

Admissions Policy for Higher Education: Experience of Quality Education in Selected Universities, in Kenya

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Abstract: Quality higher education in Kenya appears to be influenced by several factors which include but not restricted to policies on quality education; admissions, funding, policies on inclusion and constitutional requirements. These policies are said to affect access to higher education in Kenya. However, the extent to which the identified policies impact on access to higher education in Kenya has not been extensively studied. The study objective was to determine the effects of admissions policy on quality of higher education. The target population in this study was 236, where 116 respondents were top managers while 120 respondents were students. Simple random sampling technique was used to select students who participated in this study. The questionnaire was used on the Admissions Officers, Deans, DVCs, DQA, finance officers, HODs, and the interview schedule was used on students. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that there was a positive and statistically significant relationship between admissions policy and access to quality higher education. The study recommended that the Universities should employ lecturers with PhD certificates to merge with student enrolment.

Key words: Admissions Policy, Higher Education, Quality Education, Universities.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Segrera (2010), globalization has exerted considerable pressure on governments of the day to reclassify their roles in connection to education. In the world today, educational policies have progressively been thought about and made within the context of the pressure and requirements of globalization. Carnoy (2005), states that the two fundamental bases of globalization have been recognized as information and innovation, which are exceptionally information intensive. Education in this case has been connected to the procedure of globalization via a learning economy. In the knowledge economy, training is a pivotal factor to guarantee financial profitability and intensity in the global setting. This concurred with Nogueira & Jaana, (2013). Therefore, education has turned into an apparatus for financial development as opposed to a device to get students ready to adjust to their very own society. Cultural and social qualities have lost importance and have been supplemented with business values.

Numerous fields of learning in campuses that don't convert into significant benefits are underestimated and underfunded or disposed of. Weight has been taken to resources to be

progressively beneficial and educational programs are presently intended to connect the enterprises. Globalization has presented significant issues and furthermore made open doors for University education improvement. Advanced education has prospective monetary and social advantages for people and society, and for the most part determined by the social and political moves of a nation.

Advanced education has been directly connected to monetary and social improvement as observed by expanding financial giants like China, while most developing nations still battle with trade shortfalls. Numerous analysts on Chinese advanced education have seen that the University education framework in China has been shaped by market needs with an emphasis on structure of a communist market economy that has Chinese qualities. In quest for a fair exchange, many developing nations have increased their spending on training in order to deliver a working power that can make progressively advanced innovations.

The writers Rodriguez and Wan (2010) stated that the term access requires the removal of obstructions that have restricted the entrance of all students to Higher Education (HE) for some time. The authors recognize three major obstructions that have been addressed by research and discussions on policies: poor academic preparation, lack of money related assets and lack of information about application and enrolment in higher education (HE). The authors mention that academic rigor and the students' accomplishments during secondary school are solid indicators for their consequent accomplishment at the University (Rodriguez and Wan, 2010, after Adelman, 1999 Allensworth, (2006), yet that entrance to rigorous high-quality courses is presently unevenly distributed in secondary schools. Regarding monetary assets, the authors noted that their shortage influences both "readiness for and perseverance in advanced education" (Rodriguez and Wan, 2010). Characterizing access as far as disparity, there have been distinguished (Vukasoviü and Sarrico, 2010) different hindrances or obstructions to quality, for example, placement tests and expenses paid for preliminary courses for selection tests kept running by campuses; placement tests are typically composed at the home office of the resources, which involves extra costs for movement and convenience for those living outside the regions in which the colleges are; placement tests

are usually organized at the headquarters of the faculties, whose charges are critical expenses for those with low salary. A hindrance that is habitually alluded to in the particular writing is that of financial status. It has been featured that, even with qualification for the most renowned tracks, youngsters from lower financial foundations will in general settle on less driven educational choices." (Tieben and Wolbers, 2010.); these choices are not just due to the budgetary and social assets that are accessible, yet in addition to the impression of the likelihood of progress

Studies following the expanding demand of University education frameworks globally have underlined the way that while there was high increase in admissions, such development has profited social gatherings that have consistently had an edge in access and cooperation rates (Altbach, Rumbley and Reisberg, 2009). While nations like North America and Western Europe record a support pace of 70%, the most astounding on the planet, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) registers 5%, the least on the planet (UNESCO, 2011; Pityana, 2009). In spite of the fact that there is more prominent incorporation, the special classes have held their relative bit of leeway in about all countries prompting disparities in admission and interest in advanced education.

