

Higher Learning Education: The Differentiated Purpose Among University Students A Case of Iringa, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study investigates the purpose of studying university education and the factors influencing program selection among students in Iringa, Tanzania, beyond mere economic benefits. The findings highlight that students perceive university education as a pathway to financial positioning, employment opportunities, personal growth, knowledge acquisition, and social empowerment. While most respondents believe their chosen programs align with their desired prospects, some express doubts. External influences, such as peer pressure and societal expectations, significantly shape students' decisions to pursue higher education. Factors like the quality of education, program offerings, influence from friends and family, and employment prospects impact their choice of a specific university. The study underscores the importance of considering academic and social factors in university selection. It emphasizes the need for practical guidance and support systems to help students make informed choices, ensuring a meaningful and fulfilling university experience that prepares them for their desired prospects. Thus, by aligning educational offerings, providing guidance, and fostering a supportive environment, universities can contribute to students' personal and professional growth, enhancing their contribution to society.

Keywords: *University education, Decision-making, Program selection, Students, Higher education, Factors influencing, Guidance*

1 Introduction

Many students entering higher education have limited thoughts about the purpose of university education beyond the expectation of securing higher wages and more job opportunities. The evolving pressures on higher education have raised questions about its meaning and civic mission. While some argue that higher education should primarily serve the interests of the economy and prepare students for the workforce, others emphasize the broader contributions institutions of higher education can make to society (Brooks et al., 2020; The National Task Force, 2012; Abowitz, 2008; Brighthouse & Mcpherson, 2015; Dungy, 2012; Levine, 2014; Shapiro, 2005).

The purpose of higher learning extends beyond economic development to include fostering innovation, enterprise, and the acquisition of universal knowledge. However, for many students, university education is the natural progression after secondary school, and their program choices are often influenced by expectations of finding employment and leading a better life (McArthur, 2011; UNESCO, 1998; Brooks et al., 2020).

In Africa, higher education has a rich history dating back to pre-colonial times, with indigenous experiences of higher learning institutions that produced and disseminated knowledge in various fields. These institutions played significant roles in understanding the world, nature, society, agriculture, health, literature, and philosophy (Ajayi, 1996). The university education development in Africa is through three genealogies or "triple heritages": indigenous pre-colonial higher education, branch campuses of colonial higher education institutions, and the struggle for an African university rooted in African cultural and intellectual soil (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017).

In East Africa, the history of university education dates back to the establishment of Uganda Technical School, later renamed Uganda Technical College, in 1922. This institution eventually became a university college of the University of London, offering courses and awards. In 1956, the Royal Technical College was established in Nairobi, Kenya, which later became the University College, Nairobi, forming part of the University of East Africa with constituent colleges in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and Kampala (Makerere University, 2010; Nyaigotti-Chacha, 2004). Today, universities in East Africa strive to enhance teaching, research, innovation, information and communication technology application, funding, and scholarship to produce graduates who can tap into global knowledge resources and contribute to local and regional development (Teferra & Greijn, 2010). In Tanzania, establishing the University College of Dar es Salaam as a college of the University of London in 1961 marked the beginning of university education locally. It

later became a constituent college of the University of East Africa (University of Dar es Salaam, 2011).

In Tanzania, many students need to be made aware of the application process for university education. Higher learning institutions need to establish a mechanism to assist students in understanding and selecting programs aligned with their prospects (Brooks et al., 2020). The based mechanism is fundamental as higher education institutions have unique missions, goals, functions, admission criteria, program durations, and types of awards, catering to society's diverse needs and priorities (Assié-Lumumba, 2005).

However, the increasing number of students enrolling in university education and selecting various programs focuses on understanding how students choose their schedules and whether they meet their expectations upon completion. Establishing effective systems and procedures in higher learning education that inform the application process, rehabilitate programs, and guide students in selecting appropriate programs is crucial. An effective strategy is essential in addressing the issue of unemployment, where the number of university graduates surpasses available job opportunities. Currently, students in Tanzania rely on recommendations from parents, friends, or role models without direct guidance from the University regarding the program and university selection. Thus, this study aims to determine the purpose of studying university education, identify reasons for program selection, and explore their challenges.

2 Methodologies

2.1 Study area

The study was conducted in the Iringa region of Tanzania, encompassing three universities representing the diversity of higher education institutions in the area. The selection of the Iringa district as the study area was based on purposive sampling, considering the region's significant number of universities in Tanzania. The region is selected based on its educational potential and long-standing history as an education hub within the country. It is home to prominent universities such as the University of Iringa, Mkwawa University, Roman Catholic University, and the Open University of Tanzania. Notably, the region was the first in the country to establish a private university, previously known as the Tumaini University of Iringa, now recognized as the University of Iringa. The study aims to capture the diverse range of the region's higher education experiences offered by private, government, and open universities. This selection allows for a comprehensive understanding of the differentiated purposes among university students in Iringa, considering the unique characteristics, missions, and educational approaches.

The Iringa region's rich educational landscape and the presence of various universities make it an ideal setting to explore the factors influencing program selection and the perceived purpose of university education among students. The findings from this study can provide valuable insights for higher education institutions, policymakers, and educators in Tanzania and beyond, informing strategies for program development, guidance, and enhancing the alignment between students' expectations and the offerings of universities.

2.2 Approach and Methods of data collection

The study employs a mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative methods, including key informant interviews and questionnaire surveys, to gain valuable insights into the higher learning institution studies and the challenges faced in program selection. The collected data's reliability and validity ensured the study followed a comprehensive process that included identifying knowledgeable stakeholders who could provide relevant and insightful perspectives on the study. The process involved diverse stakeholders, including students, lecturers and workers in higher learning, government officials, and community members, to comprehensively understand the multi-faceted issues and associated challenges in higher learning education. Each stakeholder group offered unique insights based on their expertise, experiences, and roles within the scope of the study.

To guide the data collection process. The key informant guide with open-ended questions probed deeply into the issues and challenges faced in university education. The questionnaire tool with closed and open-ended questions to allow a deep analysis of the university education and the programs offered. The questions encourage participants to provide detailed and honest feedback, allowing for a thorough exploration of the university education and program offered in the universities. The guides served as a framework for consistency and addressed relevant aspects during the interviews and discussions.

Participants represent the various stakeholders involved in university education and programs offered in higher learning institutions to obtain diverse perspectives. Individuals from different backgrounds, experiences, and roles ensure a broad community representation. This approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the driving factors and challenges and the diverse perspectives and interests within the university education and programs. The fostered atmosphere of openness and respect encouraged participants to elaborate on their responses and provide deeper insights into the study issues.

2.3 Data collection methods and Tools

The data collection methods employed in this study encompassed a combination of

questionnaire surveys, key informant interviews, and a comprehensive literature review. This multi-faceted approach ensured a vital and diverse data source, facilitating a thorough exploration of the research question and a complete understanding of the topic. Combining these methods allowed for a more nuanced and holistic examination of the research topic, drawing on the perspectives of various stakeholders, including students, lecturers, and other relevant individuals.

2.3.1 Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire survey gathered quantitative data and insights from a larger sample size. The questionnaire included close-ended and open-ended questions for a deeper analysis of university education and the programs offered. Using a structured questionnaire, the researchers collected standardized data that could be easily analyzed using statistical techniques, providing valuable insights into the participants' opinions, attitudes, and experiences.

2.3.2 Key informant interview

In addition to the questionnaire survey, key informant interviews to gather more in-depth and qualitative information. The researcher chooses a unique interviewing technique as it allows for a productive method of communication, enabling the interviewer to guide the discussion and probe into specific areas of interest. Face-to-face interviews to explore how high-learning students perceive the University and how they select their programs. The choice of interviewees was based on the knowledge of different respondents and their chosen programs, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. The interviews were flexible, allowing participants to contribute their insights and opinions on the research questions. The discussions were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants, ensuring accurate data capture and providing an opportunity for thorough analysis.

2.2.3 Comprehensive literature review

The comprehensive literature review was integral to the data collection process, providing a rich foundation of knowledge and insights. Existing studies, reports, and scholarly articles related to university education, program selection, and students' prospects after completing their studies. This literature review helped contextualize the research within the broader academic and policy discourse, ensuring that the study built upon existing knowledge while contributing new insights. A systematic literature review identified key concepts, frameworks, and gaps in the current understanding, informing the development of interview and discussion guides and the overall data analysis process. Thus, integrating the findings from the literature review with the primary data collected through questionnaires and interviews, a more comprehensive and robust analysis

2.4 Data Processing, analysis and Presentation

Thematic analysis was employed as the primary method to analyze the collected data in this study, which aimed to explore various aspects of university education, including the programs offered and the challenges faced in program selection. The collected information underwent rigorous qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques, including coding and thematic analysis, to identify common themes and patterns within the data. This systematic analysis allowed for extracting meaningful insights and establishing connections between university education and the challenges encountered in program selection. In the qualitative analysis phase, coding categorizes the data and identifies recurring themes and patterns. Identify key ideas and concepts by carefully reading the interview transcripts and open-ended questionnaire responses. The data is organized into meaningful categories, further refined and analyzed to develop overarching themes. By engaging in this iterative process, the researchers uncovered deep insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants regarding university education and program selection.

Furthermore, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) analyzed quantitative data from the questionnaire survey. This statistical analysis allowed for examining numerical data, such as survey responses, demographic information, and percentages. Descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, and other relevant statistical tests uncover patterns, relationships, and trends within the quantitative data. This quantitative analysis complemented the qualitative findings and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the university education and programs offered.

Through integrating qualitative and quantitative analyses, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of university education and the challenges related to program selection. Thus, through thematic analysis and statistical techniques, the researchers could identify key themes and patterns in the data, thereby shedding light on the factors influencing program selection, the effectiveness of university education, and students' experiences. This comprehensive analysis contributes to the existing knowledge of university education and provides valuable insights that can inform policy, practice, and future research in the field.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 The purpose of studying university education

3.1.1 University education an Overview

The purpose of studying university education is multi-faceted and encompasses different

expectations and aspirations. According to the findings of this study, the perceived expectations from university education include economic positioning in the community (6.9%), employment opportunities (18.4%), a good life (10.3%), improvement of knowledge (72.4%), and being a voice for the voiceless (Figure 1). These findings provide valuable insights into the purpose and perceptions of university education among students. It demonstrates that students have diverse expectations from their university education, including career prospects, personal development, and societal contributions. Understanding these expectations can help universities and policymakers align their educational offerings and support systems to meet students' needs better and ensure a meaningful and fulfilling university experience.

