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EFFECT OF GENDER AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS ON THE CHOICE OF HIGHER TOURISM EDUCATION AT MOI UNIVERSITY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Education is an important element in the civilization and modernization of the society. Tourism education is particularly pivotal in ensuring that the industry has personnel that is competent and proficient in delivering services sustainably. Despite this, the importance of tourism education has been overlooked and the Kenyan industry still lacks sufficient personnel who have to attain a higher level of tourism education. Hence, the purpose of the study was to determine whether gender and availability of funds affect the choice of higher tourism education by students of Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to determine whether gender affects the choice of higher tourism education by students of Moi University and to establish whether the availability of funds affects the choice of higher tourism education by students. The students were sampled using stratified sampling technique where 142 were used in the study. Descriptive statistic was used to address the research objectives. From the study results, the female respondents were 57% and on the other hand 42.3% of the respondents mentioned that there was the availability of funds to advance in tourism education. 84.5% of the respondents said that they would choose higher tourism education. According to the respondents, gender (48.6%) and availability of funds (93%) affected the choice of higher tourism education. The first hypothesis that stated that 'Gender of the students does not affect the choice of higher tourism education' was accepted. The second hypothesis that stated that 'Availability of funds of the students does not affect the choice of higher tourism education' was rejected.

Keywords: Gender; availability of funds; tourism education; choice

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in both developed and developing countries worldwide (Asmelash, 2015; Leslie, 2015; Xie, 2015). The growth of tourism has been fuelled by growth in leisure time and increase in discretionary income (Scheyvens, 2015; Weiler & Black, 2015; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012). Moreover, with rising disposal incomes, tourists are now demanding better experiences, faster service, multiple choices, social responsibility and greater satisfaction (Weiler & Black, 2015; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012; Yeoman, 2012). Hence, there is a need for proficient tourism education in order to ensure that these types of tourists are served better.

Tourism education is not so much a new agenda as it is old (Airey, Dredge & Gross, 2015). Medlik explains that some early tourism programs have existed, for example at the University of Rome in 1925, the University of Vienna in 1936, and at the universities of St Gallen and Berne in Switzerland from 1941 (Airey, Dredge, & Gross, 2015; Medlik, 1965). However, Airey argues that the study of tourism as distinct and may have begun 40 years ago (Tribe, 2005). In the case of tourism, hospitality and events, they are all relative newcomers to university higher education as distinct subjects (Airey, Dredge, & Gross, 2015).

By the 1980s, the rise of tourism as a global economic activity triggered calls from industry for better-qualified professionals (Airey, Dredge, & Gross, 2015; Fidgeon, 2010). Tourism and hospitality university degree programs across the globe were born from pragmatic and utilitarian concerns that emphasized a need to address gaps in workforce skills and opportunities for economic development (Airey, Dredge, & Gross, 2015). High market demand coupled with low establishment costs and the absence of existing market leaders made tourism education an attractive proposition (Airey, Dredge, & Gross, 2015; McKercher, 2002).

Moi University was the pioneer university in Kenya to offer purely tourism masters and doctor of philosophy programs in Kenya. Other higher institutions of learning have now followed suit resulting in a high number of graduates who have gone to become highly desired professionals both in Kenya and neighboring African countries (Mayaka, 2005; Kamar, 2003). The training of tourism education at the level of the university was started at Chepkoilel Campus Moi University in 1992 as a result of a report by the presidential committee that indicated the lack of proper management and conceptual skills in the education and training that existed (Mayaka, 2005; the Republic of Kenya, 1991).

The problem in the study lies on the premise that the importance of tourism education has been ignored and the Kenyan industry still has inadequate personnel with higher levels of tourism education. This study was conducted at Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to examine whether gender affects the choice of higher tourism education and whether

the availability of funds affects the choice of higher tourism education. The study was hypothesized in the following manner:

Ho1: Gender of the students does not affect the choice of higher tourism education.

Ho2: Availability of funds of the students does not affect the choice of higher tourism education.

The connection between gender and availability of funds lies on the fact that due to affirmative action, it is somehow easier for the female students to secure scholarships to advance their education compared to their male counterparts (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism education is increasing importance that has attracted many researches (Heitmann, Robinson, & Povey, 2011; Tribe, 2005). Back in 1981, Ritchie edited a special issue of *Annals of Tourism Research* that was entirely devoted to tourism education (Tribe, 2005; Ritchie, Carr, & Cooper, 2003). Consequently, Jafari and Ritchie (1981) indicated some crucial issues, where they deliberated on the pertinent issue of tourism knowledge and made a provision of a framework for understanding this. They clarified on the necessity to cultivate a body of knowledge in tourism and made some important observations about the perceived weaknesses in tourism education (Tribe, 2005).

