

KEMI Journal of Educational Leadership and Management

KJELM

[ISSN 3079-4048]

Volume: 2 Issue: 3 | Nov-2026

Career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya

Esther Kerebi Nyamache[1], **Stephen Mbugua Ngari**[1], **Stephen Asatsa**[1]

Department of Counselling Psychology, The Catholic University of Eastern Africa[1]

Corresponding Author Email: esthernyamache20@gmail.com

Cite this article in APA

https://doi.org/10.68147/9d1c5c5c

Copyright: ©2026 by the author(s). Open access under CC BY.

Abstract

This study assessed satisfaction levels with career choice among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. Guided by Social Cognitive Career Theory, the study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected from 320 undergraduate students using the Career State Inventory Scale, while qualitative data were obtained through focus group discussions involving 20 students. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA were used to analyse quantitative data, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data. Findings revealed that 15.3% of students were dissatisfied and 36.9% moderately satisfied with their career choices, indicating that 52.2% were not fully satisfied. Significant differences were observed by faculty and degree changes. The study concludes that a substantial proportion of university students require enhanced career guidance support. The study recommends strengthening career guidance programmes from secondary school through university levels.

Key terms: Career Choice, Career Choice Satisfaction, University Careers, University Placement, Career Guidance, Career Development, Career Self-Efficacy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In contemporary societies characterised by rapid technological advancement, globalisation, and changing labour market demands, career decision-making has become increasingly complex for young people. Selecting an appropriate career path is one of the most important decisions in an individual's life because it influences educational attainment, employment opportunities, personal fulfilment, and long-term well-being. Student satisfaction is generally understood as the extent to which educational experiences and

outcomes meet individual expectations and aspirations (Kuo et al., 2013; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006).

Career choice satisfaction refers to the extent to which students feel fulfilled and content with their chosen academic programmes and anticipated career paths based on the alignment between their interests, abilities, values, expectations, and future career opportunities (Milsom & Coughlin, 2015). Satisfaction with career choice is important because it is associated with academic persistence, motivation, commitment to studies, and future career success. Conversely, poor career choices may lead to dissatisfaction, programme changes, delayed graduation, withdrawal from study programmes, and future occupational frustration (Mirza et al., 2014; Monks et al., 2023).

Career guidance and counselling play a critical role in supporting students to make informed educational and occupational decisions. Effective career guidance helps learners develop self-awareness, understand available career opportunities, and make choices that align with their interests and abilities. Studies have shown that students who receive adequate career guidance are more likely to demonstrate confidence in their career decisions and experience greater satisfaction with their chosen career paths (Pekkaya & Çolak, 2013; Keshf & Khanum, 2022).

Globally, career choice satisfaction has attracted increasing attention among researchers and policymakers. In the United States, Leierer et al. (2018) found that participation in university career courses significantly improved students' satisfaction, certainty, and clarity regarding career choices. Similarly, Owusu-Addo (2023) reported that personality factors and individual differences significantly influenced career decision-making among university students in Ghana, highlighting the importance of supporting students during career development processes.

In Kenya, concerns regarding career choice satisfaction continue to emerge. A survey reported during the 2023 National Career Guidance Development Conference showed that 66% of respondents believed they were pursuing the wrong career, while only 7% considered themselves to be in the right career (Kenya News Agency, 2023). Similarly, Newa, Kathungu, and Wasanga (2021) found that utilisation of career counselling services among university students in Nairobi City County remained low despite the existence of institutional policies and programmes promoting career guidance. Further, Ndung'u and Obae (2020) reported that many students expressed dissatisfaction with degree programmes allocated through the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS). These findings underscore the need to assess career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in Nairobi County to provide evidence that can inform policy, guidance services, and educational practice.

1.2 Statement of Problem

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Career choice satisfaction is an important indicator of successful educational and career development because it influences students' academic engagement, persistence, motivation, performance, and future career fulfilment. Students who are satisfied with their chosen academic programmes are more likely to remain committed to their studies, complete their programmes successfully, and pursue careers aligned with their interests, abilities, and aspirations. Conversely, dissatisfaction with career choices may lead to programme changes, poor academic performance, delayed graduation, withdrawal from studies, and long-term occupational dissatisfaction.

Despite the availability of career guidance programmes in educational institutions, concerns regarding career choice satisfaction continue to be reported globally and within Kenya. Evidence presented during the 2023 National Career Guidance Development Conference indicated that a substantial proportion of

learners perceived themselves to be pursuing careers that did not align with their interests and aspirations. Similarly, studies conducted in Kenya have revealed low uptake of career counselling services among university students and dissatisfaction with degree programmes allocated through the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) despite students meeting admission requirements and accessing university education opportunities.

Although previous studies in Kenya have examined career guidance services, career placement, career decision-making, and access to counselling support among students, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the actual levels of career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in both public and private universities in Nairobi County. Furthermore, little is known about how satisfaction levels vary across student characteristics such as faculty of study, degree changes, type of university, and socio-economic background within this context. This represents a contextual and empirical gap in the literature.

Therefore, this study sought to assess the levels of career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya, with the aim of generating evidence that can inform career guidance interventions, university support services, educational policy, and future research on career development among university students.