1.1 statement of the problem

Expansion in higher education experienced by many countries has highlighted the dichotomy between quality and quantity of education (Malechwanz&Mbeke 2016). Kenya is no exception to this dilemma. Quality improvement has therefore emerged as one of the most important issues in global higher education policy. The higher education sector in Kenya has in the recent past expanded greatly both in terms of the number of institutions and in student enrolments. Enrolments to state universities rose by 41 per cent from 195,428 students in 2012 to 276,349 by end of 2013 (Nganga 2014). According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) (2015), the combined student enrolment in public universities and private accredited universities in Kenya in the academic years 2009/2010–2014/2015 grew from 142,789 to 446,183 representing a whopping increase of 213 per cent. The number of higher education institutions in Kenya has also expanded from one institution, the University of Nairobi (UON) in 1970 (Sifuna 2010) to seventy one universities comprising thirty-five public universities and thirty-six private universities in 2017 (CUE 2017). Ogeto (2015) contends that the high student enrolment in universities exacerbated by high enrolment of self-sponsored students has led to a shortage of facilities and services.

1.2 Objective of the study

To determine the effects of admissions policy to higher education on the provision of quality education in selected Universities, in Kenya.

1.3 Research Question

What are the effects of admissions policy to higher education on the provision of quality education in selected Universities, in Kenya?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between admissions policy and quality of higher education.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study will set out a valuable stage for Kenya as a nation and numerous different nations, particularly the developing nations, to gain from each other's challenges and strength of getting to higher education. This examination will help approach educators and policy makers see how to change the advanced education framework to address the present difficulties. Subsequently, the study will help educational policy makers, interested parties and educational planners in arranging and settling on fitting choices concerning the availability and nature of University education.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Descriptive survey design was employed in the study. It required a description of what had already happened with the variables in a natural setting. According to Orodho (2003), "Descriptive survey is a strategy for gathering data by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of people. It was utilized when gathering data about individuals' frames of mind, sentiments, propensities or any instructive or social issues," (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). The study assessed the Effects of Access Policies in relation to quality education in higher learning institutions, recording their findings, analyzing and interpreting them. This was in agreement with Cohen (1983). This type of design was applicable to this study because information was collected from the selected Universities and the results generalized over all public Universities in the country. It involved interviewing Deans on total enrolment of students both government sponsored students (KUCCPS-Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Structure) and Privately Sponsored Students (PSSP-Privately Sponsored Students Program), number of lecturers per program, number of programs enrolled, number of offices against officers, lecturers contact hours with students, and students/ lecturer ratio. Director of Quality Assurance on lecturers contact hours with students. HODs on number of lecturers per program, ratio of full time lecturers verses part time lecturers, number of lecturers with PhDs and those without PhDs. (DVC) Deputy Vice Chancellor academic planning on available facilities like playgrounds, classrooms, libraries, Constitutional requirements policy on quality matters among others, Finance Officer on fee payment records, and students on general status of quality. Those sampled will respond to questionnaires and interview schedules.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to determine the effects of admissions policy to higher education on the provision of quality education in selected Universities, in Kenya. To achieve this objective, information was sought on the number of students admitted through the Privately Sponsored Students Programs (PSSP) and the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS), the number of lecturers with PhD and without PhD certificates, the number of offices and officers and the ratio of part-time and full-time lecturers in the Universities where the study was done. The findings were presented in the following sub-sections.

3.1 Number of Students Admitted through KUCCPS and PSSP

As stated in the Universities Act No. 42 of 2012 Part VIII on Kenya Universities and Institutions of higher learning Central Placement Service, a University or a college may independently admit students to its programs in accordance with its approved admissions criteria (R.o.K, 2012). This is why in Universities, there are students admitted through KUCCPS and others through PSSP. Admissions Policy in Kenya states that there are two bodies in the country (KUCCPS and PSSP) that are allowed to admit students to higher education. Information on the number of students admitted to the three Universities through KUCCPS and PSSP was presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Number of Students Admitted through PSSP and KUCCPS

Year Status ↓	2015/2016			2016/2017			2017/2018			2018/2019			Grand Total
	Min	Max	Ave	Min	Max	Ave	Min	Max	Ave	Min	Max	Ave	
PSSP	50	2,752	934	40	2,738	926	30	2,199	743	12	2,079	697	
Sub-Total	2,802					2,778		2,229		2,091			9,900
KUCCPS	900	5,488	2,128	700	5,014	1,904	680	5,218	1,966	650	3,640	1,430	
Sub-Total	6,388			5,714			5,898					4,290	22,290
Grand Total	9,190			8,492				8,127			6,381		32,190

