

## **The Desire of Young Scholars to Enter Academia Today in Selected Universities in Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the reasons behind young scholars' motive to join academia in selected universities in Tanzania. The main objective was to investigate on the possible reasons behind young scholars' decision to join academia today. A total sample size of 75 respondents was used to generate information. Such respondents included thirty six graduate students, thirty six young scholars and three recruitment officials. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Research results show that young scholars entered academia because of the freedom and autonomy to do research and write about what they believe in. They argued that academia offered them ample time to write articles, papers and books that would help educating the society. Besides, they joined academia because of the status enjoyed by professors, influence from friends and families, need for paid jobs and dedication to the church. Besides, postgraduate students were hesitant to join academia due to lack of clear information about what it takes for someone to be an academic. Based on the results the study concludes that apart from the nature and characteristics of academia, there are other reasons behind young scholars' desire to enter academia. It could thus be recommended that, for the purpose of improving the desire of young scholars to enter academia, it is crucial for relevant authorities particularly universities to orient, train and educate young scholars on what it takes for them to be academics. This can be realized through exposing young scholars to knowledge and skills regarding teaching, research and consultancy during postgraduate studies.

**Keywords:** Desire to enter academia, Tanzanian universities, young scholars

## **Introduction**

The higher education sector in Tanzania has grown so fast over the last two decades. By the year 1990 there were only two public universities; University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). Today, the country has more than 30 fully fledged universities that enroll around 180,000 students pursuing different degree programmes (Murdani, 2016). Following such a proliferation in terms of the enrolled students, universities are in great demand for new academics to take over the responsibility of teaching, doing research and offering consultancy services. Majority of academics in universities lack necessary characteristics because universities are unable to attract, recruit and retain the qualified applicants (Makulilo, 2012).

Development of a new generation of academics in African universities and Tanzania in particular is still an issue (Dominguez-Whitehead & Moosa, 2014). Governments find it hard to adequately finance universities and eventually pay attractive salaries to academic staffs (Makulilo, 2012). McGregor (2008) did a study and discovered that at the University of Ghana the percentage of academics with doctorates was 47% while those with masters was 42%. McGregor went further and noted that the situation was alarming in many other universities in Africa wherein the figures were significantly lower than these. A significant number of reputable universities in Africa, including Makerere University in Uganda, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Ibadan University in Nigeria, were found to be using postgraduate students in teaching (McGregor, 2008; Tettey, 2010) due to lack of adequate members of academic staff.

Although postgraduate students contain a pool from which new academicians are obtained in universities (Jawitz, 2007; Tettey, 2010), the paradox remains that the number of postgraduate students who enroll to pursue postgraduate studies as well as who wish to enter the academic profession is relatively low (McGregor, 2008). The low enrollment rates of postgraduate students have subsequently reduced the number of possible future academics in universities. Due to the fact that the academic profession has lost its potential power to attract talented young scholars (McGregor, 2008) the future of the next generation of academics in universities remains doubtful (Tettey, 2010). For instance Pienaar and Bester (2014) reported that majority of young scholars do not want to become academics because they think that the academic system does not permit them to clearly understand the meaning of being an academic.

Austin (2010) reported that young scholars want to join academia due to freedom and autonomy it offers. However, majority of young scholars do not want to enter academia due to uncertain expectations associated with the academic profession itself. Austin added that young scholars including postgraduate students are concerned with the pressure of tenure-track process and promotion issues. Buller (2009) reported that it is essential for young scholars to ask themselves a couple of questions before they think of joining academia. He added that young scholars should not join academia because they qualify for the posts or because opportunities are available. Instead, they should join academia because they think would provide them with a chance to enjoy the world. They should ask on what kind of academics they want to become and what kind of hopes and values they need (Buller, 2009).

