

A Comparison of Programs in a Public University Campus in Kenya: Perceptions of Learners on Selected Indicators of Quality Education.

Dr Maureen Adhiambo Winga - Lecturer Maseno University - Kenya

P.O Box 333 40105 Maseno University, Maseno, Kenya

maureenochieng@yahoo.com

Mobile +254 (0)722426036

ABSTRACT

It is against this background that the author of the present study investigated perceptions of learners on selected quality indicators. The objectives of the study were to:- compare the perceptions of learners on the lecturer's professionalism, compare whether the students had adequate study materials, compare whether the learners had ample time for their studies and to compare the achievement of both sets of students on the same exam. The results revealed that there was no significant difference in the lecturers availability for classes, the regular students reported having more past papers than the school based students, the regular students had more time and the school based students achieved higher marks. It was concluded there was quality academic service delivery in both study programs but there was need for more time when it came to school based program. It was recommended that the school based classes be added more time.

Key Words : Higher education, Quality, School based program, Regular program, Achievement

INTRODUCTION

The provision of a globally competitive quality education, training and research is the mandate of universities in Kenya (University Act, 2012). Higher education began in Kenya with the upgrading of University of Nairobi from a constituent college of University of East Africa in 1970 (Jowi 2008). Due to pressure and public demand for higher education in Kenya, Moi University was established as the second university in 1984, followed by Kenyatta university in 1985, Egerton University in 1987, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in 1994, Maseno University in 2001 and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology in 2007 (Commission for Higher Education, 2012). Since then the foregoing universities have continued to establish constituent colleges and campuses (Commission for University Education 2016)

The rate at which institutions of higher learning are expanding does not balance the allocation and availability of resources to support this growing trend. The human resources as well as teaching and learning resources rarely meet the demands of the growing population in these institutions (Miriti W. Miriti M and Thinguri 2015).

Despite the desire to satisfy the growing demand for higher education, universities need to safeguard quality because students are consumers who know when they are getting value for their money. Indeed Ntaranqwi (2003) points out that teaching staff, enrollment and course organization have an impact on satisfaction of students and satisfaction leads to intent to return to university.

A number of countries are grappling with higher education expansion to meet the demand. India has made tremendous strides in terms of enrollment in higher education. The private sector has contributed enormously to improved access to higher education. However despite these strides, there is shortage of well-trained faculty, poor infrastructure, irrelevant curriculum, inadequate use of technology and research which is far below international standards (Misra and Bal 2016).

Megbo, Zando and Agbu (2015) reiterate that the major challenges of the planner in Nigerian universities is how to create access to university education for more candidates without stretching the available resources and reducing the existing programs as well as establishing new programs to increase the carrying capacity of that particular university for more students. Besides underfunding has become a major setback for healthy development in Nigerian universities. The little funds provided by the government are always not adequate to cater for the needs of these institutions and as a result the standards in the institutions have continued to dwindle.

Internal quality checks need to be conducted from time to time. This will ensure that service delivery satisfies and motivates clients so that they yearn for more subsequently leading to quality education (Tierney 1998). The Government of Kenya has set up a quality assurance wing to ensure that new institutions are inspected and that they meet certain standards. However Ndethya et al. (2016) note that quality assurance standards officers are not impartial when conducting their audit, favoring some institutions and being strict with other institutions.

Statement of the problem

The greatest problem of expansion rate is the quality of training offered to students in some institutions especially those that are ill-equipped with the necessary resources. There has been an outcry over rampant expansion of universities. It is alleged that expansion is deemed to jeopardize quality. The current study seeks to demystify the fact that carefully planned expansion does not necessarily interfere with quality. In the present study the author compared students perceptions of academic service delivery, in order to find out whether quality has been compromised. The self-sponsored students were constituted of the regular group and the school based group.

Limitations of the Study

1. The respondents were from the School of Education only and their perception may not be generalized to students from other schools.
2. The findings of the study may not be generalized to other campuses.

Literature Review

Megbo et al (2015) Point out that a large number of Nigerian universities and institutions of higher learning have inadequate and out of date equipment in the classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories and library and insufficient workshop space for the ever growing numbers of students.

