

Motives Behind University Students' Enrolment in the Co-operative Programs in Tanzania

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Abstract: This study explored cooperative education's dynamics at the Moshi Co-operative University in Tanzania, aiming to establish factors influencing students' enrolment in cooperative programs amidst challenges faced by Tanzanian cooperative societies. Utilizing Dweck's Goal Orientation Approach, the study employed a qualitative single-case design, involving 50 students selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of perspectives and experiences. Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews and documentary reviews, facilitating insights into participants' motivations, experiences, and the contextual factors guiding their decisions. Thematic analysis guided by Dweck's approach ensured a systematic examination of the data, revealing the influential roles of parents, friends, teachers, family and role models in students' program choices. Emphasis is placed on the significance of employment opportunities and program relevance in shaping students' decisions. The study concludes that influential factors in students' enrolment include parental, peer, teacher, family and role model factors, emphasizing the significance of employment opportunities and program relevance. To strengthen cooperative education at MoCU, the study recommends collaborative initiatives, program diversification, improved career guidance, continuous professional development, systematic program evaluation, policy refinement and longitudinal impact assessments.

Keywords: Cooperative education; motivation; enrolment; goal orientation approach; career guidance.

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Introduction

Cooperative sector plays a pivotal role in providing employment opportunities and improving the quality of life (Lawrence, 2023; Anania, 2018; Kumar et al., 2015). Recognizing its significance, the government of Tanzania implemented initiatives to stabilize the cooperative sector through establishment of the Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU), designated as a Centre of Excellence in Co-operative and Business Management Training by the East African Community (EAC) (Kalineza & Msonganzila, 2015).

As a mandated institution offering cooperative training from certificate to PhD levels, Moshi Co-operative University has responded proactively by

providing a diverse range of cooperative-related programs (Kalineza & Msonganzila, 2015; Akaro & Mkulu, 2020). These include the Certificate in Co-operative Management and Accounting (CMA), Diploma in Co-operative Management and Accounting (DCMA), Bachelor of Co-operative Management and Accounting (BCMA), Postgraduate Diploma in Community and Co-operative Development (PGD-CD), Master of Arts in Community and Co-operative Development (MA-CCD) and PhD programs in cooperatives and other specializations (MoCU, 2020).

Despite the increasing trend in student enrolment over the past five academic years, with 872 students in 2018/19, 1316 students in 2019/20, 1462 in

2020/21, 2361 in 2021/22, and 2542 students in 2022/23 (Mbwambo, 2022), a nuanced situational analysis of cooperative societies' performance in Tanzania reveals mixed results. The Tanzania Cooperative Development Commission (2021) reports impressive accomplishments, such as enhanced financial services and collaboration in formal marketing channels. However, scholars including Rwekaza and Muhiti (2016) highlight persistent challenges, including weak bargaining power, politicization, agency problems, tribal divisions, lack of member participation and the impact of global warming. Furthermore, Kiungai (2023) reports challenges like the shift from a state-controlled to a market-oriented economy, inadequate government support, limited access to essential services and low levels of education and management skills among cooperative leaders. Shirima (2022) underscored the overall low performance of cooperative societies in Tanzania, particularly primary agricultural marketing cooperative societies (AMCOS), struggling with low financial performance, member dissatisfaction and a lack of competitive advantage. Additionally, Sambuo and Msaki (2019) identified broader issues hindering the cooperative movement in Tanzania, such as poor governance, insufficient education and training, political interference and ineffective utilization of key actors and programs within the cooperative movement.

Despite these challenges, MoCU has witnessed a notable increase in student enrolment over the past five years, raising the question of what factors influence students' choice of cooperative programs. With this wave of challenges, it might be felt that students would be discouraged from enrolling in cooperative specialized programs (Boarin et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2020). However, the reverse is true as evidenced by the steady increase in student registrations over the specified period.

Literature Review

This section covers both theoretical and empirical review. It opens up by critically examining the Goal Orientation Approach developed by psychologist Carol S. Dweck, focusing on its application in education and career development. Through the analysis of relevant literature, the section further provides a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical underpinnings guiding the study.