1.3 Study Objectives

General Objective

To assess career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

The study sought to:

Assess the level of career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Determine whether career choice satisfaction differs according to students' demographic and academic characteristics, including gender, age, faculty of study, type of university, and degree programme changes.

Examine undergraduate students' perceptions of factors influencing their career choice satisfaction in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Explore undergraduate students' experiences and perspectives regarding the role of career guidance and counselling in shaping career choice satisfaction in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Question

What is the level of career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya?

Specific Research Questions

What is the level of career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya?

To what extent does career choice satisfaction differ according to students' demographic characteristics

such as gender and age?

To what extent does career choice satisfaction differ according to students' academic characteristics such as faculty of study, type of university, and degree programme changes?

What are undergraduate students' perceptions and experiences regarding their career choices and career satisfaction?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aimed to determine the level of satisfaction with career choices among undergraduate university students This aims at helping stakeholders assess the need for student counselling, support them, and guide future research on priority areas across universities.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The cross-sectional design limits establishing cause-and-effect relationships, while self-reported data may be affected by bias. Additionally, sampling selected universities limits generalisation to all undergraduate students across Kenya.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett in 1994. SCCT explains how individuals develop career interests, make educational and occupational choices, and achieve varying levels of career success and satisfaction. The theory builds on Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory and emphasizes the interaction between personal attributes, environmental influences, learning experiences, self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals in shaping career development.

According to SCCT, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to successfully perform tasks required in a particular educational or career field. Students who possess strong self-efficacy are more likely to explore career options confidently, persist when faced with challenges, and commit to career paths that align with their abilities and interests. Self-efficacy therefore plays a significant role in shaping career decisions and subsequent satisfaction with those decisions.

The theory further proposes that outcome expectations, which refer to beliefs about the likely consequences of pursuing a particular career, influence career-related choices. Students are more likely to choose careers that they believe will provide desirable outcomes such as employment opportunities, financial security, personal fulfilment, social recognition, and career advancement. Positive outcome expectations strengthen commitment to career choices and contribute to higher levels of career satisfaction.

A third key construct of SCCT is personal goals, which direct individuals toward specific educational and occupational aspirations. Students who establish clear career goals are more likely to make deliberate academic and career decisions that align with their long-term aspirations. The achievement of these goals often reinforces confidence in career decisions and contributes to overall satisfaction with chosen career paths.

SCCT also recognizes the influence of environmental and contextual factors such as family expectations, peer influence, access to career guidance services, educational opportunities, and labour market conditions. These factors may either support or hinder students' ability to pursue careers that align with

their interests and abilities. Consequently, career satisfaction is viewed as an outcome resulting from the interaction between individual characteristics and environmental influences.

The theory is particularly relevant to the present study because career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students is influenced by students' confidence in their abilities, expectations regarding future career outcomes, career-related goals, and the support they receive through career guidance and counselling services. SCCT therefore provides an appropriate framework for understanding variations in career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

2.2 Empirical Studies

Career Choice Satisfaction Among University Students

Career choice satisfaction refers to the extent to which individuals feel contented with their chosen academic and career pathways. It reflects the degree of alignment between students' interests, abilities, values, expectations, and their selected programmes of study. Research indicates that career satisfaction is associated with academic engagement, persistence, motivation, and future occupational success. Students who are satisfied with their career choices are more likely to demonstrate commitment to their studies and experience positive educational outcomes, whereas dissatisfaction may result in programme changes, poor academic performance, and reduced career commitment (Milsom & Coughlin, 2015; Monks et al., 2023).

Several studies have examined career satisfaction among university students. Leierer et al. (2018) found that participation in career development courses enhanced students' certainty and satisfaction with career decisions. Similarly, Owusu-Addo (2023) reported that students with clearer career goals and stronger self-awareness were more likely to express satisfaction with their chosen careers. These studies suggest that career satisfaction is influenced by both individual characteristics and institutional support mechanisms.

Career Guidance and Career Choice Satisfaction

Career guidance and counselling services play a critical role in helping students make informed educational and occupational decisions. Effective career guidance provides learners with opportunities to understand their interests, strengths, values, and available career opportunities. Studies have demonstrated that students who receive adequate career guidance are more likely to make informed career decisions and report higher levels of career satisfaction than those who lack such support.

Pekkaya and Çolak (2013) found that structured career guidance programmes positively influenced students' confidence in career decisions and reduced uncertainty regarding future occupations. Similarly, Keshf and Khanum (2022) established that career counselling services contributed significantly to informed decision-making and improved student satisfaction with career choices. These findings underscore the importance of career guidance in facilitating successful career development among university students.

Demographic and Academic Factors Associated with Career Choice Satisfaction

Career satisfaction may vary depending on students' demographic and academic characteristics. Factors such as age, gender, field of study, institutional environment, and programme changes have been associated with differences in career satisfaction levels. Students pursuing programmes that align with their interests and career aspirations generally report higher levels of satisfaction than those who feel

constrained by academic placement systems or external influences.