Katamei and Kiprop (2015) conducted a qualitative study to investigate what students valued the most during their educational experience. They found that students valued academic service delivery, followed by administrative and finally physical structures. Respondents indicated the degree of satisfaction they attached to different services on academic content service delivery process. The findings on attendance of lecturers revealed that lecturers were committed to their work and were driven by self-achievement and desire for promotion. The study further revealed that lecturers were relevant and related to the students' areas of specialization. They were enthusiastic, committed, had impressive personalities, excellent teaching skills and able to stimulate learners in their subjects. Exams were fairly set and marked, contributing to students' overwhelming satisfaction. The institution experienced shortage of qualified staff jeopardizing their zeal to offer adequate content delivery. Besides, it depended so much on part-time lecturers. Abagi (1999) notes that 50% of the teaching staff in Kenyan universities teach at their own institutions and at other outside institutions hence the university could get part time lecturers. Assignments and presentations formed part of assessments, providing students with an opportunity of expressing themselves.

Proper maintenance system did not go well with students and should be encouraged as it helps put facilities in order, reduce shortage and prolong use. Students were dissatisfied with library facilities. Indeed Tsinidou, Gerogianissis, and Fitsilis, (2010) point out that satisfactory library services constitute textbooks and journals and the ability to easily locate them.

The objectives of the study were to:-

- compare the perceptions of learners on the lecturer's professionalism
- compare whether the students had adequate study materials.
- compare whether the learners had ample time for their studies
- compare the achievement of both sets of students on the same exam and

METHODS

Population and Sample

The whole population of students was used. A saturated sample was used.

Data Collection Procedure

The students were informed about the research and they were very eager to participate. They were however also informed that they had a right not to participate if they didn't want to. Data was collected in two waves. The first wave of data involved presenting the questionnaires to the students. The students filled in the questionnaires in approximately 20 minutes. The second wave of data collection was carried out after the examination results were out. It involved corroborating the exam mark with the questionnaire and recording it in SPSS

Demographics and Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 20. The data was made up of 62 students. The mean age for the school based group was 31.43 whereas the mean age for the regular students was 22.31 years. The number of males was 22 whereas females were 32.

RESULTS

Table 1 A comparison of students' perception on lecturer's professionalism.

Profession.	Group	Mean	S.D	T	Df	Significance
Lecturer Available	Regular	4.78	.423	3.07	22.40	.005**
Quality	Sch. Based	3.90	1.30			
Notes	Regular	4.65	.770	1.627	27.39	.115
	Sch. Based	4.14	1.32			

**p<0.05 (2 tailed)

Table 1 shows that the lecturer was available and gave quality notes. The findings were out of a scale of 5. The students taking the regular course had higher perceptions than the school based ones. This finding is in agreement with Katamei and Kiprop (2015) who also found that some of the lecturers were enthusiastic and taught the students relevant topics. With regard to the quality of notes given to the students both groups of students indicated that the notes were of good quality. There were no significant differences based on the t test results.

Table 2 A comparison of students' perception on adequacy of study materials.

Profession.	Group	Mean	S.D	T	Df	Significance
Study Materials	Regular	3.73	1.30	.96	59	.342
Past Papers	Sch. Based	3.38	1.40			
	Regular	3.95	1.32	2.33	59	.023**
	Sch. Based	3.10	1.45			

**p<0.05 (2 tailed)

Table 2 shows that the regular students reported that they had sufficient study materials compared to the school based group. When probed further in the questionnaire some of the regular students said they used the internet for further research. This result is not in agreement with Katamei and Kiprop (2015) who found that most of the students reported that the library in Moi University was not well equipped.

Table 3 A comparison of students' perception on time

Time.	Group	Mean	S.D	T	Df	Significance
70%	Regular	4.68	.616	3.16	24.20	.004**
Lectures	Sch. Based	3.67	1.40			
Time for	Regular	4.13	1.06	3.49	35.21	.001**
Revision	Sch. Based	3.00	1.27			

**p<0.05 (2 tailed)

Table 3 reveals that the Regular group reported having more time to attend lectures as well as for revision. Clearly they had ten weeks of four hours each for lectures which gave them ample time for revision. The school based group have been affected by the introduction of new term dates which have squeezed their weeks for studies. Most of the weeks for learning were moved to the months of November and December. On further probing, the school based group pointed out that occasionally they missed lectures in order to complete assignments that were due.

Table 4 A comparison of students' academic achievement

Achievement	Group	Mean	S.D	T	Df	Significance
Marks	Regular	64.56	8.199	-2.56	52	.013**
	Sch. Based	70.56	7.972			
Marks	Male	62.41	9.52	-3.20	52	.002**
	Female	69.41	6.54			

**p<0.05 (2 tailed)

Table 4 reveals that the school based group performed better than the regular group in the same examination. Despite the disadvantages that the group faced they passed the exam well. This could partly be attributed to the fact that they sat for their exams soon after classes while the information was still fresh in their memories. A comparison between males and females also reveals that females performed better than the males

Recommendations

The author recommends that the school based students be added more time where possible.

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