



# Impact of Massification on Students' and Lecturers' Academic Participation in Public and Private Universities in Kenya

Wilberforce N. Mwirichia<sup>a\*</sup>, Nelson Jagero<sup>b</sup>, Hillary Barchok<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>a,b,c</sup>Chuka University, Chuka, Kenya

**Abstract:** The study aimed at finding out the impact of massification on the students' and lecturers' academic participation in public and private universities in Kenya. Massification is the rapid enrolment of students in universities. Kenya has expanded her student enrolment in universities for her development needs. Research findings raise pertinent issues touching on the quality of education in the Kenyan universities. The study adopted a causal-comparative survey research design. The respondents were students and lecturers in the eight purposely selected universities in Kenya. A sample of 399 respondents consisting of 361 students, 22 lecturers and 16 heads of Department from four public and four private universities in Kenya were selected for the study through simple random sampling technique. The descriptive statistics used in the study was percentages. The study found that there is poor lecturers' academic participation in public and private universities. The study recommends that university authorities increase the ratio of lecturers to students in public universities to raise the quality of learning and teaching in the universities.

**Keywords:** Massification, Academic Participation, Private Universities, Public Universities.

## 1. Introduction

Scott (1995) used the term "massification" in the context of higher education system to describe the rapid increase in students enrolment in the latter part of the twentieth century. The causes of massification in higher institutions of learning in Europe was the democratization of education, the rise of knowledge economy and the phenomenon of globalization which is turning higher education into an export industry. Massification of higher education in Germany has been funded by the sustainable climb in education participation, generated through the changing educational aspirations and decisions in families and transmitted through the school system. Special factors such as the shortening of school time or the suspension of compulsory military service reinforce the sustainable process of growth of university education (Wolter, 2016).

Most African countries have a very rapid increase in actual number of students enrolled in higher education. UNESCO (2010) Institute for Statistics indicates that African countries have experienced rapid enrolment of students in their universities. Findings from Botswana, Nigeria, Ghana and elsewhere in Africa have shown that there is massive student enrolment in universities (Sawyer, 2004). An examination of a few African countries shows that the average annual increase in student enrolment from 1999 to 2005 was in the range of 12% to 60%.

In Kenya, massification began in 1990's when there was a double intake of students from form four and those who had graduated from form six. This caused the Kenya government to establish several universities and chartered private universities with the hope of absorbing as many students from secondary school so as to increase her pool of high skilled manpower for development (Republic of Kenya, 1988). The establishment of Self-Sponsored Programmes (SSP) in all public universities further increased enrolment of students in universities in Kenya.

Government of Kenya has recognized the need of policies aimed at providing quality education at university (Republic of Kenya, 1999). Economists have recognised that efficiency enhances quality of education. The rapid growth and enrolment in universities in Kenya however, has raised concern among stakeholders on the quality of university graduates (Kairu, 2014). Studies have been carried out on the effect of massification on universities in Kenya. However, there is no comparative study on the impact of

massification on students' and Lecturers' academic participation in public and private universities in Kenya.

## **2. Literature Review**

The students' participation in academic affairs of a university consists of classroom participation in form of access, retention and graduation. The gender, age and participation of the underrepresented groups is another form of student academic participation. Students' can also participate in academics in various forms such as subject/ discipline enrolments; academic year, their ages, place of enrolment; gender; ethnicity; first language; social class, parental education, type of school attended, housing tenure, health/ disability; criminal activity, learning difficulties, family structure and religious backgrounds (Altbach, 2016).

Afolabi (2005) pointed out dropout rate, repetition rate and completion rates as the main measures of education wastage. Dropout rate refers to non –completion of studies by a student while repetition is stagnation in an academic year or more such that time stipulated for completion of the education cycle is lengthened for that particular student or cohort. Completion rate refers to the percentage of the students that finally leave the system on completion of the course to the total number that enrolled in the final academic year of the level.

Lecturers also participate in academic affairs of universities through research, teaching and in consultancy. The Commission for University Education in 2009 reported that the academic qualification of academic staff was wanting. In the University of Nairobi, 46% of lecturers Doctorates and 54% Masters; Moi University, 37% Doctorates, 63% Masters; Kenyatta University, 70% Doctorates, 30% Masters; and in Egerton University, 39% Doctorates, 61% Masters.

The enrolment of students in public and private universities has affected research work by lecturers. According to the UNESCO (2010), the African continent contributed only 2.0% of the worlds' knowledge as manifested in research publications and less than 0.1% of the worlds' inventions particularly Kenya researcher's contribution amounted to about 6.6% of all sub-sahara Africa publications in the fields of natural science (Republic of Kenya, 2013).