Research further suggests that students enrolled in programmes perceived to offer favourable employment opportunities are more likely to demonstrate positive career outcome expectations and higher levels of satisfaction. In contrast, students who enter programmes that do not align with their interests may experience uncertainty and dissatisfaction during their academic journey. These findings support the argument that contextual and personal factors play a significant role in shaping career satisfaction among university students.

Career Choice Satisfaction in Kenya

In Kenya, concerns regarding career choice satisfaction have gained increasing attention. Reports presented during the 2023 National Career Guidance Development Conference indicated that many learners believed they were pursuing careers that did not align with their interests, abilities, and aspirations. Similarly, Newa, Kathungu, and Wasanga (2021) found that utilisation of career counselling services among university students remained low despite institutional efforts to promote guidance programmes. In addition, Ndung'u and Obae (2020) reported dissatisfaction among some students placed into degree programmes through the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS). These findings suggest a need for continued examination of career satisfaction among university students within the Kenyan context.

Research Gap

The reviewed literature demonstrates that career choice satisfaction is influenced by individual characteristics, career guidance experiences, educational opportunities, and contextual factors. Previous studies have established the importance of career counselling, self-awareness, and career decision-making in shaping students' satisfaction with their chosen careers. However, several gaps remain evident.

Conceptually, many studies have focused on career decision-making, career guidance utilisation, or career development outcomes rather than directly assessing levels of career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students. Contextually, limited empirical evidence exists regarding career choice satisfaction among students enrolled in both public and private universities within Nairobi County. Methodologically, most studies have relied primarily on quantitative approaches, with limited exploration of students' lived experiences and perceptions regarding their career choices.

Therefore, there remains a need for a mixed-methods investigation of career choice satisfaction among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The present study sought to address these conceptual, contextual, and methodological gaps.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The researcher employed a mixed methods approach, adopting the convergent parallel Mixed Method Research (MMR) design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously. Data analysis was done separately, but thereafter the researcher combined the two data types to generate comprehensive results. According to Kerlinger (1986), research design is a blueprint, organisation, and approach to investigation undertaken to provide answers to research questions with maximum control over variables.

3.2 Target Population and Sample Size

In the quantitative portion, stratified random and simple random sampling were employed. The target population for this study was first-year university students enrolled in the selected 13 private and public chartered universities in Nairobi County with a population with an approximate population of 25,153 (CUE, 2023). The target population for this study was undergraduate first-year university students enrolled in the 13 private and public chartered universities in Nairobi County. Through stratified and simple random sampling methods, 2 public universities and 3 private universities were selected with a total of 12,137 students. By using simple random sampling, the sample size was selected based on Taro Yamane's statistical formula. Quantitative data was collected through self-administered questionnaires given out to the selected sample size of 347, and 320 responded. For the qualitative study, two FGDs were selected each with10 participants from a public university and an additional 10 from a private university, forming a total of 20 participants. They were then subjected to content analysis and verbatim narratives in a phenomenological study

By using simple random sampling, the quantitative sample size was selected based on Taro Yamane's statistical formula: n = N/ 1+ N(e)2

Where;

n is the required sample size from the population under Study;

N is the whole population that is under Study;

e is the precision or sampling error of 0.05.

University A - Required sample size;

n = 5,898/ 1+ 5,898 (0.05)2

1+ N(e)2 = 15.75

N= 5,898/15.75 = 374.48

5,898/12,137 x 374.48 = 181. 97 ≃ 182

University C - Required sample size;

n = 1,667/ 1+ 1,667 (0.05)2

1+ N(e)2 = 5.168

N= 1,667 /5.168 = 322.56

1,667/12,137 x 322.56 = 44.30 ≃ 44

University F- Required sample size;

n = 2,077/ 1+ 2,077 (0.05)2

1+ N(e)2 = 6.19

N= 2,077/6.19 = 335.54

2077/12,137 x 335.54 = 57.4 ≃ 57

University J- Required sample size;

n = 432/ 1+ 432 (0.05)2

1+ N(e)2 = 2.08

N= 432/2.08 = 207.69

432/12,137 x 207.69 = 7.39 ≃ 7

University K- Required sample size;

n = 2,063/ 1+ 2,063 (0.05)2

1+ N(e)2 = 5.16

N= 2,063/6.16 = 334.90

2,063/12,137 x 334.90= 56.92 ≃ 57

Sample size: 182+44+57+7+57 = 347

3.3 Research Instruments

Questionnaires were the primary means of gathering data. The Career State Inventory Scale (CSIS) was used. This is a psychological assessment standardised test designed to measure an individual's current state in the career decision-making process. The Career State Inventory Scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.74, which exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 for social science research. This reliability estimate is consistent with previous validation studies by Leierer et al. (2017). The qualitative part used a Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)guide that included five general open-ended semi-structured questions and a few probes.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

A self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) was given to students after they sought verbal and written consent. The standardised test known as Career State Inventory (CSIS) was adopted from Leierer et al. (2017). The satisfaction item as it is currently presented uses a six-point Likert Scale: 1 represents very satisfied, 2 indicates satisfied but has some doubts, 3 indicates not sure, 4 indicates dissatisfied and intends to stay, 5 indicates very dissatisfied and plans to change, and 6 indicates I'm not sure about my future career. Quantitative data were collected through self-administered questionnaires given out to the selected sample size of 347 where 320 responded.