Tourism education should not only begin at the college and university level but should start all the way from high school and it would have an added advantage of increasing general public awareness, especially of its benefits and impacts and the role of the host community in the inbound tourism systems (Mayaka, 2005). This would also increase the prospects of students developing an early interest in tourism as a field of study (Airey, Dredge, & Gross, 2015). The end result may be the attraction of the best brains into this field of study and, therefore, the enhancement of research and scholarship in tourism and hospitality (Tribe, 2005).

Much is discussed concerning the contribution of women in the university structure (Ayikoru, 2015). Women's predisposition to embrace their emotions and sometimes use this as a strategy to cope with work-life balance or lack thereof makes them 'ideal' candidates in providing care-related

work both at home and at work (Ayikoru, 2015; Small, Harris, Wilson, & Ateljevic, 2011; Lynch, 2010).

Furthermore, women are disproportionately encouraged to do the “domestic” work of the organization, and/or, the care work, neither of which count much for individual career advancement even though they are valuable to the students and the reputation of the university (Airey, Dredge, & Gross, 2015; Lynch, 2010; Grummell, Devine, & Lynch, 2009). Consequently, students’ gender can crucially affect their level of contribution in e-learning activities (Tribe, 2005; Sigala, 2002).

Funds available to necessitate further education have been identified to be a major obstacle in higher education during previous researches (Glennerster, Kremer, Mbiti, & Takavarasha, 2011; Medway, Rhodes, Macrae, Maguire, & Gewirtz, 2003). Many young people face financial barriers to learning and the provision of financial support acted as an important enabler to participation in learning, particularly for those ‘looking for learning opportunities’ (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013).

The study was based on the Social Learning Theory of Career Selection by John Krumboltz. This theory attempts to explain how educational and occupational preferences and skills are acquired and how selections of courses, occupations, and fields of work are made (Krumboltz, 1975). This theory is relevant to the study because the study focuses on two factors namely gender and availability of funds as issues that affect the students on their choice of higher tourism education.

METHODOLOGY

The study used explanatory research design which is applied when the problem is known and descriptions of the problem are with the researcher, but the causes or reasons or the description of the described findings is yet to be known (Sahu, 2013 ; Kothari, 2004). In the research, 142 respondents were sampled using stratified random sampling, which is a sampling technique where the population is divided into homogeneous, mutually exclusive groups called ‘strata’ and independent samples are then selected from each stratum (Passer, 2014; Altinay & Paraskevas,

2008). The strata used in the study were the levels of tourism education namely diploma, bachelors and masters, where independent samples were drawn from each stratum.

Data was collected using questionnaires which are set of questions to be asked from respondents, with instructions that are appropriate showing which questions are supposed to be asked, and in what order (Sreejesh, Mohapatra, & Anusree, 2014). The study used descriptive statistics, which was intended to illuminate the data so that their core characteristic was revealed (Bowers, 2008). The hypotheses for the study were tested using F-Tests. This test is appropriate in checking the normality of populations in given samples with equal variance (Field, 2009; Kothari, 2004).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As depicted in Table 1 on gender, the male respondents were 43% and this did not vary between the respondents ($\chi^2 = 2.817$, $df=1$, $p < 0.093$). This meant that the female respondents were less than their male counterparts in the study. On the availability of funds, 42.3% mentioned that funds were available and this did not vary between the respondents ($\chi^2 = 3.408$, $df=1$, $p < 0.065$). This meant that according to most respondents, the funds were not available to assist the students in attaining a higher tourism education. These funds are pivotal in ensuring that the students advance their tourism education. If the funds are lacking or insufficient, the advancement to higher levels of tourism education is impeded.

From the findings, 84.5% of the respondents indicated that they would advance their tourism education and this did not vary between the respondents ($\chi^2 = 67.634$, $df=1$, $p < 0.001$). This meant that a majority of the respondents reiterated that they will advance their higher tourism education. A majority of the students desire to advance their tourism education. This is because the industry needs personnel with a higher tourism education. The study also realized that 48.6% of the respondents mentioned that gender affected the choice of higher tourism education and this did not vary between the respondents ($\chi^2 = 113$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.737$). This meant that a slight majority of the respondents in the study were of the opinion that gender did not affect the choice of higher tourism education of respondents. Although there is affirmative action, most respondents affirmed that gender was not the variable to predict whether one will choose to advance to higher levels in tourism education.

Furthermore, on whether the availability of funds affected the choice of education, 93% of the respondents mentioned that it did and this did not vary between the respondents ($\chi^2 = 104.817$, $d = 1$, $p < 0.001$). This meant that a considerable number of respondents in the study were of the opinion that availability of funds affected the choice of higher tourism education of respondents. Without finances, it will be impossible for a student to advance in tourism education. The learning institutions require finances to facilitate the process of delivering tourism education to students.