Theoretical Review

The Goal Orientation Approach, developed by psychologist Carol S. Dweck in 1986, guided this study. Historically, the Goal Orientation Approach originated in the field of psychology, gaining prominence in the 1980s and 1990s before being adopted in the education field. According to the Goal Orientation Approach, individuals' motivations and approaches toward achieving specific goals influence their choices and actions (Dweck, 1986).

The Goal Orientation Approach, rooted in educational psychology and motivation theory, delves into individuals' intrinsic motivations and approaches toward achieving specific goals (Dweck, 1986; Dweck, 1999). This psychological concept has been widely applied in the realm of career development, significantly shaping individuals' decisions, persistence and success in their professional journeys. In the context of career decision-making, individuals with a mastery orientation focus on learning and skill development while those with a performance orientation, are driven by external validation and success markers (Locke & Latham, 2002; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2004). This approach has been instrumental in understanding workplace motivation, influencing professional development choices, fostering adaptability in the face of challenges and informing leadership strategies.

Applying the Goal Orientation Approach to the academic context, individuals with a mastery orientation in academia demonstrate a genuine love for learning and a commitment to the pursuit of knowledge. Scholars engaging in continuous research and skill development exemplify this orientation, driven by a passion for deepening the understanding of a specific subject (Dweck, 1986). Conversely, a performance-oriented goal orientation in academia may lead individuals to pursue an academic career for external validation and recognition of their achievements, such as publications, awards and academic honours (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2004). Additionally, an academic career provides individuals with autonomy and the opportunity to contribute to society through teaching, research and mentorship, aligning with socially oriented goals (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

In this study, the Goal Orientation Approach is directly applicable to understanding students' enrolment in cooperative programs at the Moshi Co-operative University. This approach elucidates

how individuals' motivations and approaches toward goals influence their choices and actions. Specifically, it helps to discern whether students are driven by intrinsic motivations, such as a love for learning or by external validation, such as seeking employment opportunities. Thus, the Goal Orientation Approach serves as a valuable lens for analysing factors influencing students' decisions within the cooperative education framework at MoCU.

Empirical Review

A number of studies have been conducted pertaining to cooperative education and training, both in developed and developing nations. However, findings are not enough to address the reasons why University students at the Mosi Co-operative University decide to enrol into cooperative specialised programs. Anania (2018) conducted a study on co-operative education and training, exploring factors such as fund availability and the number of trainers and trainees. While the study provided valuable insights, it lacked a participatory approach involving cooperative members' perspectives, leaving a gap that this study seeks to fill.

Similarly, Hayward (2016) delved into international cooperation for education in developing countries, highlighting benefits of regional and international initiatives for cooperative education. However, the study lacked empirical evaluations of the outcomes and challenges of these initiatives. Likewise, Hayward (2017) examined the role of international cooperation and partnerships in supporting higher education development in Africa but lacked empirical evaluation. These gaps provide an opportunity for the current study to contribute essential insights by providing empirical evaluations within the context of cooperative education at Moshi Co-operative University.

Johnston (2016) explored the impact of globalization on cooperative education, identifying factors such as changing demands in the global labor market. However, the study lacked a comparative analysis of cooperative education models in different countries. This deficiency creates a gap that this study aims to address by providing a comparative analysis and offering insights into factors influencing students' decisions to enrol in cooperative programs at Moshi Co-operative University.

In Kavuta's (2013) investigation into factors impeding cooperative member education provision in Tanzania, hindrances such as fund inadequacy and inefficient trainers emerged. However, the absence of a participatory approach involving cooperative members' views and experiences offers an opportunity for this study to contribute valuable insights. By incorporating cooperative members' perspectives, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of challenges faced by students in choosing cooperative programs at the Moshi Co-operative University.