For the qualitative study, the researcher purposively selected 10 students from a public university and an additional 10 students from a private university, resulting in a total of 20 participants who participated in FGDs as part of the phenomenological study. Data was gathered through a focus group discussion guide. The FGD guide included five general open-ended semi-structured questions and a few probes. In this case, the students were invited to the FGDs in two different sessions of 10 members from a public university and another 10 from a private university. All participants were over 18 years old, and they signed informed consent forms before participating in the discussions, which were audio-recorded with the help of research assistants.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Content validity was attained by the researcher obtaining an expert review of the instrument to assess content concerning the area or field the researcher is studying. This process served as a pre-test, permitting the deletion of items that were deemed to be conceptually inconsistent. For construct validity, the research instruments were distributed to the researcher's colleagues, who then provided interpretations regarding the theoretical significance of the concept under measurement. Based on the

responses, the researcher assessed the face validity and made subjective decisions.

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed to determine how the responses for the quantitative tool correlated within the sample; the researcher used Cronbach's alpha of r =.74, as used in the Career State Inventory's (CSI) standardised measure by Leierer et al. (2017).

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

After data collection, the completed questionnaires were screened, coded, and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations were used and summarised in tables. In addition, inferential statistics included ANOVA test that was run to address the study objective and research question, and the analysed data was presented in the form of figures and tables. The findings were presented using tables and narrative explanations. Statistical results were interpreted in relation to the study objectives, research questions, and existing literature on career choice satisfaction.

Qualitative data analysis was done using a much more text-based approach, including verbatim transcriptions of 5 Focus Group Discussion questions. The accuracy of the data was checked, and the participants' identities were already concealed by coding their names. The phenomenological data analysis followed a method as laid out by Colaizzi (1978). In this section, the data taken during the discussions were supplemented by the recordings and later transcribed. Subsequently, the discussion data was subjected to thematic analysis to offer a detailed description of the data analysis process as per Braun and Clarke (2006). Themes were generated using a bottom-up approach as per the objectives. The themes and the possible interlinks between themes were checked to see if any themes could be considered as sub-themes or if two themes could be merged. The themes were polished continuously by looking at themes and sub-themes, and then the thematic analysis was completed.

Gradually, the convergent mixed-methods approach was applied, where after quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, data analysis was done separately, but thereafter the researcher combined the two data types to generate comprehensive results.

3.7 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was obtained by first getting a letter of introduction from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa's Counselling Psychology Department. A study license (NACOSTI/P/24/33530) was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation. Thereafter, the researcher obtained research permits from Daystar University Institutional Scientific Ethical Review Committee (DU-ISERC), the Nairobi County Commissioner's office and the Ministry of Education-Nairobi County director's office, which allowed the researcher to undertake the study. Finally, the researcher acquired research authorisation letters from the sampled universities and on the designated days, the selected participants filled out the consent forms before filling out the questionnaires. For those who were below 18 years, assent forms were signed by their parents. Participants were not coerced to participate and were also allowed to withdraw at their own will.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The major aim of this study was to assess satisfaction levels with career choice among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS Version 27. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations were used and summarised in tables. In addition, inferential statistics such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson correlation were used in data analysis. The results are presented through

tables accompanied by narrative interpretations and discussions.

4.1 Data Processing and Analysis

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Quantitative Sample

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Data on respondents' gender was obtained to compare gender parity among the respondents. Most respondents (55.9%) were female, and 44.1% were male. This indicates that there is only a slight difference in the gender distribution of students in the universities under study.

Age of Respondents

The respondents were requested to indicate their age based on age ranges: 17 years and below, 18-20 years, 21-23 years, and 24 years and above. The findings revealed that the majority of the students, 75.6%, were within the 18-20 age bracket, while 15.9% were within the 21-23 age bracket. The two categories, age 17 years and below and age 24 years and above, constituted 2.2% and 6.2% of the population under study, respectively.

Category of the University of Respondents

The university category of the respondents was considered in this study. The respondents were asked to indicate their university category, whether private or public. The majority of respondents (n=233; 72.8%) were from public universities, while (n=87; 27.2%) of the respondents came from private universities. The population of students from public universities was higher than from private universities.

School/Institute/Faculty of Respondents

The student sample was further stratified into some degree programmes that were grouped into five clusters according to the areas of specialisation. Students who were undertaking Education were 23.1 % of the respondents, Arts & Social Sciences accounted for 24.1 %, Engineering had 21.6% of the respondents, Sciences 21.9 %, and finally Applied Sciences & Technology 9.4%. This implies that there is an even distribution of the respondents as per the sampling guidelines.

Change of Degree by Respondents

The respondents were asked whether they had changed their degree, and they were expected to give a yes or no answer. The majority of the respondents (76.9%) reported that they had not changed their degree, while 23.1% of the respondents cited that they had changed their degree. Most of the students may not have had the opportunity to change from one degree to another.

