

Effect of Kenya Public Service Internship Program (PSIP) on Employment of Young Women in Kenya.

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Abstract

Research has shown that internship programs empower youth by offering them practical and employability skills, enhancing their chances of obtaining meaningful employment after demonstrating work readiness. In Kenya, the Public Service Commission acknowledges the need for graduates to engage in internships and introduced a graduate internship program. However, data shows that most graduates from colleges and universities in Kenya do not undertake internship programs or practicums due to the unavailability of opportunities. At the same time, there is a concern over the value and relevance of the skills that young men and women possess and wish to bring to the workforce. This study evaluated Kenya's Public Service Internship Program, which was launched in 2016, and assessed its effect on young women and men's career progression, income and employment from a gender perspective. According to employment data, women are adversely impacted; female employment participation in the job market is 29.5% compared to their male counterparts at 36%. By the time the study commenced, empirical data in Kenya was lacking to show the impact of the PSIP program on women's economic empowerment, which was what this study envisaged to establish. The study was grounded on the Social Relations Framework for Gender Analysis. This framework was used alongside the Theory of Change to generate knowledge on the programme's effectiveness. The study used both primary and secondary data, and descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to understand the data. A cross-sectional research design was adopted. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions. The study sample comprised a group of 69 young women and 70 men who were exposed to work readiness programs and another group who were not. The snowballing method was used to reach out to the targeted respondents. The data was collected from three counties in Kenya, namely Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. Quantitative data was analysed using STATA, while qualitative data was analysed thematically. Although the study revealed a positive correlation between participation in the program and employment, career progression and income, unemployment still remains a major challenge in Kenya. Young men had a better probability of being employed compared to young women. It also emerged that there is a mismatch between areas of specialisation and placement. Despite the unemployment challenges, the programs should be upscaled and include profit and non-profit agencies to accommodate more beneficiaries. Additionally, the program needs to build their entrepreneurial capacities and provide resource support. Learning institutions should encourage students to be job creators instead of job seekers.

Keywords: Skills, Employment, Career progression, internship, income

1.0 Introduction

Work readiness includes the knowledge, fundamental skills, and attitudes required to perform a specific job. Through Apprenticeship, Internship, and Mentorship (AIM) programmes, young people can improve their employability and work readiness. These programs can help new graduates validate their job choices, develop positive work attitudes, and impart practical skills.

Most of the studies done globally on work- readiness show that there is a need for the development of employable skills or work readiness for graduates as they are unable to explore their careers due to skills deficiencies (Bilal, Rohani, Mumtaz and Haryanni, 2015). However, different countries adopt different methods to address the problem. According to Becker (1964), a strong proponent of human capital theory states that the knowledge, skills and capabilities implanted in graduates are key drivers of competitiveness and success of any nation. In most countries, internships have yielded positive results (Slamet & Rochmad, 2020; Rocio, Herrera, Lurier, Regan and Riege, 2013 & Kate, Jenkinson & Amanda and Benson, 2016).

Internships are fast gaining popularity in institutions of higher learning across the globe. This also applies to Africa, with many universities and colleges making it a requirement for certain courses, especially those requiring practical knowledge (Roots, 2020). They are not only viewed as a means of transforming the theoretical knowledge students possess into practical work experience but also as an opportunity for interns to explore different places, cultures, and sectors (Roots, 2020). In other cases, internships are useful when graduates use their theoretical knowledge in a related organisation after graduation, which is the subject of this study. Programs for internships are seen as a way to empower the nation's young people by giving them employable and practical skills, which will increase their chances of getting a meaningful job due to enhanced work readiness. The programs enable students to acquire practical skills and anticipate employers' work expectations (Kapareliotis *et al.*, 2019).

The Kenya National Employment Authority Act 2016 acknowledges the need for learners to engage in internships. For this reason, the National Employment Authority Act of 2016 mandates that students in tertiary learning institutions be placed in internship programs after completing their

studies (National Employment Authority, 2020). The authority partners with stakeholders such as universities, colleges, and public and private sector players to ensure that internship programs offered in Kenya are well coordinated and take place in accordance with applicable standards (National Employment Authority, 2020). There is also a provision for implementing, evaluating, and monitoring internship programs in the country. However, most Kenyan college and university graduates and universities do not participate in internship programs due to limited opportunities. Consequently, employers have raised concerns about the relevance of these graduates' skills (Ministry of Education, 2019). The current study evaluated the Kenya Public Service Internship Program (PSIP), which started in 2016. The initial cohort consisted of 400 Information Communication Technology (ICT) interns. This was later expanded to graduates from other fields of study. Yearly, 3,600 newly graduated male and female interns are placed in public institutions for a duration of one year to equip them with relevant skills required in the job market. There is a need to increase women in these programs because their participation in the labour market is 29.5 per cent compared to males, who are at 36 per cent (Owino *et al.*, 2016). There is a close relationship between internship and apprenticeship.