Source: Research data 2019

As shown in table 3.1 the study established that 2,128 students on average were admitted through KUCCPS in the 2015/2016 academic year in the Universities where the study was done. The minimum number of students admitted through KUCCPS during the same academic year was 900 while the maximum number was 5,488 students making a total of 6,388. Those who were admitted in the 2015/2016 academic year through PSSP were 934 on average, with the minimum number being 50 students and the maximum number being 2,752 students making a total of 2,802 students. The total number of students admitted in the academic year 2015/2016 was 9,190. It is also indicated in Table 3.1 that on average 1,904 students were admitted through KUCCPS during the academic year 2016/2017 with minimum being 700 students and maximum number admitted were 5,014 students totaling to 5,714. As for the PSSP students, the Universities admitted 926 students on average during the academic year 2016/2017. The least number of PSSP students admitted during this year was 40 while the highest was 2,738 students making a total of 2,778 students. Therefore a total of 8,492 students were admitted in the three Universities during the 2016/2017 academic year.

The table also reveals that during the 2017/2018 academic year, 1,966 students were admitted in each of the Universities through KUCCPS with minimum number admitted in one of the Universities being 680 students and highest number admitted being 5,218 students. Those who were admitted during the same year 2017/2018 under PSSP were 743 students on average. It was also indicated that a total of 5,898 students were admitted through KUCCPS in 2017/2018

academic year while 2,229 students were admitted under PSSP during the same year giving a total enrolment of 8,127 students in the three Universities during that academic year. Also noted was 1,430 students (on average) admitted in the Universities through KUCCPS in the academic year 2018/2019 with a minimum number admitted being 650 students and maximum being 3,640 students. Comparatively, a smaller number 697 of students was admitted during the same academic year 2018/2019 through PSSP. Actually, one of the Universities where the study was done admitted only 12 PSSP students during the 2018/2019 academic year. This implied that the average number of students admitted in each of the Universities where the study was done through both KUCCPS and PSSP was 2,127 students giving a total of 6,381 in the three Universities.

There was a general decrease in enrolment of students over the past four academic years. As revealed in Table 3.1, the enrolment decreased from 9,190 students in 2015/2016 academic year to 6,381 students in the 2018/2019 academic year. This was still evidenced even after having two admission bodies in place: (KUCCPS and PSSP) in the Universities where the study was done. Admission of students to higher learning institutions should be done basing on affordability or bed-space of that particular University. This is in agreement with the Ministry of Education (2012); and Wanjohi (2011), who states that, "Since independence time, major transitions and reforms in Kenyan education system were made and focused on its access, equity, quality, affordability and relevance and tremendously expanded

institutions at all levels to meet the aspirations of rapidly growing Kenyan population.” If admissions were done according to the social demand of the Kenyan population minus considering quality parameters like number of lecturers per program, number of lecturers with PhDs, lecturer conduct hours with students per week, ratio of full-time lecturers against part-time lecturers, among others will lower the quality of education in these institutions. Even with two bodies admitting students to Universities, enrolment still declined in the last four years (2015/2016 - 2018/2019). CUE (2011) recommends that any candidate scoring a C+ and above in KCSE exam qualifies to join higher learning institutions. Besides, those scoring a c (plain) in KCSE for recognized pre-University qualification holders or recognized diploma holders with a minimum of credit C (of 2.50 on a scale of 4.00) from a recognized institution also qualifies for University education.

3.2 Ratio of Students Admitted Through PSSP to KUCCPS.

There are two bodies that admit students to higher learning institutions in Kenya namely KUCCPS and PSSP. Due to this, there was need for the study to note the ratio of students admitted through both PSSP and KUCCPS. The results were as presented in table 3.2

Table 3.2 Ratio of PSSP students to KUCCPS students

Status Year ↓	PSSP	KUCCPS	Ratio %	Total Enrolment
2015/2016	2,802	6,388	30.5:69.5	9,190
2016/2017	2,778	5,714	32.7:67.3	8,492
2017/2018	2,229	5,898	27.4:72.68	8,127
2018/2019	2,091	4,290	32.8:67.2	6,381

Source: Research data 2019

The study noted that, the ratio of students admitted through PSSP to KUCCPS was 1:2 on average.