Family Economic Status of Respondents

The study examined the family economic status of respondents in terms of frequencies and percentages. The study tried to determine respondents' family economic status to get its relationship with career choice satisfaction. The respondents comprised 92.2 % of the sampled students. According to the reports from the respondents, as indicated in Table 13, the majority of the respondents came from middle-class families (n=254; 79.4%). On the other hand, the rest of the respondents came from low-class families (n=51; 15.9%), while those from high-class families were the fewest (n=15; 4.7%). These findings imply that the majority of respondents came from middle-class families.

4.1.2 Overall Career Choice Satisfaction Levels on Career Choice among Respondents

The study sought to assess satisfaction levels in career choice among undergraduate university students in selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. Respondents' level of satisfaction was measured using Leierer et al.'s (2017) Career State Inventory (CSI) to assess the students' state of career satisfaction. Respondents were asked to describe their level of satisfaction with their chosen career. They were given a 5-point Likert scale starting from Strongly Disagree SD:(1) Disagree D (2) Neutral N (3) Agree A (4), and Strongly Agree SA (5). Ten items were generated to describe satisfaction levels. During scoring, all the scores in each category were added, and the sum totals were computed. The lowest possible sum for each subscale was 10, while the highest possible sum was 50. The scores were interpreted that if respondents scored between 10 and 23, it meant that they were unsatisfied, while if the respondents scored between 24 and 37, they were moderately satisfied, and between 38 and 50 were highly satisfied. The results of the respondents' descriptive statistics of their level of satisfaction were presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Satisfaction Levels of Career Choice among Respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Unsatisfied	49	15.3%
Moderately Satisfied	118	36.9%
Highly Satisfied	153	47.8%

Table 1 gives a summary of the levels of satisfaction among respondents who took part in the study differed. According to the reports from the respondents, the majority of the respondents belonged to two groups, that is, unsatisfied (n=49;15.3%) and moderately satisfied (n=118; 36.9 %). A total of 52.2% students were not completely satisfied hence needed guidance against the satisfied students (n=153; 47.8%).

4.1.3 Demographic Differences in Career Choice Satisfaction Levels of Respondents of Quantitative Sample

The study further analysed the demographic differences of the respondents. The demographics included gender, age, category of university, school/institute/faculty, change of degree and family economic status. The results indicated that there was no significant mean difference in the satisfaction level constructs in terms of gender and age, against the satisfaction levels. On the other hand, results indicated that there were notable significant mean differences in the satisfaction level construct in terms of the category of university, school/faculty/course of study, changes in the degree and the family's economic status against the satisfaction levels.

Gender and Career Choice Satisfaction Level of Participants

Table 2

Satisfaction Level by Gender

Gender	Mean	Frequency	Std. Deviation
Male	35.6383	141	9.20735

Female	34.2458	179	9.36260
Total	34.8594	320	9.30579

The results in Table 2 indicate that there was a slight difference in the mean scores for male (M = 35.6383, SD = 9.20735) and female students (M = 34.2458, SD = 9.36260). The mean score for male students was slightly higher than the mean score for female students. This indicates that the male students are slightly more satisfied than the female students.

Table 3

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Career Satisfaction Level by Gender

ANOVA Table			**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Satisfaction Level * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	152.934	1	152.934	1.770	.184
Satisfaction Level * Gender	Within Groups		27471.738	318	86.389		
Satisfaction Level * Gender	Total		27624.672	319			

The results in Table 3 indicate that there was no significant mean difference in the satisfaction level construct in terms of the gender of the participants (F (1, 318) = 1.770; p>0.05). The significance level p (=.184) >α (0.01) implies that there are no significant differences in the means; hence, the satisfaction levels of students do not significantly change with gender.

Age and Satisfaction Level of Participants

Table 4

Satisfaction Level by Age

Age	**Mean**	**Frequency**	**Std. Deviation**
17 & Below	31.5714	7	12.01190
18-20 Years	34.4091	242	9.56231
21-23 Years	36.0588	51	8.44609
24 & Above	38.4000	20	6.09918
Total	34.8594	320	9.30579

The results in Table 4 show that there were differences in the mean scores for students below the age of 17 years (M = 31.5714, SD = 12.0119) and 18-20 years (M = 34.4091, SD = 9.5623) 18-20 Years (M = 36.0588, SD = 9.56231) 21-23 years (M = 36.0588, SD = 8.44609) and 24 & above (M = 38.4000, SD = 6.09918). These results indicate that at age 23 and above, students had the highest mean score, yet students below the age of 17 years had the lowest mean. This is an indication that mature students were satisfied with their career choices as compared to their younger counterparts. Probably the reason is that they took time to choose the career that they wanted without influence, or maybe they are changing from their previous careers.

Table 5

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Career Satisfaction by Age

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Satisfaction Level * Age	Between Groups	(Combined)	448.834	3	149.611	1.740	.159
Satisfaction Level * Age	Within Groups		27175.838	316	85.999		
Satisfaction Level * Age	Total		27624.672	319			

The results in Table 5 indicate that there was no significant mean difference in the satisfaction level construct in terms of the age of the participants ($F(3, 316) = 1.740$; $p>0.05$). The significance level p (=.159) >α (0.01); therefore, it is an indication that there are no significant differences in the means; hence, the satisfaction levels of students do not significantly change with age.

