



# Factors Influencing Students' Decision to Enrol in Higher Learning Institutions: Case of Bachelor Students from the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences—Rwanda

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## Abstract

Education is a human right and its benefits have made it to be among human basic needs. As tertiary education is concerned, several studies have indicated the need for personal development, career enhancement, career switching, need to meet environmental conditions as the leading factors in influencing a considerable number of people to join higher learning institutions (HLIs). Recent reports on Rwanda higher education have shown a lot of changes in administration and students' participation rates. The number of HLIs has increased remarkably and Students' enrolment grew from 751 students in 1972 to 86,140 in 2019. However, little attention has been put on the factors behind such an influx of enrolment at HLIs. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the factors influencing students' decision to enrol in HLIs with a consideration of gender, age, marital status and mode of attendance. It followed a case study design. The primary data were gathered from a proportional sample of 228 out of 1539 students enrolled in three faculties at the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences during the academic year 2018/19. The researchers used a questionnaire tested with a Cronbach's alpha equals to 0.812. Data were analysed by use of descriptive statistics and t-testing. The findings validated previous studies and revealed environment and job based factors as key factors influencing students' decision to enrol at tertiary education. The study findings suggest consideration of students' motivations to join HLI in the process of organizing teaching, learning and assessment process as well as programme development.

## Subject Areas

Education

## Keywords

Tertiary Education, Higher Learning Institution, Decision, Educational Choice, Student Satisfaction

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

Education is a human right and it is a tool for individuals to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary for them to cope with their ever-changing environment. For that reason, the characteristics of people enrolled in education institutions have changed remarkably and motivation for schooling varies from people to people, country to country. Similarly, to other decisions people take in everyday life, the decision to join a tertiary education follows a series of calculations on possible benefits and costs, opportunities and threats associated with it. Conferring to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the motivation to decide on joining tertiary education may come from an experienced gap in satisfying a specific need or a requirement. Thus, unsatisfied need or requirement which may come from internal or/and external environment becomes a motivating factor for people to join education or not. This situation brings to wonder 1) factors behind the decision to enroll in higher education, and 2) whether those factors are associated with individual characteristics such as gender, age, marital status and programme of study.

Before genocide against Tutsi in 1994, education in Rwanda was dominated by one institution that is National University of Rwanda (NUR). Only 2000 students graduated in three decades means from 1963 to 1994. MINEDUC report, 2019 argued that we have more than 40 HLIs countrywide with a total number of 86,140 enrolled students in 2019 which has risen from 68,621 in 2018. About 57% of all tertiary students enrolled in private institutions in 2019. The tertiary institutions are dominated by private institutions and the overall number of enrolled students has doubled within the last decade.

Empirical studies on the factors influencing decision to enrol in tertiary education institutions indicate common and different individual motivations. The recent study findings by Piseth [1] have validated by Bone (2002), Teowkul *et al.* (2009) and Walker (2012) that people's decision to join a graduate programme include 1) personal development factors such as self-improvement and achievement; 2) career enhancement factors including promotion, high income, competitiveness; 3) career switching factors such as need to change the current employment, take new career path; 4) environmental factors such as peer influence, status in society, family expectations; and 5) university factors including for example easy access, time for studying etc. Same study findings have proved no statistical association between the decision to join university based on age and both career enhancement and switching factors. However, personal develop-

ment, environmental and university based factors were found statistically associated with the decision to join higher education based on age. The study by Ane (2012) provides evidence that expectation to be paid high earnings, expansion of employment opportunities and the possibility to get a higher level position are among the factors that push people to join higher education. However, the author proves significant difference between male and female expectations.

