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Abstract

The study sought to investigate the relationship between the quality of learning and student inter-university transfer in private universities in Kenya. This study targeted 26 registered private universities (including private university constituents where mobility rate records are too high) in Nairobi County, Kenya. The research sample size was 180 private university students and nine registrars. Quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Descriptive analysis, inferential statistics, and regression analysis were used to analyse the findings. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores, percentages, and standard deviation were computed appropriately. Binary logistic regression analysis was adopted to establish the extent of the impact on the dependent variables of independent variables. The study concludes that the quality of learning significantly influences students' mobility in private universities in Nairobi County in Kenya. Students prefer being in institutions of learning that can guarantee them quality education to enable them to get opportunities to thrive in the labour market. The study recommends that private universities invest in their respective infrastructure to ensure superior learning possibilities. There is a need to invest in qualified lecturers, classrooms, libraries, laboratories and many other things that contribute to quality learning. Student's mobility in private universities is in favour of institutions that are perceived to offer quality education.

Key terms: Inter-University Transfer, Private Universities, Quality of Learning, Students' Mobility.

INTRODUCTION

Quality education refers to education that provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the labour market. In many instances, the quality of learning education has even wider benefits, including its potential to develop individuals in ways that help develop society more broadly (Alexander, 2015). Students in institutions of higher learning often compete to get opportunities to study in universities that are known to offer quality higher education. Quality of learning is an important consideration that students make in choosing to remain in an academic institution or to transfer to another institution (Yao-Chuan, 2017). The aspect of quality pervades all aspects of the university. Presently, increased student mobility allows universities to provide a more inclusive and inspiring environment that attracts more students. According to Luciano (2014), the quality of education is directly related to students' mobility and enrolment in academic institutions. In the higher university sector, the quality of education is mostly linked with class size, effectiveness of assessment and availability of learning resources.

According to McCowan (2018), teaching skills, academic experience, and level of commitment to teaching are also important aspects that significantly affect the quality of teaching and learning in universities. Students who feel they miss a good opportunity for high-quality education tend to despise the learning institution where they are enrolled and eventually seek to transfer (when possible). According to Raghuram (2013), student mobility in higher learning institutions can arise as learners seek to be enrolled in institutions that are perceived to offer quality education. As students are to be placed in universities where quality education is delivered, it is common to expect a phenomenon where students change from one academic institution to another. This may sometimes compel a student to assume a fresh move to undertake similar or related courses. Clavel (2015) argues that student mobility may constitute prospective opportunities to study outside their countries (usually with a perception that such institutions offer high-quality education). Moreover, student mobility can also take place between an institution or a country (inward) or out of an institution or a country (outward). In this case, such mobility has also been described in terms of intra-national meaning within the confines of a nation and international being beyond a country's borders.

Studies on student mobility have been carried out in Kenya, for instance, its effect on quality teaching (Kandie, 2014), on student mobility and regional integration; Gabriel (2014) on determinants of demand and supply of students in universities; Mulonzi (2014) on factors influencing students' choice of universities; Nyabuti (2018) on review of students' admission policies for quality assurance, none has explored the effect of quality of learning on students' mobility. Thus, this study will seek to analyse the effect of quality of learning on students' mobility in private universities in Nairobi County in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aspect of quality pervades all aspects of the university. Presently, increased student mobility allows universities to provide a more inclusive and inspiring environment that attracts more students. As a result, we should witness the enhanced quality of universities (Cañado, 2015). Therefore, mobile students should choose universities on the basis of the quality of the university. Students consider education as an asset that increases their potential and provides opportunities for them to thrive in the labour market. Consequently, students engage in their financial resources, hoping to increase their chances for employment in the future (Van Bouwel & Veugelers, 2009). In this regard, mobile students choose to attend quality institutions, which they hope will yield them higher returns in the future.

This review examines the learning value in higher education institutions and its influence on student mobility. According to Luciano (2014), the quality of the curriculum constitutes the framework that seizes the sum total of the student's educational experiences, including the university goals and objectives, learning content organisation, pedagogic strategies, learning activities, exploitation of resources, spatial issues and assessment of achievement. According to McCowan (2018), quality in an institution of higher learning is characterised by

elements of participation, practices and results. Hence, attention should be paid to the preliminary substructure and employees provided by these institutions. With regard to Kenyan higher education institutions, there are only some measures of learning outcomes beyond the completion of the degree (McCowan, 2018).