The aim of the Public Internship Policy is to enhance the employability of both men and women as advocated for in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, 2023 and the constitution of Kenya, 2010, Article 55. However, this objective has not been achieved. As per the Kenya Secondary Schools Examination Results released by the Ministry of Education for the year 2019, out of the 693,263 students who sat for the KCSE examination, only 145,341 were admitted into Universities, and 430,598 were admitted into Technical, Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) institutions (KNBS, 2020). The unsettling question is; what became of the 120,000 candidates who were not able to secure post-secondary education? This number increases yearly, gradually increasing the number of youths in need of opportunities for economic empowerment. The government is thus concerned about the employment of these youths who are not admitted to higher learning institutions. Girls are even more disadvantaged due to sociocultural expectations, which view them as ripe for marriage at that age. The problem is compounded by poverty, where the parents view the girls as sources of wealth emanating from dowry, which is paid for them when they get married.

There is a need to enhance the internship policy to embrace skills development from primary Schools to University. Since the number of students graduating from Universities and Tertiary Colleges outnumbers those who are being absorbed into the job market, the internship policy should devise better criteria for selecting interns. According to Nalugala (2020), there is a need to develop a model for inculcating the culture of work from an early age. The study recommends adopting an education system that equips learners with problem-solving skills as a tool for economic empowerment.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

It has been shown that work readiness programmes, such as internships, impart individuals with practical skills pertinent to excelling in any field or profession. Despite the benefits gained by students from work readiness programs, such as internships, many graduates (especially females) do not participate in them. Social, cultural and economic factors have hindered the exposure of girls and women to such programmes. The result is that girls and women continue lagging behind their male counterparts in work readiness and competitiveness in the job market. Moreover, Kenyan employers have raised concerns about the relevance of the skills possessed by young men and women. Empirical data in Kenya shows that women are the most affected in this regard. Female participation in the Kenyan job market is 29.5 per cent compared to males at 36 per cent (Owino *et al.*, 2016). Despite the fact that programmes for work readiness have been implemented in Kenya, there is limited empirical evidence to show whether these programmes work or not or the impact they have on women's economic empowerment. Thus, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Kenya Public Service Internship programme in enhancing young women's employment in both formal and non-formal sectors. Further, the Public Service Internship programme was evaluated to establish its effect on Women's school-to-work transition (SWT) and employment with a view to ensure women's economic empowerment (WEE) in Kenya. The data collected was used to demonstrate what works in the work readiness programmes and the career progression of those who undertook the programmes. This information will be vital to policymakers.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The objective of the study was to evaluate the impact of the Public Service Internship Policy (2016) on the employment of young women

1.4. Specific Questions

What is the impact of the Public Service Internship Policy (2016) on the employment of young women in Kenya?

1.5 Literature Reviewed

The Kenya National Employment Authority Act 2015 recommends the need for an internship during or after the successful completion of a person's learning and training. Participation in internship programmes improves the professionalism and technical aspects of the intern and is expected to increase employability. The Public Service Internship Policy (2016) was initiated to address skills gaps in graduates. The public service internship program is a result of this policy.

According to a pilot study conducted in Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nairobi counties on youth employment in Kenya, an internship program was found to have a positive effect on earnings among youth aged 15-29 years in the ratio of 2:3 for males and females, respectively (Zepeda *et al.*, 2014). However, there is a gap since youths who are not vulnerable were placed in an internship program in public service. Global and regional studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between work readiness and employment. However, empirical evidence showing whether the Kenya government policy internship program prepares young women for the world of work has not been done.

Studies have demonstrated the benefits students acquire in internship programs (Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010). However, other findings have shown that the internship experience has the potential to negatively influence students' intent to enter the labour market (Cunningham, Sagas, Dixon, Kent, & Turner, 2005). Nevertheless, work readiness programs may help beneficiaries clarify their career paths. Evidence shows that students have been used as sources of cheap labour rather than

being trained for their career growth and progression (King, 2009). These concerns involve the notion that interns are often used as cheap labour, completing routinised tasks rather than being trained and developed as students earning academic credit (Cunningham, Sagas, Dixon, Kent, & Turner, 2005).

These substandard internship arrangements sometimes violate federal labour laws (Schoepfer & Dodds, 2010). Students desire a challenging yet fair experience with clear responsibilities (Stratta, 2004). If this is missing, they will likely lose commitment and interest in the internship and pursuit of their career (Dixon, Cunningham, Sagas, Turner, & Kent, 2005). It is in this context that this study was formulated in order to address the above-mentioned challenges. It is expected that the internship program will help the youth to acquire and develop valuable technical and professional skills that help them gain related work experiential opportunities. Sessional Paper no.1 of 2019 proposes the implementation of a number of strategies, such as establishing a framework for post-training skills in the development of the national, internship and apprenticeship program, enhancing industrial and partnership linkages between industries and the education sector, provision of a knowledge management system on graduates and potential employers (Republic of Kenya, 2019). This study hoped to help develop a framework that can be used to increase young women's participation in internships and, hence, employment opportunities.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Social Relations Framework for Gender Analysis, which Naila Kabeer developed in the early 1990s in collaboration with policy-makers, academics, and activists. The framework is firmly anchored on structural feminist thinking, which focuses on the interchange between social relations and patriarchy (Weedon, 1997). The framework is based on various theoretical notions. The first one is the concept of development, considered as the process of increasing human well-being. The second concept refers to social relations. According to Kabeer, social relations are structural relationships that create and reproduce systemic differences in the positioning of groups of people. Thirdly, the framework relies on institutional analysis. The causes of gender inequality are not confined to the micro-level (household and family) but are reproduced across various institutions at all levels. Institutions are defined here as a framework of rules for achieving certain social or economic goals. They exist at macro (international

