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MANAGING STUDENTS' JOB OPPORTUNITY EXPECTATIONS IN TANZANIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine and compare students' job opportunity expectations in the programmes offered in two business schools in Tanzania in relation to industry demand, professional specialization, and demographics before graduation. The extent of students' satisfaction with the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired were determined. The need for managing students' job opportunity expectations is suggested. A cross-sectional survey covering a total of 192 first degree final year students from the Institute of Accountancy Arusha and the College of Business Education was conducted in June 2013. The students' job opportunity expectations (dependent variable) were sought using a survey instrument consisting of demographic information items and the job expectations after completion of studies. The job expectations items were measured on a Likert scale anchored at 1(not at all easy/none) to 5(very easy/ plenty). Varying job opportunity expectations from the first-degree final year students according to professional specialization and demographic variables were observed. It is recommended to business schools to continuously study the job market trend/industry needs, link with the industry and appropriately guide and counsel students about the industry status. A continuous management of students' job opportunity expectations is emphasized.

Key Words: *Job Opportunity, Expectations, Business Schools, Professional Specialization*

INTRODUCTION

Training institutions exist for the purpose of serving the dynamic societal needs. Training institutions do train and develop the human capital that utilizes knowledge, skills and competences in social, political and economic spheres. Education and training are treated as strategic agents for mindset transformation and for creation of a well educated nation, sufficiently equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to competently and competitively solve the development challenges facing the nation (URT, 2014). With competent workforce the likelihood of good performance of firms is certain other things being equal e.g. technological and infrastructure, economic, socio-cultural, political, legal environment etc.

There has been a short supply of skills required in the industry like technical and role specific, organization and planning, oral communication, and problem solving, literacy and numeracy and IT skills (Ball, Montgomery, Hill, Howie, Kempster & Palmer , 2015). On the part of great majority of businesses, the attitudes and aptitudes of graduates for work were more important than the specific degree studied (*Ibid*). Strong links between education institutions and employers are therefore required. In the course of training and development of the workforce, training institutions are required to work hand in hand with the industry. However, this may seem possible in theory rather than practice.

Complaints from the industry have been raised on the skills gap for example in relation to curricula design that are production-led, based on staff experience, interests and availability, rather than necessarily preparing graduates for the industry-employment market (Stringfellow, Ennis, Brennan & Harker,2006); the use of the open loop accreditation model (Cheng, & Tam,1997; Swiatek & Konczakowska, 2001) and reliance on the traditional "brick and teach" rather than on "click and teach" approaches (Benton, 2009). Complaints about graduates' job fit exist in the Tanzanian industry context as well (e.g.; MSTHE, 2002; Mwapachu, 2013, June 23rd; Ndyali, 2016; Olomi, 2015) and there has been an unemployment outcry [10.3%] (NBS, 2015).

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare the students' job opportunity expectations in the programmes offered in two business schools in Tanzania in relation to professional specialization, and demographics, to examine the extent students were satisfied with the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired from the Tanzanian training institutions before graduation and to suggest the need for managing students' expectations.

An understanding of the job trend in the labor market open eyes to training institutions, in terms of curricula review and development. Training institutions will be informed of the programmes that may require an emphasis in terms of resource (physical and human) allocation and those that may require discontinuity or suspension for a while. Same understanding will spark the need for institutions to relate with the industry. Nevertheless, an understanding of students' job opportunity expectations versus reality determines the counseling efforts required by the training institutions while handling students.

Knowledge of industry needs by the institutions will facilitate towards reduction of graduates' undue unemployment. The links between training institutions and the industry will be enhanced. On the part of the students, upon graduating they will leave the training institutions with an understanding of job availability/status in the specific industry. Nationally, the training institutions will be addressing the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) Education and Training Policy (2014)[*Sera ya Elimu na Mafunzo (2014)*] and UNESCO Report (2014) that require improvement and relevance of education offered by

training institutions(URT,2014) as well as education offered by technical education training institutions as partly quoted hereunder,

> …*"to impart the necessary knowledge and skills to youth and adults to enable them contribute to the socio-economic development of their communities, and ultimately, to that of the country"* (UNESCO Report, 2014, p. 50).