According to Luciano (2014), the quality of education is directly related to students' mobility and enrolment in academic institutions. In the higher university sector, the quality of education is mostly linked with class size, effectiveness of assessment and availability of learning resources. Class size is computed as the number of students enrolled in a particular course or the number of learners that a teacher (lecturer) is responsible for. It is different from student to faculty ratio. The size of the class in higher education is considered an important factor that determines the quality of learning and, by extension, students' mobility (transfers from one institution to another).

According to McCowan (2018), teaching skills, academic experience, and level of commitment to teaching are also important aspects that influence the quality of teaching and learning in universities significantly. Students who feel they miss a good opportunity for high-quality education tend to despise the learning institution where they are enrolled and eventually seek to transfer (when possible).

Flores-Mavil (2014) examined the factors that determine the execution and advancement of quality assurance procedures in universities. This comparative study examined higher learning institutions in South America and Europe. The study revealed that higher learning institutions adopted different pathways to improve their offers for learning, institutional image and pedagogic practices.

When exploring the aspects of student engagement among first-year campus-based students enrolled in Australia, Krause and Coates (2008) defined seven aspects of student engagement that are key to their retention in the universities. According to the study, student engagement deals with the extent to which they are involved in research activities (also associated with learning quality). The extent to which students are involved in educational matters that are closely associated with their learning outcomes is a key aspect of student engagement. First-year student requires a lot of engagement in the course of their education and knowledge generation. From a student engagement viewpoint, quality learning also depends on how the universities and their staff are involved in supporting conditions that inspire and reassure student involvement. Student engagement incorporates academic and non-academic/social aspects of their learning experiences. Proper student engagement includes understanding the nexus between students and the university as an institution. Universities are responsible for fashioning a conducive environment that makes knowledge transfer possible through student engagement. Students tend to heighten their efforts to transfer out of an institution that is characterised by the absence of well-guided student engagement activities.

According to Raghuram (2013), student mobility in higher learning institutions can arise as learners seek to be enrolled in institutions that are perceived to offer quality education. As students are to be placed in universities where quality education is delivered, it is common to expect a phenomenon where students change from one academic institution to another. This may sometimes compel a student to assume a fresh move to undertake similar or related courses.

According to Clavel (2015), student mobility may constitute prospective opportunities to study outside their countries (usually with a perception that such institutions offer high-quality education). Moreover, student mobility can also take place between an institution or a country (inward) or out of an institution or a country (outward). In this case, such mobility has also been described in terms of intra-national meaning within the confines of a nation and international being beyond a country's borders.

Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010) investigated decisions of choice of the university that university students in Ghana made. The study selected a sample of 300 1st year undergraduate students through convenience sampling. The study findings showed clearly that the teaching quality was one of the reasons that students made a choice to join a

particular university. In this regard, teaching quality may be well-thought-out as a universal reason that applies to all Jones (2014) sought to determine academic views of the quality of institutional in the Republic of Somaliland in order to understand the purpose and framework to measure quality in their system.

Regionally, the study was conducted in three universities in Somaliland. Using a study sample of 203 respondents, the study found that the overall qualification and training of lecturers was a restraining factor in the attainment of quality in higher education.

Similarly, Mbabazi (2013) investigated the quality of learning in higher education institutions in Rwanda. The study emphasised students' learning and employability. Data was gathered from interviews with 74 lecturers, students and employees of universities. The study found that the absence of experience of deep approaches to learning by lecturers was the cause of limitations in students' learning outcomes. Moreover, the study showed that the students needed to prepare for higher education. These studies clearly need to indicate the association between quality of education and student mobility, as the present study envisages.

In the Kenyan context, little effort has been made to evaluate the quality standards in Kenyan universities, especially in the context of the current rapid growth in enrolment, which has compromised quality. According to the World Bank (2019), the number of academic staff found in public universities has grown disproportionately to the number of students joining these universities. Consequently, universities need more suitable staff to teach, and this negatively affects the quality of the learning in universities.