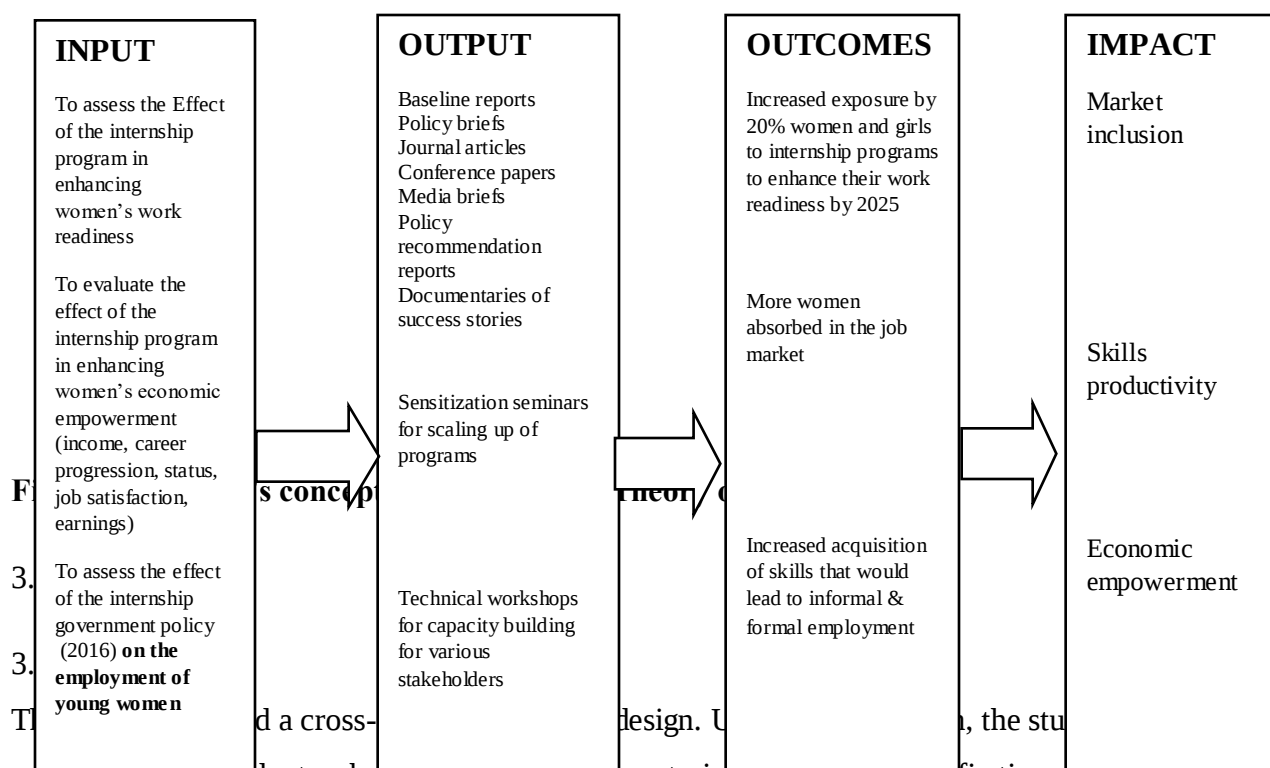
community), meso (the state, the marketplace) and micro-level (community, household). Regarding institutions, Kabeer challenges the ideological neutrality and the independence of institutions. Institutions produce, reinforce and reproduce social differences and inequalities. In addition, institutions are connected to each other and do not operate independently; a change at the national institutional level can affect institutions at other levels. Institutions vary across contexts and cultures, but Kabeer identifies some important common aspects that they share. They all possess the following five aspects of social relationships: rules, resources, people, activities and power. These dimensions are significant for analysing social inequality in general and gender inequality in particular. Examining institutions on the basis of their rules, practices, people, distribution of resources, and their authority and control structures helps one understand who does what, who gains, and who loses (which men and which women).

A fourth notion on which Kabeer builds this framework is gender policies and the different ways they can be categorised: Gender-Blind, Gender-Neutral, Gender-Sensitive, and Gender-Positive. Gender-blind policies consider men and women not to be equals. They use gender norms, roles and stereotypes that reinforce gender inequalities. Gender-neutral policies work within the existing gender division of resources and responsibilities and do not challenge them. The framework addresses strategic gender needs and transforms unequal gender relations to promote shared power control over resources, decision-making and support for women empowerment (ILO., 2010; Goulding, K., 2013; March, Smyth, & Mukhopadhyay, 1999). This framework was used as a tool to analyse the gender inequalities within the institutionalised distribution of resources, responsibilities and power relationships alongside the theory of change.