This study adds to the realm of literature in relation to graduates' job opportunity expectations versus reality in Tanzania.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature describes expectation as a belief that is centered on the future; it may or may not be realistic. A less advantageous result gives rise to the emotion of disappointment (Zeithaml, Berry & Gremler, 2006). Various theories explain an individual's expectations of an outcome such as Expectation-disconfirmation theory (Chao, Wang, Fu & Yi, 2011); Vroom's Valence Instrumentality Expectancy Theory (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996) and Value percept disparity theory (Bloemer & Dekker, 2007).

Students' education or training experience ends with the learning outcomes either getting employed or creating own employment. Students' satisfaction is then realized much later after graduation (Boshoff & Gray, 2004). If students obtain employment/own employment within a reasonable time after graduation, the student will be satisfied. If expectations for employment involve longer time, the first experience would be a surprise (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).

Specific to Tanzania, the Education and Training Policy (URT, 2014) among other things reiterates the need for improvement of the relevance of education offered by training institutions for it to be effective in self employment and certainly to the industry which uses the knowledge, skills and competencies of the graduates.

Empirical Studies show that students' job opportunity expectations are formed based on a number of factors such as previous experience (Petrovay, 2008); early career decision(Fjortoft & Lee, 1994; Hirschi, & Lage, 2007; Mastor & Ismail, 2004); parental persuasion(Hellriegel & Slocum, 2004); student's personality(Cano-Gracía & Hughes, 2000; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004; Petrovay, 2008; Ridgell, 2004; Segal,Borgia, Schoenfeld, 2005); education level(Robinson, & Sexton., 1993); employment prospects that is demand and supply(DuPre & Williams, 2011; Harvey,1999; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006); salary(Ng, Schweitzer, Lyons, 2010; Taylor, 2007); gender(Ng *et al.*, 2010; Olomi, 2015); employers' influence (Roehling & Cavanaugh, 2000; Caldwell & Cattermole, 2015); career development (Tanaka, Horiuchi, Shimpuku & Leshabari, 2015), career expectations(Armenio, Deslippe, Duffin, McGill,Meludie, Sawatsky(2012); choice of an institution to study and the quality of

the preferred course and the earning potential (Thomas, 2014), time spent by students from a given training institution to secure a job etc. For instance, the time taken to secure job in America was about 27 weeks (Everrett, 2012). In the case of Tanzania it takes months or even years (Ndyali, 2016). A survey of first degree graduate destinations six months after they graduated in UK (Higher Education Statistics Agency's Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey (HESA, 2014/15) of 300,050-domiciled graduates indicate a rate of 76.3% graduates in employment and 5.6% unemployed while 18.9% were working and studying at the same time and 18.1% were continuing with further studies or training. The UK five years trend on graduates employment rate had been 53 percent according to the UK Government figures of the graduates.

As a consequence of the stated factors among others, students study with a certain degree of optimism from previous graduates' employment trends. For example Everret (2012) study on students' expectations regarding employment and job market conditions in Agribusiness in California Poly-techniques State University indicated an optimism of the college seniors' job expectations compared to recent graduates.

However, the degree of optimism differs between student categories. For example, Thomas (2014); Majogoro and Mgabo(2012) indicate different degree of optimism between male and female graduates. Male graduates (83%) were more confident than female (77%) graduates of being employed. Islam, Ahmed, Khalifah, Sadiq and Faheem (2015) show differences between fresh graduates' expectations and actual experiences regarding work environment in Malaysia.

Whereas several factors that influence students' job opportunity expectations have been identified, most of the studies have been undertaken in UK, US or Malaysia poly-techniques/universities- the developed economies. Little is known about students' job opportunity expectations in Tanzania's technical institutions-the developing economy. The factors (in UK, US and Malaysia) that influence students' job opportunity expectations may not apply in the context of Tanzania. It is therefore imperative to study students' job opportunity expectations in the context of Tanzania business/management schools to find out if there is a need of managing their job opportunity expectations.

From the preceding literature, students' job opportunity expectations are determined by the industry demand and supply (external to training institutions), professional specialization, gender, knowledge, skills and competencies acquired from the learning institutions etc. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables is shown in Figure 1. Of the independent variables, Industry demand and supply was not measured in this study. This opens another avenue for further studies.