Eidimtas [2] indicate the consideration of studies as an investment to yield returns in the future, especially by increasing chances to change career and earning higher incomes as a motivating factor for pursuing tertiary education. Besides, environmental conditions such as family and social status, economic development, education policies that expand access and accessibility to higher learning institutions are among the factors influencing the decision to participate in higher education. The findings are in agreement with that of Gallotti *et al.* (2006) and Ceja (2006) that educated parents are likely to encourage their children to pursue tertiary education. They provide space for creating in children the need to study university by sharing information, saving for education and monitoring every step in children's education. Eidimtas and Juceviciene (2013) justify the source of information and the message itself as a motive for people to join higher education. For example, the information contained in advertisements on technical and vocation education with possibility to get a scholarship; speeches of government high officials on the role of education, higher education in particular, in turning developing countries into middle income countries are among the information that attract people to think about admission to tertiary education [3]. The study findings by [4] indicate family opinions and expectation, and students-like type of life as influential factors in deciding whether to pursue university education in Poland. Contrarily to other studies as mentioned above, the findings revealed better chance to find employment and possibility to get professional advancement not the main determinants of decision to enroll in tertiary education in Poland. This may be due to perception that rate of employability among university graduates is low and the university degree does not promise potential to increase opportunities for job or self-employment [4]. Fernandez [5] investigated the reasons students pursue higher education, the sources of information that aided students in selecting a tertiary institution, and the factors that impede students' decisions to study at university Sains Malaysia. According to the findings, the primary motivations for students to pursue higher education are to improve their job prospects and to gain knowledge and experience. Students choose university because of its good reputation, adequate facilities, and availability of programs and courses that meet their needs.

Sikubwabo [6] investigated factors influencing the decrease of student's enrolments in six selected private higher learning institutions in Rwanda. The results show that institutional factors have a significant influence on the decrease of student's enrolments [7]. These factors are namely: high costs, inflexible and

unmarketable programs, inflexible payment modalities, students' poor living conditions, poor internet connections, institution bad location and inflexible academic rules and regulations. The study recommended that people in charge should be aware of the factors that enhance the decrease of student enrolments. The author suggested further study regarding students' satisfaction. Saheed [8] argued that a wide gap noted in enrolment trend based on gender across departments while conducting Students' enrolment trend in the School of Education, College of Education in University of Rwanda. Mendonça [9] conducted a research regarding Factors influencing the choice of higher education institutions in Angola. The findings show that the main issues are related to scientific activities where there is a discrepancy in gender. Sedahmed [10] looked at Factors Influencing Students Decisions to Enrollment in Sudanese Higher Education Institutions. The findings show that about 50% are educational Institution related factors and 40% are admission related factors while influence strongly students' enrolment decision while only 10% is employment related factors and 0% for student and society related factors have weak influence.

Aftermath of the Genocide against Tutsi the students' participation rates at tertiary education have increased tremendously. Education statistics show an increase from 751 students in tertiary colleges in 1972 to 89,160 students in 2018 enrolled in both public and private tertiary education institutions [11]. The number of students in private tertiary institutions was 14% higher than the number of students in public tertiary institutions in 2018. With regard to gender, the female students are many (51.1%) in private higher learning institutions compared to the public ones (31.5%). However, the number of male students was generally bigger than that of female students at tertiary education. There are many factors influence the choice of high education [9] [12]. Disaggregation by age revealed students within age group 21 to 28 dominating the enrolment. The number of students within 30 to 34 years old became high and the group was dominated by students having jobs [13]. The ideal is that both male and female are expected to join tertiary education upon the completion of secondary education possibly with a balance but the number of female taking up their university admission is few than that of male. In addition to that the normal school age for completing secondary education is 18 years old and secondary school leavers are expected to start university at the age of 19 years old. However, this is not the case. The heterogeneity in the students' characteristics in higher learning institutions attracts a need to pose the following questions: 1) What are the factors influencing students' decision to enroll to higher learning institutions?; 2) To what extent are those factors associated with gender, age, marital status and mode of attendance?

