

## **DEGREE STUDENTS' ACCESS TO ACADEMIC RESOURCES: KISII AND LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Growth in undergraduate student enrolment in Kenyan public universities is phenomenal as public universities admitted 25% more students in 2011/2012 compared to 2010/2011 academic year. This is a positive response to public and private demand for highly trained human resource necessary for social and economic development of the country. However, the unprecedented rapid growth is posing challenges to both students and management of Public Universities. The study was set to compare on access to academic resource by undergraduate degree students in local Universities in Kenya. Key to this paper will be students' access to morning and evening lectures, library and co-curricular activities. Kisii and Laikipia Universities were purposively chosen for the study. A cross sectional survey was used to select a target population of 607 and 332 parallel and regular degree students and 15 full time lecturers in Kisii University and 191 and 177 parallel and regular degree students and 25 full time lecturers in Laikipia University respectfully. The study adopted an analytical survey design as it was appropriate in analyzing varied data from different groups. Data was obtained by use of Likert scale and close ended questions in the questionnaires. Key findings were that the parallel degree students had more challenges in accessing sports facilities, lectures and teaching and learning resources.*

**KEYWORDS:** Academic Resources, Parallel Degree, Regular Degree, University

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Public universities in the world have always sought for ways of acquiring more revenue apart from their allocations from the exchequer owing to decreasing funding (Huemmert, 2010). One of the strategies adopted by all universities is mounting of module two commonly referred to as the parallel degree programmes in 1991 (Koech & Nyagesiba, 2011). This strategy is keenly in line with Kenya's vision 2030 that aims at transforming Kenya into a newly industrialized middle income country (Gudo *et al.*, 2011), which further observed that universities are the key players of education and training for a dependable and sustainable workforce. In order to achieve

these Gudo & Olel (2011), reported that students play a crucial component in the education system however they are often ignored in most of the universities decisions.

Public universities in Kenya have two groups of students; regular or module I students who had attained the highest grades. The other group is module II or parallel degree students who had comparatively lower grades though they had attained the minimum university entry requirement (GOK, 2012). Selection of courses for these students differs, since the regular degree students' course choice depends on their performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). On the other hand, module II students gain university entry owing to different criteria that varies from university to university (Koech & Nyagesiba, 2011). However these two groups of students are normally required to do the same courses (GOK, 2012). The introduction of the module II programmes in 1991 was faced with a lot of resistance which was punctuated with a strike in 2002, (K'Okul, 2010). This led to the University of Nairobi closing for one month and later reopened an impression that the policy was from "top down" rather than acceptability from the stakeholders. Module II programmes coupled with double intakes are presumed to have placed strain on facilities in public universities. It is on this basis that the study was set out to find out the welfare challenges faced by parallel degree students in comparison to the regular degree students in Kisii and Laikipia universities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a cross sectional survey with emphasis on causal - comparative design which determines the consequences of differences that already exists among groups of individuals (Kerlinger, 2000). The design was appropriate as the investigation compared challenges faced by different independent groups of university students in parallel and regular degree programmes. The research targeted parallel (module II) students on fulltime basis, and regular (Module I) students, fulltime lecturers, Deans of students and Academic Registrars ranging from the year 2009 to 2011. Since Kisii university had a population of 1,105 regular degree students (Module I), 2,528 parallel (Module II) students and 55 full time lecturers as at 2011, a sample size of 332 regular (module I), 607 parallel (module II) students and 15 full time lecturers was according to Kombo and Tromp (2006) considered appropriate, as this was 30% of the accessible population. On the other hand Laikipia university had a population of 591 Regular (module I) students, 642 parallel (module II) students and 98 full time lecturers as at 2011, a sample of 177 module I students, 191 module II students and 25 full time lecturers would be appropriate for the study. The samples for students and lecturers were obtained by snowball sampling technique while samples for Deans of students and Academic Registrars were selected by use of both purposive sampling techniques.

**Instrumentation**

Questionnaires having the Likert scale and close ended questions were the main research instrument used in this study. One questionnaire was administered to the university students who participated in the study while the other questionnaire was administered to the regular university lecturers. The other two were administered to the Deans of students and Academic Registrars. The questionnaires were supplemented by documentation available in the university colleges.