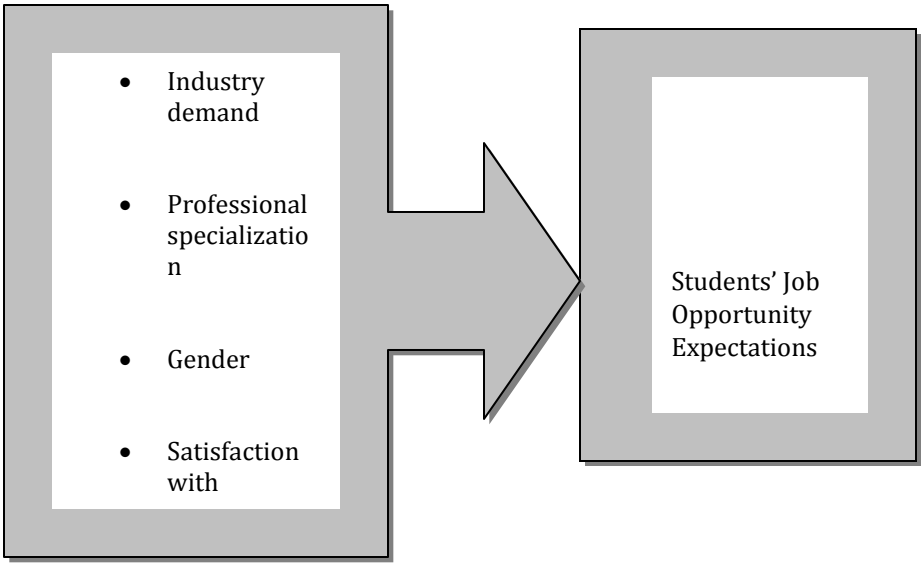

Figure 1: Conceptual Model for Studying Students' Job Opportunity Expectations

METHODOLOGY

A survey covering a total of 192 first degree students from the Institute of Accountancy Arusha (IAA) and the College of Business Education (CBE) was conducted in June 2013. About 59 percent of students were male while about 41 percent were female students. Distribution according to professional specialization, employment status, and age group are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Mean scores (${}^{n}_{i=1}\Sigma\, j_i /N$) and standard deviations for the corresponding scale items (j_i) were computed. The use of mean score for constructs with several scale items is considered appropriate as it presents more meaningful information than using single item scores (Babbie, 1998; Hair *et al.* (2006)). Analysis of variance between groups using SPSS 16 software was determined.

Table 1: Characteristics of sampled respondents by profession

Professional specialization	N	Percentage
Business Administration	43	22.4
Accountancy	57	29.7
Procurement and supply/Logistic management	26	13.5
Marketing	12	6.3
Legal and industrial metrology	8	4.2
Information technology	23	12.0
Tax administration	3	1.6
Banking and finance	6	3.1
Computer science	14	7.3
Total	**192**	**100.0**

Table 2: Characteristics of sampled respondents by demographics

Gender		
Male	113	58.9
Female	79	41.1
Total	**192**	**100.0**
Emplоment Status		
Currently employed	43	22.4
Currently not employed	149	77.6
Total	**192**	**100.0**
Age Group		
20-24	40	20.8
25-29	118	61.5
30-34	16	8.3
35-39	4	2.1
Not stated	14	7.3
Total	**192**	**100.0**

The students' job opportunity expectations (dependent variable) were sought using an instrument consisting of demographic information items, satisfaction with knowledge, skills and competencies acquired at the institution and the job opportunity expectations items after completion of the course. The job expectation were measured on a Likert scale anchored at 1(low/none) to 5(high). The satisfaction with knowledge, skills and competencies acquired from the institution was measured using a Likert scale anchored at "1" = Not at all satisfied to "7"= satisfied to a great deal.

The data collected from research participants were mainly primary. Questionnaires were personally administered to students during their class time after receiving permission from the concerned CEO and lecturers.

RESULTS

The extent of students' job opportunity expectations is provided in Table 3.
Job opportunity expectations results were based on the scale "1"= Low/none; "2"=slightly moderate; "3"=moderate; "4"= High; "5"= Very High.

Male students indicate high mean score (M=2.7847) on job opportunity expectations compared to female students (M=2.7637) in both institutions (Table 3). These results support Expectation-disconfirmation theory (Chao, Wang, Fu & Yi, 2011) where individual's expectations of an outcome vary. The variation of an outcome's expectation may vary due to a number of reasons such as individual's experience, gender, age etc. However, the difference is not significant. In addition to expectation disconfirmation theory, explanation for these results in the Tanzanian context may be linked to policy issues. Tanzania is enforcing the National Strategy for Gender Development Policy (2000) which favors female recruits to males with equal qualifications[1]. Female students in the two institutions may have not been aware of this policy. On the other hand female students may know the shortage of jobs and the degree of competition in the industry hence low job opportunity expectations (Olomi, 2015). On the other hand female students may be more ready for self employment compared to male students [Ajzen's (1991) Theory of planned behavior]. The theory of planned behaviour(TPB) holds that an individual ability to develop behavior has to make a combination of three variables-attitude towards the behavior, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control (Segal, Borgia & Schoenfeld, 2005). Consistent with TPB Majogoro and Mgabo (2012) indicate female student's intention to self-employment is higher compared to male students due to high female risk tolerance compared to male students.