School/Institute/Faculty and Satisfaction Level

Table 6

Satisfaction Level by School/Institute/Faculty

School/institute/faculty	Mean	Frequency	Std. Deviation
Education	32.4324	74	8.52246
Arts & Social Sciences	31.8571	77	8.73245
Engineering	37.2029	69	10.15987
Sciences	37.1429	70	9.36426
Applied Sciences & Technology	37.8333	30	6.74196
Total	34.8594	320	9.30579

The results in Table 6 show that there were differences in the mean scores for students in Education (M = 32.4324, SD = 8.52246) Arts & Social Sciences (M = 31.8571), SD = 8.73245) Engineering (M = 37.2029, SD = 10.15987) Sciences (M = 37.1429, SD = 9.36426) and Applied Sciences & Technology (M = 37.8333, SD = 6.74196). From the results, Engineering, Sciences and Applied Sciences & Technology students had high mean scores, and both Education and Arts & Social Sciences students had the lowest mean. This implies that Science students were satisfied with their career choices as compared to Education or Social Sciences students. There's a need to establish whether this is due to job prospects or any other motivation behind it. These results are similar to those of the qualitative part, where one participant said:

"I wanted to do sciences, aiming at an engineering position. Those are some of the courses you do, and you are assured of a job in engineering, food science, and Biology. In case I were to do education, then it had to be in sciences like mathematics and physics, but my cut-off points could not favour me, and that's how I landed in Education Arts" (P07, personal communication, June 2024).

Table 7

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Career Satisfaction by School/Institute/Faculty

Satisfaction Level			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Satisfaction Level * School/institute/faculty	Between Groups	(Combined)	2139.184	4	534.796	6.610	.000
Satisfaction Level * School/institute/faculty	Within Groups		25485.488	315	80.906		
Satisfaction Level * School/institute/faculty	Total		27624.672	319			

The results in Table 7 indicate that there was a significant mean difference in the satisfaction level construct for the School/institute/faculty of the participants ($F(4, 315) = 6.610$; $p>0.05$). The significance level $p (=.000) < \alpha (0.01)$ is an indication that there were significant differences in the means; hence, the satisfaction levels of students significantly change with the kind of School, institute or faculty that they are studying in.

Change of Degree and Satisfaction Level

Table 8

Satisfaction Level by Change of Degree

Change of Degree	Mean	Frequency	Std. Deviation
Yes	36.9067	75	8.61359
No	34.2327	245	9.43566
Total	34.8594	320	9.30579

The results in Table 8 show that there was a difference in the mean scores for the students who changed degree ($M = 36.9067$, $SD = 8.61359$) and those who did not change degree ($M = 34.2327$, $SD = 9.43566$). These results indicate that the students who changed their degrees had a higher mean score than those who did not change their degrees, which indicates that the students who changed their degrees experienced slightly more satisfaction in their chosen careers than those who did not change their degrees.

Table 9

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Satisfaction Level by Change of Degree

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Satisfaction Level * Change of Degree	Between Groups	(Combined)	410.586	1	410.586	4.798	.029
Satisfaction Level * Change of Degree	Within Groups		27214.085	318	85.579		

Satisfaction Level * Change of Degree	Total		27624.672	319

The results from Table 9 indicate that there was a significant mean difference in the satisfaction level construct in terms of the change of degree of participants (F (1, 318) = 4.798; p< 0.05). The significance level p (=.029) < α (0.05); therefore, this is an indication that there are significant differences in the means; hence, the satisfaction levels of students significantly change with age.

Family Economic Status and Satisfaction Level

Table 10

Satisfaction Level by Family Economic Status

Family Economic Status	Mean	Frequency	Std. Deviation
Low Class	34.3529	51	9.97963
Middle Class	34.7835	254	9.27811
High Class	37.8667	15	7.15009
Total	34.8594	320	9.30579

The results in Table 10 show that there were differences in the mean scores for students coming from different family economic levels. Students from low-class (M = 34.3529, SD = 9.97963) and middle-class (M = 34.7835, SD = 9.27811) families are less satisfied as compared with their high-class counterparts (M = 37.8667, SD = 7.15009). Well-to-do families probably have the resources to facilitate their children's career path preferences as compared to those who originate from the lower economic status category.

Table 11

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Satisfaction Level by Family's Economic Status

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Satisfaction Level * Family Economic Status	Between Groups	(Combined)	150.201	2	75.100	.867	.421
Satisfaction Level * Family Economic Status	Within Groups		27474.471	317	86.670		
Satisfaction Level * Family Economic Status	Total		27624.672	319			

The results in Table 11 indicate that there was no significant mean difference in the satisfaction level construct in terms of the family economic status of the participants (F (2, 316) = .867; p>0.05). The significance level p (=.421) >α (0.05), therefore, is an indication that there are no significant differences in the means; hence, the satisfaction levels of students do not significantly change with family economic status.

4.1.4 Qualitative data analysis

The phenomenological data analysis followed a method as laid out by Colaizzi (1978). In this section, the data taken during the discussions were supplemented by the recordings and later transcribed.