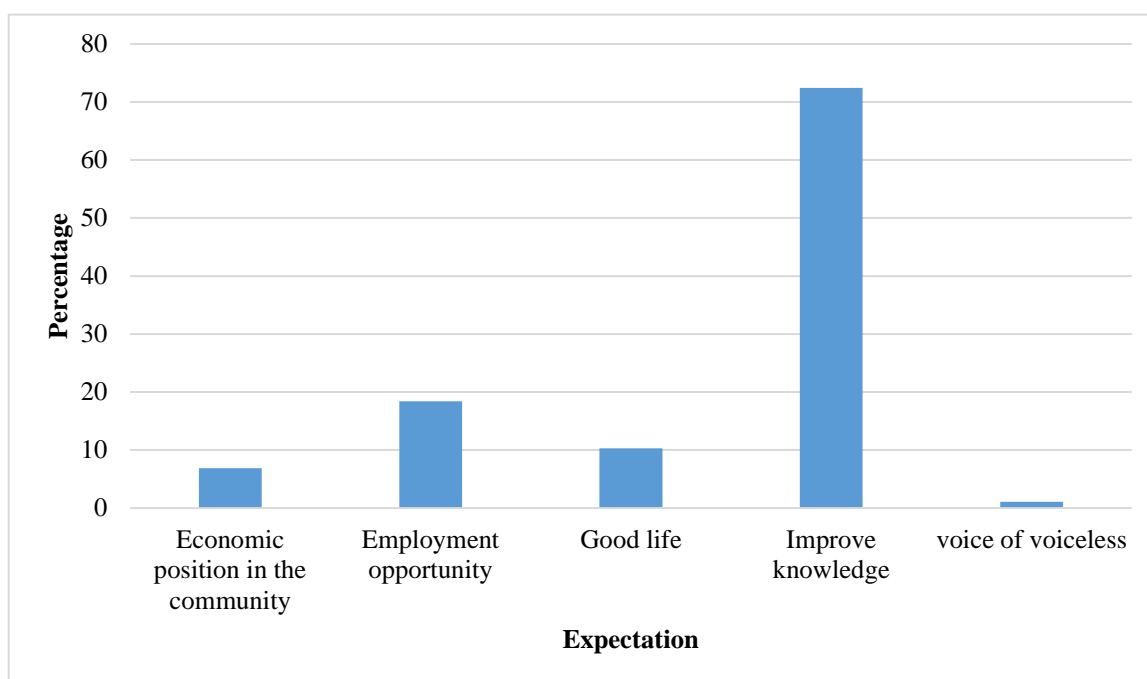


Figure 1: Perceived Expectations from University Education

Furthermore, the study explored the respondents' perceptions regarding aligning their chosen programs or courses with their desired prospects. The results indicated that most respondents (97%) believed their selected programs fulfilled their desired options (Figure 2). Respondents provided several reasons when asked why they felt their chosen course would fulfil their prospects. The reasons included passion (31.0%), acquiring knowledge (16.5%), fulfilling a dream (12.2%), employment opportunities (6.6%), self-assurance (6.6%), practical studies (5.6%), success and achievement (5.5%), and other reasons such as achieving goals (4.4%), acquiring new skills (4.4%), overcoming challenges (4.4%),

becoming a professional (3.3%), contributing to humanity (2.2%), and self-empowerment (2.2%). However, a small percentage of respondents (3.4%) believed their chosen course would not fulfil their prospects. The reasons for this included disliking the procedure, a lack of employment opportunities, and feeling prepared for employment but not for self-employment

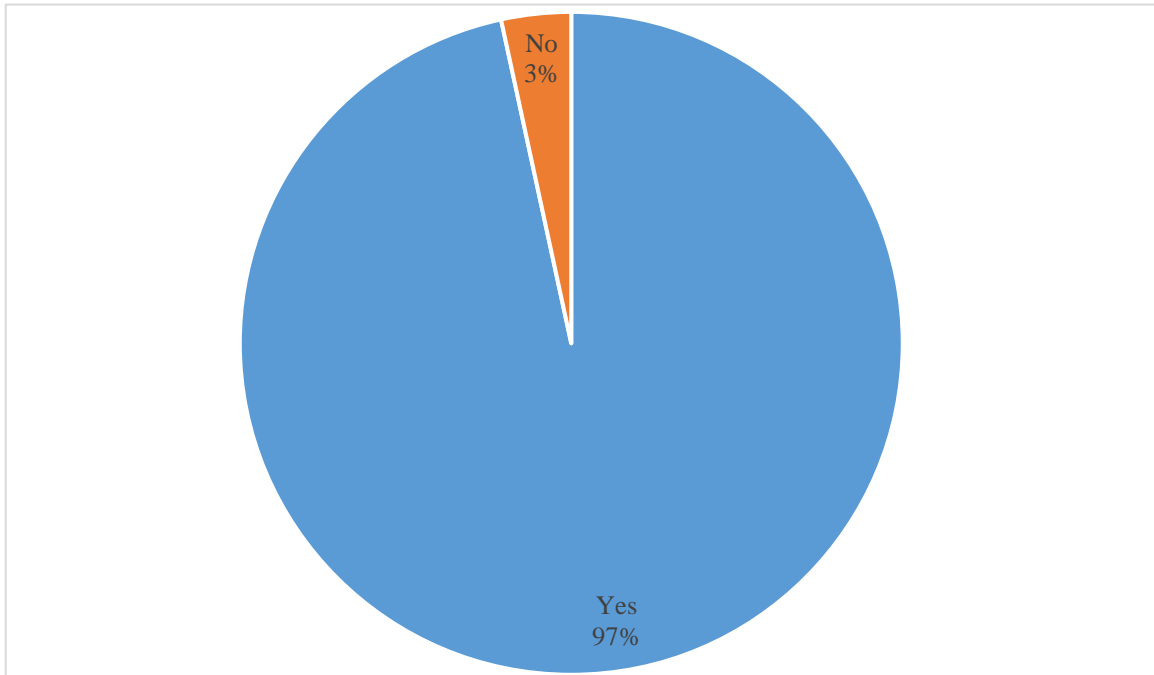


Figure 2: Respondents' Perception of Programs Fulfilling the Prospect

Figure 2 indicates that a significant majority (97%) believed their chosen programs fulfilled their desired prospects. Different expectations, including economic positioning, employment opportunities, personal fulfilment, and knowledge acquisition, drive the desired purpose of studying university education. Most respondents perceived that their chosen programs aligned with their desired prospects. These influenced perceptions, passion, knowledge acquisition, and future career opportunities. However, a small percentage of respondents expressed concerns about their chosen courses needing to fulfil their prospects, citing course dislike and limited employment opportunities.

3.1.2 Perceived Purpose of university education

The perceived purposes of university education indicate the various reason for pursuing it. The findings revealed that the main perceived reasons for studying university education included expanding knowledge (85.1%), getting a good job (3.4%), better economic

positions (2.3%), having a part in decision-making (3.4%), aiming for higher ranks (2.3%), and being self-motivated (3.4%) (Figure 3). It is important to note that many students have a short-sighted purpose when studying university education. Previous research has indicated that external influences, such as peer pressure, often significantly shape students' decisions to pursue higher education. Additionally, societal expectations often dictate the transition from secondary education to university or college education without deeply considering personal goals and aspirations. Therefore, these findings highlight the importance of understanding university education's purpose to ensure its objectives. The results highlight the need to understand the true sense of university education to fulfil its dreams.

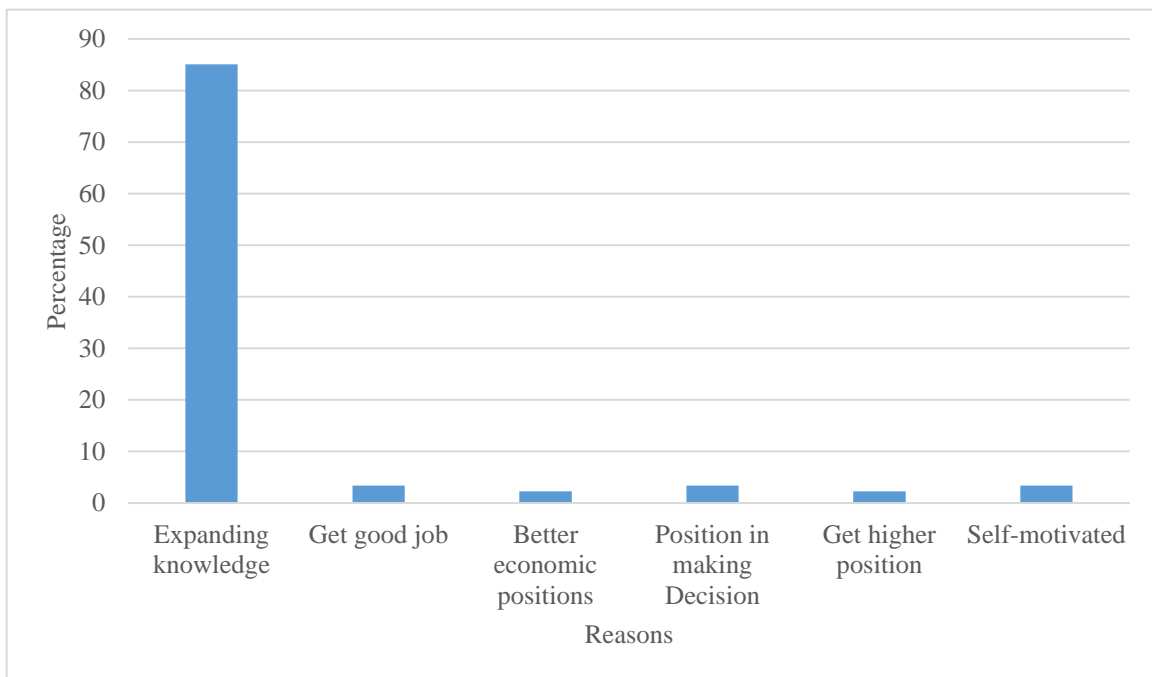


Figure 3: Perceived reasons for studying university education

The survey further explored the reasons for choosing a specific university. The respondents provided various factors influencing their decision on the choices of their current University. The reasons provided included the presence of good lecturers (26.4%), self-motivation (14.8%), quality education and constructiveness (13.7%), the fact that many prominent people studied at the University (11.5%), preference for the program offered (11.5%), and influence from friends (5.7%). Other reasons mentioned were the availability of practical learning opportunities (5.7%), social behaviour (3.4%), and influence from parents or relatives (3.4%), the location of the University (3.4%), and the University's reputation (2.3%). The respondents' answers indicate their awareness and understanding of

the factors influencing their choices. Figure 4 illustrates the reasons and influences behind students' program selections within the University. These findings indicate that students consider academic and social factors when making decisions. It emphasizes their awareness and understanding of the factors influencing their choices and highlights the importance of providing a well-rounded and supportive university environment.