Mwakilama (2019) investigated the role of cooperative education in enhancing graduates' employability in Tanzania but lacked a specific focus on the factors influencing students' enrolment in cooperative programs. Thomas (2020) advocated for more international cooperation in education but lacked a specific focus on challenges and opportunities of cooperative education in developing countries, especially in Africa. Lawrence (2023) explored the effect of cooperative education and training on the performance of agricultural marketing cooperative societies but lacked the participatory approach involving cooperative members' perspectives. Addressing this gap, this study sought to contribute valuable insights into reasons behind students' decisions to enroll in cooperative programs.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative paradigm, aiming to explore multifaceted factors influencing students' enrolment in cooperative programs at MoCU. Qualitative research allows for a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives, experiences and motivations, providing insight into the contextual and situational influences guiding their decisions (Hollweck & Yin, 2014). The researcher chose the focused single-case design, focusing exclusively on MoCU as the singular provider of cooperative education programs. This approach facilitated an exhaustive examination within the distinctive academic context of MoCU.

Study Area

This study took place at Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU) in Tanzania, the sole institution in the country offering cooperative programs from certificate to PhD level. MoCU's unique position as a dedicated centre for cooperative education makes it an ideal location for this study (Kalineza &

Msonganzila, 2015; Akaro & Mkulu, 2020). Again, MoCU's designation as a Centre of Excellence in Co-operative and Business Management Training by the East African Community underscores its significance (MoCU, 2020). As such, studying cooperative education at MoCU provides insights into the dynamics of cooperative training and subsequent impact on the broader cooperative sector. Additionally, MoCU's comprehensive range of cooperative-related programs offers a rich context for understanding students' motivations and experiences in enrolling in cooperative programs (MoCU, 2020).

Population and Sampling

The study involved a sample of 50 students from Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU) in Tanzania, selected using purposive sampling to ensure diverse perspectives. Purposive sampling allowed for the selection of participants with varied backgrounds and experiences in cooperative education. This approach aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of factors influencing students' enrolment in cooperative programs. The sample included students from different academic levels and demographic backgrounds, providing rich insights into the dynamics of cooperative education at MoCU. Through interviews and document reviews, data was collected to explore the multifaceted influences guiding students' decisions. This sampling technique facilitated a thorough examination within the unique academic context of MoCU, offering valuable insights into the complexities of cooperative education enrolment.

Instruments

Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary review. Semi-structured interviews elicited insights directly from students regarding their reasons for enrolling in cooperative programs. Documentary review involved analyzing admission documents from 2020 to 2022 to provide historical context and track the evolution of cooperative education admission processes. Focus group discussions took place with third-year and second-year students to gain deeper insights into their perspectives on cooperative programs.

Validity and Reliability

Thematic analysis, guided by the guidelines of Miles and Huberman (1994), ensured the credibility and reliability of the data. Transcription, translation, categorization, coding and interpretation identified

emergent themes. Participant quotes and quantified responses using tables reinforced the credibility and clarity of findings (Saldaña, 2015). Triangulation of data sources, member audits, and an audit trail involving colleagues enhanced the study's reliability.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Data analysis involved a simultaneous approach, with interview and focus group data transcribed and analyzed using content analysis. This process encompassed data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions. Atlas.ti 7 software assisted in coding, categorization and identification of themes and patterns across the dataset, ensuring a systematic and rigorous approach to data analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher followed ethical guidelines. He ensured explicit informed consent from all participants, ensuring their comprehensive understanding of the study's purpose, objectives and voluntary participation. He also ensured confidentiality through code representation of participants' names, ensuring the ethical use of obtained information.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents results by research questions that guided the study.

Research Question 1: What are the contextual factors influencing students' choice of cooperative programs?

The first theme that emerged from the data analysis was the contextual factors influencing students' choice of cooperative programs. Through interviews and focus group discussions, the study revealed that the environments in which students are exposed have an influence on the students' choice of the cooperative programs. More specifically, study participants emphasized the significant influence of their environment, particularly the role of parents, friends, teachers and other family members in shaping their career decisions. According to the data presented in Table 1, a substantial percentage of students cited parents (38%), friends (68%), teachers (31%), and other family members (24%) as influential factors in their decision-making process. Additionally, role models emerged by 59% of participants. These findings underscore the importance of considering external influences in understanding students' motivations and decisions regarding cooperative education presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Contextual Factors Influencing Students' Choice of Cooperative Programs

Factor	Frequency	Percent
Parents	225	38
Friends	217	68
Teachers	100	31
Other family members	76	24
Role models	189	59