3.3 Enrolment (PSSP) and number of Lecturers without PhD

Lecturers in Universities played a vital role in the provision of quality education. It was therefore important for this study to determine the number of students admitted to Universities against lecturers without PhD certificates. This was believed to have a negative effect on the quality of education in the Universities where the study was done because only lecturers with PhD certificates qualified to teach in Universities. The findings were presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Lecturers without PhDs and PSSP Students

Academic Year	Lecturers without PhDs	PSSP	Ratio %
2015/2016	200	2,802	6.7:93.3
2016/2017	245	2,778	8.1:91.9
2017/2018	262	2,229	10.5:89.5

2018/2019	287	2,091	12.1:87.9
Total	994	9,900	

Source: Research data 2019

With regard to lecturers without PhD certificates and PSSP students it was noted from table 3.3 that as PSSP students decreased in enrolment in the past 4 years (2015/2016_2,802, 2016/2017_2778, 2017/2018_2229, and 2018/2019_2091), the number of lecturers without PhDs was increasing (2015/2016_200, 2016/2017_245, 2017/2018_262, and 2018/2019_287). This lowered the quality of education in higher learning institutions because lecturers without PhDs are not qualified to teach in Universities.

The study went further to find out the number of lecturers with PhD certificates against PSSP students. The results were as presented in table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Lecturers with PhDs and PSSP Students

Academic Year	Lecturers with PHDS	PSSP Students	Ratio %
2015/2016	85	2,802	2.9:97.1
2016/2017	103	2,778	3.6:96.4
2017/2018	120	2,229	5.1:94.9
2018/2019	158	2,091	7.1:92.9
Total	466	9,900	

Source: Research data 2019

Table 3.4 shows an increase in the number of lecturers with PhD certificates against a decrease in enrolment. Thus in 2015/2016, the study noted 85 lecturers with PhDs against 2802 PSSP students. In 2016/2017, the number of lecturers with PhDs was 103 while PSSP students were 2,778. There were 120 lecturers with PhDs against 2229 PSSP students in 2017/2018. Finally, there were 158 lecturers with PhDs against 2091 PSSP students in 2018/2019. This was an indication that quality education in Universities was rising because lecturers with PhD certificates make up the qualified staff to teach in Universities.

3.4 Hypothesis Testing

Statistical analysis was done to establish the effect of admissions policy on quality of education in Universities as per the hypothesis of the study. The findings were as presented in Table 3.5

Table 3.5: Correlation between admissions policy and quality of education in Universities

		Quality of Education
Admissions Policy	Pearson Correlation	.925**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	76

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results in Table 3.5, show that there was a positive and statistically significant relationship between admissions policy and quality of University education ($r=0.925^{**}$, $p<0.001$ significant level). This meant that we reject the null hypothesis which states that; there is no statistically significant relationship between admissions policy and quality of University education and take the alternative one which is: There is a statistically significant relationship between admissions policy and quality of education in Universities. The coefficient of determinant R^2 established that admissions policy contributed 85.6% variability to University education when other factors were held constant. This meant that if admission to higher education was done in an equitable manner, quality education would be realized. This was to be done in accordance with availability of physical facilities like space, reading materials in libraries, adequate number of lecturers and lecturer-student contact hours was to be increased among others.

Compelling understudy choice is significant in any advanced education framework in light of the fact that the nature of understudies influence the quality and inside effectiveness of the instructive projects advertised. World Bank report says to instruct their understudies adequately, establishments ought to have the option to enlist just the same number of candidates as they can dependably instruct, and to acknowledge just understudies who have the information and capacity to completely profit by their investigations. Selectivity should help guarantee that enrolment development was identified with instructional limit and if determination criteria had great prescient legitimacy, that open doors for further investigation would be designated to the individuals who were well on the way to profit scholastically. As indicated by Higher Education: Issues and Options for Reform (1993), Learners perform best when they pursued courses of concentrate that coordinated their capacities and premiums.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study assessed the effects of access policies on quality of higher education in selected Universities, Kenya. Based on the results of the study, the researcher made the following conclusions; that although Universities have tried to provide quality education in higher learning institutions, there is still much to be desired. Thus, the admissions policy the way it is implemented influences quality of education because enrolment waters quality of education

V. WAY FORWARD

Admissions Policy-Universities should employ lecturers with PhD certificates to merge with enrolment of students. The policy will ensure admission is offered to those who qualify for University academic programmes; ensure that only applicants who meet the eligibility requirements for admission will be considered for admissions to a program and ensures that the University maintains academic excellence by

admitting those who are capable of following academic programmes.

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