McAlpine and Akerlind (2010) reported that not all young scholars including those pursuing postgraduate studies want to practice academia because of poor expectations they hold with the academic profession. It was reported that there are some aspects of the academic career that are distasteful including; competitive pressured work-settings that impact quality of life, uncertain pathways, low salaries and insecurity propel a number of PhD and masters holders not to join the academic profession today. HESA (2011) posited that despite the fact that South Africa produces a relatively higher number of postgraduate students than many other African countries, not many of them join academia because they think the outside sectors pay more than academia does. From this position, it is evident that the academic profession has lost its previously attraction power. Thus, it is from this viewpoint, an understanding of the reasons behind young scholars' desire to enter the status-waning academia today was required for informing the necessary authorities to rethink of the strategies that would attract many young scholars in academia for the development of the next generation of academics in universities in the country. The major research question of this attempt was; "what are the reasons behind young scholars' desire to join the status-waning academic profession today in Tanzania?"

### **Ability of universities to attract and recruit new academics today**

A few decades ago the academic profession enjoyed a celebrated position and attracted a number of smart, talented and skilled young scholars (Albatch, 2000; Enders, 2007; Austin, 2010; Gappa, 2010). However, changes in policy, enrolments, management structures and financial resources have made universities lose the previously enjoyed power of attracting young-talented aspiring scholars (Sutherland & Petersen, 2009). It was observed by McGregor (2008) that universities in Africa

are running out of academics, and the degree of the problem differs between countries. Inadequate funding for research and inadequate attention to professional development has led to problems with regard to recruitment in universities at a time when teachers are needed to teach the growing number of students (Quinn & Vorster, 2012). Today, academia is witnessing a multitude of young talented academics and researchers swerve to other professions following successful completion of their masters, doctorates and postdoctoral studies (Jawitz, 2007). Tettey (2010) examined the ability of universities in developing the next cohort of academicians in African countries. It was discovered that today universities in Africa do not have ability to produce the needed number of academics as they did before. The problem is even appalling in Tanzania due to the noticeable increase in enrolments of students for both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. As stated elsewhere, following the burgeoning of universities in Tanzania there is a gigantic demand for new academics (Ishengoma, 2008; Makulilo, 2012). Lecturers who got employed in 1970s all-through to 1990s are on the verge of retiring. Universities are experiencing a huge gap between the aging members of staff and the young scholars (Abeli, 2010). Based on this backdrop, it is clear that there is great demand for new academics in universities in Tanzania.

### **Socialization of postgraduate students (aspirant academics) into academia**

Although there has been a remarkable increase in enrolment of postgraduate students in Africa and Tanzania in particular, such enrolment numbers remain to be relatively lower than any other regions. The low enrolment rates define also the subsequent completion rates as noted by Albatch (2000). This has made the process of generating new members of academic staff hard. According to Tettey lower rates of postgraduates in developing countries cut the efforts to build generations of young academics. Similarly, the graduation rates are awfully low while dropout rates are high due to lack of school fees and inappropriate supervision of postgraduate students' thesis and dissertation writing (Tettey, 2010). Inadequate number of academicians in universities is exacerbated by the increased enrolments of students and impulsively retirement of experienced and senior lecturers. For instance, at the University of Dar es Salaam, one of highly renowned universities in Tanzania, a large number of academics remain teaching on contract basis as they have already retired from permanent contracts (Tettey, 2009; Makulilo, 2012).

According to Dominguez-Whitehead and Moosa (2014) transition from postgraduate studentship to fulltime member of academic staff is a matter of concern in African

universities. Preparation of academic-minded young talents in institutions may start with the manner in which a respective institution nurtures the available pool of postgraduates. The literature shows that young scholars require sufficient information and exposure on academia (Gappa, 2010; Austin, 2010). In that manner young scholars get an opportunity to gain knowledge of academic practice before they embark on it (McAlpine & Hopwood, 2006; Nelson, Desmond & Rapisarda, 2010). Austin (2010) argued that the creation of awareness of academia on aspiring young academics has to start early-on so that it provides students with a chance to interact and learn from experienced professors.