The combination of parental guidance, peer influence, teacher advice, family dynamics and the inspiration drawn from role models collectively shapes an individual's decision when choosing an academic program. Again, the personal values, interests and aspirations instilled into students by the parents play a crucial role in the decision-making process. For instance, parents often played a significant role in determining the affordability of certain academic programs. Moreover, the parents' cultural and familial expectations can heavily influence a student's choice. Parents may encourage or discourage certain fields, based on their values and beliefs about success. Confirming the roles of parents in choosing academic programs, one student had the following to say:

For me, joining a cooperative program was a matter of time. My father did it and he enjoys his work as a lecturer. Although I have been asking myself if I can really teach, my performance still encourages me and I will make sure I do my level best to remain as a tutorial assistant after my graduation" (Student 7, 11th January 2024).

Friends on their side might have influence in terms of peer pressure and sharing interests with fellows. Peer pressure can have a considerable impact on a person's decision. Peer pressure might influence someone to choose a program that is popular among the social circle or matches their friends' choices. In terms of sharing interests with fellow friends, similar interests among friends can lead to shared academic pursuits. This might have contributed to the decision-making process.

Teachers are the most influential group in students' career choices through guidance and mentoring. These findings are because teachers can provide valuable insights into a student's strengths and interests. Personal connections with teachers who are passionate about a particular subject can inspire students to pursue related academic programs. In addition, teachers are always educational

counsellors to most students. Speaking of a teacher, one study participant had the following to say:

For sure, our lecturers have their contribution when it comes into why I chose cooperatives over other programs. We can see them, they have a good life, there are gaps in cooperatives which are yet to be filled and this is what they always preach" (Student 9, 11th January 2024).

The other group mentioned by the students is other family members. The findings related to extended family influence, which is typically African in nature, might include grandparents, aunts, uncles and other family members who may share their own experiences and perspectives, affecting the decision-making process. Again, family expectations can be connected to extended family members who may contribute to shaping expectations and preferences regarding academic choices. One of the study participants had the following to say:

I was motivated by my uncle who was among the first graduates of a degree program in cooperatives and since then, he was always telling me to study it. Because he had a good life and was very wise, I decided to study so as to be like him" (Student 6, 11th January 2024).

The last group, which is most influential to one's academic career choice, is role models. As per the findings, 189 (59%) study participants reported that inspirational figures influenced their academic choices. Looking up to a particular professional or public figure inspired the study participants to follow a similar academic path. Through role models, a number of career success stories were reported to have attracted some students to enroll into the cooperative specialization. Success stories of individuals in specific academic fields further served as motivation and influenced the choice of academic programs. The following response from a student confirms the influence of role models in choosing academic careers:

I firstly started studying CMA at a certificate level but later, I was convinced to change and I did a diploma in human resource Management. One day I was surprised to see a person who inspires me preaching about cooperatives and the way cooperatives can change someone's life. For sure, I did not wait too much, when the degree program started, I think I was the first or second person to apply, and it was no other program but BA CMA which I am currently undertaking (Student 10, 11th January 2024).

The influence of role models is interconnected and multifaceted. The combination of parental guidance, peer influence, teacher advice, family dynamics and the inspiration drawn from role models collectively shape an individual's decision when choosing an academic program. These influences collectively contribute to the intricate process of academic program selection, with personal values, interests, and cultural expectations playing pivotal roles.

These findings concur with those McCall (2021) who argued as follows:

The tendency to choose a particular occupation, the internal permission to choose according to this preference and to function successfully as a professional all depend on the relationships with key people, especially the parents, during childhood and also on the career choices of these key people.

The responses also concur with those of Workman (2015) and Eldegwy et al (2022) who reported the power of people in the closer circle of friends, family and academia that influence students when it comes to career choice.

The study findings concur with the Goal Orientation approach in a number of ways. Firstly, the goal orientation approach underscores the idea that individuals often strive to find meaning in their lives and careers. This perspective is in harmony with the external influences discussed in the findings. Participants emphasized the importance of relationships, cultural expectations and success stories in shaping their academic decisions. The narratives presented by the students align with the notion that the tendency to choose a particular occupation is influenced by relationships with key

people during childhood, as noted by Workman, (2015).