Similar results on students' job expectations differences among male and female graduates have also been reported by Schweitzer *et al.* (2011) and Thomas (2014).

[1] http://www.mcdgc.go.tz/data/Tanzania_-_National_Strategy_for_Gender_Development.pdf

Table 3: Students' Job opportunity expectations by professional specialization, Gender, Employment Status, and Age group

Professional specialization	Mean	Std. Deviation
Business Administration	2.8062	0.8521
Accountancy	2.7018	0.7784
Procurement and supply / Logistic management	2.6923	0.6987
Marketing	2.5556	0.8449
Legal and industrial metrology	3.1667	0.6901
Information technology	2.7826	0.9672
Tax administration	2.8889	0.8389
Banking and finance	3.0000	0.2108
Computer science	2.9762	0.7449
Total		
Gender		
Male	2.7847	0.7753
Female	2.7637	0.8254
Total		
Emplоment Status		
Currently employed	3.0155	0.9812
Currently not employed	2.7069	0.7207
Total		
Age Group		
20-24	2.8250	0.8540
25-29	2.7966	0.7409
30-34	2.2917	1.0462
35-39	2.9167	0.7876
Not stated	2.9762	0.6197
Total		

Specific to each institution students' job opportunity expectations are shown in Table 4.

IAA students indicate high job opportunity expectations as they scored a mean of 2.7857 compared to 2.7660(CBE). However, the difference is not significant (Table 5).

Table 4: Students' Job opportunity expectations by Institution

Name of Institution	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Percentage
CBE	2.7660	0.7819	94	49.0
IAA	2.7857	0.8098	98	51
Overall mean	2.7760	0.7942	192	100

Table 5: ANOVA for Job opportunity expectations by institution

ANOVA Table			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. P=0.05
Job opportunities expectations * Name of Institution	Between Groups	(Combined)	0.0187	1.0000	0.0187	0.0295	0.8637
		Within Groups	120.4622	190.0000	0.6340		
		Total	120.4809	191.0000			

Mean students' job opportunity expectations by professional specialization are shown in Table 6 and Figure 2.

Table 6: Students' Job opportunities expectations by professional specialization

Profession	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Business Administration	43	2.8062	0.8521
Accountancy	57	2.7018	0.7784
Procurement and supply / Logistic management	26	2.6923	0.6987
Marketing	12	2.5556	0.8449
Legal and industrial metrology	8	3.1667	0.6901
Information technology	23	2.7826	0.9672
Tax administration	3	2.8889	0.8389
Banking and finance	6	3.0000	0.2108
Computer science	14	2.9762	0.7449
Total	**192**		

Overall, students specializing in Legal and Industrial Metrology showed the highest job expectations (M=3.1667, SD=0.6901) followed by Banking and Finance (M=3.0000, SD= 0.2108), Computer

Science (M=2.9762, M= 0.7449) followed by Tax administration (M= 2.8889, SD=0.8389), Business Administration (M=2.8062, SD= 0.8521) (Table 6).