While the responsibility of socializing postgraduate students on academic practice remains to be the function of an individual university, the decision to join academia or not is a matter of an individual young scholar. As stated elsewhere in this study, about two decades ago the academic profession enjoyed a renowned position among many other professions whereby young scholars joined it due to its innate characteristics. However, as evidenced in the literature, it is clear that young scholars pursuing postgraduate studies these days do not consider academia as their first prioritized career (McAlpine & Akerlind, 2010). Thus, the reasons behind young scholars' desire to join the status-waning academic profession in Tanzania are yet to be identified. It was the intention of the researcher to investigate the reasons behind young scholars' decision to enter academia despite the fact that the profession has speedily been losing its hype.

### **Theoretical framework**

The empowerment theory was used to guide the flow of arguments and ideas in this study. Kanter (1977) argued that salient characteristics of a university define its capacity to empower workers. The theory states that empowerment to workers is enforced through access to information, opportunity to study, resources and support. According to the theory, power is gained through access to important information, opportunity to grow, support and resource. In the same line, the process of creating capable young scholars depends on the ability of graduate schools to support, encourage and enable postgraduate students aspire to become academics. Graduate schools must establish well designed postgraduate programs that enable aspiring young scholars acquire appropriate skills, knowledge and information. During post-graduate programs, young scholars ought to be told of the freedom and autonomy academia offers, career pathways, tenure processes and institutional values. By offering information on academia, universities empower, encourage

and create the best foundation for young aspiring scholars to have a strong desire to be academics. However, the theory ignores the truth that young scholars can assume agency and self-directed professional development by initiating personal plans, sources of information and opportunities to grow (Spreitzer, 1995).

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the reasons behind the decision of young scholars to join academia today in three selected universities in Tanzania. The focus was to determine why young scholars want to join the academic profession today. The main research question was “what are the possible reasons behind young scholars’ desire to join academia today”?

### **Methodology**

#### **Context and design**

The study used a qualitative research approach that allowed the researcher to study respondents’ viewpoints, opinions and perspectives regarding the reasons behind the desire of young scholars to enter academia today when its status is swiftly waning out (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Kothari, 2004; Cooper, Schindler & Sharma, 2012). The study used a descriptive case study design to gain in-depth understanding of the reasons behind young scholars’ decision to enter academia. The cases in this context were the three universities. Units of analysis were the reasons behind young scholars’ desire to enter the academic profession. The design was deemed apt because it involves an analytical textual description and interpretation of the rationale for young scholars’ decision to enter academia (Yin, 2003; Omari, 2011).

#### **Area of study**

The study was conducted in three (3) selected universities that were regarded apt due to unique features they possessed in relation to the present study. The University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) is the oldest, highly renowned and well-known university in Tanzania. The University of Dodoma (UDOM) is a new and the fastest growing public university with the largest number of enrolled students. Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) is the oldest and largest private higher learning institution in Tanzania. The three universities were selected due to their unique features. For instance, UDSM was selected because of its long history and status. The history and status of this university was considered to be

one of the factors that would attract young scholars to join it. Also, UDOM was chosen because it had the largest pool of students and thus was on the verge of employing a greater number of young scholars compared to any other university in the country. SAUT was selected because is the largest and the fastest growing private university that needs a large pool of young scholars probably than any other private university in the country.

## Respondents

A total sample size of seventy five respondents was used to generate data. It included thirty six postgraduate students, thirty six young scholars and three recruitment officials from three selected universities. Students doing masters, PhD and other types of postgraduate studies were involved in this study. They provided information regarding the way they think of academic profession. They were also asked whether or not they thought of entering academia once they finish studies. Those who desired to enter academia were asked why and vice versa.