Furthermore, the findings provide insights that support the goal orientation approach's emphasis on the multifaceted nature of individuals' decisions. The combination of parental guidance, peer influence, teacher advice, family dynamics and inspiration from role models collectively contribute to shaping academic choices. This alignment with the goal orientation approach acknowledges the complexity of factors influencing individuals' decisions and emphasizes the interconnectedness of various influences in shaping academic and career paths.

Research Question 2: How do opportunities influence students' choice of Cooperative Programs?

The second objective of this study was to establish whether opportunities available in the cooperative sector acted as a catalyst for University students to enroll into cooperative related academic programs. The study revealed that employment prospects and employment opportunities created by cooperatives to the University graduates attracts most of the students to enroll into cooperative programs and not others. The findings further categorized the opportunities mentioned by respondents into two major groups, namely academic related opportunities (68%) and economic/financial opportunities (98%) as follows:

The Influence of Academic Opportunities

One of the themes that emerged from the findings was the extent to which academic related factors (education opportunities) could motivate university students to enroll in the Cooperative program at the university level. Interviews held with students showed that most of them joined the program because they would become cooperative professionals. Others argued that they joined this program because they had the required academic qualifications, while to some others, this was a continuation of further studies. One student, for example, pointed out the following:

To me, cooperative means everything because I hold a Diploma in cooperatives and now I am doing a degree in it. I want to improve much in this and, one day, I can even become a professor in this field and I shall be able to some extent educate people of all ages to meet their

educational needs (Student 8, 11th January 2024).

Another student reported:

I was influenced to join cooperative program because I possess qualifications required and my first degree will enable me to add qualifications as well as upgrade my knowledge including skills which are essential for my future professional career (Student 9, 11th January 2024).

Those statements implied that students never joined a cooperative program not without a reason. The first respondent joined the course after completing a Diploma in cooperative program. Others, with a similar view, said that they benefited both academically and professionally after graduating in the same program. They narrated further that, academically, they were competent at work compared to the time before attending certificates and diploma courses. Furthermore, as per the second respondent on this question, the former experience in cooperative programs enabled them to be professionally recognized by employers, a situation which caused the latter to promote them. In this regard, they joined cooperative programs expecting that after graduation they would be more academically and professionally recognized by their employers and other internal as well as external firms, which deal with Cooperative program and training.

Academic Specialization and Continuity

The second theme that emerged under academic opportunities that influence students to enroll into the cooperative programs was the need for academic specialization and continuity. Most of the study participants (95%) reported that they enrolled into further stages of the cooperative program after finishing the first one, while some few (5%) reported that the cooperative program in which they were enrolled were new or beginners. More specifically, the findings revealed that most of the diploma students (DCMA) enrolled in their programs since they started with CMA at their certificate level, hence the program was compatible to what they had started. The majority (88%) of the degree students (BCMA) who reported that they had a DCMA and CMA background gave similar responses. One of the study participants reported:

Most of us need to specialize. Therefore, for me for example, it is very difficult to jump from cooperatives to other programs since I firstly enrolled in cooperatives. Even my future will remain cooperatives. There is no need to fumble about with other programs which we do not have background with." (Student 15, 11th January 2024).

Therefore, education opportunities available through cooperatives might have acted as a catalyst towards students' enrolment in cooperative program. This outlook corresponds with that of Abe and Chikoko (2020) who noted that striving to find meaning in one's life is one of the primary motivational force in man. People choose an occupation that enables them to satisfy needs that were unfulfilled in their childhood, and actualize dreams passed on to them.

Research Question 3: How do employment opportunities influence students' choice of cooperative programs?

