necessary materials, equipments for teaching and learning of vocational subjects, follow up of policies geared towards vocationalisation of education, strengthening of guidance and counseling in schools, teachers should come up with strategies for developing positive attitudes in students towards vocational subjects in order to encourage many students to like the subjects as well as improving performance and parents together with the community should encourage their children to study vocational subjects. It is believed that this will boost the number of students selecting vocational subjects.