**Table 1** *Sample size by category and university*

S/N	Category of respondents	Studied Universities			Total
		UDSM	UDOM	SAUT	
1	Young Scholars	12	12	12	36
2	Postgraduate Students	12	12	12	36
3	Recruitment Officials	1	1	1	03
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>75</b>

Young scholars were the newly recruited academics that had not reached seven years since first appointment as academics. Finkelstein, Seal and Schuster (1998) defined a young scholar as an early career academic who is new to academia and does not exceed seven (7) years since his or her first appointment. Young scholars were expected to give information as to why they decided to enter the status-waning academic profession. Recruitment officials were involved in the process of screening the shortlisted young scholars; and one of common questions that are normally asked during recruitment interviews is “why do you want to join this profession”? Therefore recruitment officials in universities were assumed to know a lot about why young scholars join academia today. This sample size was obtained based on time, fiscal resources and nature of the needed information (Hite, 2001).

Table 2 *Characteristics of respondents by sex, age, level of education and seniority*

<b>A: Postgraduate Students</b>											
Sex		Years of age			Level of studies			Year of study			
M	F	Below 20	21-40	41-60	PhD	Masters	Below	I	II	III	IV
18	18	00	34	02	12	26		12	14	10	-
<b>B: Young Scholars</b>											
Sex		Years of age			Education level			Years in academia			
M	F	Below 20	21 - 40	41 - 60	PhD	Masters	Below	0-1	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	Beyond 5
18	18	00	35	01	10	26	00	02	29	03	02
<b>C: Recruitment Officials</b>											
Sex		Years of age			Education level			Work experience (Years)			
M	F	Below 20	21 - 40	41 - 60	PhD	Masters	Below	0-1	1-3	3-5	Beyond 5
02	01	00	02	01	00	02	01	00	02	01	00

Study's respondents were divided into four different types of respondents. Postgraduate students' cohort consisted of young scholars who pursued masters and doctorates in different programmes in the selected institutions. A great number of postgraduate students were aged between 21 and 40 years. This was more or less similar to the age composition of the young scholars in the three selected universities. The table also indicates that most of young scholars (29 out of 36) had been working as academic members of staffs for less than four years. As such, these respondents were the most appropriate in offering information on the reasons behind their decision towards joining the profession.

### Sampling procedures

Representative sample of this study was obtained through purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Purposive sampling technique was used to get the three studied universities and recruitment officials from every university. Convenience sampling procedure was used to obtain young scholars and postgraduate students from each of the three universities. This technique was appropriate to get the sample from students and young academicians because it allowed the researcher to meet every respondent when and where it suited them. As such, it was easy to reach students and young academics in particular universities at their convenience. This means, relevant respondents were obtained expediently.

## **Data collection**

### **Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain different forms of data from recruitment officials, young scholars and postgraduate students. An interview guide was used to direct the researcher on who was to be asked what, how and when. Each interview was done for about 20 to 30 minutes depending on the nature of the required information. At first, the researcher had to build rapport with each of the interviewees. Intentional questioning, attentive listening, follow-ups and appreciation of respondents' contribution were carefully done. Data generated in each of the interviews were transcribed before the researcher entered into another session. The generated data were expected to help the researcher collect respondents' views, opinions and perceptions on the reasons behind the desire of young scholars to enter academia today.

### **Focus group discussions (FGDs)**

Focus group discussions were conducted to generate collected views and understanding about the reasons behind young scholars' desire to enter academia in an interactive way. Discussions were held with young scholars and postgraduate students in each of the selected universities. Each focus group discussion comprised of six respondents and the discussion section lasted for about 30 minutes. Each member of the group was encouraged to participate freely without hesitation. FGDs enabled the researcher to get invaluable and true data that were not obtained during interview sessions. Young scholars provided reasons for their desire to become academics. Open-ended questions such as "do you wish to become an academic after finishing studies"? were asked to postgraduate students who pursued masters and PhD studies. Also, young scholars who had just joined the academia were asked questions such as "why did you decide to become an academic? Were you influenced by anyone to enter academia? Why do you think academia is the right career for you? guided the focus group discussions.