Subsequently, the discussion data was subjected to thematic analysis to offer a detailed description of the data analysis process as per Braun and Clarke (2006). Themes were generated using a bottom-up approach according to the objective. The themes and the possible interlinks between themes were checked to see if any themes could be considered as sub-themes or if two themes could be merged. The themes were polished continuously by looking at themes, sub-themes, and then the thematic analysis was completed. Gradually, the convergent Mixed method was applied, where after quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, data analysis was done separately, thereafter, the researcher combined the two data types to generate comprehensive results.

In support of these findings interviews were conducted with students from a private university and a public university. The students were asked to comment on whether they were satisfied with their careers. Students from the public university pursuing the Education Arts degree program reported that they were dissatisfied with the course that they selected.

A participant from a private university undertaking a nursing course said that:

“I’m not particularly satisfied with nursing because for one I did not want to do nursing I wanted to venture into medicine, particularly surgery but I could not so this is like a second option because I will still be in the medical field, but, I'm looking forward to advancing my career in the future” (P18, Female student, public university, June 2024).

Furthermore, the majority of students enrolled in the Education Arts degree program expressed dissatisfaction with the course they chose. For instance, one participant said:

“I’m not satisfied with my career. I wanted to do sciences, aiming at an engineering position. Those are some of the courses you do, and you are assured of a job in engineering, food science, and Biology. In case I were to do education, then it had to be in sciences like mathematics and physics, but according to KUCCPS, my cut-off points could not favour me, and that’s how I landed in Education Arts. (P07, female student, public university, June 2024).

Another participant during the FGDs said:

“I’m not satisfied with the course that I was admitted to. If you have a passion for something, you should be placed in it. I wanted to do something related to what I excelled in high school, and that was either law or music. In Music as a subject, I never scored less than B plus grade. However, my family members advised me just to do an education course, yet my dad knew that I wanted to be a lawyer or musician because I love politics. I used to discuss politics with my father while I was in high school. I was reading the newspapers. I love politics and but now my dad advised that I could only be a lawyer if himself was one. Since both my parents were teachers, they thought that I should also become one. The reason is that they had already made connections for me to easily find a job. They further guided me that they could only pay my school fees if I did education and not any other course. Later on, I found a well-wisher who was willing to pay for my law course but my parents said that if our daughter was a lawyer she was not going to make a good wife and mother to her kids and it’s not a good course for women, since it may lead to breaking of her marriage. However, I'm on this campus just taking and attending lessons, but I know that I'm not supposed to be here. But elsewhere for sure, one day I will go back to where I belong.” (P09, Female student, public university, June 2024).

In contrast, students from private universities seemed to be more satisfied. For instance, one student from a private university said, “I am satisfied with this career. This is because I feel like the career will drive me to achieve limitless possibilities and even open windows of opportunity to achieve greater heights. to show to people” (P011, male student, private university, June 2024).

Another participant reported:

“I'm really satisfied with my career. At first, I wanted to pursue medicine, but because of the grades I achieved, I couldn't. But since it is in the medical field, I'm indeed satisfied because I'll be working with the medics in this sector to ensure that the lives of people are okay” (P016, male student, private university, June 2024).

5.0 SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study, conducted in Nairobi County, Kenya, explored career choice satisfaction among undergraduate students and found that 36.9% were moderately satisfied, and 15.3% unsatisfied making a total of 52.2 % that are dissatisfied with their career paths. Private university students reported higher satisfaction than their public counterparts. The Science students were satisfied with their career choices as compared to Education or Social Sciences students. Students who changed their degrees experienced slightly more satisfaction in their chosen careers than those who did not change their degrees. Students from economically stable families were more satisfied than their counterparts, probably because they have the resources to facilitate their children's career path preferences as compared to those who originate from the lower economic status category. Students from the public university pursuing the Arts courses reported that they were dissatisfied with the course that they selected as compared to the science students. This calls for the need for professional psychological help in choosing careers.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendation is proposed: stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education in Kenya, school administrators, and university placement services should urgently adopt a more holistic approach to embrace career guidance. Implementing professional and structured guidance programs from early education levels could help students make informed and personally fulfilling career choices to support long-term career satisfaction.

References

1. Arulmani, G.,Van, D., & Easton, S. (2003). The influence of career beliefs and socio- economic status on the career decision-making of high school students in India. International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 3,193-204.
2. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology,3(2),77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
3. Bubic, A. (2014). Decision making characteristics and decision styles predict adolescents' career choice satisfaction. Current Psychology, 33(4), 515–531. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144- 014-9226-5
4. Carter, P. (2014). Student satisfaction in theory and in practice. Paper presented at KOTESOL/KAFLE 2014 International Conference, Seoul, South Korea.
5. Colaizzi, P. F. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In R. S. Valle & M. King (Eds.), Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology (pp. 48–71). Oxford University Press.
6. Commission for University Education. (2023). Institutional audit report 2023. Nairobi, Kenya: Commission for University Education.
7. Government of Kenya. (2023). National policy framework for career guidance in Kenya. National Policy Framework for Career Guidance in Kenya
8. Hampton, N. Z. (2005). Testing for the structure of the career decision self-efficacy scale-short form among Chinese college students. Journal of Career Assessment, 13(1), 98-113.