**Precision of Instruments**

A test -re-test of the questionnaire was conducted in Chuka University since it is away from the study location and it was also a constituent college of Egerton university. The instrument was again administered to the same respondents after two weeks. The responses were scored and Pearson Product moment correlation was used to compute the correlation coefficient between the first and second scores. The Cronbach's Alfa coefficient of 0.812 was found which according to Siegle (2002) was considered above the minimum reliability of 0.70 and hence the instrument was found suitable to be used in collecting data in the study. Both construct and face validity of the instrument was established to ensure that all the areas critical to the study were included in the instrument.

**Administration of Instruments**

The permit for the study was sought from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology headquarters in Nairobi through the assistance of the School of Graduate Studies, Kisii University before proceeding to the field. Using the permit and an introductory letter from Kisii University, the researchers were able to obtain permission from the principals of the target constituent university colleges through their Deans of students and Academic Registrars to conduct the research. The university student leaders were used to identify regular and parallel degree programme students who participated in the study. The lecturers' questionnaire was given to one of them who circulated them among other lecturers until the required sample size was obtained. The Dean of students and Academic Registrars' Questionnaires were administered by the researchers. The researchers administered the questionnaires with adequate instruction and assurance of confidentiality to the participants in the study. The questionnaires were administered during weekdays and collected the same day.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS****Students level of participation in co-curricular activities**

According to Taylor *et al.*, (2010) as noted by Gudo *et al.*, (2011), sports enhances school adjustment, moral adjustment, self-esteem and a more positive self-concept. However Gudo *et al.*, (2011), observed that only 44.118% of students in public universities were satisfied with the provisions of sports facilities. The researchers therefore sought to find out how public university students module of study affected their participation in co-curricular activities. The statement in the student's questionnaire was, "I am not allowed to participate in co-curricular activities because of my module of study." The response was that MII students had a challenge in participating in co-curricular activities. This is because they had highest weighted means of 2.6 and 3.7 in Kisii University and Laikipia University respectively. When this was compared to the regular degree students, the weighted means were, 2.1 in Kisii University and 2.2 in Laikipia University thus the regular degree students did not have any challenge in participating in co-curricular activities. This implied that module II students had challenges in participating in sports.

### Morning and evening lecture

The problem of accommodation in public universities was detected in the early 1970s prompting the University of Nairobi (UoN) and Kenyatta University (KU) to rent hostels for the ever mounting boarding requirements for students (Gudo & Olel, 2011). Parallel degree students are not accommodated in the university and if they are it is normally at market price (GOK, 2012). The Deans of students were asked in the questionnaire to determine if parallel degree students would be able to attend to morning and evening lectures. The responses were recorded in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Rating Module II students access to lectures by their Deans of Students'

Item number	SA	A	U	D	SD	Opinion
1.Access to evening lectures	LUC	-	-	KUC	-	Challenge in LUC
2.Access to morning lectures	-	-	KUC	-	LUC	No challenge

Note. The acronyms SA, A, U, D, and SD imply strongly agree, agree, undecided, and strongly disagree respectively.

The lecturers' provided information about the students' access to lectures challenges as faced by parallel degree students in comparison to the regular degree students. The second part of the lecturers questionnaire was compiled in appendix vii and represented in Table 2

**Table 2:** Rating Module II students' Welfare Challenges by their lecturers in KUC and LUC

Item No.	Weighted mean		Conclusion
	KUC	LUC	
2. Easy access to Morning Lectures	2.33	3.44	Challenge in KUC
3. Easy Access to the Evening Lectures	2.93	2.48	Challenge in LUC

The lecturers and the Dean of students in Kisii University observed that parallel degree students access to morning lectures was a challenge (see Tables 1 and 2). In Laikipia University, the lecturers observed that access to evening lectures was a challenge while the Dean of students was undecided on the matter (see Tables 1 and 2). However since lecturers are the ones who lecture the evening lectures and take roll call of their students then access to the evening lectures by parallel degree student is a challenge.

#### **Availability of books in the library**

Students' ability to do assignments is always linked to the availability of learning material. Availability of reference material for the students use was an access challenge. Students and lecturers were asked in the questionnaire to provide an opinion on the availability of books in the library as well as completion of assignments respectfully. The question in the students questionnaire was "insufficient books in the library hinder my ability to do comprehensive studies." The students' opinions were calculated by use of weighted means. Weighted means above 2.5 were considered to be a challenge. The responses were as follows, 4.4, and 4.2 for Kisii University and 3.7 and 3.4 for Laikipia University for parallel and regular degree students respectively. Despite the weighted means for parallel degree students being higher than regular degree students, the students had a challenge in accessing books in the library. When the two universities are compared, Kisii University had higher weighted mean compared to Laikipia University, this also implied that students in Kisii University had a challenge in accessing the Library.