## 1.2. Conceptual Framework

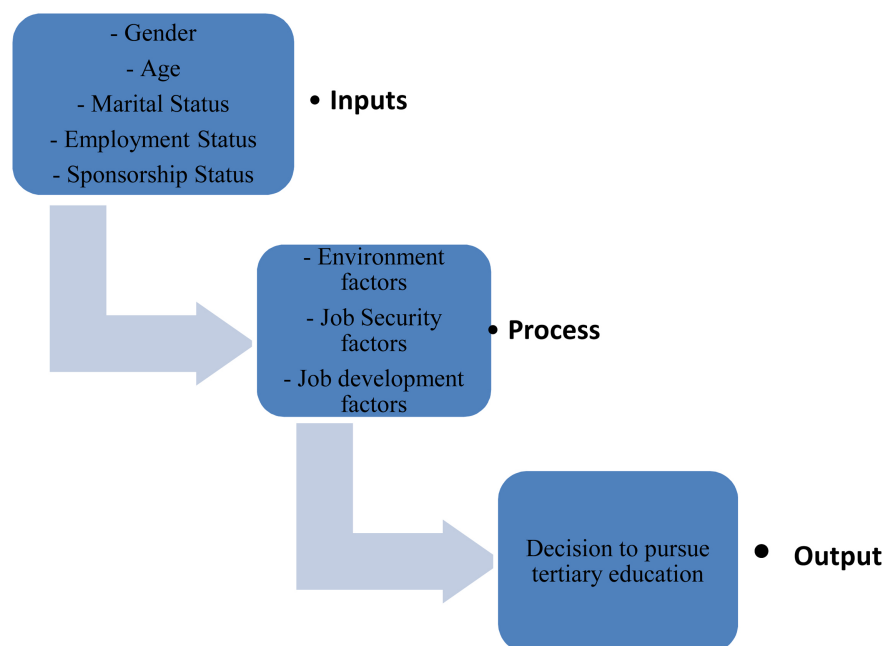
This study follows below research model with a consideration of personal characteristics as input variables, factors behind the decision as process variables

and decision to join tertiary education as output variable.

**Figure 1** provides space for considering personal characteristics in terms of gender, age, marital status, employment status, and availability of scholarship to be independent of the decision to join tertiary education. On the top of that, in the process of weighing decision options, individuals consider and are shaped by a number of factors including environment factors, job security actors and job development factors. For this study, environmental factors refer to external conditions from the societal trend and aspiration. These include but not limited to family conditions, social condition, economic conditions and political aspiration on education. Job security factors are operationalized as conditions emerging in employment sphere and if individuals are not able to cope with them may be disqualified for the job. They are therefore motives for seeking or sustaining employment safety. This may largely include all forms of requirements to get new or/and to remain on current employment. Job development factors refer to the dynamics attracting individuals to move forward in their career and developments. These may include but not limited to need for high earnings, future investment, career development, higher position, and enlargement of job opportunities.

## 2. Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey design using quantitative approach. The items of the survey questionnaire were developed based on a review of previous studies on factors influencing people' decision to join higher learning institutions [8] *This study therefore aims to investigate the factors influencing students' decision to enrol in HLIs with a consideration of gender, age, marital status and mode of*



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework.

*attendance. It followed a case study design. The primary data were gathered from a proportional sample of 228 out of 1539 students enrolled in three faculties at the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences during the academic year 2018/19. We used questionnaire tested with a Cranbchi's alpha equals to 0.812. Data were analysed by use of descriptive statistics and t-testing.* The questionnaire included 20 statements measures with five point Likert scale ranging from 1—strongly disagree to 5—strongly agree. Out of 20 statements, 7 items measured environment factors, 9 measured job based development factors and 4 measured job security factors associated with decision to enrol in higher learning institutions. The target population was 1539 students registered at the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences during the academic year 2018/19. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to the students from all departments at the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences. Quota sampling was used to choose the sample. We divided population into subgroups based on the following criteria: gender, age, and the program of enrollment (Weekend, holiday and day program). These subgroups were identified in the whole population. This method helped in well representation of chosen subgroups in the study. Out of a total of 306 surveys sent, 228 usable questionnaires were received, which gives a response rate of 94.12%. Among 228 respondents, 53.1% were women, 64.1% were in the age of 21 - 30, and 26.7% were older than 30. The 46.9% were men, 1% were less than 21 years old, 69% were in the age of 21 - 30, and 30% were older than 30. Only 68% of respondents at the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences had a job, while 32% of the respondents studied to get one. With regard to marital status, 54.8 % were married compared to 45.2% who claimed to be single. Out of 219 who showed their preferred mode of attendance, 74.4% attended weekend sessions, 16.4% day sessions and 9.6% attended holiday session. The questionnaire was first piloted to ensure the internal reliability of scales. The test was confirmed with 0.812 alpha and all factors had exceeded Cronbach's alpha 0.7. The analysis of factors influencing a decision to enrol in higher learning institution was done by use of mean range, whilst the association of factors influencing decision and characteristics of students in terms of gender, age, marital status, employment status, scholarship status and programme of study are examined through t-test.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