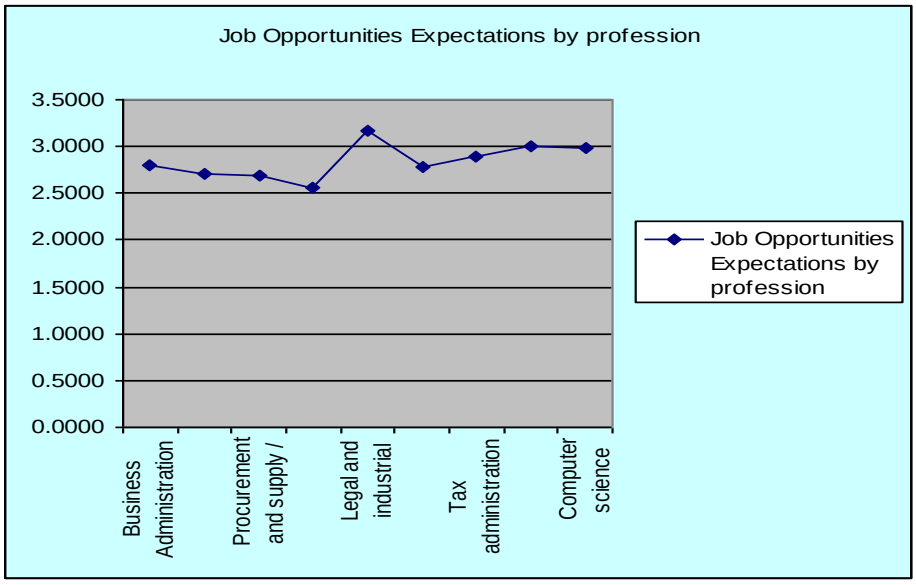

Figure 2: Students' job opportunities expectations by professional Specialization

Analysis of variance of Job opportunity expectations indicated no significant mean differences between students' groups except for job opportunity expectation against employment status (Table 7). However, these differences are expected because an employed student is already on the job whereas students who have not been employed may be uncertain of job availability. Although students' job opportunity may be moderate, certainly, there exist a gap between students' job opportunity expectations and the actual experience (Islam *et al.*, 2015).

Table 7: ANOVA Job opportunity expectations by employment status

ANOVA Table			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job opportunities expectations * Employment status	Between Groups	(Combined)	$3.1773				P=0.05
		Within Groups	$117.3036	1	3.17729	5.14635	0.02442
		Total	$120.4809	190 191	0.61739		

Table 8: Job opportunity expectations by satisfaction with knowledge, skills and competencies acquired at the institutions

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation P= 0.05
Satisfaction with the skills and competencies acquired at the institution	192	3.3333	0.6667
Satisfaction with intellectual development at the institution	192	2.7500	0.5000
Satisfaction with academic performance at the institution	192	2.9333	0.4346

The satisfaction with the knowledge, skills and competencies on the scale continuum "1" = Not at all satisfied to "7"= satisfied to a great deal are on the low side (Table 8). Students mean score on the satisfaction with the knowledge, skills and competencies obtained from the institutions (M=3.333, SD 0.6667) is lower than moderate satisfaction (mid score of 4). There were no significant differences between student groups by the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired at the institutions (Table 9).

Table 9: ANOVA for Job Opportunity expectations versus Satisfaction with skills acquired

ANOVA Table			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. P=0.05
Job opportunities expectations * Satisfaction with the skills acquired at the institution	Between Groups	(Combined)	7.4122	8.0000	0.9265	1.4996	0.16
		Within Groups	113.0687	183.0000	0.6179		
		Total	120.4809	191.0000			

DISCUSSION

Job opportunity expectations for students specializing in Legal and Industrial Metrology were the highest (M=3.1667, SD=0.6901) followed by Banking and Finance (M=3.0000, SD= 0.2108), Computer Science (M=2.9762, M= 0.7449) followed by Tax administration (M= 2.8889, SD=0.8389), Business Administration (M=2.8062, SD= 0.8521) (Table 3). The high job opportunity expectations showed by Legal and Industrial Metrology students (offered by CBE only) could be explained by the fact that the industry is in great demand of graduates with this specialization. Once they complete the studies the Government through the Weights and Measures Agency employ them on the spot. Students could have this in their minds. On the other hand, high job opportunity expectations for Banking and Finance specialization (offered by IAA) could be explained by the growing banking industry in Tanzania. Computer Science specialization (offered by IAA) is also demanded in the industry

following the technological advancement in the industry. Like the business/management schools' students in Tanzania, different graduates' job opportunity expectations have also been reported in medical professions in UK (Taylor, 2007).

Overall, on the five point Likert scale where "1"= Low/none; "2"=slightly moderate; "3"=moderate; "4"= High; "5"= Very High, students scored a mean of 2.7760 which indicates job opportunity expectations between the interval slightly moderate to moderate. This indicates that students' job opportunity expectations in the industry are low.

The low job opportunity expectations of students could be accounted for by inadequate prior knowledge of the demands of graduates' professional specializations in the labor market (DuPre & Williams, 2011).