### **Data analysis**

The data analysis process started immediately after the data generation. The generated data were analyzed by the use of the *seven-stage* model (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003) of data analysis. The seven-stage model involved reduction, display, transformation, correlation, consolidation, comparison and integration of research findings. Contextual interpretations and thematic coding guided analysis

of qualitative data whereby texts, words, themes and phrases were categorized and transcribed accordingly. The analysis of data from interviews and FGDs started with data reduction and summarization process wherein segments of qualitative data were categorized into meaningful themes. Then the researcher formulated tentative codes and labels to identify themes, concepts and patterns. Colors and numbers were used to mark words, phrases and sentences to discern emerging themes. The findings were reported together with voices and excerpts from the respondents.

## **Research findings**

### **Reasons behind young scholars' desire to enter academia today**

The study wanted to know the reasons behind young scholars' decision to join academia today in Tanzania. Interviews and FGDs were conducted with postgraduate students and young scholars. Research results showed that postgraduate students and the already practicing young scholars got attracted to enter academia due to the unrestrained nature of academia, respect, status and lifestyle enjoyed by lecturers, influence from friends and members of the family, remuneration and other financial privileges, demand for wage employment, researches, out-reaches and charity services as well as devotion to the church. The research findings are clearly presented below;

#### ***The nature of the academic profession (academia)***

The researcher, through interviews, asked postgraduate students if they had thought of joining academia soon after successfully finishing their studies and the reasons behind. It was reported by students that they thought of joining academia because of the nature of the profession in the sense that it would have given them freedom in doing research and writing books and articles. It was also discerned by postgraduate students that academia would allow them learn and do what they wished with a minimum degree of restriction. For instance, they stated that academia was going to allow them read and write books, attend different academic conferences and forums and do unrelenting research. When asked during interviews, young scholars further discerned that academia allowed someone do challenging obligations; research outreach, charities and consultancy for the aim of supporting the immediate community. To them, academia was not like other occupations which require an employee to stay in the office all-day-long and do similar tasks which could be boring at times. One newly recruited academic member of staff narrated:

Academia has enabled me learn new issues every day.....I remain

informed on different things inside and outside the academic realms. You know the world keeps changing every time. I couldn't see any other profession that would have given me such an opportunity... (Young Scholar – UDSM).

The narration by one of young scholars justifies that young scholars enter academia because they want to learn diverse issues of everyday life inside and outside university compounds. According to the preceding narration, young scholars thought that academia is one among a few occupations that enable workers to have wider range of chances to learning, doing research and educating the wider society. Young scholars thought that academia was the profession which would have made them competently contribute to the development of their immediate societies politically, academically and economically. They argued that academia offered them with an ample time to write articles, papers and books which could help in educating the wider society. Moreover young scholars unveiled that unlike many other occupations, academia allowed them to pursue further studies (professional growth) as the minimum requirement was having a PhD.

#### ***Status enjoyed by university lecturers***

The study sought to establish whether or not postgraduate students entered academia because of the status lecturers and professors in universities enjoyed. Further, analysis of the interviews with graduate students indicated that some students were eager to join academia because they wanted to gain status and respect university lecturers enjoyed in the society. Data showed that the respect and status university lecturers have from fellow colleagues, students and the wider community was one of the factors that attracted young scholars to enter the academic profession, as one of the postgraduate students reiterate:

I want to join this profession because of my professor. The way he teaches...way he explains different ideas, the way he is respected out there...made me think of academia. I wish to be a professor... (Postgraduate Student- UDOM).

The statement by one of postgraduate students means that at-times young scholars get attracted to enter academia because of individual characteristics of lecturers. It was also noted that the activities professors do; projects and outreaches, may have an influence on the decision of young scholars; postgraduates and/or aspirant academics to enter academia. Professors' way of treating students, scholarly practices, teaching style, type of life they lived and respect accorded to them by the wider community inspired young scholars to join academia.

Besides, it was discovered that postgraduate students had wanted to join academia because the larger society perceived universities as peculiar institutions that were responsible for producing skilled and knowledgeable people. Lecturers are regarded by the larger society as people who are familiar with a plenty of things in life. They are great figures who prepare other professionals and experts in many fields including Engineering, Law, Architecture, Accountancy, Psychology, Education and many others. It was reported by postgraduate students and young scholars that they wanted to join the profession because they expected to be held high by the society.