In Kenya, there was lowering of academic standards and de-emphasizing of merit and the need for staff to research and publish (Gudo *et al.*, 2011). Chacha (2004) observes that research and publishing by faculty has dropped over the last few years due to heavy teaching responsibilities brought about by the rising student numbers, plus the need to “moonlight” so as to make some extra money to supplement their incomes. Faculties are not keen on undertaking meaningful research and publishing their work.

Massification has reduced student /lecture ratio hence affecting individual student attention. Gudo *et al.* (2011) argues that the increasing number of students had put great pressure on the work; load of the dons who were expected to actively participate or engage in research work. Massification has led to lecturers handling large numbers of students. This has led them to expend much of their time marking scripts and carrying out regular assessments.

Gudo *et al.* (2011) noted that massification in Kenya was characterized by low staff morale; lengthening the period it takes students to complete their degrees courses, and examination irregularities. The study investigated the nature and level of students and lecturers academic participation in both public and private universities in Kenya.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Design**

The study adopted a causal-comparative research survey design. It explores effects of an independent variable on an dependent variable. In other words, it points out the similarities and explains differences among variables under study. This study sought to determine the impact of massification on students' and lecturers' academic participation in public and private universities in Kenya.

### **3.2. Population and Sample Size**

The accessible population for this study was 179,427 respondents consisting of 175,249 students and 4,178 lecturers from the eight universities selected for the study. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) an accessible population of 179,427, has a normal sample size of 384. Thus 384 was shared out among the universities using proportionate sampling.

### 3.3. Sampling Procedure

Proportional sampling was used to compute respondents from each university. A total of 421 respondents were involved in the study.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics used was percentages. The quantitative data was analysed by use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software version 21.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The research findings were analysed using descriptive statistics. The study aimed at determining the impact of massification on students' and lecturers' academic participation in public and private universities in Kenya.

Results on the impact of massification on lecturers' academic participation in public and private universities was derived by determining the percentages of lecturers' responses on 7 items measuring the construct on the 5-point likert scale where : SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, NO=No opinion, DS=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

Table 1 presents lecturers' responses on the impact of large classes on their academic participation. Bearing in mind the effects of mass enrolment of students in the universities indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

**Table 1.** Lecturers' Academic Participation in Public and Private Universities

Statement	Private University					Public University				
	SA (%)	AG (%)	NO (%)	DS (%)	SD (%)	SA (%)	AG (%)	NO (%)	DS (%)	SD (%)
Large class size has increased exam Marking time causing delay in providing students with feedback	35.3	5.9	11.8	23.5	55.6	55.6	33.3	-	5.6	-
Large class size has increased lecturers' stress as they mark many student's scripts	29.4	23.5	5.9	23.5	11.8	38.9	38.9	5.6	11.1	-
Large class size has reduced time For lecturers'academic research	17.6	52.9	5.9	-	17.6	22.2	44.4	11.1	16.7	-
Large class size has compromised the quality of evaluation	11.9	23.5	11.8	29.4	17.6	11.1	61.1	-	22.2	-
Large class size has compromised the quality of examination supervision	17.6	23.5	11.8	23.5	17.6	27.8	50.0	5.6	11.1	-
Large class size has compromised the quality of learning since most students are distracted from learning	11.8	29.4	5.9	29.4	17.6	27.8	27.8	16.7	16.7	5.6
Large class size has led to students' stress as a result of stressful university academic life	23.5	11.8	11.8	23.5	23.5	22.2	38.9	11.1	16.7	5.8
Overall	21	24.4	9.3	21.8	23	29.4	42.1	7.2	14.3	1.6

**Key:** SA=Strongly Agree, AG= Agree, NO=No Opinion, DS=Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

The results on [Table 1](#) shows that 45.4% of lecturers in private universities and most lecturers (71.5%) in public universities are of the opinion that mass enrolment of students in the universities have negatively affected lecturers' academic participation in the universities.

The results shows that 41.2% of lecturers in private universities and 88.9% in public universities indicated that large class size increases examination marking time causing delay in providing students with feedback. This finding concurs with the study of [Ngolovoi \(2006\)](#) who found that large class size increased workload which affected curriculum delivery. This finding concurs with [Twigg \(2005\)](#) study whose concluded that inadequate feedback to students' decreases quality of learning.

Majority (52.9%) of lecturers in private universities and 77.8% in public universities showed that marking a large number of student scripts may have increased lecturers' stress levels hindering their teaching in the universities. This finding in line with Head of Department responses which showed that lecturers experience psychological stress due to large class size which minimizes lecturer-student interaction. This finding is consistent with studies by [Ngolovoi \(2006\)](#) in public universities in Kenya who found that increased class size has hampered quality of evaluation in the universities.