The third objective of this study examined the way employment opportunities motivated university students to enroll in cooperative programs. University students enrolled into the cooperative programs because after their graduation they would get employment. When asked how cooperatives would ensure employment compared to other programs, most of the students (70%) attributed cooperatives to a few areas, which employ a big number of people in Tanzania as people can employ themselves, they can join cooperative organizations and they are multipurpose. One of the study participants responded as follows;

You know, in our country, whenever you join a course you should first think of your future and not just to be influenced by the mob psychology. Frankly speaking, I am just in need of employment, being it a public or employing myself. What I know and I am sure of, is that a cooperative sector is still vacant compared to other sectors because the only university that trains cooperative specialists is MoCU. I know, if God wishes, my employment is assured and having settled for a while, I shall find the means by which I can improve my life. This is just capital to me and I will use it to improve my life (Student 11, 11th January 2024).

It would appear, therefore, that employment opportunities had a significant role to play in students' motivation to join the cooperative programs. However, people differ in their motives for studying. Abe and Chikoko, (2020) who argued that the choice of a career is a complex and multifaceted process, that includes all the spheres of a person's life including the available opportunities, supports this.

Contrary to people who are still searching for employment opportunities, the findings from people who were employed already revealed their thirsty for cementing their academic progress. When asked why, most of the respondents who had already been employed said that a person who is academically higher than the other in an organization is more advantaged, as such he/she can even get promotions and other favors connected to such an employment. Representing the general consensus, one respondent said"

When I was firstly employed, my boss encouraged us to keep on improving our careers, the aim being minimizing a number of people to whom you must report. Again, it is through your education, that even promotions and appointments in higher posts will favor you. So, I am also motivated to improve, but through this specialization" (Student 17, 11th January 2024).

The implication behind this response is that individuals already employed in the cooperative sector recognize the intrinsic value of academic progression for career advancement. The student's acknowledgment of the advantage gained through higher academic qualifications aligns with the broader trend observed in the findings. It suggests that pursuing cooperative programs at the university level is perceived not only as an avenue for personal growth but also as a strategic move for career development.

The emphasis on continuous improvement and the pursuit of higher qualifications underscores a commitment to professional excellence. This resonates with the idea that individuals, particularly those already employed, view education as a means to enhance their skills and competencies, ultimately positioning themselves for promotions and increased responsibilities within their organizations. The student's perspective reflects a goal-oriented approach to education, emphasizing the tangible

benefits of academic specialization in the cooperative sector.

The study findings on Opportunities Influencing Students' Choice of Cooperative Programs align with the Goal orientation approach in several key aspects. The investigation into the role of opportunities in the cooperative sector, driven by the goal of career success, reveals that university students consider various factors in their academic choices. The study underscores that employment prospects and opportunities provided by cooperatives strongly attract students, highlighting the goal-oriented nature of their decision-making. Additionally, the examination of academic opportunities influencing students' choice aligns with the goal orientation approach, emphasizing meaningful and goal-driven careers. The study displays students' motivations centered on becoming cooperative professionals, acquiring qualifications, and advancing knowledge for future professional careers, resonating with the goal orientation perspective.

Moreover, the study identified academic specialization and continuity as crucial themes influencing students to enroll in cooperative programs, reflecting a goal-oriented approach to academic progression within the cooperative sector. The findings reveal that the majority of participants opt for further stages of cooperative programs, aligning with the goal orientation approach's emphasis on continuous improvement and specialized knowledge acquisition for achieving long-term career objectives.

Research Question 4: What are the individual factors influencing students' enrolment into cooperative programs?

The researcher further examined the extent to which individual related factors determined enrolment in cooperative programs. From the findings, most of the students argued that they chose cooperative programs because they liked it and cooperative programs motivated them. To represent the consensus, one of the students made the following comments: "I am taking this course because I like it. I am in fact intrinsically motivated and I wish to excel in this career, that's why cooperative program is my choice" (Student 12, 11th January 2024).

The statements corresponds with the work of Charokar and Dulloo (2022) who pointed that self-

directed learning is an important form of individual learning. By considering the nature of cooperative programs, motivation is a necessary feature of self-directed learning.