McCowan (2018) investigated the challenges higher learning institutions face in improving the quality of education. This study used interviews, observations and documentary analysis to collect data in a three-year-long study. The study identified three categories of obstacles to quality in Kenyan universities. These included human and infrastructural resources, governance structures, and instructional practices. As evident from the literature reviewed above, the issues surrounding the quality of education in institutions of higher learning are clearly exemplified. However, these studies could be more comprehensive in their association of these quality characteristics with student mobility in universities.

Quality education refers to the kind of education that provides students with the knowledge and skills they need for the job market. Alexander (2015) argued that the quality of learning education has even wider benefits in many instances, including its potential to develop individuals in ways that help develop society more broadly. Students in institutions of higher learning often compete to get opportunities to study in universities that are known to offer quality higher education. A policy aimed at enhancing quality education should emphasise student employability and alleviating labour shortages.

According to Yao-Chuan (2017), the quality of learning is an important consideration that students make in choosing to remain in an academic institution or to transfer to another institution. Most students take campus image as a proxy for quality of learning. Campus image and quality of learning influence students' decision to remain in an academic institution where they have been placed. Using a sample of international students studying in Taiwan with 210 students as respondents, it was found that if the image is negative, most students try to transfer to institutions where the image is positive. The institutional image significantly influenced students' choices of studying at Taiwan University. This study uses the method of direct interview and questionnaire. Similarly, Saputro (2017) found that campus image significantly influenced students' decisions in choosing a study institution as well as transferring away from an institution. Even though the product or brand of the university is largely unknown, students often choose their institutions through the image of the campus.

Mukwambo (2020) asserts that universities need to work hard to produce quality graduates up to the job market task. The education system should be more inclined towards quality education delivery than just teaching. A proper education system in a university setup should also guide a student on the soundness of various choices that can be made in the course of their

career practice. A proper education system should instil qualities that can enable graduates to deliver when employed in various sectors of the economy. The system should also support those students who intend to employ themselves rather than be employed. Higher education among students should be a unique opportunity for gaining skills on how to make the right choices in life. The outcome of the higher education system should be graduates who are able to think critically. Institutions offering higher education should embrace good policies that support the quality of learning among students.

In their investigation of factors affecting students' choice of higher education institution in Malaysia, Moorthy et al. (2019) found that quality of learning is a major factor that influences students' mobility among institutions in their search for quality education. University reputation was observed to have a strong influence and persuasive power on student's University selection decisions since it was believed to be correlated with the quality of learning.

Mbabazi (2013) asserted that availability and access to teaching and learning resources are considered paramount in influencing the quality of education in universities. Some key teaching and learning resources of immense significance in most institutions include libraries, classrooms or lecture halls, laboratories, computers/laptops, and other ICT-related devices. Investment in teaching and learning resources is responsible for increased student enrolment in most institutions. Poor teaching and learning resources often result in massive transfers from institutions as students seek to be placed in institutions where there are superior resources. Overcrowding and resource constraints are the outcomes of universities that increase their student enrolment without a reciprocal increase in facilities' capacity.

Mwebi and Simatwa (2013) examined the growth of non-governmental higher learning institutions in Kenya. The effect of quality of education on the rate of completion was studied (and vice versa). It was discovered that the rate of student registration in private universities was low, and the completion rate was perceived to be too high. In addition, the likelihood of transferring from privately owned higher learning institutions was minimal, and the completion rate needed to be higher. Universities that are highly affected by transfers are those without the necessary resources for quality learning in higher institutions. These facilities include libraries, playgrounds, hostels, lecture halls, health facilities and laboratories.

Akinwumi (2008) explained that the quality of education in universities is threatened by the rising number of students' registration without the relative increment in the physical learning facilities. On the other hand, McCowan (2018) emphasised that insufficient resources and personnel have contributed to the poor quality of university education in Kenya. In addition, according to Ngolovoi (2008), overworking and lack of qualifications by some teaching staff are affecting the quality of education offered in higher learning institutions.