This section presents the findings as follow: 1) respondents' central tendency on environment factors, job development factors and job security factors influencing students' decision to enroll to higher learning institutions, and 2) level of association between factors and personal characteristics in terms of gender, age, marital status, employment status, scholarship status and programme of study.

#### **3.1. Descriptive Statistics on the Factors Influencing Decision to Enrol to Higher Education**

The findings in **Table 1** show respondents' environment based factors that have

**Table 1.** Environmental factors influencing decision to enroll to higher learning institution.

| Factors   | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|------|----------------|
| Need for rising social status                           | 215 | 3.67 | 1.62           |
| Economic living conditions                              | 217 | 3.63 | 1.64           |
| Social living conditions                                | 217 | 3.27 | 1.68           |
| Political environment on education                      | 217 | 3.09 | 1.67           |
| Public call and easy access to higher education         | 207 | 2.79 | 1.78           |
| University education on fashion                         | 207 | 2.57 | 1.68           |
| Recommendation from parents and/or other nearest people | 210 | 2.01 | 1.53           |

influenced their decision to enroll tertiary education. The need to raise up the social status was given much value compared to other factors in the same category with a mean of 3.67, standard deviation (s.d) 1.62. The effect of economic conditions was indicated among influential factors in taking decisions to join higher education with a mean of 3.63, s.d 1.64 compared to the value given to social conditions with a mean of 3.27, s.d 1.68 and political atmosphere (mean = 3.09, s.d 1.67) which attracts people to study. The influence of open access to university education was recognized among other environmental factors that influence the decision to pursue tertiary education but with a low rate, mean of 2.79, s.d 1.78. Equally, the respondents however recognized university education as a fashion with low effect on the decision to enroll in a given academic programme. Although all above mentioned factors were indicated as influential determinants for individual decision to pursue university education, on the other hand social conditions especially social status, economic conditions and attractive legal and policy frameworks to education are the main environment factor contributing to the decision to enroll in higher learning institution. The motivation based on parents and/or other people's recommendation was qualified with a mean of 2.0, s.d 1.53 which is a low influence.

The findings in **Table 2** reveal job security factors having high influence on the decision to pursue university education. The latter is considered by a quite number of people as a solution or/and response to the condition imposed by employment market. These employment conditions were rated with a mean of 4.23, s.d 1.43 which is high. The respondents affirmed the decision to join higher education to be dependent of the need for fulfilling required competencies for the job (mean 3.76, s.d 1.58), fulfilling required education qualification for employment (mean 3.37, s.d 1.70) and securing current job (mean 3.34, s.d 1.84). Generally, respondents rated job security factors to have high influence on individual decision to enroll in university education. The need to overcome the conditions imposed by employment market is among the main influential factors

**Table 2.** Job security factors influencing decision to enroll to higher learning institution.

| Factors                                      | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-----|------|----------------|
| Conditions imposed by employment market      | 221 | 4.23 | 1.43           |
| Fulfilling required competency for the job   | 210 | 3.76 | 1.58           |
| Having required qualification for employment | 208 | 3.37 | 1.70           |
| Securing current job                         | 210 | 3.34 | 1.84           |

contribution to the decision to pursue tertiary education.