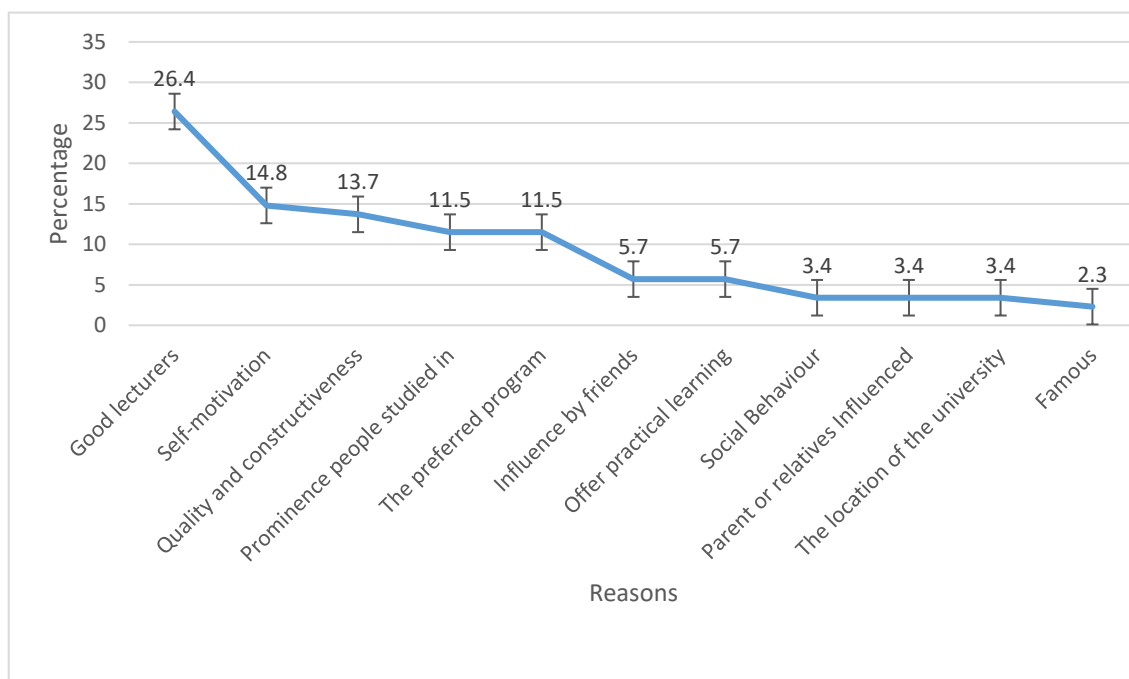


Figure 4: Reasons for and influences on selecting university programs

Figure 4 provides insights into the reasons and influences that shape students' decisions when selecting university programs. The findings indicate that students know and deeply understand the factors contributing to their choices. Notably, factors such as the quality of faculty, personal motivation, the educational quality offered by the program, social influences, and individual program preferences emerge as influential factors in their decision-making process. This study highlights the multi-faceted nature of the decision-making process and underscores the significance of these factors in shaping students' choices.

3.2 University program information and Selection

3.2.1 University programs information

Various factors influence the selection of university programs, including potential job opportunities (42.5%), financial support (56.3%), gaining knowledge (1.1), having control

over one's business (1.1), and interest in related activities (1.1) (Figure 5). explore the time students take to decide on their program selections, and the study found that most respondents (64.9%) took three years or more to make their decisions (Figure 6). Additionally, 27.1% took less than a year, and 8.0% took one to two years. During the decision-making process, students sought advice primarily from relatives (34.2%), friends (28.3%), and parents (22.4%). These findings emphasize the significance of practical guidance and support systems to assist students in making informed choices and ensure a meaningful and fulfilling university experience. Moreover, they indicate that students often rely on external guidance when deciding important university education decisions. Such results underscore the need for improved career counselling and guidance services throughout the decision-making process.

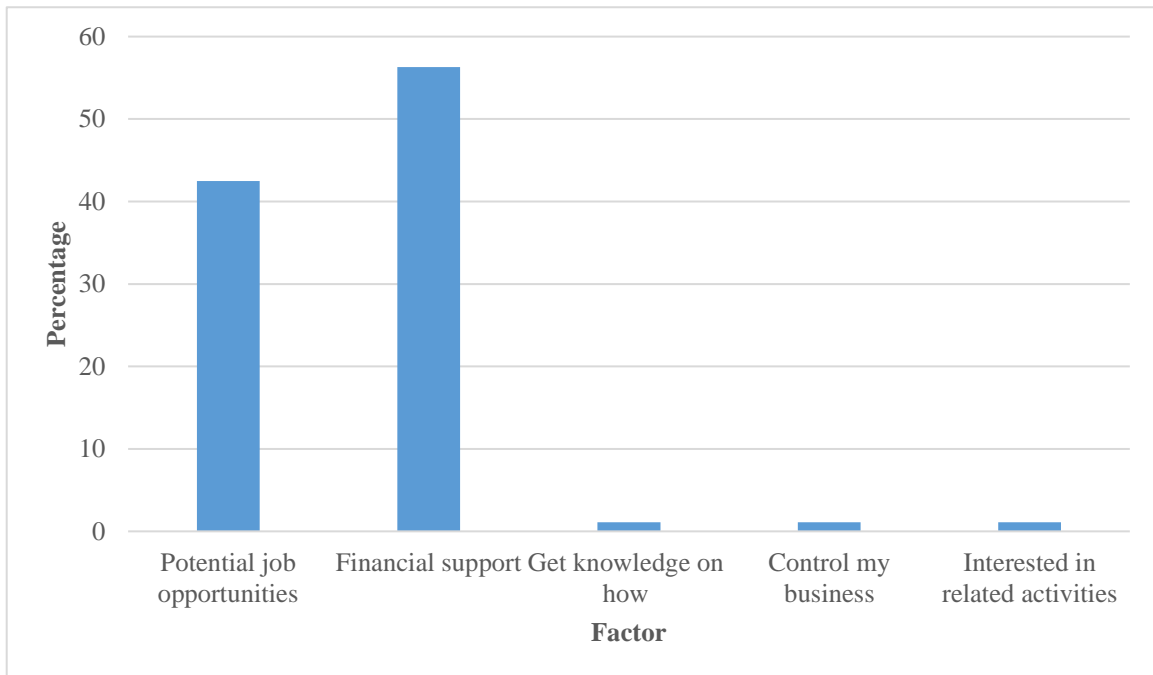


Figure 5 Factor affecting course selection

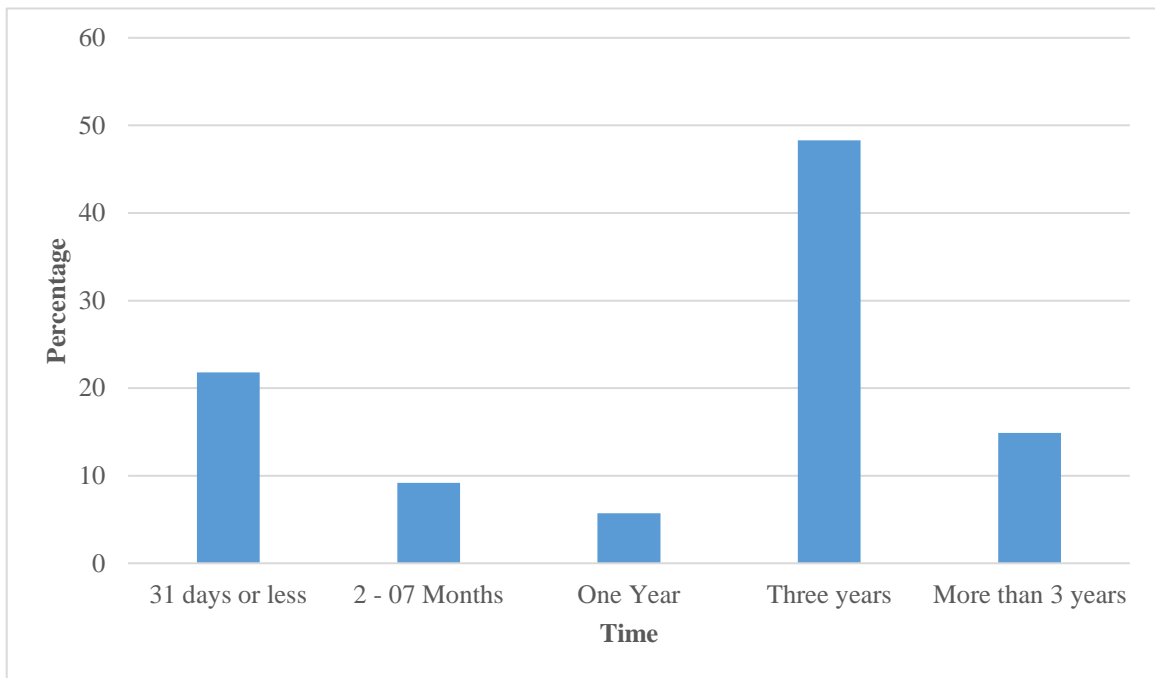


Figure 6 The time taken to decide on a specific university program

Figure 6 illustrates the time individuals take to decide on a specific university program. The study reveals that the reasons behind the extended decision-making process are diverse. Among the respondents, 39.1% sought advice from their relatives, friends, and parents as part of their decision-making process. Another 47.1% sought motivation to ensure they were making the right choice. Additionally, a small percentage, 5.7%, indicated that they required awareness and information about the university program, as without it, they may have reconsidered or not chosen the program. Figure 7 provides further details on program awareness and its impact.