Another factor reported by most of the study participants was usefulness/relevance of the cooperative programs in their daily life. During interview sessions, students liked the contents available in the cooperative studies since they directly connected to daily life. Some of the important contents mentioned include managerial accounting, microfinance, business law and agricultural cooperative. Others include business enterprises, formal and informal financial cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, mining, housing, specialized skills and transport. The rest are conflict management, entrepreneurship, finance and investment, insurance and risk management, policy development, financial accounting, modelling and forecasting, governance and leadership, lobbying and advocacy techniques, banking, procurement and supply chain, project planning and management, strategic business planning and management. One of the study participants said:

Cooperative programs consist of issues which we exactly experience in our daily life hence most of us achieve best performance that attracts others. Most of us show a positive reaction except few students who think cooperative program is about dealing with illiterates and it lacks opportunities (Student 16, 11th January 2024).

From the quotation above, individuals are more likely to pursue educational opportunities that they perceive as directly useful and applicable to their lives. These findings align with those of Abe and Chikoko (2020) who emphasizes the significance of practical relevance in educational decision-making. This suggests that individuals are inclined to engage with educational content that resonates with their experiences and perceived needs. Such alignment between curriculum content and real-world relevance not only enhances student motivation, engagement and performance but also enhances the overall effectiveness of educational initiatives.

These findings are congruent with the Goal Orientation Approach, particularly the mastery-oriented orientation, which emphasizes the pursuit of competence and mastery over tasks (Dweck, 1986; Locke & Latham, 2002; Skaalvik & Skaalvik,

2004). By recognizing and addressing learners' practical needs and experiences, educational institutions can better cater to diverse motivations, ultimately fostering greater engagement and success in cooperative programs. However, the presence of dissenting views among some participants underscores potential divergences in individual perceptions and motivations, necessitating further exploration and refinement in program design and communication strategies. These insights provide valuable guidance for educational practitioners and policymakers aiming to optimize the effectiveness and relevance of cooperative education initiatives.

Another factor that was raised by students when asked to state the reasons for their choice of cooperative program was Professional Development, reported by four of the study participants. Some students joined cooperative specializations because they only develop what was initially started. When questioned, study participants stated that they were working in different co-operative departments as officers, accountants, managers and some were board members of SACCOS and AMCOS. Representing the consensus, one study participant said:

I am an employee of a SACCOS in Namanyere, so I applied DCMA because I want to improve my career and become more competent. Sometimes it is challenging for an employee to be incompetent, especially when there are new demands that need more skills" (Student 16, 11th January 2024).

The implication raising from the quotation is that professional development makes people from different cadres seek stages higher than those they possessed before admission. Coupled with other reasons, such as possession of employment, individuals choose not to diverge from their area of specialization. These findings concur with those of Gargalcano et al, (2023) who reported that individuals are intrinsically motivated to pursue educational opportunities that align with their personal and professional goals. The profound implication suggests that professional development serves as a significant motivator for individuals from diverse backgrounds to pursue higher levels of competence. This aligns with the Goal Orientation Approach, particularly the mastery-oriented orientation, which emphasizes the pursuit of

competence and mastery over tasks (Dweck, 1986; Locke & Latham, 2002). By recognizing and addressing the aspirations for professional development among learners, educational institutions can better cater to diverse motivations, ultimately fostering greater engagement and success in cooperative programs.

The study findings on individual factors concur with the Goal orientation approach in a number of ways. Firstly, most students chose the cooperative program out of intrinsic motivation and personal preference. The emphasis on liking the course and being intrinsically motivated aligns with the Goal orientation approach, emphasizing the pursuit of meaningful and personally fulfilling career paths. As highlighted by one student, their choice of the cooperative program was driven by a genuine interest in excelling in that career, displaying an intrinsic motivation that resonates with the principles of self-directed learning, as suggested by Gargalicano et al, (2023).

Research Question 5: What are the government related factors that influence students' enrolment into cooperatives?

This section sought to establish how the government's direct selection of students into cooperative programs affects their academic choices. Out of 40 study participants, 32 (80%) reported that they enrolled in cooperative programs because they were selected by the government from form four, while only 8% said that the government's selection had no influence on their decision. One respondent, for instance, reported, "I was selected directly by the government from form four³. Therefore, I had no choice and my parents also accepted⁵. That is why I am currently studying this course" (Student 18, 11th January 2024). Another respondent said, "Most of us were selected by the government⁴. You can't imagine, I didn't even know the existence of this University, and even the cooperative programs, but when I was selected, I travelled all the way from Songea to Moshi" (Student 19, 11th January 2024).