The findings in **Table 3** expressed the influence of job development factors on the decision to register in tertiary education. Much weight (mean score 4.31, s.d 1.36) were given to the consideration of education as an investment to pay off in the future, education as a tool to build up future career with a mean score 4.09, s.d 1.47 and education as means to change employment position to a better one (job promotion) with a score mean 3.98, s.d 1.52. The respondents rated the need for increasing income through salary with a mean score of 3.78, s.d 1.61, the need for changing from one job to another (new job) with mean score of 3.75, s.d 1.58 to effect the decision to pursue higher education. Besides credits to influence decision to register with higher education was to the programmes which are likely to expand job opportunities (mean score of 3.64, s.d 1.60), to open the space for promotion (score mean of 3.55, s.d 1.62) and programmes which fit with previous studies (mean score of 3.44, s.d 1.62).

A comparison of respondents' rating on three main factors by considering the average of the sum of rates of each item corresponding each category of factors (environment, job security and job development) revealed job development factors to be the leading factors contributing to the decision to pursue higher education with a mean of 3.76, s.d 0.99.

As indicated in **Table 4** respondents equally considered the decision to register with higher learning institution not only because of the influence of job development factor, also with the influence of job security factors and environment factor with a rating of 3.68, s.d 1.12 and 3.00, s.d 0.89 respectively. A look on single items rated to be the most (top five) influential determinants to the decision to join university education include but not limited to 1) education as an investment to pay off in the future with mean score 4.31, 2) conditions imposed by employment market with a mean score 4.23, 3) programmes which fit the current job or future career with a mean score 4.09, 4) University education as a way to change current position to a better one with a mean score 3.98, and 5) University Education as a way to increase incomes.

### 3.2. Level of Association between Factors Influencing Decision to Enrol to Higher Education and Personal Characteristics

The findings on whether there is or not significant difference between the factors behind the decision to pursue tertiary education and personal characteristic in terms of gender, age group, marital status, employment status, studentship



**Table 3.** Job development factors influencing decision to enroll to higher learning institution.

| Factors   | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|------|----------------|
| Making an investment to yield in future               | 203 | 4.31 | 1.355          |
| Programme which fits the current job or future career | 214 | 4.09 | 1.465          |
| A way to change current position to a better one      | 208 | 3.98 | 1.523          |
| A way to increase income through increased salary     | 219 | 3.78 | 1.605          |
| Programme which help change from one job to another   | 209 | 3.75 | 1.580          |
| Programme which is likely to give work                | 208 | 3.64 | 1.603          |
| Programme which is likely to open door for promotion  | 211 | 3.55 | 1.624          |
| Programme which is in line previous studies           | 212 | 3.44 | 1.641          |
| Programme which is likely to yield highly paying job  | 212 | 3.27 | 1.725          |

**Table 4.** Rating of factors influencing decision to enroll to higher learning institution.

| Factors (combined)            | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|----------------|
| Job based development factors | 227 | 3.76 | 0.99           |
| Job security factors          | 225 | 3.68 | 1.12           |
| Environment factors           | 226 | 3.00 | 0.89           |

status and programme of study are presented below:

The results presented in **Table 5** indicate the following: 1) Environment factor behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between male and female ( $t = -0.737, 0.46 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 2) Job based development factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between male and female ( $t = -1.482, 0.14 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 3) Job security factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are significantly different between male and female ( $t = -2.105, 0.04 < p\text{-value } 0.05$ ).

The findings presented in **Table 6** indicate the following: 1) environment factor behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between below and 30 years old and above 30 years old ( $t = 0.182, 0.856 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 2) Job based development factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between below and 30 years old and above 30 years old ( $t = 1.268, 0.206 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 3) job security factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between below and 30 years old and above 30 years old ( $t = 0.705, 0.482 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ).

The results presented in **Table 7** indicate the following: 1) the mean environment factor behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between single and married students ( $t = -0.021, 0.983 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 2) the mean job based development factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between male and female ( $t = 1.24,$

**Table 5.** Level of association between factors and gender.

|                               |                             | t-test for Equality of Means |         |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
|                               |                             | t                            | df      | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Environment                   | Equal variances assumed     | -0.737                       | 209     | 0.46            |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | -0.738                       | 207.209 | 0.46            |
| Job based development factors | Equal variances assumed     | -1.482                       | 210     | 0.14            |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | -1.481                       | 205.617 | 0.14            |
| Job security factors          | Equal variances assumed     | -2.105                       | 208     | 0.04            |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | -2.084                       | 191.443 | 0.04            |

$p \leq 0.05$ : difference is significant;  $p \geq 0.05$ : difference is not significant.