1.7 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) seeks to identify the overall /long-term goal that the intervention needs to achieve. Once this goal has been identified, ToC seeks to consider what conditions must be implemented to achieve the desired goal. The long-term outcome of our research was to improve exposure by 20% for women and girls to apprenticeship, internship and mentorship (AIM) programs to enhance their work readiness by 2025. The study includes considering the socio-demographic characteristics of the women, the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs in preparing women for work readiness and economic empowerment, and the effectiveness of

government policies on work readiness that influence more women being economically empowered through such programs, among other considerations. The study envisaged that achievement of the long-term goal would greatly be influenced by the extent to which women were aware of work readiness programs that were available to support them. Figure 1.1 briefly illustrates this study's conceptualisation of the theory of change.



a sample of respondents who share essential characteristics, e.g., the specific time the prospective candidates joined the program, current residence and age bracket, were considered. The data collected was used to estimate the effect of the programs on employment outcomes, income levels and the graduates' career choices. The study relied on primary data. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions.

Data for this study was derived from a survey conducted on the empowerment program in Kenya that the study evaluated: The Public Service Internship Program and the Government of Kenya mentorship program. The total estimated population considered for the three programs was 20,000.

The Yamane (1967) sample size formula was used to derive the sample size for the survey:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision (level of confidence). Given that our estimated population size was 20,000, at 95 percent level of confidence, our sample size was estimated as follows:

$$\frac{20,000}{1+20,000(0.05)^2}$$

$$= 392$$

This sample was divided into three programs, with a minimum sample size of 131 for each program. Policymakers, implementers, and supervisors were interviewed in all the programs. Further, focus group discussions were held at each site for all the programs. In this regard, the Public Service Internship Program, which this paper focuses on, had a sample of 139 respondents, consisting of 69 females and 70 males. Some had gone through the Public Service Internship Program (PSIP), while others had not.

3.2. Data Collection

The data was collected from three counties in Kenya: Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu regions. The selection of counties was based on the respondents' information, which was sourced from the programs' office in Nairobi. The tracer approach was used to identify those who received the intervention and those of similar characteristics who had not received it. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions. Therefore, the study sample comprised a group of young women and men exposed to the programs and another group that was not. This approach was necessary since the study needed to compare the outcomes for young women vis-à-vis those of young men, especially for the public service internship program. For a proper impact evaluation, it was also necessary to check the difference in outcome between those who had participated in the programs and those who had not.

3.3. Data Analysis

Each of the program was analysed as follows:

The study first employed a regression model to analyse the effect of PSIP on women's economic empowerment, where the dependent variable was the respondents' employment status. The

variable took the value 1 if it was reported that the individual held an employment position; and 0 otherwise. We estimated the following model;

$$y_i = \alpha_i + \phi D + \delta X_i + \gamma Z_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Where i denoted the individual (young woman/young man), y_i is the dependent variable capturing the employment status of the sampled individual. α_i is the intercept, D is a dummy with 1 if the individual is enrolled in the program and 0 otherwise; X_i is a vector of control variables, Z_i is a vector of peer characteristics while ε_i are i.i.d., mean 0 innovations. Necessary diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure the validity of the results. The coefficient of the D variable indicated the empowerment effect of the internship/mentorship/apprenticeship program. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis was conducted using STATA. Cross-sectional analytical approaches were used in this study.

4.0 Findings

4.1. Public Service Internship Program

Table 1 summarizes the study's quantitative data for the Public Service Internship Program (PSIP) to better explain our data.

Table 1: Sample Statistics for Key Variables (N=139)

Variable	Number	Relative Frequency (%)
Participation in PSIP		
Yes	81	58%
No	58	42%
Gender		
Female	69	50%
Male	70	50%
Employment Status		
Employed	69	50%

Not Employed	69	50%
Age		
20 – 30 Years	114	82%
30 – 40 Years	25	18%
Marital Status		
Single	95	68%
Married	44	32%
Highest Level of Education		
Diploma	7	5%
Degree	132	95%
Course Taken at College		
Humanities	37	27%
Business	36	26%
STEM	65	47%
Grade Achieved		
First Class (Equivalent)	2	1%
Second Class Upper (Equivalent)	101	73%
Second Lower (Equivalent)	32	23%
Pass	4	3%
Promotion		
Promoted	4	7%
Not Promoted	55	93%
Income		
Below 5,000	79	57%
5,001 - 20,000	18	13%
20,001 - 50,000	26	19%
Above 50,000	16	11%
Sector of Employment		
Education	5	4%
Productive	17	12%

Services	36	26%
Trade	2	1%
None	79	57%

Source: Authors Computations

The data presented in Table 1 captures a sample of 139 young women (50%) and men (50%), some of whom went through the public service internship program (58%) and others who did not (42%). A majority of the respondents (70%) learnt about the internship opportunity through digital platforms (social media and website), while 30 went through other means (print media, friends and others). Half of the sampled respondents (50%) were employed, while the other half were not. For the age bracket, 82% were in the 20 – 30 years bracket, while 18% were aged between 30 and 40 years, indicating that most persons in this age bracket were settled in life, and, therefore, the program was not of the essence to them. A majority of the respondents in the study were single (68%). Regarding the highest level of education, those with a Diploma were 7 (5%), while 132 (95%) had a degree. This shows the program's competitive nature, where those with a degree have a natural advantage over those with a diploma.