These quotations suggest that the government's selection process has a strong influence on students' enrolment in cooperative programs, as it limits their options and determines their academic paths. Moreover, the quotations indicate that students and parents trust the government's decisions and follow them without much resistance, even if they have to travel long distances or study unfamiliar subjects.

This implies that the government has a high level of authority and credibility in the education sector, and that, students and parents value the opportunities and benefits that the government provides through cooperative education.

The findings of this section are consistent with the Goal orientation approach, which emphasizes the role of external influences and structures in shaping individuals' academic choices (Dweck, 1986; Locke & Latham, 2002). According to this approach, individuals may pursue certain academic goals based on the expectations and incentives set by external agents, such as the government, rather than their own intrinsic interests or motivations. The government's selection of students into cooperative programs can be seen as an external factor that influences their academic choices, as it determines their eligibility, availability, and accessibility to cooperative education. The government's selection process may also affect students' attitudes and behaviors towards cooperative education, as it may create a sense of obligation, compliance, or gratitude among students and parents. Therefore, the findings of this section support the idea that the government plays a pivotal role in academic choices, especially in the context of cooperative education.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

In the light of the findings, this study sheds light on factors influencing students' enrolment in cooperative programs at the Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU) in Tanzania. The cooperative sector, despite facing challenges in societal performance, has witnessed a notable increase in student enrolment over the past five years. The contextual factors shaping students' decisions are diverse and interconnected, involving influences from parents, friends, teachers, family members and role models. These influences collectively contribute to the intricate process of academic program selection, with personal values, interests and cultural expectations playing pivotal roles.

Opportunities provided by cooperative programs, both academic and economic, influence students' choices. Academic opportunities, including the prospects of becoming cooperative professionals and the need for specialization, act as motivating factors. The perceived employment prospects within the cooperative sector, self-employment opportunities, and the unique offerings of MoCU in

cooperative education serve as catalysts for enrolment.

Individual factors, such as personal liking, intrinsic motivation and the perceived relevance of cooperative program content to daily life, play a crucial role in shaping students' preferences. Professional development is a driving factor for some students, reflecting the desire to enhance their competence in response to evolving demands within the cooperative sector. Finally, government factors, particularly direct selection by the government, emerged as influential in students' decisions to undertake cooperative programs. The high level of trust in government decisions indicates the significance of policy and planning in shaping academic program choices.

Recommendations

From the conclusions, a number of recommendations can be drawn to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of cooperative education at Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU). Firstly, the complex challenges facing the cooperative sector underscore the necessity for strengthened collaborative efforts among educational institutions, the government and cooperative organizations. This collaborative approach can facilitate joint research initiatives, capacity-building programs and policy advocacy to address systemic issues hindering the sector's growth.

Secondly, there is a pressing need for the cooperative sector to adapt and diversify its educational offerings. Embracing non-traditional cooperative enterprises and aligning educational programs with the evolving demands of the industry will ensure that graduates are adequately prepared for the complexities of the sector. Additionally, the study underscores the pivotal role of effective career guidance in influencing students' program choices. Therefore, there is a need to enhance career guidance programs to provide students with comprehensive insights into the unique advantages and opportunities offered by cooperative programs. Furthermore, recognizing the intrinsic motivation expressed by students, continuous professional development initiatives should be implemented to enhance graduates' skills, keep them abreast of industry trends, and maintain their competitiveness in the job market.

Regular evaluations of cooperative programs are essential to ensure their ongoing relevance and

effectiveness. Engaging students, alumni and industry stakeholders in this evaluation process will provide valuable feedback for continuous improvement. Given the significant influence of government factors on students' decisions, it is crucial to revisit and update the cooperative development policy. Establishing an effective oversight body will support the proper implementation of cooperative programs and initiatives, ensuring alignment with national development goals.

Finally, conducting longitudinal studies on student outcomes is essential to assess the long-term impacts of cooperative programs accurately. Understanding graduates' career trajectories and contributions to the cooperative sector will inform program enhancements and ensure their continued relevance in addressing the evolving needs of society.

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