**Table 6.** Level of association between factors and age group.

|                               |                             | t-test for Equality of Means |         |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
|                               |                             | t                            | df      | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Environment                   | Equal variances assumed     | 0.182                        | 212     | 0.856           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | 0.181                        | 129.883 | 0.856           |
| Job based development factors | Equal variances assumed     | 1.268                        | 213     | 0.206           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | 1.221                        | 121.620 | 0.225           |
| Job security factors          | Equal variances assumed     | 0.705                        | 212     | 0.482           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | 0.716                        | 139.147 | 0.475           |

$p \leq 0.05$ : difference is significant;  $p \geq 0.05$ : difference is not significant.

**Table 7.** Level of association between factors and marital status.

|                               |                             | t-test for Equality of Means |         |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
|                               |                             | t                            | df      | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Environment                   | Equal variances assumed     | -0.021                       | 224     | 0.983           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | -0.021                       | 208.320 | 0.983           |
| Job based development factors | Equal variances assumed     | 1.240                        | 225     | 0.216           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | 1.230                        | 209.313 | 0.220           |
| Job security factors          | Equal variances assumed     | -0.083                       | 223     | 0.934           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | -0.083                       | 214.359 | 0.934           |

$p \leq 0.05$ : difference is significant;  $p \geq 0.05$ : difference is not significant.

0.216 > p-value 0.05); 3) the mean job security factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between male and female ( $t = 0.083, 0.934 > p$ -value 0.05).

The findings presented in **Table 8** indicate the following: 1) the mean environment factor behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between employed and non-employed students ( $t = 0.331, 0.741 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 2) the mean Job based development factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between employed and non-employed students ( $t = 0.087, 0.931 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 3) the mean job security factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between employed and non-employed students ( $t = -0.009, 0.993 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ).

The results presented in **Table 9** indicate the following: 1) the mean environment factor behind the decision to pursue higher education are significantly different between self-sponsored and scholarship holders ( $t = 2.147, 0.033 < p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 2) Job based development factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between self-sponsored and scholarship holders ( $t = 1.461, 0.146 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 3) job security factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different between self-sponsored and scholarship holders ( $t = 1.437, 0.153 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ).

**Table 8.** Level of association between factors and employment status.

|                               |                             | t-test for Equality of Means |         |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
|                               |                             | t                            | df      | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Environment                   | Equal variances assumed     | 0.331                        | 190     | 0.741           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | 0.330                        | 154.712 | 0.742           |
| Job based development factors | Equal variances assumed     | 0.087                        | 191     | 0.931           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | 0.084                        | 144.888 | 0.933           |
| Job security factors          | Equal variances assumed     | -0.009                       | 190     | 0.993           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | -0.009                       | 158.560 | 0.993           |

$p \leq 0.05$ : difference is significant;  $p \geq 0.05$ : difference is not significant.

**Table 9.** Level of association between factors and studentship status.

|                               |                             | t-test for Equality of Means |        |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|
|                               |                             | t                            | df     | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Environment                   | Equal variances assumed     | 2.147                        | 162    | 0.033           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | 2.279                        | 29.204 | 0.030           |
| Job based development factors | Equal variances assumed     | 1.461                        | 162    | 0.146           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | 1.237                        | 25.289 | 0.228           |
| Job security factors          | Equal variances assumed     | 1.437                        | 160    | 0.153           |
|                               | Equal variances not assumed | 1.347                        | 25.261 | 0.190           |

$p \leq 0.05$ : difference is significant;  $p \geq 0.05$ : difference is not significant.

The analysis of variance revealed the following as presented in **Table 10**: 1) the mean environment factor behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different among the programmes of study ( $F_{2,218} = 0.249$ ;  $0.780 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 2) Job based development factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different among the programmes of study ( $F_{2,219} = 1.185$ ;  $0.308 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ); 3) job security factors behind the decision to pursue higher education are not significantly different among the programmes of study ( $F_{2,217} = 0.123$ ;  $0.884 > p\text{-value } 0.05$ ).