### ***Influence from family members, former classmates, peers and friends***

The researcher was interested in exploring on the influence of family members; friends and peers influence on the decision of young scholars to join the academia. During interviews with young scholars as well as postgraduate students, respondents were asked if their family members, peers and friends had influenced their desire to join academia. Research results indicated that young scholars and students were attracted by the fact that their friends had joined academia. Some of the respondents agreed that family members and peers greatly influenced their decision to enter academia through persuasion. This signifies that friends and family members had a significant influence on one's decision to become an academic.

Indeed, it was reported by recruitment officials that some young scholars mentioned parents and former classmates as one of the reasons behind their decision to become academicians in universities. They narrated that recent mushrooming of universities had made a number of former classmates apply for and secure teaching posts in different universities in Tanzania including the selected institutions; UDSM, UDOM and SAUT. Data indicated that such fellow former classmates were reported to persuade and convince fellow colleagues to also enter academia. One of the young scholars from SAUT had the following to narrate:

Many of my friends work with different higher learning institutions in Tanzania...and this is one of the major reasons I joined this university.... they told me about all good things they enjoy as academics and I said to myself let me join the university.... (Young Scholar, SAUT).

The narrated story suggests that newly recruited academics joined academia because they were influenced by former classmates who also worked as academic

staffs in different universities. It was discovered that young scholars listened to the suggestions of their peers with regard to what academia as a profession could offer.

### ***Remuneration and other fiscal benefits***

Research results obtained through interviews with postgraduate students and recruitment officials indicated that young scholars wished to enter academia because of the financial benefits they expected to be earning after securing employment as academicians. During interviews it was noted that postgraduate students wanted to enter academia because it would have yielded them a relatively higher salary than what they were destined to be receiving if they entered other occupations. For instance, evidence shows that postgraduate students who pursued Master of Arts in Education and Master of Education in Science claimed to have wanted to enter academia so they would make better salaries (three-times more) than what they were destined to earn if they were to remain as secondary school teachers. Thus, they decided to enter academia so that they could earn better salaries. When asked whether or not remuneration is one of the factors that made them join academia, young practicing scholars argued that working as a tutorial assistant at a university was paying better than becoming a normal secondary teacher. As was reported by one of young scholars who reiterated:

I know salary is not that huge here, however, the amount I receive is way far better than what I would have received if I was a mere secondary school teacher. However, people just do not know that academia is one of the best paying professions if you really work hard (Young Scholar - SAUT).

From this quote of a young scholar above, it is evident that young scholars join the academic profession because they think they would earn relatively more money than if they entered into other posts such as teaching at secondary school level.

### ***Demand for employment opportunities***

Research results generated through interviews with young scholars and recruitment officials in three respective universities revealed that the demand for jobs was great among postgraduate students who pursued masters; and some of them decided to continue with postgraduate studies because of lack of employment. Research results showed that the increased number of graduates in Tanzania and the subsequent competition for salaried jobs made some scholars enter academia just for the

sake of securing a job. They unveiled that teaching was the only profession that presented the possibilities of being hired compared to other professions. This might probably suggest that young academicians enter academia not because they love it but rather because they want to secure jobs. One of practicing young scholar had the following to witness:

I stayed for almost three years without a job. Lucky enough my performance was not that bad to allow me join academia though it was not my intention in the first place. I entered because vacancies were available and I qualified. But to be honest I don't like teaching. It is hectic reading and writing everyday in lifetime (Young Scholar, UDSM)

It was evident from the findings that some young scholars joined the academic profession so that they secure employments and fulfill their needs. This implies that lack of employment chances made some of the young scholars enter academia.