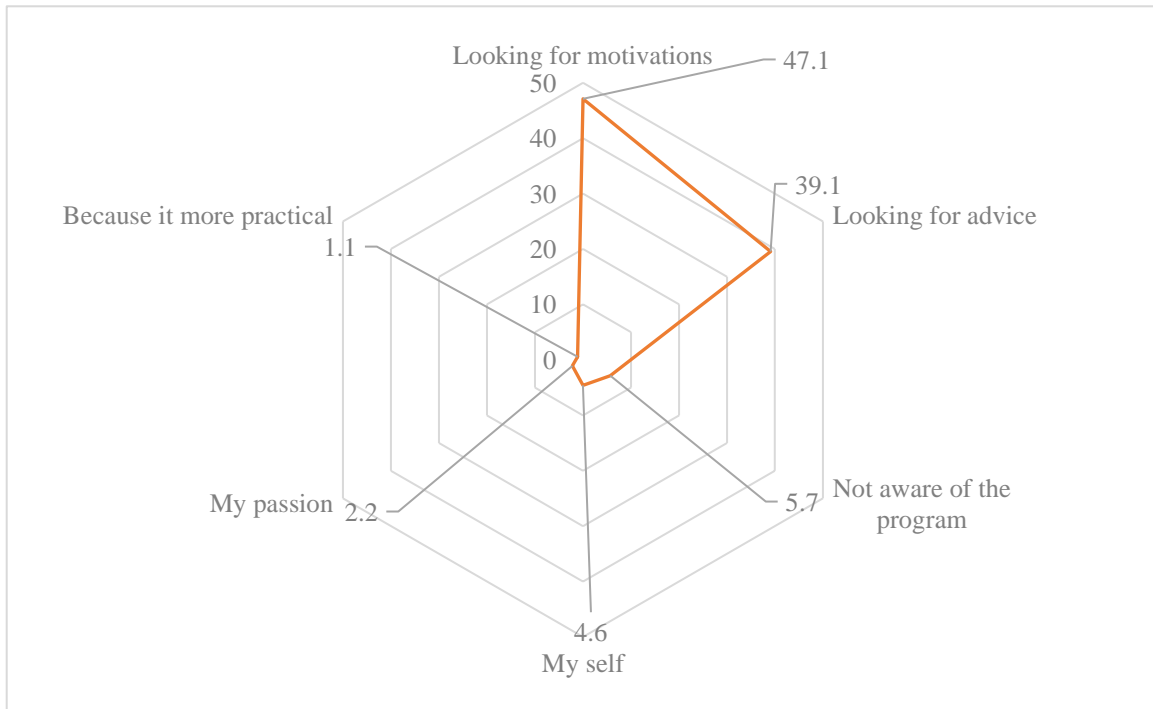


Figure 7 Reason for a long time to decide/ select the program

3.2.2 Course programs choices and Reasons for Selection

The selection of university programs and institutions raises concerns regarding student enrollment, program selection, and prospects. It is crucial for students applying to higher learning institutions to receive proper guidance and education, ensuring their awareness of program requirements and future opportunities. Otherwise, there is a risk of a growing number of educated individuals remaining unemployed and marginalized. The extent to which student registration, program selection, and prospects have reshaped the belief that students who apply and register at higher learning institutions are aware of the program and its potential. Suppose students using higher learning institutions are well-informed, advised, and taught to integrate with the program and be mindful of the opportunities that await them after completing their studies and, in that case, reduce the number of educated but unemployed individuals in society.

Reasons for selecting a university program include having good lecturers (26.4%), the reputation of prominent individuals who studied there (11.5%), personal preference for the University (11.4%), a constructive program structure (10.3%), the availability of the desired program (10.3%), influence from friends (5.7%), the pursuit of better education

(5.7%), passion for the field (5.7%), emphasis on practical learning (5.7%), consideration of social behaviour (3.4%), influence from parents or relatives (3.4%), the University's fame or prominence (2.3%), and the location of the University (3.4%) (Figure 8).

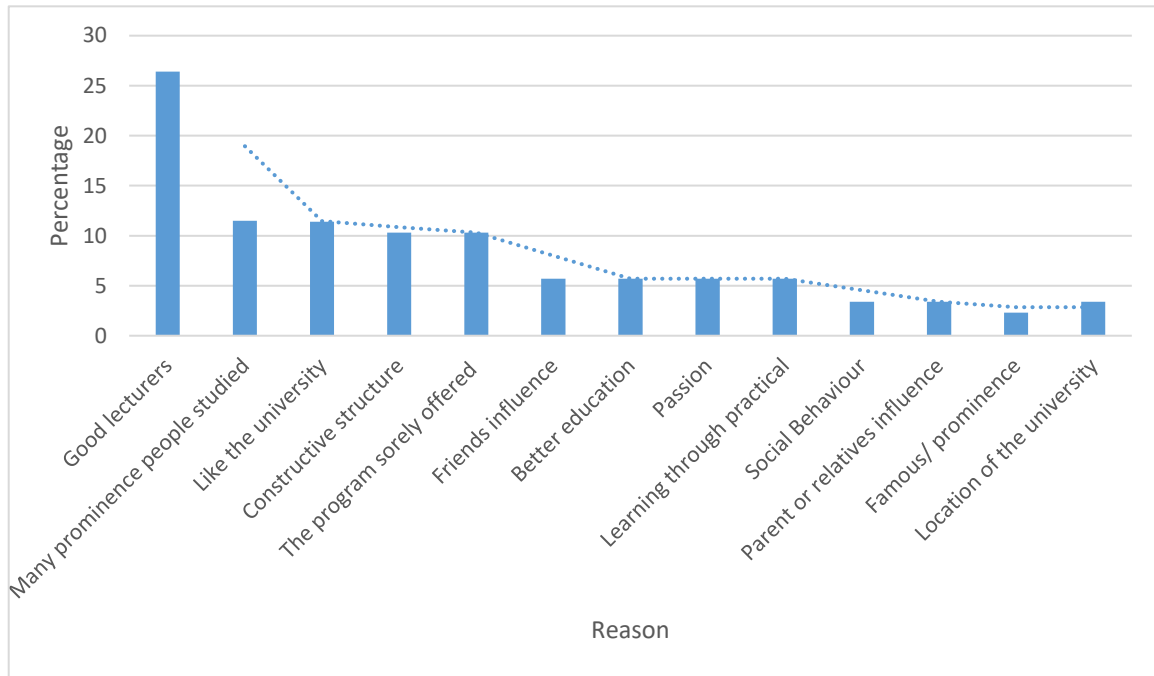


Figure 8 Perceived Reason for Choosing the University

Figure 8 sheds light on the perceived reasons behind individuals' choices to pursue a university education. It highlights that the decision to pursue higher education varies among individuals and occurs at different stages. The majority, approximately 64.4%, start considering university education during primary school. Others begin contemplating it during ordinary-level secondary school (19.5%), high-level secondary school (10.3%), nursery school (3.4%), bachelor's degree studies (1.1%), or even while already employed (1.1%). Figure 9 indicates the timeframes when individuals start considering pursuing a university education. Thus, it demonstrates the diverse range of stages at which individuals embark on their journey towards higher education.

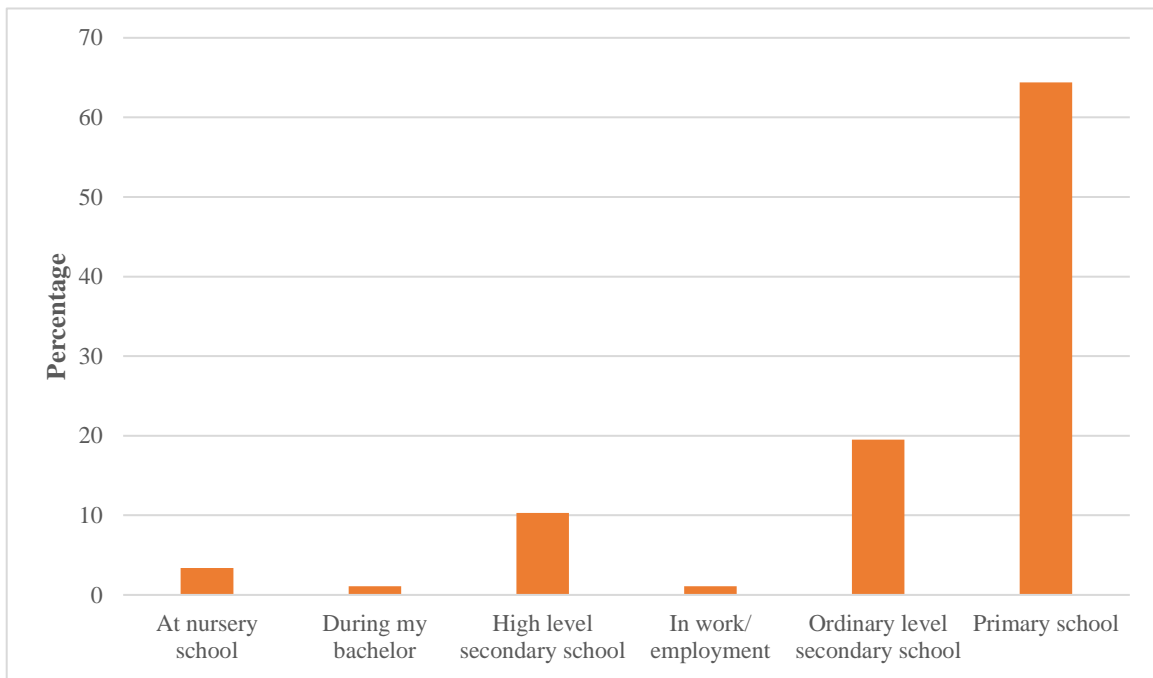


Figure 9 Time stated to think about joining a university education

Figure 9 provides insights into individuals' time to consider joining a university education. The researcher identified that most students, 39.1%, were influenced by their parents, mainly if their parents were professionals in the field they wished to study. Relatives also played a significant role, accounting for the same percentage of influence. Furthermore, 14.9% of students expressed a personal interest in a specific program. Siblings, guardians, and friends collectively influenced 11.5% of students, with friends accounting for 6.8% of that influence. Religious leaders impacted 3.4% of students, while 3.4% were drawn to programs due to their practical nature. Additionally, 1.1% of students mentioned being asked by their bosses to choose a program, as indicated in Figure 10. These findings highlight the diverse influences and factors contributing to individuals' decision-making processes when considering pursuing a university education.