For those who had post-secondary school qualifications (certificate, diploma or degree), 37 (27%) had taken a course in humanities, 36 (26%) undertook a course in business, and 65 (47%) undertook a course in STEM. This shows that those with STEM-related courses had a higher advantage of joining the program compared to other disciplines. In their highest level of education, 2 respondents (1%) scored a first class (or its equivalent), 101 respondents (73%) achieved a second upper (or its equivalent), 32 respondents (23%) achieved a second lower (or its equivalent), while 4 respondents (3%) scored a pass (or its equivalent). The fact that few respondents had a first class (or equivalent) underscores the fact that high-scoring students may have progressed to higher learning or had secured better opportunities. Seven percent (7%) of the working respondents had been promoted at the time of the survey, while 93% had not been promoted. This implies that a majority of the respondents may not have acquired the requirements for promotion. Regarding income, 57% of the respondents had an income of less than Ksh. 5,000, 32% had an income of between Ksh. 5,001 and Ksh. 50,000, while 11% had an income of above Ksh. 50,000. For those who were working, 5 (4%) were in the education sector, 17 (12%) were in the productive sector,

36 (26%) were in the services sector, 2 (1%) were in the trade sector while 79 (57%) were mostly not in employment and thus not engaged in any sector.

4.1 a) Estimation Results

This study's key objective was to ascertain whether participation in an internship program influenced the employment outcome of young women in Kenya. It is important to note that the reasons that will cause a participant to hold an employment position are similar to the ones that will make a participant be admitted to an internship program. In this regard, we observed that **participation** in an internship program was an endogenous variable. To address the endogeneity problem, this study used a reduced-form model. The dependent variable (employment status) is binary; therefore, a probit /logit model can be applied. However, we also estimated a linear probability model (LPM) for the robustness check. The estimation results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression Results: Dependent Variable is Probability of Accessing Employment

	The LPM Model	Logit Model Marginal Effects	Probit Model Marginal Effects
Employment Status	Coefficient (t-statistic)	Coefficient (z-statistic)	Coefficient (z-statistic)
Participation (<i>cluster/county mean</i>)	0.772** (2.13)	0.787** (2.12)	0.805** (2.21)
Gender (<i>f=1; m=0</i>)	-0.145 (-1.63)	-0.142* (-1.73)	-0.145* (-1.79)
Age dummy (<i>1= 20-29; 2=30-40</i>)	-0.011 (-0.09)	-0.011 (-0.10)	-0.009 (-0.08)
Marital Status	0.007	-0.004	-0.004

<i>(m=1; 0 otherwise)</i>	(0.07)	(-0.05)	(-0.04)
Highest Edu. Level <i>(1 = degree; 2 = Postgrad)</i>	0.001 (0.00)	0.032 (0.12)	0.028 (0.12)
Grade Achieved <i>(1=C or below; 2=B; 3=A)</i>	0.202* (1.96)	0.196** (2.02)	0.196* (2.04)
Extracurricular Activity <i>(1=yes; 0 otherwise)</i>	-0.088 (-0.86)	-0.088 (-0.91)	-0.089 (-0.94)
Course Name: <i>(Business =the base category)</i>			
Humanities	0.116 (0.94)	0.113 (0.95)	0.118 (1.03)
STEM	0.143 (1.48)	0.143 (1.55)	0.146 (1.55)
Distance (km) from a participant's county to Nairobi)	-0.034** (-2.23)	-0.033** (-2.34)	-0.033* (-2.38)
Constant	0.126 (0.45)	-	-
	Number of obs = 137 F(10, 126) = 3.39 Prob> F = 0.0006 R-squared = 0.1439 Root MSE = 0.48239	Number of obs= 137 Wald chi2(10) = 20.35 Prob> chi2 = 0.0261 Logpseudo-likelihood = -84.34998 Pseudo R2 = 0.1117	Number of obs = 137 Wald chi2(10) = 22.28 Prob> chi2 = 0.0137 Log pseudo-likelihood = -84.2397 Pseudo R2 = 0.1129

Source: Author computations from research data

***, **, * significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively

To address endogeneity, the variable ‘*participation*’ was transformed to the ‘*mean participation*’ ratio, where respondents were categorised in clusters (on the basis of their home counties), and the participation ratio was generated by considering the number of respondents in the region that participated in an internship program divided by the total number of respondents in that county. Thus mean participation ratio varies by county so that all individuals in a given county have the same average participation ratio. However, individuals in a county have their own participation probabilities (1 for participation and 0 otherwise). In that regard, these individual-level participation rates are not used because they correlate with the employment equation's error term. In contrast, the error term associated with an individual's probability of employment is by construction unrelated to the average participation rate, as it is exogenous to an individual. The link between the instrument (cluster level average participation), the raw participation variable and employment is presented in Appendix II.

Predictions of employment status based on LPM, Logit and Probit Models

These are shown in Table 4. Where is table 3 that you refer to at end of the paper?

Table 4: Sum employmentstatusthat1 employmentstatusthat2 employmentstatusthat3

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Employmentsttusthat1	137	0.50365	0.16220	0.05233	0.86001
Employmentsttusthat2	137	0.50360	0.16422	0.09928	0.84402
Employmentsttusthat3	137	0.50365	0.16257	0.11026	0.83408

Source: Author computations from research data

The three models are stable, and the coefficient is well predicted. The predictive values presented in Table 4 for the three models (LPM, Logit, and Probit) have their mean values close to each other and maximum values less than 1, indicating that the LPM predicted values for employment status are within the unit interval as expected. From the estimations presented in Table 2, the probit model gives us the best results; we, therefore, select this model for interpretation.