9. Indianti, W., & Aninditha, R. (2019). Does academic self-concept moderate academic achievement and career adaptability? A study of Indonesian junior high students. Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, 27(T2), 187–195.
10. Kamaliah, S., Roslan, S., Bakar, A. R., & Ghiami, Z. (2018). The effect of supervised work experience on the acquisition of employability skills among Malaysian students. Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, 8(4), 354–364. doi:10.1108/HESWBL-05-2016-0028
11. Kenya News Agency. (2023, December 8). Gov't identifies lack of career guidance—Key contributor to low transition to higher learning institutions.
12. Keshf, Z., & Khanum, S. (2022). Career Guidance and Counseling Services in Pakistan from the Perspective of Students and Career Services Providers. Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research, 37(1), 39–66. https://doi.org/10.33824/PJPR.2022.37.1.03
13. Kerlinger, F.N., Foundations of Behavioral Research (3rd ed.), New York: CBS College Publishing, 1986 Kuo, Y. C., Walker, A. E., Belland, B. R., & Schroder, K. E. (2013). A predictive study of student satisfaction in online education programs. International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 14(1), 16-39.
14. Leierer, S., Peterson, G., & Reardon, R. (2017). The career state inventory (CSI as intentional assessment. Career Planning & Adult Development Journal, 33(4).
15. Brown, S. D., & Lent, R. W. (2006). Preparing adolescents to make career decisions. Self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents, 201-223.
16. Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D. (2019). Social cognitive career theory at 25: empirical status of the interest, choice, and performance models. J. Vocat. Behav. 115, 103316. 10.1016/j.jvb.2019.06.004.
17. Li, M., Fan, W., & Zhang, L. F. (2023). Career adaptability and career choice satisfaction: Roles of career self-efficacy and socioeconomic status. The Career Development Quarterly, 71(4), 300-314.
18. Miller, A. K., Osborn, D. S., Sampson, J. P., Peterson, G. W., & Reardon, R. C. (2018). The Impact of a College Career Course on Students' Career Decision States. Career Development Quarterly, 66(4), 371–377. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12157.
19. Milsom, A., & Coughlin, J. (2015). Satisfaction with college major: A grounded theory study. NACADA Journal, 35(2), 5–14. https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-14-026
20. Mirza, N. S., Syeda, T., Zahra, & Mirza, A. A. (2014). Determinants of career choice among university students. International Journal of Academic Research and Development, 6(1), 17–24.
21. Monks, K., Conway, E., Freeney, Y., & McDowell, N. (2023). Is ability-job fit important for work engagement? Evidence from the Irish civil service. Public Management Review, 25(10), 1835–1858. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2022.2050284
22. Ndung'u, K. J., & Obae, R. (2020). Effects of career placement by KUCCPS among the undergraduate students in public universities in Kiambu County, Kenya. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 4(12), 323–329. https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2020.41216
23. Newa, E. O., Kathungu, B., & Wasanga, C. (2021). Factors influencing uptake of career counselling services among university students in Nairobi City County, Kenya. African Social Science and Humanities Journal, 2(1). https://doi.org/10.57040/asshj.v2i1.36
24. Ngunjiri, G. F. (2013). Decisiveness in Career Choices among Secondary School Students in Kiambu West District-Kiambu County, Kenya. School of Education in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements for Award of Degree of Master of Education, Kenyatta University.
25. Nota, L., Ferrari, L., Solberg, V. S. H., & Soresi, S. (2007) study on career search self-efficacy, family

support, and career indecision among Italian high-school youth.

26. Owusu-Addo, A. (2023). Determinants of career choice and personality traits of university students. Journal of African Education, 4(2).
27. Patton, W. & McMahon, M. (2014). Career Development and systems theory: a new relationship. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
28. Pekkaya, M., & Çolak, N. (2013). Determining the priorities of ratings via AHP for the factors that affect the career choice of university students [Üniversite öğrencilerinin meslek seçimini etkileyen faktörlerin önem derecelerinin AHP ile belirlenmesi]. The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies, 6(2), 797–818. http://dx.doi.org/10.9761/JASSS_643
29. Rosenzweig, E. Q., Chen, X.-Y., Song, Y., Baldwin, A., Barger, M. M., Cotterell, M. E., Dees, J., Injaian, A. S., Weliweriya, N., Walker, J. R., Wiegert, C. C., & Lemons, P. P. (2024). Beyond STEM attrition: Changing career plans within STEM fields in college is associated with lower motivation, certainty, and satisfaction about one's career. International Journal of STEM Education, 11, 15.
30. Tessema, M. T., Ready, K., & Yu, W. C. W. (2012) published a study titled Factors affecting college students' satisfaction with major curriculum: evidence from nine years of data in the International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2(2), 34–44
31. Um, B., & Seon, Y. (2024). Counselling trainees' academic burnout, meaningful work, and career choice satisfaction: A resilience framework. The Career Development Quarterly, 72(1),18–31. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12341
32. Yarmohammadian, H. M., & Rad, A. M. M. (2006). A study of the relationship between managers' leadership style and employees' job satisfaction. Leadership in Health Services, 19, 11–28. https://doi.org/10.1108/13660750610665008