### ***Dedication and commitment to the church***

As for the religious-allied private universities, where a number of staff members were nuns, priests, brethrens, fathers and bishops, it was reported during interviews that young scholars were interested to enter academia in order to assist in building the church. Doing so was a sign of their commitment and dedication to the church and to their Lord God. Newly recruited academics claimed that they felt happy to see the church's academic projects grow outstandingly. They reported to be pleased to see the church grow and establish additional new schools and universities in the country. One newly recruited academia who was also a nun had this to narrate:

....there is a speedy increase of universities and number of students today....people who qualify for academic positions are extremely scarce. So, I just wanted to volunteer and help the Church. I think by doing this I can assist spreading the word of GOD and change the society morally (Young Scholar, UDSM).

On the basis of the above narrations from a young scholar, it is evident that some young scholars at SAUT entered academia because they were committed to helping the church grow and establish itself. It was also noticed that they wanted to inculcate into students and other colleagues the *word* of the almighty Lord God and create a God-loving nation. Besides, young scholars reported to enter academia because they wanted to instill morally good behaviors and characters into university students. They felt that other lecturers could not perform this important pillar

better than they would do. It was further revealed by that they wanted to be role models to students, spread the word of God easily to as many people as possible and cultivate a morally good society. Further it was reported that the promotion of fathers, brethren, nuns and chaplains to become lecturers was part and parcel of the church's plans to use own produced personnel.

### **Discussion of findings**

Findings indicate that young scholars including postgraduate students desire to enter academia due to a couple of reasons. One of the reasons is the inherent features that are associated with the academic profession. It was noted that autonomy and freedom to do research, discover new ideas and concepts, write books and articles as well as provide consultancy services to the immediate society attracted young scholars including postgraduate students to enter the profession. These findings get support from Gappa (2010) who argued that academic scholars in universities are free to express their views in research and publication of results, in classroom when discussing issues and as academic citizens without institutional censorship. Moreover, Austin (2010) noted that young scholars who desired to join academia described it as a profession that provides flexible time for thinking, reflecting and creating new knowledge and skills. Also Austin reiterated that young scholars were attracted to become academics because the profession gave them time to organize their tasks and opportunity to continue learning.

Another reason behind the youngsters' desire to become academics was the reputation and status that was enjoyed by their teachers including lecturers and professors. It was noted that the manner lecturers and professors executed their duties including teaching and conducting research made some of young scholars desire to join the profession. This implies that if professors do their tasks diligently and competently they are likely to attract other young promising academics to join in. In the same vein, it is possible for young scholars not to join academia because of bad examples from professors in universities. In this view, if universities cultivate well-mannered and excellent professors then it is possible to attract and develop good young talents of scholars. These results get support from Metcalf, Rolfe, Stevens and Weale (2005) who noted that postgraduate students in universities over-time lack motivation to join academia due to absence of motivating and eye-catching lecturers and professors who act as role models to young aspiring scholars. This means that presence of eye-catching lecturers in a university acts as one of the attracting factors for you

Further, data indicated that some young scholars joined academia due to an influence exerted by their family members, peer colleagues and friends. During interviews with young scholars and recruitment officials it was discovered that some postgraduate students wanted to be academicians because they were persuaded by family members. When asked further, young scholars unveiled that such family members persuaded them because they were also working as academics in some higher learning institutions. Besides, some young scholars decided to enter academia because their friends had already joined it. These findings get support from a study conducted by Naz, Saeed, Khan, Khan, Sheikh & Khan (2014) on the impact of peers and friends in career decision making. The study noted that although parents play a great role in socialization and personality development of children, peers and friends contribute for about 70% on people's career decision making. Another study by Onditi (2016) noticed that significant others appeared to have either a direct or indirect influence on career choices of young people. It was revealed that senior people in the society assume a great position in directing and advising young people about what kind of career is suitable for them. The way parents, relatives and guardians perceive and talk about a particular career has a great impact on children's career preferences and choices.