From the probit model estimations, it is evident that participation in the internship program, gender and grade achieved are significant factors that influence the employment outcome of young people in Kenya. Specifically, the results of the gender variable indicate that young men have a 14.5% higher probability of being employed than young women. It, therefore, implies that in Kenya, young men are more likely to get job placement than young women. This is a finding that requires further interrogation in future research. The other finding is that there is a positive association between participating in the internship program and the likelihood of holding a job. This result is consistent with the result of the Instrumental Variable (IV) model presented in Appendix I. The internship program, therefore, contributes positively to the placement of young people in employment positions in Kenya and, therefore, should be upscaled.

The effect of the grade achieved in the highest institution of learning was also found to be statistically significant; those who attained better grades had a 19.6 % better chance of employment than those with lower grades. Young people in Kenya, especially young women, are encouraged to aim for better grades at the tertiary level to improve their probability of being employed. It was also revealed that 74.3% had second-class honours upper division compared to 1.4 % who had first-class honours among those interviewed. It can then be deduced that most of the students who attain first-class honours go for further studies. Women aspiring to enter the job market need to work hard to acquire higher grades to be competitive.

Additionally, taking a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) course at a tertiary institution also matters, but it is marginally not significant, probably due to the small sample size in our study. Young women should be encouraged to pursue courses in the STEM field since employers favour these skills in the market compared to skills in business studies and humanities. The distance from the participant's town of 'residence' to Nairobi, where the internship program is managed, was integrated into the model as a control variable, and its

estimated coefficient was found to be statistically significant. The implication of this finding is that young people living far away from Nairobi have a lesser chance of holding an employment position than those living in Nairobi County. Nairobi County is Kenya's economic hub; therefore, it is highly probable that it provides more employment opportunities for young people than other counties.

Further analysis shows that individual participation increases employment prospects. The negative sign for the coefficient on individual participation rate in the IV model's first stage is due to the automatic negative correlation between it and the cluster level participation level. That is, as the average participation ratio increases, an individual's chance of enrolling in the internship program declines because the internship places are fixed. Thus, the greater the number of youths enrolling, the smaller the probability that each of the youths will enrol. Indeed, the youths whose home counties are far from Nairobi have a lower chance of getting into the program. Since distance is a price-like variable, the demand curve for the internship is downward sloping, as expected.

4.1 b) Qualitative Results of the Public Service Internship Program

The relationship between career choice, income level and the public service internship program, specifically for young women, was analysed using the qualitative approach.

a) Career Choice

To profoundly understand career choice, the study first considered the course taken at college. Figure 2 presents the career path chosen by young women who underwent the PSIP program.

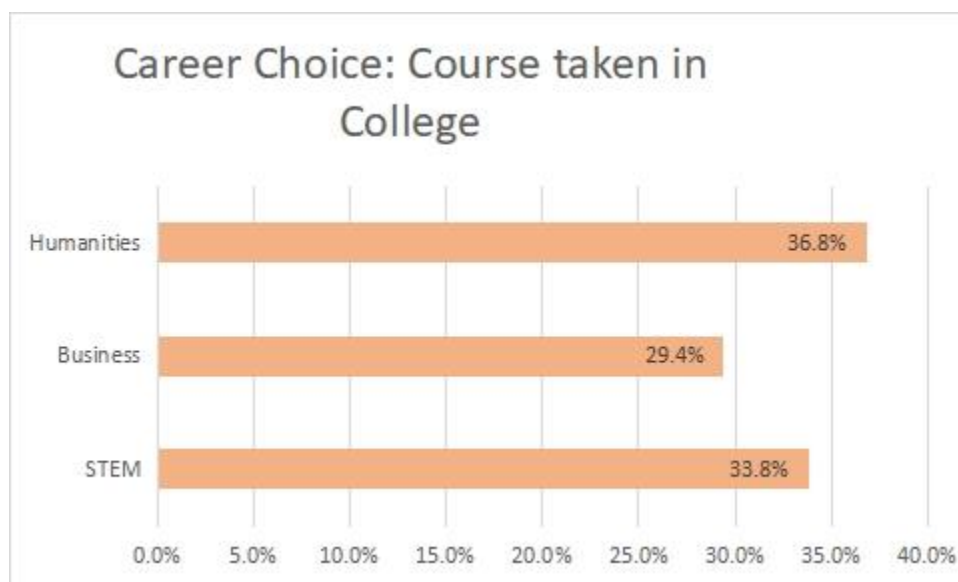


Figure 2: Career Choice

Data Source: Study Survey Data.

Of the young women who went through the PSIP program, 29.4% chose to pursue a business-related course, 33.8% chose a STEM course, and 36.8% pursued a humanities course in college. The findings suggest that the PSIP program attracted young women from STEM-related fields. However, the highest percentage of women was in the field of humanities. We chose to explore this further by considering the career placement of the young women who had gone through the PSIP, as demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Career Choice

Sector of Employment			
	Services	Productive	Row Total
Humanities	11 (18%)	4 (7%)	15
Business	5 (8%)	7 (12%)	12
STEM	25 (42%)	8 (13%)	33
Column Total	41	19	60

Source: Author Computations from Study Survey Data

Of 60 respondents who were employed, 19 were in the productive sector, which is a STEM-related field. It is important to note that in this study, the services sector comprised of Financial, Advisory, Hygiene, Human Resource and Security Services. The productive sector encompassed energy, tourism, agriculture, extractives and related sectors. Looking at Table 4, eleven (11) of the respondents (18% of the total) who pursued courses in humanities were employed in the services sector, while 4 (7% of the total) were in the productive sector. The remaining respondents who were employed and had pursued Business (5) and STEM (25) courses were working in the services sector. It is, therefore, clear that even after participating in a STEM course at their highest level of education, most of the respondents did not pursue a career in STEM but were in the services sector. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Wernick and Ledley (2020), who established that only 27.1% of students graduating with STEM degrees enter the STEM workforce.