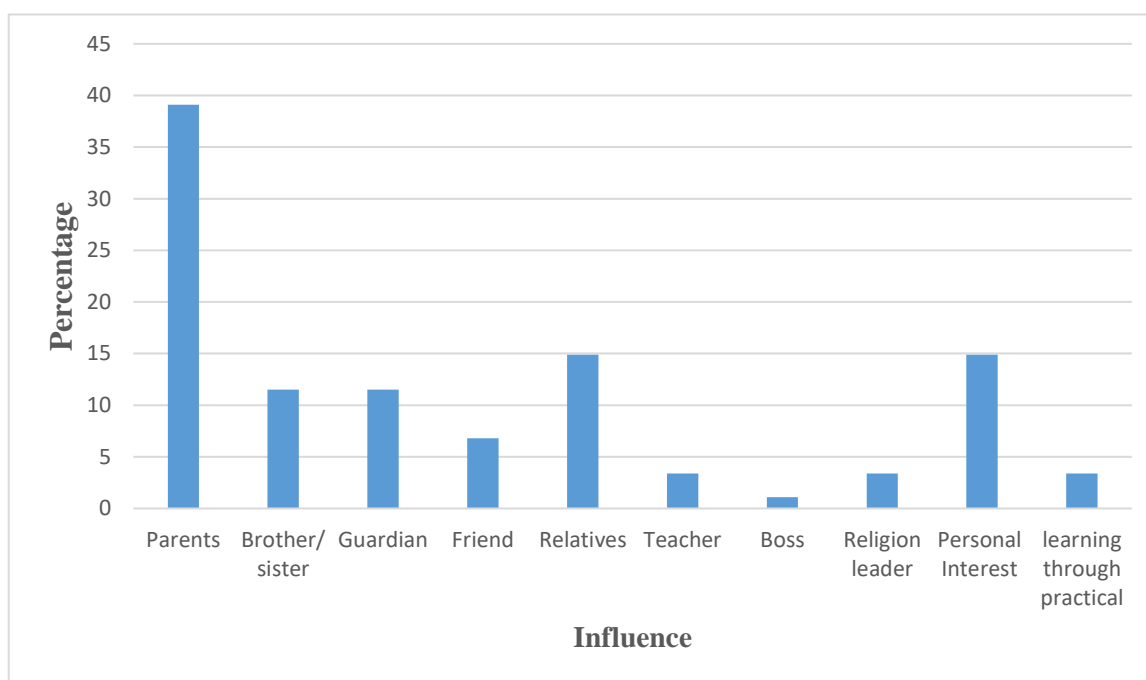


Figure 10 Influence in joining university studies

Figure 10 highlights the various factors influencing students' decisions when choosing university studies. Parents emerged as the most significant influence, accounting for 39.1% of respondents. Relatives, personal interests, siblings, guardians, friends, teachers, religious leaders, learning through practical experiences, and bosses also shaped students' decisions. Relatives and personal interests each accounted for 14.9% of the influence, while siblings and guardians had an effect of 11.5% each. Friends accounted for 6.8% of the outcome, while teachers, religious leaders, and practical experiences had an impact of 3.4%. Finally, bosses influenced 1.1% of students' decisions. These findings emphasize the importance of various individuals and factors in guiding students' choices regarding university studies.

The kind of influence reported includes good life/ job opportunities or employment prospects (16.1%) are potential outcomes that prospective students and their families seek when investing their time, efforts, and ambitions. Additionally, 18.4% of students stated that a good economic status influenced their program selection. Self-confidence was cited by 55.1% of students as their motivation for pursuing a university education, enabling them to express themselves confidently. The students' respondents (6.9%) aimed to achieve a good position in the workforce after completing their studies. Others (1.1%) sought to

expand their knowledge, be the voice for marginalized groups, or pursue activities of personal interest (1.1%) (Figure 11). The respondents describe that the transition from education to employment is the straightforward motive of every student opting for university study and one of the most influencing characteristics in choice decisions of university programs, specifically for male students.

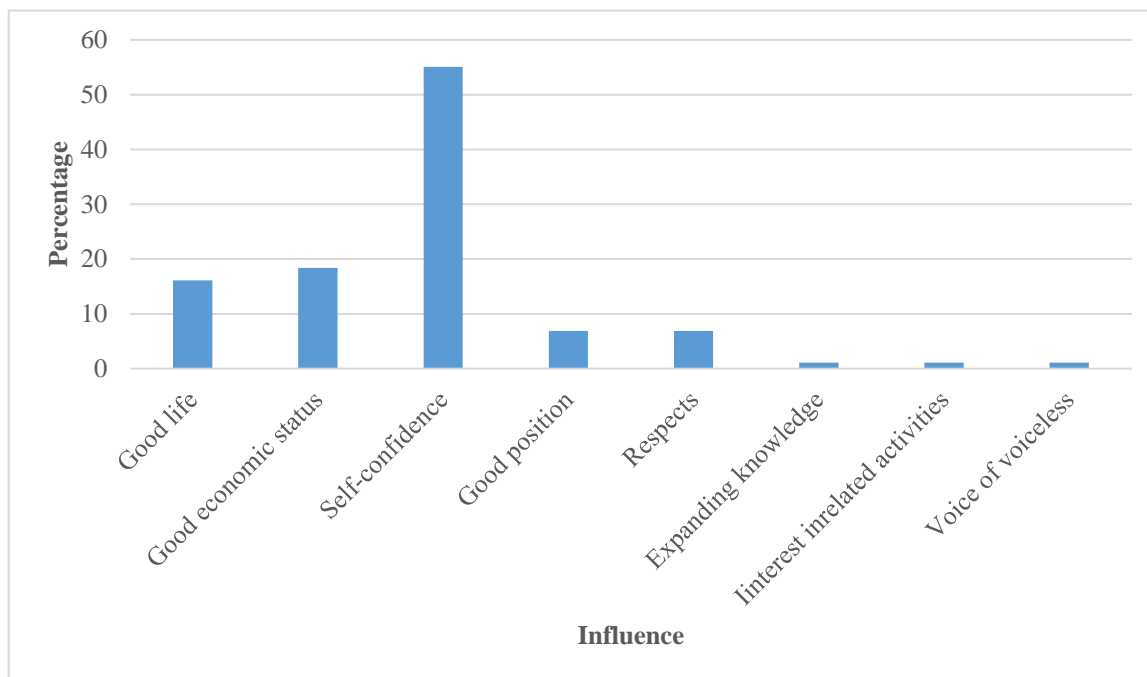


Figure 11 Kind of Influence on studying university education

The respondents identified factors influencing their choice to attend their current program. The factors identified by students include career-related considerations (46.0%), opportunities for prospects (28.7%), the presence of good lecturers (8.0%), passion for the subject and a desire to increase knowledge (8.0%), personal dreams (5.7%), influence from parents and friends (3.4%), and emphasis on practical learning (3.4%). The effect from various sources, including friends already admitted to the University, was also mentioned (Figure 12).

During the research study, 8.0% of students said Passion & Increase knowledge they have passion for choosing the program; the increase in knowledge was another mentioned factor by the student who the researcher interviewed, and 5.7% of the student said that it is a dream to choose the program, parents and friends are the factors which influence the student, 3.4% contributed that the learning procedure is the factor which it can affect the

student to choose the program, practical method of teaching can influence convenience and identified as influential factors.

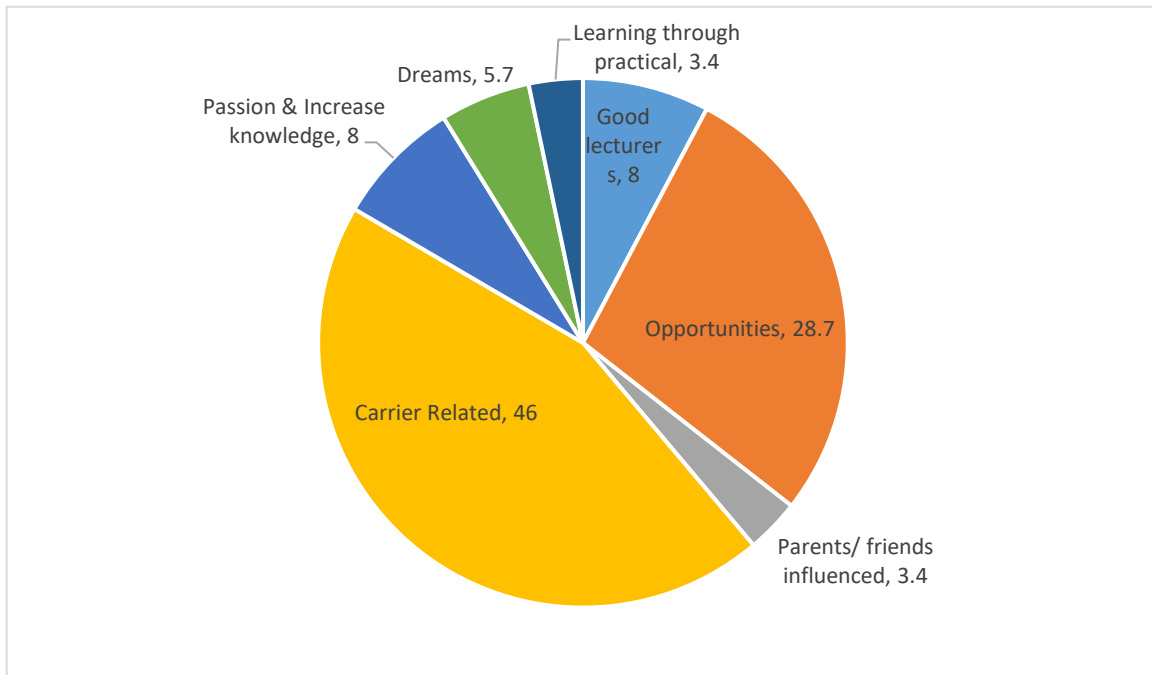


Figure 12 Reason for choosing to study the program

The identified factors influencing students' program choices were through a prepopulated list and open-ended comments. Among the respondents, 46.0% chose a program based on career prospects, 28.7% considered job opportunities, 8.0% valued the presence of good lecturers, 8.0% passionate and desired to increase knowledge, 5.7% pursued their dreams, parents or friends influenced, 3.4%, and 3.4% preferred practical learning approaches. Furthermore, respondents were inspired to choose their programs by various individuals. Parents (24.1%), siblings (13.8%), guardians (13.8%), relatives 12.6%, personal motivation (10.2%), successful students (12.6%), friends (5.7%), practical learning experiences (4.6%), religious leaders (3.4%), personal interest or passion (3.4%), teachers 2.3%, media (1.1%), and bosses (1.1%) all played a role in influencing program selection.