Kimathi and Henry (2014) explained that facilities in Kenyan universities have failed to match the rising number of students registering. Lecture halls and office spaces are the most affected facilities. Due to this, private higher learning institutions had to advertise themselves as superior institutions in order to draw more students than the government universities, which always admit many students every academic year. Private higher learning institutions are competing for students based on quality standards. Students in private universities pay a lot of fees. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the institution to offer quality education to justify the high fees they charge (Kara et al., 2016). On the other hand, Okwakol (2008) emphasised that the majority of higher learning institutions lack physical learning resources such as classes, offices, and library and laboratory spaces to provide a conducive learning and teaching environment.

Alexander (2015) argues that excessive enrolment growth has negative effects on the quality of education provided to university students. The teaching, learning and academic environment is negatively affected when many learners are supposed to share limited resources. In extreme cases, learners are assessed in a sub-standard manner, with some lecturers resorting to multiple-choice tests, fill-in-the-blanks and short-form answers as coping strategies to

deal with a huge population of students. When the workload is too much, most lecturers resort to delivering their teaching through more lectures and less student group work, research projects, individual or group presentations, laboratory sessions, in-class hands-on learning activities, field trips, role-play, homework, case studies or dialogical interactions with students. In this context, lecturers are not able to identify struggling students, let alone schedule individual meetings with them in their teaching-learning process assistantship. Due to workload, overburdened lecturers reserve less time to engage in research or personal professional development, eventually lowering the quality of learning that they deliver.

Mwebi and Simatwa (2013) discovered that 55 per cent of laboratory equipment in higher learning institutions was not in a good state to conduct experiments, compromising the quality of learning in private institutions. As a result of this, only half of the experiments were conducted. In addition, most universities have not embraced using computers to run their teaching activities and store student's information. Furthermore, poor quality was attributed to a lack of utilisation of the digital age computer-assisted learning, web connectivity and network learning in offering quality education in higher learning institutions.

The Republic of Kenya (2006) discovered that the availability and quality of learning material highly affects the quality of teaching and research in universities, especially information technologies. Furthermore, there is no match between the increasing number of students in higher learning institutions and the expansion of physical resources and academic infrastructure. On the other hand, the existing infrastructure in the universities is inadequate, broken and in a bad state.

Only teaching staff with PhDs should be allowed to conduct lectures in universities. According to Gogo (2010), the quality of education is likely to be affected due to the lecturers' lack of competence. Most lecturers teach at more than one university. Due to the heavy workload, the lecturers are not able to deliver quality and are teaching students only to pass exams.

Oketch (2009) emphasised that some lecturers in universities teach masters students, yet they are not competent even in technical courses, which require experience to teach. On the other hand, staff retention is another challenge that is being overlooked in universities. Newly started higher learning institutions do not find it hard to get new teaching staff, but once they are hired, they find it hard to retain them. Without permanent lecturers in private universities, there will be no quality education. This is because the part-time lecturer may leave for permanent jobs in other institutions, and the university may end up employing unqualified teaching staff. In their bid for economic efficiency, universities use less money while they generate more income (Odebero, 2010).

According to Aleshkovski et al. (2020), the quality of education is one of the key factors that is considered by most university students in their choice of academic institution and in determining whether to remain in the chosen institution for a long time until the completion of their educational goals. Quality of education is a major indicator of student and institutional success in higher education. Quality of education is a primary indicator of institutional performance, especially in private universities. In order to survive in an environment where education is becoming expensive and hardly accessible to poor students, private universities are obliged to market themselves through their ability to offer high-notch education.

According to Kim et al. (2020), the concept of quality education among institutions of higher learning has never gained more interest among the stakeholders than it did after the outbreak of Covid 19. Though there was massive disruption of academic programmes in most universities, institutions that were able to implement drastic transformation programmes that could enhance the quality of higher education (HE) delivery through online platforms actually benefited a lot. On the other hand, institutions that were rigid in their programmes and could not offer quality higher education ended up losing a lot of

their students. It, therefore, means that quality education is highly related to the material digitalisation process in higher learning/university institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Influence of Quality of Learning on Student Mobility in Private Universities in Kenya

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that there are very few issues of missing marks. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 78.8 per cent, with 43.6 per cent agreeing and an additional 35.2 per cent strongly agreeing. Those respondents who disagreed with the statement were a cumulative of 13.3 per cent. About 7.9 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, the average student rating of the statement that there are very few issues of missing marks was 3.98, with a standard deviation of 1.06.