#### 4. Implications of Findings

The above findings imply that people are driven by different motivation in the pursuit of higher education. Job development factors lead the decision to enroll to higher learning institution. This means that people are looking for education which enables them to respond to their growth needs, especially through programmes which promise to pay off in the future and those ones respond to the changing terms and condition of today's employment market. Consequently, higher learning institutions are required to develop and review existing academic programmes in a way that the person registered to them are able to grasp desirable and useful knowledge, skills and job attitude. The influence of dynamics in social, economic and political sphere attracts attention of higher learning institution not only to provide a flexible mode of attendance, also to organize teaching, learning and assessment in way that needed competences are developed and opportunities for career development and better employment positions are made available to the students. Industrial attachment and involvement of employing institutions in curriculum or programme development could help in the process.

The findings bring to wonder about current responses from higher learning institutions vis-à-vis job security factors which are behind the decision to pursue higher education. Universities are known to be bureaucratic institutions whereby a set of rules and regulations is used to either qualify or not its students. On

**Table 10.** Level of association between factors and programme of study.

|                               |                | ANOVA          |     |             |       |       |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
|                               |                | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  |
| Environment                   | Between Groups | 0.407          | 2   | 0.203       | 0.249 | 0.780 |
|                               | Within Groups  | 177.871        | 218 | 0.816       |       |       |
| Job based development factors | Between Groups | 2.365          | 2   | 1.183       | 1.185 | 0.308 |
|                               | Within Groups  | 218.482        | 219 | 0.998       |       |       |
| Job security factors          | Between Groups | 0.316          | 2   | 0.158       | 0.123 | 0.884 |
|                               | Within Groups  | 279.454        | 217 | 1.288       |       |       |

$p \leq 0.05$ : difference is significant;  $p \geq 0.05$ : difference is not significant.

another hand, due to the pressure from employer, students may decide to join a university with a belief to get an award earlier or any other academic document before the normal programme duration as a way to secure his/her current employment. Do the universities have a way-out to respond to this matter with no violation of regulations, at the same time ensure the safety of its clients? Does the existing qualification framework provide flexible way for universities to respond to this challenge without disgracing the quality of education? In addition, the findings claim the lack of required competence for the job as a motive to pursue higher education. The composition of university students provides evidence on the existence of both employed and no employed students in the same programme and classroom. Thus, how do the universities consider and integrate the experience of employed students and promote non-experience students in the same classroom? If each student is focusing on fulfilling required competence for the job, how do universities individualized its teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that everyone has got his/her package according to his/her specific needs?

The findings therefore call higher learning institutions to mind about the students' differences based on motivation to join university as the quality of programme and teaching-learning-assessment process are concerned. For today and future sustainability of universities, it seems imperative to align the academic programmes and organization of instructions to the different needs of people who demand for education. Generally, the findings revealed that the means factors influencing decision to enroll to higher education are no significant different vis-à-vis personal characteristics in terms of gender, age group, marital status, employment status, studentship status and programme of study. The exception was found on the mean job security factors behind the decision to pursue higher education which is significantly different between male and female and the mean environment factors behind the decision to pursue higher education which significantly different between self-sponsored and scholarship holders.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Upon the findings it is concluded that students who are enrolled in higher education were motivated by almost same factors. Job development factors are the dominant factors to influence the decision to pursue tertiary education compared to job security factors and environment factors. Although the findings revealed the mean factors contributing to the decision to join higher education are not significantly different from the personal characteristics; there are exceptions at the level of job security factors between male and female and environment factors between self-sponsored and scholarship holders. The findings suggest the universities consider the students' differences about motivations to register to university education and align the programme development and review of existing one accordingly. Universities should also ensure a quality teaching-learning-assessment process that address growth needs and required

knowledge, skills and job attitudes by involving mainly employing institutions and other industries in curriculum development. In this study, we used descriptive statistics to analyze the data, hence, the future study may focus on the determinants of higher learning education choices and students' satisfaction with regard to academic performance.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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