3.3 The challenges in university education and during course selection

Most students face many challenges during course selections; however, the respondent shows that some challenges are common but need solutions. Respondents, when interviewed by researchers, 62.1% said financial conditions were the big challenge that made them fail in choosing their preferred courses. Parents 'financial means sort with low

social status often Become significant factors that influence most students to opt for affordable classes. Subjects requiring expensive requirements can become a hurdle hampering students 'interest in choosing courses in line with their specialities. Many students would not choose target courses due to socio-economic problems. 18.4% of the respondents also revealed that lack of guidance during course selections contributes to failure to select an approach which can be Manageable. They said that the University should have a person who can help the student to choose the right course; 16.1% they have fear to fail the class because some of the respondents discontinued the study, 1.1% revealed that they made a copycat decision, and 1.1% told to have resistance from their fellow student.

They are currently taking at the university Education Based on the responses of the student-respondents, there are five (5) ways on how they managed to take their current courses at the College of Education, to wittiness: Self-determination and opting for course preference. Through self-determination, students are encouraged to pursue the course taken despite not their course preference. The challenges faced during course selection include Financial Conditions 62.1%, student Lack of Guidance to advise them on program selections and 16.1% Fear of Failure Others are Copycats 18.4% Decisions and Opposition from other people (Figure 13).

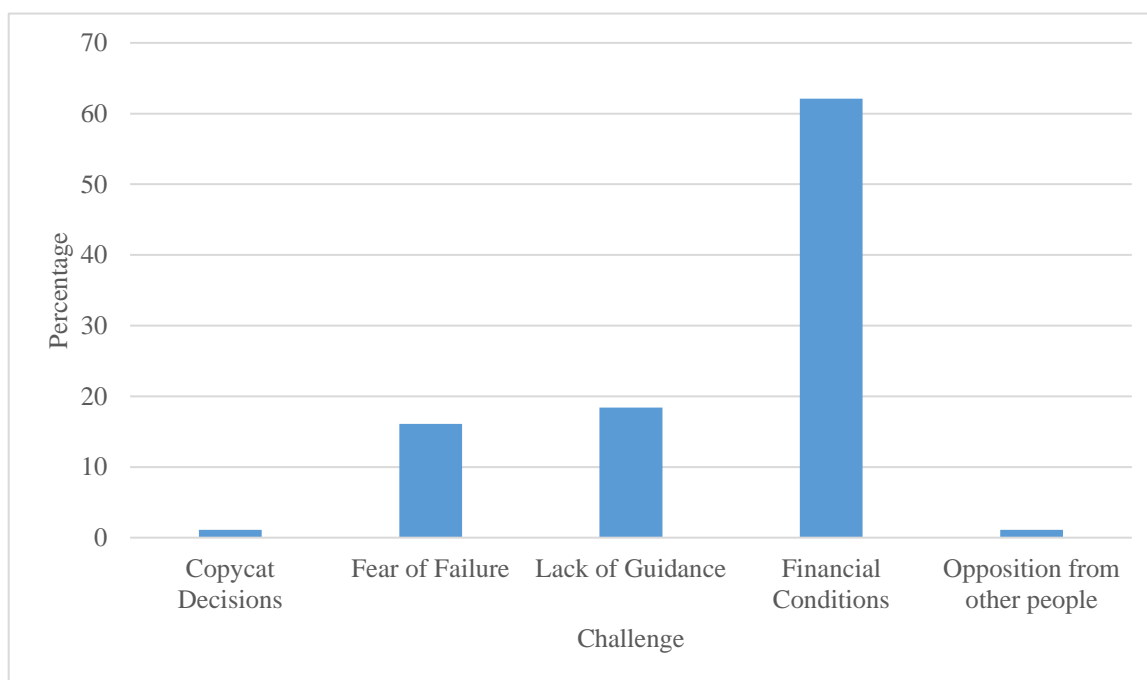


Figure 13 challenges faced during Course Selection

Figure 13 highlights the challenges faced by students during the course selection process. The perceived solutions to overcome these challenges include various strategies. Among the respondents, 44.8% mentioned using university guidance as a solution. 29.9% expressed the need for financial support. Additionally, 5.7% needed to understand the course thoroughly before applying. Seeking assistance from other students was mentioned by 4.6% of respondents, while the same percentage said the importance of parental support. 10.3% suggested practical learning and acquiring more knowledge through university education. Lastly, 1.1% of students expressed the need for sponsorship. For further details on the solutions, refer to Figure 14. These findings provide valuable insights into students' challenges during course selection and the potential strategies to overcome them.

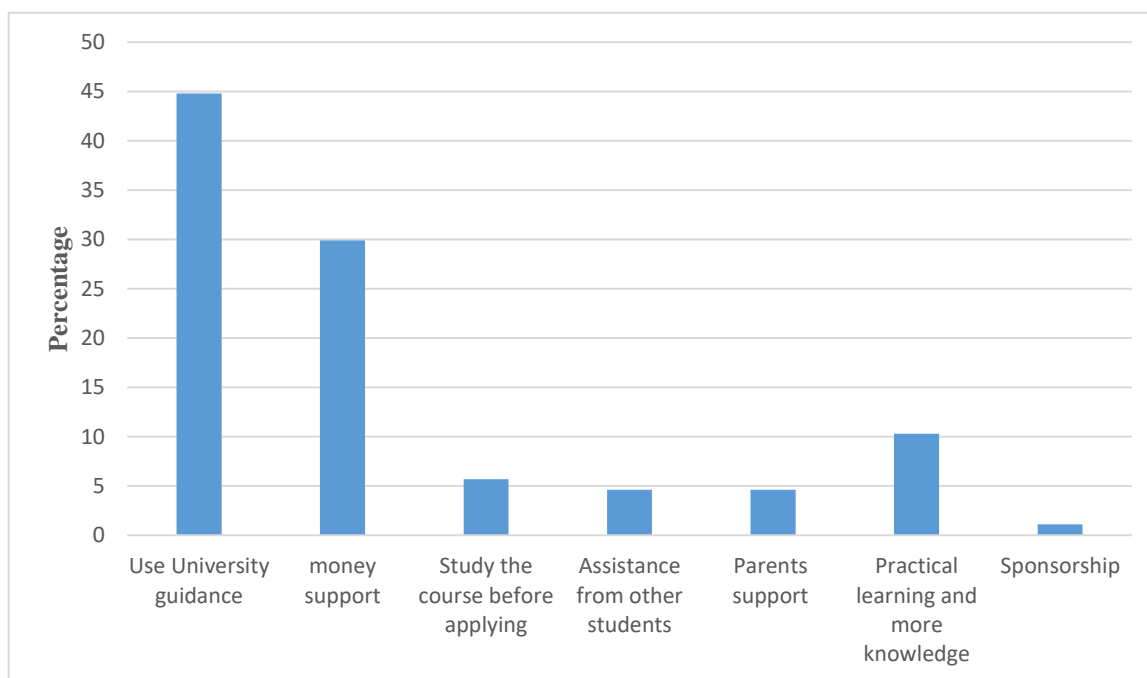


Figure 14 shows the difficulty faced in overcoming the challenge.

Figure 14 presents the difficulties encountered in overcoming challenges during the course selection process. Meanwhile, Figure 15 focuses on the categories of complications students face in universities and provides potential solutions. Among the findings, 45.9% of students need more knowledge to address program-related challenges. Furthermore, 11.5% of students report facing pressure from parents or friends, while 32.2% find it challenging to find adequate guidance from advisers. Additionally, 3.4% of students face financial constraints, and a similar percentage encounters difficulties due to a lack of self-effort.

These results shed light on the specific hurdles students face and the corresponding areas that require attention and support.