Most (70.5%) of lecturers' in private universities and 66.6 % in public universities indicated that they do not have adequate time for carrying out academic research because of large class size. Related studies by [Olukoju \(2002\)](#) found that was decline in research output in the universities. Studies by [Brandenburg and Zhu \(2007\)](#) found out that large class size reduced the quality of academic research in public and private universities in China. In their studies, [Fieldman et al. \(2004\)](#) pointed out that universities need to carry out research for effective teaching.

About 72.2% of lecturers' respondents in public universities and 35.4% in private universities showed that quality of evaluation has been negatively affected by large class size. The finding is in line with Heads of Departments' response on the impact of massification on their academic work (Excerpt 1). The Heads of department indicated that quality of examination evaluation has been affected by large class size. Studies by, [Kul et al. \(2005\)](#) explored the impact of evaluation on education quality. Consequently, the study indicated that students' enrolment affects their evaluation.

The results in [Table 1](#) show that 41.1% of lecturer responses from private universities and 77.8% from public universities indicated that university examination supervision is not satisfactorily conducted. In this study Heads of departments responses showed that supervision of students is a challenge as the examination hall has very many students with few lecturers. This findings is in line with [Gudo et al. \(2011\)](#) study on universities in Kenya that showed that the quality of invigilation and supervision of examinations in both public and private universities is not satisfactory.

Information in [Table 1](#), further shows that 61.1% of lecturers in public universities and 35.3% in private universities indicated that large class sizes have caused stress in students as they try to catch up with university student academic workload. The findings are consistent with the research results of [Odebero \(2010\)](#) who found that universities with large class sizes are likely to stress students. A study by [Volkwein et al. \(2000\)](#) found that institutions that foster student success provide stimulating classroom experiences that encourage them to devote more time and efforts to their learning and have then developed good study habits.

About 55.6% of respondents in public universities and 41.2% in private universities indicated that large class sizes have compromised the quality of learning as students are distracted from learning. Related studies on student success by [Amelink \(2005\)](#) indicated that students may not perform well in their college examinations if the environment is not conducive to learning.

Information was sought from the students on the impact of massification on students' academic participation in public and private universities in Kenya. The students gave their opinion in terms of students' failure rate, dropout rate, repetition rate and completion rate. The responses were scored on a 5 point Likert Scale where VH=Very High, HI=High, UN=Undecided, LO=Low and VL= Very Low. As relates to the mass enrolment of students, indicate the rate at which the following occurs:

The findings are presented in [Table 2](#). Bearing in mind the effects of mass enrolment of students in the universities indicate your opinion on the statements given.

**Table 2.** Students' Responses on Academic Participation

Variable	Private University					Public University				
	VH (%)	HI (%)	UN (%)	LO (%)	VL (%)	VH (%)	HI (%)	UN (%)	LO (%)	VL (%)
Student failure rate	4.1	20.5	26	42.5	4.1	5.4	20.5	26.8	34.0	12.0
Student dropout rate	9.6	9.6	21.9	38.4	19.2	2.8	17.0	21.5	37.7	20.1
Student repetition rate	13.7	17.8	23.3	34.2	6.8	5.4	22.4	19.0	33.7	17.3

Student completion rate	26.0	32.9	15.1	13.7	6.8	24.6	51.8	9.9	10.5	8.0
<b>Overall</b>	7.6	20.2	21.6	32.2	9.2	9.6	27.9	19.3	29	14.4

**Key:** VH- Very High HI- High UN- Undecided LO-Low VL-Very Low.

Results in Table 2 show that 41.4% of students' responses in private universities and 43.4% in public universities are of the view that students' academic participation in universities is low.

Information in Table 2 shows that 46.6% of students' in private universities and 46% in public universities indicated low student failure rate. Studies by Pike and Kuh (2000) came to similar findings in colleges in United States.

About 57.6% of students' respondents in private and 57.8% in public universities indicated low student dropout rate. A study by Shiundu (1999), reported such results in Kenyan universities. Odebero (2010) associated the low dropout of university students to the financial-aid provided by the Kenya Government.

A proportion (41%) of students in private universities and 51 % in public universities indicated low student repetition rate. The findings show that there are lower repetition rates in private universities as compared to public universities in Kenya. A previous study by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) and George *et al.* (2006) showed that there is low student college dropout rates in United States. Pascarella and Terenzini points out that college dropout rates is caused by low lecturer-student interaction.

Results analysis in Table 2 shows that 76.4% of students in private and 58.9% in public universities indicated high completion rates. The results show that public universities have lower completion rates than private universities. Thus there is high student completion rates in both public and private universities in Kenya. Studies in universities in Kenya by Chege (2006) found that universities are enrolling and graduating many students.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to find out the impact of massification on students' and lecturers' academic participation in public and private universities in Kenya.