Table 1: Gender, availability of funds and advancing higher education

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive statistics
Gender			
Male	61	43.0	$\chi^2 = 2.817$, $d = 1$, $p < 0.093$ $n = 142$
Female	81	57.0	
Availability of funds			
Yes	60	42.3	$\chi^2 = 3.408$, $d = 1$, $p < 0.065$ $n = 142$
No	82	57.7	
Choosing higher tourism education			
Yes	120	84.5	$\chi^2 = 67.634$, $d = 1$, $p < 0.001$ $n = 142$
No	22	15.5	
Gender affecting choice of higher tourism education			
Yes	69	48.6	$\chi^2 = 113$, $d = 1$, $p < 0.737$ $n = 142$
No	73	51.4	
Availability of funds affecting choice of higher tourism education			
Yes	132	93.0	$\chi^2 = 104.817$, $d = 1$, $p < 0.001$ $n = 142$
No	10	7.0	

From Table 2, the variables of gender and availability of funds were cross-tabulated. It was realized that 42.6% of male respondent and 42% of female students accessed funds for higher tourism education. From this findings, slightly more male compared to female had funds available for higher tourism education (0.6%) when compared to their total numbers

Table 2: Gender of students by availability of funds cross-tabulation

			Gender of students		Total
			Male	Female	
Access to funds	Yes	Count	26	34	60
		% within Gender of students	42.6%	42.0%	42.3%
	No	Count	35	47	82
		% within Gender of students	57.4%	58.0%	57.7%
Total	Count	61	81	142	
	% within Gender of students	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Moreover, the variables of gender and choice of higher education were cross-tabulated (Table 3). The findings revealed that 80.3% male respondent and 87.7% of female intended to advance in tourism education. From these findings, slightly more female compared to male intended to choose higher tourism education (7.4%). This is an interesting statistics due to the fact that women today have come to the realization that they have to develop themselves to succeed in life. Gone are the days when females wholly depended on men.

Table 3: Gender of students by choice of higher education cross-tabulation

			Gender of students		Total
			Male	Female	
Advancing higher education	Yes	Count	49	71	120
		% within Gender of students	80.3%	87.7%	84.5%
	No	Count	12	10	22
		% within Gender of students	19.7%	12.3%	15.5%
Total	Count	61	81	142	
	% within Gender of students	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

On the Analysis of Variance, the independent variable is gender and the dependent variable is advancing higher tourism education as depicted in Table 4. F distribution test results were $F(1, 140) = 1.421$, $p < 0.235$. The p-value of 0.235 is more than the standard α of 0.05, and therefore the hypothesis (Ho1) that stated that 'Gender of the students does not affect the choice of higher tourism education' was accepted. Gender has been a trending issue in the wake of affirmative action and women empowerment especially in developing countries (Kieti, Ipara, & Olubulyera,

2015). Affirmative action and women empowerment has made gender an insignificant factor in terms of affecting the choice of higher tourism education.

Table 4 : ANOVA^a of gender and advancing higher tourism education

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	0.187	1	0.187	1.421	0.235 ^b
Residual	18.405	140	0.131		
Total	18.592	141			

a. Dependent Variable: Advancing higher tourism education

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender of students

Table 5 shows the Analysis of Variance between gender as the independent variable and advancing higher tourism education as the dependent variable. F distribution test results were $F(1, 140) = 7.448$, $p < 0.007$. The p-value of 0.007 is less than the standard α of 0.05, and therefore the hypothesis (Ho₂) that stated that 'Availability of funds of the students does not affect the choice of higher tourism education' was rejected. Without funds, it would be almost impossible to choose a higher tourism education. The availability of funds in terms of scholarship, bursaries and loans can be instrumental in ensuring that the students advance in tourism education.

Table 5: ANOVA^a of access to funds and advancing higher tourism education

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	0.939	1	0.939	7.448	0.007 ^b
Residual	17.652	140	0.126		
Total	18.592	141			

a. Dependent Variable: Advancing higher tourism education

b. Predictors: (Constant), Access to funds

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a majority of the respondents reiterated that they choose to advance their tourism education. In the wake of globalization and the need for employees who are qualified and proficient, the respondents saw the need to advance their tourism education. In addition, a slight majority of the respondents in the study were of the opinion that gender did not affect the choice

of higher tourism education of respondents. In the advent of affirmative action, efforts have been made to ensure that the female gender is empowered. This, therefore, makes it realistic that gender indeed does not affect the choice of higher tourism education. From the study findings, availability of funds affected the choice of higher tourism education of respondents. There has been a global economic hardship, where economies of countries have struggled with inflation and recession. Kenya has not been exempted from this global phenomenon. When the students are availed with educational funds in terms of bursaries, scholarships, and loans, it gives them the momentum and impetus to advance with their tourism education. Without the funds, this advancement in tourism education is impeded.

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