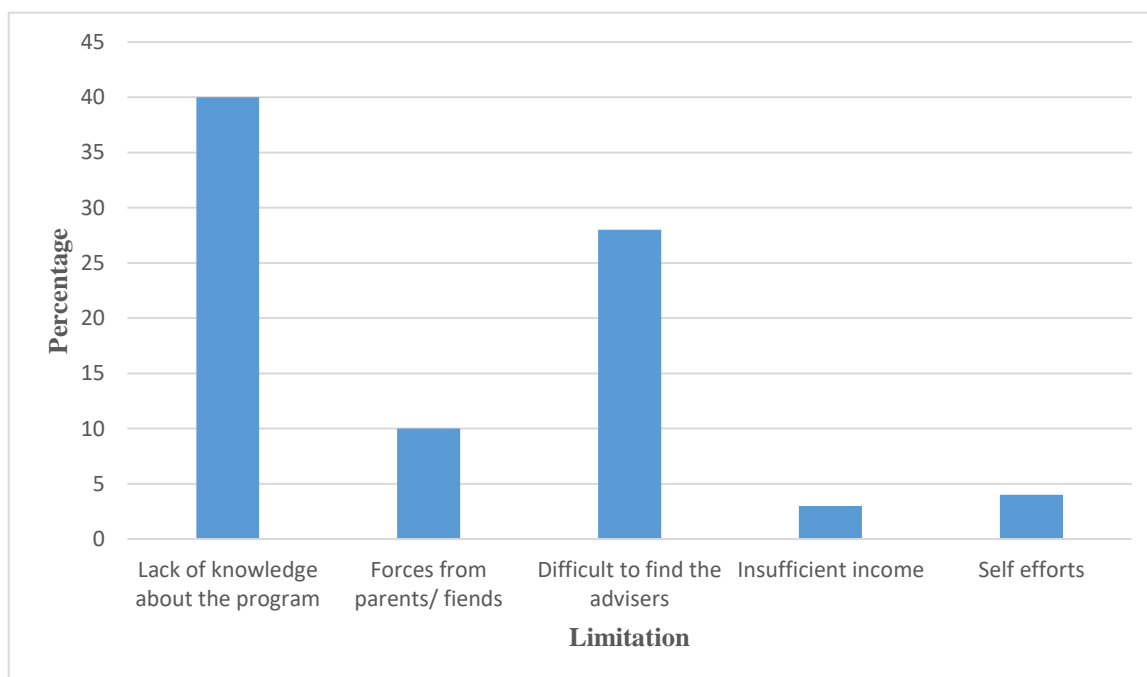


Figure 15 shows difficulties in overcoming the challenges

3.4 Perceived Changes and option for improving university education

3.4.1 Perception of changing the program

A retake is perceived to make a better person and help to understand what failed. The best results are achieved by cognitively repeating and studying the program afresh, internalizing the concept and sitting the tests and course works, but you are still thriving. When the respondent asked whether they could retake the same course if given another chance, 55% responded positively to retaking it, that they were aware of the period before joining the university program. 44.8% responded negatively about retaking the same course; this indicates that they needed to be made aware of the program before joining university education. Figure 16 shows the number of students needing to change the system and who desire to retake the study if given another chance. The factor contributing to the student who wanted to change the course was that they needed to learn about the study they were selected to join. 23.9% of the respondent said they would like to retake the course. The reason to retake the examination is that it was a favourite course, and 3.3% of it is an unquestionable employment opportunity. 10.2% of responses show that they will change class because they believe that the systems they are studying it has few chances of

employment opportunities. Therefore, a student is looking for courses which offer job opportunities.

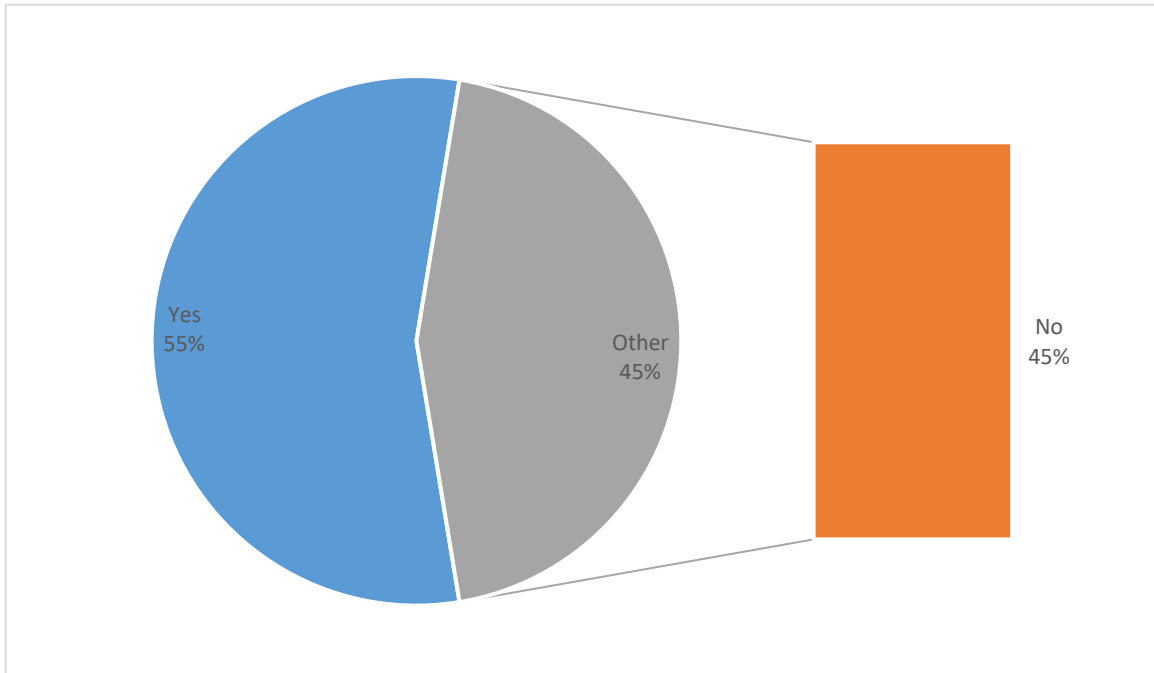


Figure 16. Chance to take another course/ program

Approximately 6.7% of respondents expressed the reason for taking new courses, which was the absence of knowledge before selecting the earlier method, 6.6% of respondents showed that they want to retake the system to continue acquiring more skills, 2.2% of respondents replied that they wish to retake the course because it is easy to understand, 3.3% consider the same class will contribute employment opportunity 23.9% respondents they can retake the same course since it is Favorite course related with carrier and 5.6% consider the course to be Supportive course in their lives.

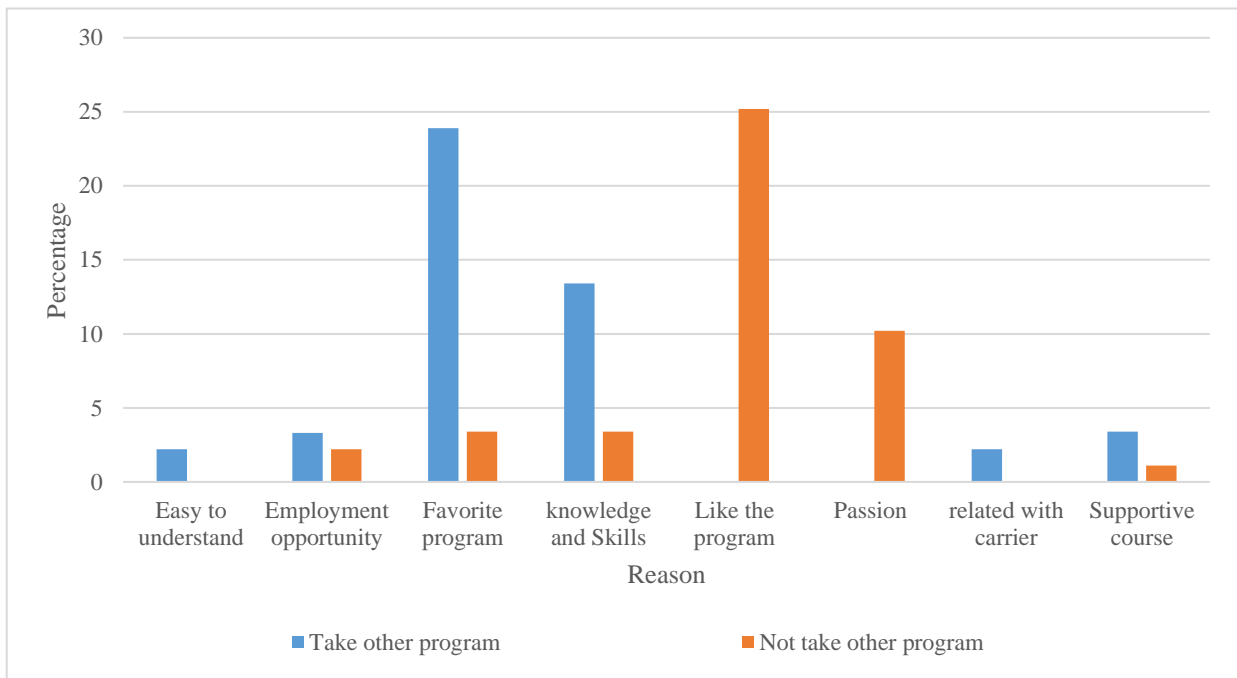


Figure 17 Reason for taking or not taking another program

The survey results indicate a small percentage of respondents, approximately 3.4%, mentioned that their decision to stick with their current program was due to a desire to acquire fixed knowledge and skills. Similarly, another 3.4% stated that their interest in the program was the primary reason for not considering other options. Additionally, 1.1% of participants disagreed across multiple fields, indicating a need for more focus on a specific course. On the other hand, a significant portion, 25.2%, expressed satisfaction with their current program, while 2.2% cited the potential for immediate employment opportunities as a factor for not seeking a different course. Notably, 10.2% of respondents demonstrated a strong passion for a specific field of study.

3.4.2 Perception of Improving the University Education

Figure 18 shows opinions on improving university education. The results indicates the following: 37.6% respondents contribute that, university education should base more practically also 51.0%, alleged it should improves knowledge, by 12.3%, university educations should improve different skills 2.2%, said Better continue like this, 2.2%, respondents advise universities to Change of curriculum 9.9% of respondents Gives awareness in solving social problems, 20.9% shows that University they are studying is Good University, 19.9% said Good program, 2.2%, the program are looking help them for

Competent building 11.0% they are studying program for Job and connection opportunity It is not easy to look 5.5%, Contribution of Government to student 2.2%, others are advise people to join program 12.1%, respondents reveals that Good study environment 12.4%, contributes that the Responsibility of student help them on a excellent performance 5.5%,advice the University to Support non degrees 13.2% suggest the University have to update their system of studies and admission in digital design.