Regarding accreditation to professional bodies, the interns gave diverse reasons for not having joined professional bodies. 29.5 % indicated that they were unaware of any professional body, while 15.8 % indicated that they were unaware of the procedure and key requirements. Another 20 % indicated financial constraints. Further, it is noted with concern that most of the interns have not joined professional bodies associated with their professions. This is due to a lack of awareness of procedures and key requirements for registration. They are also constrained by the fees charged for accreditation. Some focused on their studies, others felt that their priority was getting a job, while the remaining felt that they could join later in life.

Further, as far as co-curricular activities are concerned, the study revealed that those who participated in the internship program had a higher opportunity and chance of being absorbed in both the internship and job market. It is, therefore, important to encourage children to get involved in co-curricular activities. Currently, the new CBC curriculum aims to achieve the same.

Data from the interview schedules indicated that policymakers and implementers felt the entire program design should emphasise women and youth empowerment. They felt that more internship /attachment opportunities needed to be provided since the program is in high demand among the youth, especially to enable them to access and be competitive in the job market.

There are several benefits of the program to the young men and women. 42.6 % of the young women and men indicated that they got information about other job opportunities, networking with different professionals, and exposure to different careers, which was at 18.5%. A respondent said that “the program helped me make a decision of my future career choice”. Besides, 45.5 % indicated that there was an expansion of employment possibilities”. For example, a respondent confessed that “the program has made me move out of the box” and “I was able to take up space by creating a business that gives opportunities to other women.”

Further, there was an enhancement of young women's economic empowerment. 37.6 felt that the program enhanced their skills, enabling them to be employed or self-employed. For example, a given case is where a respondent said, “A woman who has gone through the program has helped me to acquire skills to make proper decisions that I have been unable to make” Otherwise, women who went through the program felt motivated and appreciated, which is a recipe for self-esteem.

Among the challenges expressed by the young men and women respondents was concern about the delay in the payment of stipends /grants, which interfered with their participation in the program. It was noted that once the interns have been dispatched, supervisors and implementers rarely monitor and evaluate them as a follow-up. They felt that there was a need for psycho-social support for those who take up these opportunities.

To improve the internship program, young men and women observed that most interns were deployed in areas that did not match their expertise and recommended matching of skills during internship placement. Further, both interns and those who were unsuccessful noted that they needed to collaborate with the government and public sector for more internship and job placement opportunities. Interns requested certification after completing the program to get job opportunities.

b) Income Levels

We then looked at the impact of participating in the Public Service Internship Program on income levels. We first considered the income levels of respondents who had participated in the PSIP program (both genders) when they were employed.

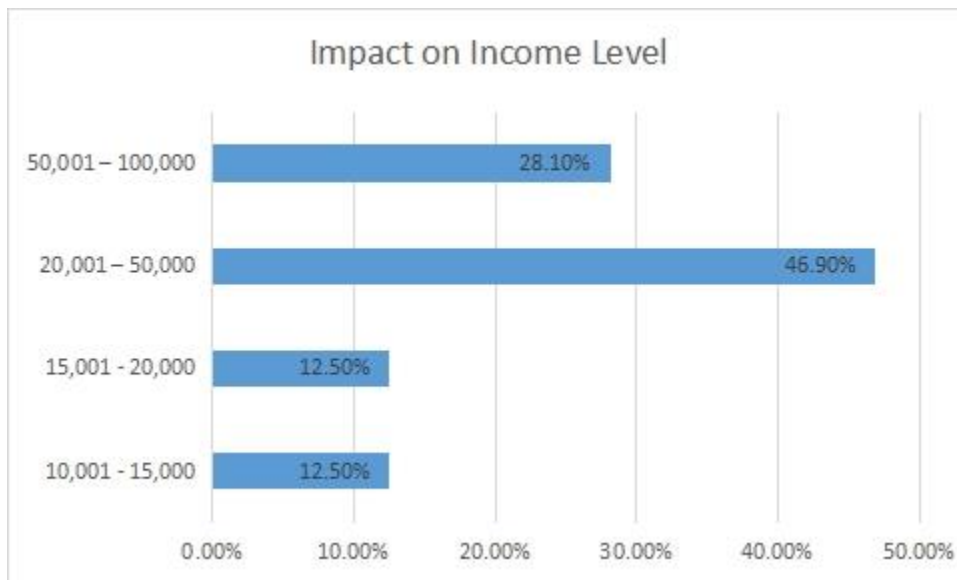


Figure 3: Impact of PSIP Program on Income Level

Data Source: Study Survey Data.