The study found that students' and lecturers' academic participation has been hampered by large class sizes. The results from the lecturers' responses indicated that their academic participation is negatively affected by large class sizes. There are challenges in marking of students scripts on time, examination supervision and so on. Although, universities have increased hiring of lecturers, the lecturer-student academic interaction is still limited due to low lecturer- student ratio.

## 6. Recommendations

University administrators need to increase their academic faculty staff ratio to match the students enrolments so as to raise students' and lecturers' academic participation in private and public universities in Kenya.

## References

- Afolabi, S. O. (2005). *Statistical Tools and Models for Educational Planners*. Ilorin: Integrity Publications.
- Altbach, P. (2016). *Leadership for world-class universities: Challenges for developing countries*. Chestnut Hill: Boston College.
- Amelink, C. T. (2005). Predicting academic success among first-year, first generation students. Unpublished Ph.D.dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.:
- Brandenburg, U. and Zhu, J. (2007). Higher education in China in the light of massification and demographic change: Lessons to be learned for Germany. Berlin:CHE ArbeitsPapier No. 97. 1-59.
- Chacha, N. (2004). Reforming higher education in kenya. Challenges, lessons, and opportunities: A Paper Presented at State University of Newyork. Workshop with the Committee on Education, Science and Technology. Naivasha, Kenya.
- Chege, M. (2006). The state of higher education in kenya; problems and prospects. Paper Presented at the'Mijadala' social policy, governance and development in Kenya'Sponsored by Development Policy Management Forum Nairobi, Kenya.



- Fieldman, K. A., Smart, J. C. and Ethington, C. A. (2004). What don college students have to lose? Exploring outcomes of differences in person-environment fits. *Journal of Higher Education*, 75: 528-55.
- George, D. K., Kinzie, J., Jennifer, A. B., Bridges, B. K. and Hayek, C. J. (2006). What matters to student success: A review of the literature. Commission Report for the National Symposium on Post-Secondary Student Success. Spearheading a Dialogue on Student Success. National Post-Secondary Education Cooperative. Available: [https://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/kuh\\_team\\_report.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/kuh_team_report.pdf)
- Gudo, C. O., Olol, M. A. and Oanda, I. O. (2011). Students admission policies for quality assurance: Towards quality education in Kenya universities. *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 2(8): 177-83.
- Kairu, P. (2014). *Kaimenyi Puts Varsities on Notice Over Quality*. Daily Nation. Nairobi: Daily Nation Media Group.
- Krejcie, R. and Morgan, D. (1970). Determining sample size for research studies. *Education and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3): 608-09.
- Kul, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H. and Whitt, E. J. (2005). *Student success in college, creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco: Jasey-Bass.
- Ngolovoi, M. (2006). Means testing of students loans in Kenya. Paper Presented at the Comparative and International Higher Education Policy: Issues and Analysis Workshop: University of Albany.
- Odebero, S. O. (2010). *Crisis in financing and management of Kenyan higher education: Implications for planning reform agenda*. Educational Management of Kenya Conference. Migori Teachers' College.
- Olukoju, A. (2002). *Changing Perspectives on the Social Sciences in Ghana*. Accra: Springer Shop.
- Pascarella, E. T. and Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How College Affects Students. A Third Decade of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pike, G. R. and Kuh, G. D. (2000). First and second generation college students. A comparison of their engagement and perceptions of the campus environment. *The Review of Higher Education*, 29(4): 425-50.
- Republic of Kenya (1988). *Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya (1999). *Total Quality Education and Training*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya (2013). *Incentives for Scientific Publications*. Nairobi: NACOSTI.
- Sawyer, A. (2004). Challenges facing African universities. Available: <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu>
- Scott, W. R. (1995). *Organizational Sociology, Social Institutions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage publication.
- Shiundu, J. O. (1999). Wastage in education: A synthesis of causal factors and strategic interventions. A Paper Presented to Ministry of Agriculture. Nairobi.
- Twigg, C. A. (2005). *Improving learning and reducing costs. New models for online learning*. Annual Meeting for the Association for Learning Technology. Manchester, England.
- UNESCO (2010). UNESCO Science report 2010: The current status of science around the world. Available: <http://www.UNESCO.org>
- Volkwein, J. F., Valley, S., Parmley, K., Blose, G. and Zhou, Y. (2000). *A multi-campus study of academic performance and cognitive growth among native freshmen, two-year transfer and four-year transfer*. Annual meeting of the Association for Institutional Research. Cincinnati, OH U.S.A.
- Wolter, A. (2016). Massification and diversity: Has the expansion of higher education led to a changing composition of the student body? European and German experiences. Berlin, Germany. Available: <https://www.pef.uni-lj.si/fileadmin/Datoteke/Mednarodna/conference/wher/after/wolter.pdf>