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that the reputation of the university faculty is above board. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 73.4 per cent, with 38.2 per cent agreeing and an additional 35.2 per cent strongly agreeing. Those respondents who disagreed with the statement were a cumulative of 6.6 per cent. About 20 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, the average student rating of the statement that the reputation of the university faculty is above board was 3.99, with a standard deviation of 0.99.

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that they consider their current university ranking as high compared to other private universities. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 73.3 per cent, with 40.6 per cent agreeing and an additional 32.7 per cent strongly agreeing. The respondents who disagreed with the statement were a cumulative of 18.8 per cent. About 7.9 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, an average student rating of the statement that they consider their current university ranking as high compared to other private universities was 3.87, with a standard deviation of 1.09.

Table 1: Quality of Learning

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev
1. There are very few issues of missing marks	5 (3.0)	17 (10.3)	13 (7.9)	72 (43.6)	58 (35.2)	165 (100)	3.98	1.06
2. The reputation of the university faculty is above board	5 (3.0)	6 (3.6)	33 (20.0)	63 (38.2)	58 (35.2)	165 (100)	3.99	0.99
3. I consider the current university ranking as high compared to other private universities	1 (0.6)	30 (18.2)	13 (7.9)	67 (40.6)	54 (32.7)	165 (100)	3.87	1.09
4. The University attracts many international students	10 (6.1)	38 (23.0)	22 (13.3)	61 (37.0)	34 (20.6)	165 (100)	3.43	1.22
5. The university has an overall reputation for quality	1 (0.6)	14 (8.5)	21 (12.7)	75 (45.5)	54 (32.7)	165 (100)	4.01	0.92
6. The status of a degree from the university is high compared to other private universities	5 (3.0)	13 (7.9)	13 (7.9)	92 (55.8)	42 (25.5)	165 (100)	3.93	0.96

7. The university's higher education quality is above board	1 (0.6)	14 (8.5)	25 (15.2)	83 (50.3)	42 (25.5)	165 (100)	3.92	0.89
8. The employability prospects of graduate from the university are high	1 (0.6)	13 (7.9)	37 (22.4)	68 (41.2)	46 (27.9)	165 (100)	3.88	0.93
9. The university has useful linkages with other highly rated-universities	1 (0.6)	9 (5.5)	33 (20.0)	84 (50.9)	38 (23.0)	165 (100)	3.90	0.84
10. The univ. embraces multiple learning and teaching approaches	1 (0.6)	1 (0.6)	5 (3.0)	100 (60.6)	58 (35.2)	165 (100)	4.29	0.62
11. The university has up-to-date research facilities	9 (5.5)	30 (18.2)	18 (10.9)	78 (47.3)	30 (18.2)	165 (100)	3.55	1.14
12. The university has a well-equipped library	26 (15.8)	30 (18.2)	13 (7.9)	62 (37.6)	34 (20.6)	165 (100)	3.29	1.39
13. The university offers high-quality services to its students	13 (7.9)	18 (10.9)	5 (3.0)	99 (60.0)	30 (18.2)	165 (100)	3.70	1.13
14. I consider that the university offers a lot of value in its education	1 (0.6)	9 (5.5)	13 (7.9)	75 (45.5)	67 (40.6)	165 (100)	4.20	0.85
Overall							3.85	0.69

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that their university attracts many international students. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 57.6 per cent, with 37 per cent agreeing and an additional 20.6 per cent strongly agreeing. Those who disagreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 29.1 per cent. About 13.3 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, the average student rating of the statement that their university attracts many international students was 3.43, with a standard deviation of 1.22.

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that their university has an overall reputation of quality. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 78.2 per cent, with 45.5 per cent agreeing and an additional 32.7 per cent strongly agreeing. The respondents' proportion who disagreed with the statement was a cumulative of 9.1 per cent. About 12.7 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, the average student rating of the statement that their university has an overall reputation of quality was 4.01, with a standard deviation of 0.92.