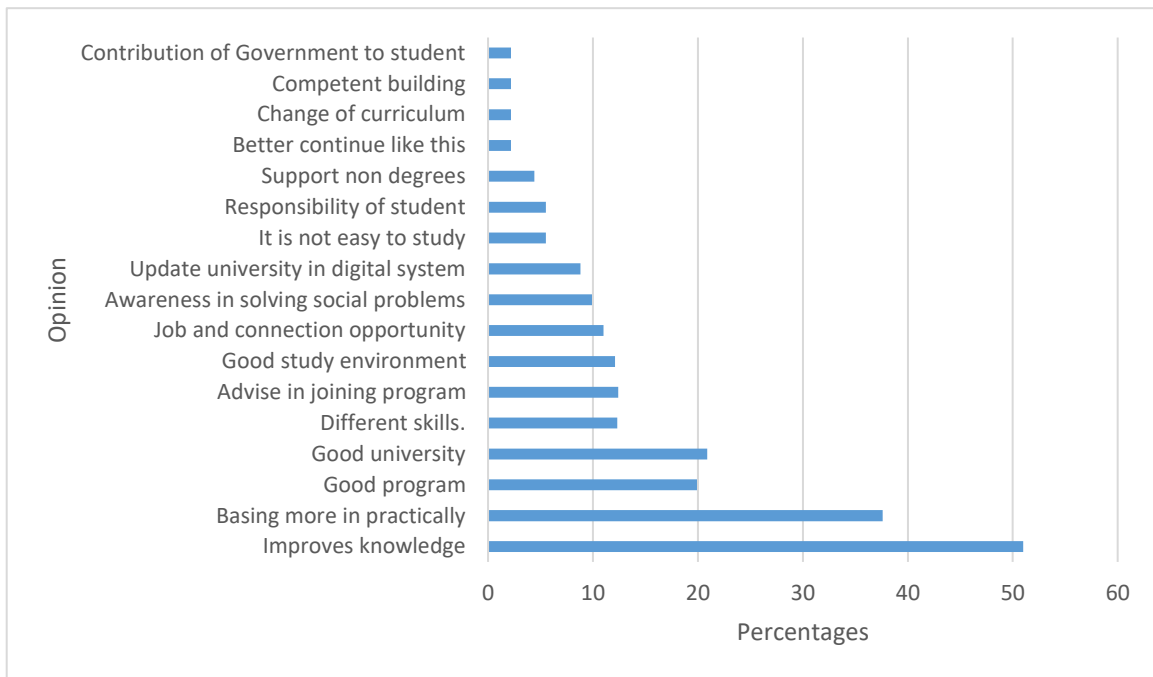


Figure 18 Opinions on the improving university education

The recommendations displayed in figure 19 whereby 61.1%, recommends for improvement includes Improve knowledge and skills through practical University's 29.9% of respondent recommend that the university program should reflect the real-life Good 48.9%,respondent recommend that program and education reached another is Improve learning resources, 22.1%, advice that teaching facilities and methodologies there was also provide conducive studying environment 18.8%,contributed that lecturer should Facilitate student to understand the programs 13.2%, mention that the territory of University Inspire student to join the university education 5.5%, student are admired by Creation good practical learning infrastructure 3.3%,student they want to Maintain lecturers and students' good relationship 2.2%, of student want to be Employed experienced lectures 2.2%, Integrate Education with environment 2.2%, Conduct regular

curriculum review 3.3%, Advice student before program selection 2.2%, Partners with employers' organizations to secure opportunities 2.2 %, of the respondent recommend to lecturer to finally maintain Punctuality in Course delivering.

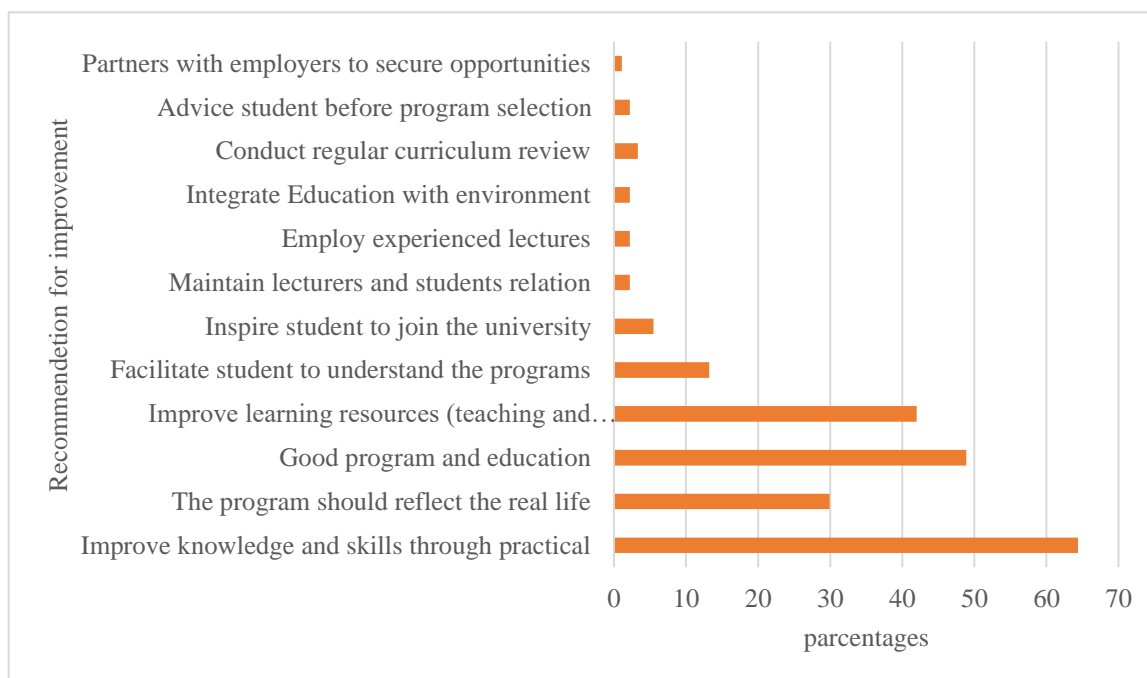


Figure 19 Recommendations for improvement

It is concluded that university education is more influenced by the third party than the students themselves for several reasons, as we have discussed. And the findings showed that their relatives affect an enormous number of university students because of what they believe to be the best for their children later on, but bad enough is that the findings showed the negative result of students toward the choice of their relatives as the days go on and due to the increase of awareness during the university studies. Let student universities choose what they think will be valuable to them and valuable for their future because everyone knows themselves better than others.

4 Discussions

Higher education's purpose has been debated, with some arguing that it should primarily serve the interests of the economy and prepare students for the workforce. In comparison, others emphasize the broader contributions institutions of higher education can make to society. This study aimed to explore the purpose of studying university education, the

reasons for program selection, and understand how students choose their programs and the challenges they face. The findings revealed that students have diverse expectations from their university education, including economic positioning, employment opportunities, personal fulfilment, and knowledge acquisition. Most respondents believed their chosen programs fulfilled their desired prospects, citing factors such as passion, knowledge acquisition, and future career opportunities. However, a small percentage of respondents expressed concerns about their chosen courses not fulfilling their prospects. Thus, students have a broader understanding of the purpose of university education, which goes beyond mere economic benefits. It highlights the need for universities and policymakers to align educational offerings and support systems to meet student's diverse needs and aspirations.

Moreover, the study found that most students believed their selected programs fulfilled their desired prospects. Passion, knowledge acquisition, and future career opportunities influenced their perception that their chosen courses would align with their preferred candidates. However, a small percentage of students expressed concerns about their selected practices needing to fulfil their prospects, citing reasons such as disliking the course or limited employment opportunities.

In terms of the perceived purposes of university education, expanding knowledge was identified as the main reason for studying at the University. While other reasons, such as getting a good job, better economic positions, and participating in decision-making, were mentioned, they were less prominent. These results indicate that students value acquiring knowledge and personal development through university education. It also highlights the need to address external influences, such as societal expectations and peer pressure that may overshadow students' individual goals and aspirations. When selecting their programs and universities, students considered various factors. The presence of good lecturers, self-motivation, quality education, program offerings, and influence from friends was among the reasons for selecting a specific university. Such results suggest that students consider academic and social factors when making decisions. It also reflects their awareness and understanding of the factors influencing their choices.

The study also explored the time students take to decide on their program selections. A significant percentage of students took three years or more to make their decisions, most seeking advice from relatives, friends, and parents. Influences on program selection attributed to parents and relatives, personal interest, and practical learning opportunities. The effect of parents and relatives, especially professionals in a specific field, highlights the role of family expectations and aspirations in shaping students' choices. Practical learning opportunities were also influential, indicating a preference for hands-on

experiences in program selection. The results show that students often rely on external guidance when deciding important university education decisions. It emphasizes the need for practical guidance and support systems to assist students in making informed choices.

The study also identified factors influencing program and university selection, including good lecturers, personal motivation, educational quality, social influences, program preferences, and the reputation of the University. Furthermore, the study highlighted the challenges students face in program selection: limited awareness of available programs, lack of career guidance, little information about prospects, and limited access to university resources. These challenges underscore the importance of improving career guidance services, providing accessible information about programs and competitors, and establishing support systems to assist students in making informed decisions about their program choices.

Overall, the findings of this study shed light on the purpose of studying university education and the factors influencing program selection among students. The results highlight students' diverse expectations and aspirations beyond mere economic benefits. Students primarily value the acquisition of knowledge and personal development through university education. It emphasizes the need for universities and policymakers to align educational offerings with students' diverse needs and aspirations. Additionally, it underscores the importance of providing practical guidance and support systems to help students make informed choices and ensure a meaningful and fulfilling university experience. Thus, universities can better prepare students for their desired prospects and contribute to their personal and professional growth.

4 Conclusions

The perceived purposes of university education included expanding knowledge, getting a good job, better economic positions, participating in decision-making, aiming for higher positions, and being self-motivated. External influences, such as peer pressure and societal expectations, often significantly shape students' decisions to pursue higher education. Higher learning institutions must establish effective mechanisms that assist students in selecting programs aligned with their prospects, provide career guidance, and improve access to information and resources. Thus, better meeting the needs and expectations of students and ensuring a meaningful and fulfilling university experience.

The purpose of higher education goes beyond economic development and encompasses different expectations and aspirations. Students have diverse expectations, including

financial positioning, employment opportunities, personal fulfilment, and knowledge acquisition. While most students believe that their chosen programs fulfil their desired prospects, there is a need for improved systems and procedures to guide students in selecting appropriate programs. More awareness, guidance, and information about university programs are needed to help students make informed choices. Higher learning institutions must establish mechanisms that provide comprehensive information, advice, and support to students during the program selection process. Thus, by aligning educational offerings and support systems with the needs and expectations of students, higher education institutions can ensure a meaningful and fulfilling university experience for their students.

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