Availability of books in the Library would have an effect on the ability of students to complete their assignments on time. The lecturers responded to the following opinion, "Module II students complete their assignment on time." The lecturers in Kisii University observed that completion of assignments in time was a challenge to students in Kisii University as they showed a higher weighted mean of 2.60 compared to 2.32 for Laikipia University. This therefore implies that parallel degree students in Kisii University have a challenge in accessing the library to do assignments.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

The researchers recommend further research on different aspects of university education and especially in the following areas:

- Challenges that public university students face in comparison to the students in private universities.
- Challenges faced by parallel Degree (Module II) students in the school based, evening and weekend modes.
- The efficiency of Module II graduates in the job market compared to module I graduates.

### **Acknowledgement**

The authors would like to acknowledge the valuable advice that was provided by Kisii University lecturers (Department of Education), Michel Nyang'au and Professor Joseph Bosire.

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### Appendix 1: Analysis of Kisii University MI (Module I) and MII (Module II) Students Questionnaires

Rating item No.	MI			MII		
	$\Sigma fi$	$\Sigma fixi$	WM	$\Sigma fi$	$\Sigma fixi$	WM
1. Delayed to enroll because of financial problems.	332	896	2.7	607	2,732	4.5
2. Since I enrolled for university Education family resources have been depleted.	332	1,029	3.1	607	2,307	3.8
3. I will not sit for exams if I do not complete my fees balance.	332	1,096	3.3	607	2,185	3.6
4. I am not allowed to participate in co-curricular activities because of my module of study	332	697	2.1	607	2,185	3.6
5. Insufficient books in the library hinder my ability to do comprehensive studies	332	1,394	4.2	607	2,671	4.4
6. Lecture halls are not conducive for studies	332	1,162	3.5	607	2,307	3.8
7. In most cases I am not able to access the dean of students to air my problems	332	1,096	3.3	607	2,064	3.4
8. My Lecturers are not the teaching committed enough in	332	863	2.6	607	1,457	2.4

**Note:** WM denotes the weighted mean.

**Appendix 2: Analysis of Laikipia University MI and MII Students Questionnaires**

Rating item No.	MI			MII		
	$\Sigma fi$	$\Sigma fixi$	WM	$\Sigma fi$	$\Sigma fixi$	WM
1. Delayed to enroll due to financial problems.	177	637	3.6	191	649	3.4
2. Since I enrolled for university Education family resources have been depleted.	177	566	3.2	191	879	4.6
3. I will not sit for exams if I do not complete my fees balance.	177	726	4.1	191	783	4.1
4. I am not allowed to participate in co-curricular activities because of my module of study	177	602	3.4	191	783	4.1
5. Insufficient books in the library hinder my ability to do comprehensive studies	177	602	3.4	191	707	3.7
6. Lecture halls are not conducive for studies	177	584	3.3	191	688	3.6
7. In most cases I am not able to access the dean of students to air my problems	177	478	2.7	191	497	2.6
8. My Lecturers are not committed enough in the teaching	177	584	3.3	191	5.6	2.7

**Note:** WM denotes the weighted mean.

**Appendix 3: Analysis of Kisii and Laikipia University Lecturers' Questionnaire**

Rating item No.	KUC			LUC		
	$\Sigma fi$	$\Sigma fixi$	WM	$\Sigma fi$	$\Sigma fixi$	WM
1. Module II students attend all Lectures	15	47	3.1	25	70	2.8
2. Module II students attend all Lectures on time	15	42	2.8	25	68	2.7
3. Module II students have easy access to the morning Lectures	15	35	2.3	25	85	3.4
4. Module II students have easy access to the evening Lectures	15	44	2.9	25	63	2.5
5. Module II students complete their assignments on time	15	39	2.6	25	58	2.3
6. Module II students have easy access to the Laboratory and lecture Halls	15	39	2.6	25	63	2.5
7. Module II students have easy access to facilities Such as the College Buses and Library	15	45	3.0	25	68	2.7
8. All Module II students take the final examination at the end of the semester	15	44	2.9	25	103	4.1
9. Module II students pass the examinations well	15	44	2.9	25	68	2.7

**Note:** WM denotes the weighted mean.