Figure 3 demonstrates that a majority (46.9%) of those who participated in the PSIP program and had jobs with moderate income levels between Ksh. 20,000 and Ksh. 50 000, while 28.1% had income levels between Ksh. 50,000 and Ksh. 100 000. Only 25% had a lower income. Specifying the analysis of young women, Figure 4 presents the results.

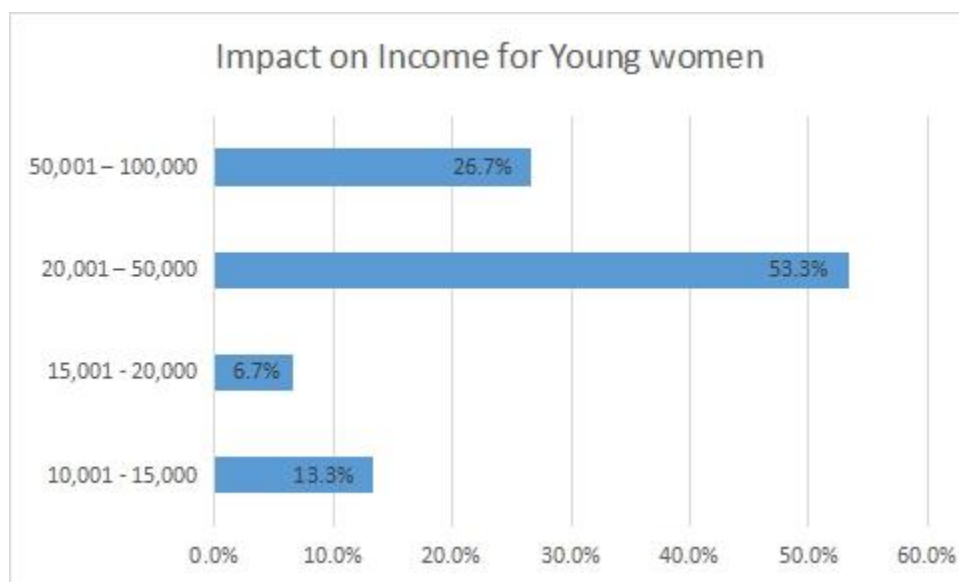


Figure 4: Impact of PSIP Program on Income Level for Young Women

Data Source: Study Survey Data.

Figure 4 demonstrates that a majority (53.3%) of young women who participated in the PSIP program and had gotten jobs had moderate income levels of between Ksh. 20,000 and Ksh. 50 000, while 26.7% had income levels of between Ksh. 50,000 and Ksh. 100 000. Only 20% had a lower income. This implies that the program was beneficial in empowering young women.

5. 0.

Conclusion

5.1 Public Service Internship Program (PSIP)

The study sought to establish the effect of the Public Service Internship Program on the employment of young women in Kenya. To achieve this, the study used both qualitative and quantitative analytical approaches. In spite of the fact that the program is working, the results indicate that young men had a higher probability of being employed than young women. The study also found that participants in the internship program were more likely to get a job placement than those who did not participate in the internship program. The study found that the grade attained at the highest level of education had a significant impact on the employment status of young men

and women in Kenya; those with better grades had a higher chance of being employed than those with lower grades. The analysis further demonstrated that more young people were placed in the services sector than any other sector, the highest number being those who took a STEM course. This reveals the limited nature of the productive sector to absorb STEM graduates. Finally, the study found that most of the young women who had participated in the public service internship program had gotten jobs that had moderately high income levels. This reveals the program's economic empowerment attribute.

6.0 Recommendations and Further Studies

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made:

6.1 PSIP Recommendations

- i. Policy intervention to support young women in Kenya to secure job placements. This would include reserving a given percentage of an establishment's workforce for women.
- ii. A restructuring of the PSIP to ensure placement and follow-up of the interns to ensure that it meets its aim of enhancing job placements for participants. Measures to be considered in this endeavour include ensuring that internship placement is aligned with the courses taken by the students at the university. The purpose is to ensure that the internship will contribute to enabling students to be absorbed in sectors of their specialisation; the interns should be facilitated to acquire sector-specific certification after successful completion of their internship program to ensure compliance with the requirements of the job market and that there should be a collaboration between the public and private sector to enhance the rate of job placement for participants who have gone through the program.
- iii. Young university women should be encouraged to work hard as better grades can enhance their employment chances.
- iv. Recommends empowerment of young women, both at the university and internship spaces, to report and take measures to protect themselves from gender-based violence

6.2 Further Recommendations to Reduce Unemployment

- i. Provision for seed money for business start-ups for young men and women
- ii. Create a platform or an app to link graduates with employers/marketers

- iii. Official appointment of supervisors of interns for motivation and quality outcomes
- iv. Need to develop a framework to enhance monitoring and evaluation of all the programs
- v. Affirmative action needs to be actualised to address the challenge of gender disparity in programs and ensure youth and gender mainstreaming in all spaces of training and employment.
- vi. It is recommended that the programs focus on entrepreneurship, business planning, and training in infrastructural environments that can accommodate technological growth, including artificial intelligence.
- vii. The government should provide psycho-social services to the youths in the program.
- viii. Capacity building of the supervisors on the intended outcome of the program.
- ix. Program for all sector players and create stakeholders network and mapping, mentorship supervisors

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