Although financial benefits are not a precious part of academia as stated by Pienaar and Bester (2014), some young scholars were aware of the fringe benefits a person could get from carrying out research projects and consultancy issues. Thus, they joined academia so that they could earn any financial opportunities that would come via research projects and outreaches. Data indicated that some young scholars who were destined to be employed in sectors that yielded lower amounts of salaries than academia were eager to join the profession so that they would earn higher than what they would have earned if they became, for instance, secondary school teachers.

Due to an increased job market competition and increased number of graduates in social sciences and education programmes there has been an increasing rhythm for unemployed young graduates without jobs in Tanzania. The fact that teaching is still an option from which youngsters would secure jobs, young scholars decide to enter academia. This implies that some of young scholars tend to join academia simply because of lack of job opportunities and not because of the love they have for academic practice. This would mean that to some young scholars joining academia was not their genuine career choice but rather a stepping stone before

they got other jobs outside the academic realms. These findings are supported by Anangisye (2009) who noted that teaching was the last alternative among types of careers young graduates would think of joining. In that perspective, some young scholars joined academia because they had no any other options at their disposal. Some young scholars entered academia because they wanted to help the church run its projects well. Due to manpower shortage and the reality that the church (Catholic) had many institutions that needed lecturers, some young scholars had to join academia because they were committed and dedicated to serving the church. This was a symbol to prove that they were really devoted to serving the Lord. It was also noted that such young scholars wanted to be role models to students and spearhead a God-loving world of morally good intellectuals. Many of young scholars who joined academia because of their devotion to the church were nuns, fathers and chaplains.

On another side, some scholars who reported to be disinterested in entering academia argued that their lack of interest was due to lack of detailed information about the profession. They argued to have no any clue on issues related to academic tasks such as course designing, teaching, proposal writing, consultancy services, professional publishing and conducting research. Such results are supported by McAlpine and Akerlind (2010) who noted that knowledge on issues prevailing in the academic arena is fundamental for aspiring scholars to know what is expected of them. Quinn and Vorster (2012) stated that the dearth of information on what really academia is all about has made a couple of students to be hesitant to join it. Also, Adams (2002) noted that young scholars are not confident to enter academia due to lack of necessary knowledge and skills with regard to academia.

Postgraduate students wanted all the procedures and stages one has to pass through before they become lecturers to be known to aspirants. Information about a point someone would obtain a permanent position as an academic would help students and young talented researchers become interested in joining academia as they would beforehand know what is expected of them. Some students reported to be so anxious and stressed whenever they thought of academia due to what they heard from others. These results get support from Acker and Haque (2010) who argued that it is critical for postgraduate programmes be designed in a way that helps young aspirant scholars get information about what academia really is. Quinn and Vorster (2012) argued that universities should think of academies that would provide knowledge on vexing issues facing the academic realm.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

The study concludes that young scholars (including postgraduate students) in universities desire to enter academia because of the inherent natural characteristics the academic profession offers. Opportunity to learn more and gain knowledge, conduct research and discover new concepts, exercise autonomy and write articles on different issues of one's interests are some of the reasons behind young scholars' desire to join academia in Tanzania universities. Apart from that, young scholars join academia due to influence from family members, peers and significant others. Also, status enjoyed by university professors, remuneration and other financial benefits, the need for employment and commitment to the Church are some of the reasons that made youngsters desire for academic practice. Other young scholars do not want to be academicians because of a couple of factors including limited exposure regarding the profession, lengthy procedures one have to undergo before he or she becomes a successful lecturer and the prominent puzzling atmosphere of academia.

The study recommends that management authorities of universities should put in place proper policy practices that enable postgraduate students and other aspirant academics get exposed to knowledge of teaching, research and consultancy. Keen organization of seminars, symposia, workshops and colloquiums that would familiarize students on how to write proposals, papers, design courses and related academic issues is imperative. It has to be noted that research findings showed that some postgraduate students reported not to be interested in joining academia due to insufficient information. For that reason, individual universities and the ministry of education, science and technology need to re-examine their educational policies to make sure that they incorporate issues related to knowledge dissemination so that young scholars have the right data on academia.

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