On the aspect of students' satisfaction with the skills and competencies acquired at the institutions of study, a score of (M=3.333, SD 0.6667) indicates that satisfaction with the skills and competencies acquired from institutions is less than moderately satisfied (score of 4). This finding demand concerted effort from the Tanzania business/management schools because the essence of attending any professional specialization is to attain the relevant and appropriate skills and competencies for application in the industry. However, this did not affect the students' job opportunity expectations. On the one hand students may understand that the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired from training institutions may be the beginning of the life long learning process hence an individual investment. On the other hand, students understand the resources constraints faced by institutions in Tanzania.

Although first degree graduates from Tanzania business/management schools (under technical and vocational institutions category) are recognized for having acquired technical or subject-specific skills, and that students have indicated low to moderate satisfaction with the skills, there is a stiff competition in the labor market. The competitors can be outsmarted if graduates have differentiating skills like essential 'soft' skills and attributes that can be acquired at the colleges when applying for jobs upon graduation. Research from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES, 2013) indicate that employers prefer mature and experienced candidates with skills like: Communication, networking and business awareness, organization and action planning, analytical and problem solving, teamwork, opportunity recognition, leadership, positive work ethics etc.

Given that the graduate jobs market is constantly changing and that new companies emerge using new technologies and creating new jobs, while other jobs change dramatically or disappear, specific training for a narrow range of jobs may turn out to be less useful if those jobs are subject to recession or encounter changes that have affected other industries over the years. The business

schools/management schools seek to equip students with the skills and attributes to be flexible and adapt to a rapidly changing jobs market. It is important to remember that over a working life - current students (modal age group 25-29), could last 31 years (Tanzania retirement age is 60) - this labor force is likely to experience significant industry change, and therefore graduates should prepare themselves through lifelong learning to find the opportunities that arise and to thrive in the careers of the future.

Nevertheless, this could be an opportunity to business and management schools to design and conduct Alumni courses or to upgrade the current programmes to match the industry demand. Following up the performance of students after graduation is important. It is also enriching to establish the period the students stay in the labor market before they get employed or self-employment.
Everret (2012) indicates a period of 27 weeks (about four months) as time taken to secure job in America for Agriculture specialization graduates. In UK, the employment rate for graduates six months after graduation has been reported as 71.2 percent (UKCES, 2013).

The reported time of employment is rather short for graduates in Tanzania the majority of who are expected to go for self-employment after graduation given limited available jobs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results from the study have indicated high job opportunity expectations for students specializing in Legal and Industrial Metrology (M=3.1667, SD=0.6901) followed by Banking and Finance (M=3.0000, SD= 0.2108), Computer Science (M=2.9762, M= 0.7449) followed by Tax administration (M= 2.8889, SD=0.8389), Business Administration (M=2.8062, SD= 0.8521) (Table 6 & Figure 2). It is therefore concluded that students in different professional specializations have different job opportunity expectations. The labor market prefer on top of the professional skills, graduates to have soft skills as well. The employers of agricultural graduates emphasized on computer-, people, and teamwork-related skills (Barkley, Stock & Sylvius, 1999).

Students indicated low to moderate satisfaction with the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired at the institutions of study with a mean score of (M=3.333, SD 0.6667). There were no significant group differences on students' job opportunity expectations.

Recommendations: It is recommended that business/management schools should continuously study the job trend in the industry in order to improve their curricula to fit the industry needs.

It is further recommended that schools should suspend programmes that are not required by the industry and to properly allocate resource (physical and human) to those required by the industry. In this case, training institutions should enhance the links between them and the industry. As Tanzania is

moving towards a knowledge dependent economy, business schools should work with industry to advance the process of innovation across all business sectors.

Training institutions should continuously study students' job opportunity expectations and the labor market requirements (supply and demand) for appropriate counseling and guidance on the industry status in terms of the courses offered and the professional specializations. This will lead to reduction of students' undue unemployment after graduation for they will leave the colleges with an understanding of job availability or status in the labor market.
Further, business schools should offer courses determined by the industry needs (URT, Education and Training Policy, 2014) and worldwide recognized.

Recommendation for further research

The study's population involved students from two Tanzania business schools. The student population could be increased in other studies. In addition, the study considered students job opportunity expectations while at the College- before graduation. Other studies can be undertaken after students have graduated.

Satisfaction of the knowledge, skills and competencies obtained from business schools yielded low to moderate results. Another study on the satisfaction of the knowledge, skills and competencies obtained from the two business/management schools and specifically among professional specialization is worthy pursuing in future. The investigation of employment rate of previous graduates can also be undertaken.

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