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that the status of a degree from their university is higher than private universities. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 81.3 per cent, with 55.8 per cent agreeing and an additional 25.5 per cent strongly agreeing. Those respondents who disagreed with the statement were a cumulative of 10.9 per cent. About 7.9 per cent were undecided. On a scale of 1 - 5, the average student rating of the statement that the status of a degree from their university is high compared to other private universities was 3.93, with a standard deviation of 0.96.

Most of the student respondents agreed that their university's higher education quality is above board. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 75.8 per cent, with 50.3 per cent agreeing and an additional 25.5 per cent strongly agreeing. Those respondents who disagreed with the statement were a cumulative of 9.1 per cent. About 15.2 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, an average student rating of the statement that their university's higher education quality is above board was 3.92, with a standard deviation of 0.89.

Most of the student respondents agreed that the employability prospects of graduating from the university are high. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 69.1 per cent, with 41.2 per cent agreeing and an additional 27.9 per cent strongly agreeing. The respondents' proportion who disagreed with the statement was a cumulative of 8.5 per cent. About 22.4 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, the average student rating of the statement that the employability prospects of graduates from the university are high was 3.88 with a standard deviation of 0.93.

Most of the student respondents agreed that their university has useful linkages with other highly rated universities. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 73.9 per cent, with 50.9 per cent agreeing and an additional 23 per cent strongly agreeing. The respondents' proportion who disagreed with the statement was a cumulative of 6.1 per cent. About 20 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, the average student rating of the statement that their university has useful linkages with other highly rated universities was 3.9, with a standard deviation of 0.84.

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that their university embraces multiple learning and teaching approaches that are useful to them. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 95.8 per cent, with 60.6 per cent agreeing and an additional 35.2 per cent strongly agreeing. The respondents' proportion who disagreed with the statement was a cumulative of 1.2 per cent. About 3 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, an average student rating of the statement that their university embraces multiple learning and teaching approaches that are useful to them was 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.62.

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that their university has up-to-date research facilities. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 65.5 per cent, with 47.3 per cent agreeing and an additional 18.2 per cent strongly agreeing. Those respondents who disagreed with the statement were a cumulative of 23.7 per cent. About 10.9 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, an average student rating of the statement that their university has up-to-date research facilities was 3.55, with a standard deviation of 1.14.

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that their university has a well-equipped library. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 58.2 per cent, with 37.6 per cent agreeing and an additional 20.6 per cent strongly agreeing. The respondents' proportion who disagreed with the statement was a cumulative of 34 per cent. About 7.9 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, the average student rating of the statement that their university has a well-equipped library was 3.29, with a standard deviation of 1.39.

Most of the student respondents agreed that their university offers high-quality services to its students. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 78.2 per cent, with 60 per cent agreeing and an additional 18.2 per cent strongly agreeing. A total of 18.8 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the statement. About 3 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, the average student rating of the statement that their university offers high-quality services to its students was 3.7, with a standard deviation of 1.13.

The majority of the student respondents agreed with the statement that they consider their university to offer a lot of value in its education. Those who agreed with the statement comprised a cumulative of 86.1 per cent, with 45.5 per cent agreeing and an additional 40.6 per cent strongly agreeing. The respondents' proportion who disagreed with the statement was a cumulative of 6.1 per cent. About 7.9 per cent were neutral. On a scale of 1 - 5, an average student rating of

the statement that they consider their university to offer a lot of value in its education was 4.2, with a standard deviation of 0.85. Most of the respondent's scores on the perceived quality of learning in their universities ranged between 4 -5 (52.1%) and 3 – 4 (39.4%), as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Students' Rating of the Perceived Quality of Learning in their Universities

Quality of learning scores	Frequency	Percentage
1-1.99	1	0.6%
2-2.99	13	7.9%
3-3.99	65	39.4%
4-5.00	86	52.1%
Total	165	100.0%

The overall students' rating of the perceived quality of learning in their universities (on a scale of 1 – 5) was a mean of 3.85, with a standard deviation of 0.69. The aim of this study was to determine if there was a significant difference in the students' rating of the perceived quality of learning in their universities, and analysis was done using an independent samples t-test. Therefore, a t-test was used as a means to compare the ratings of those willing and not willing as affected by their quality of learning. The results are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: T-test Results for the Comparison of Students' Rating of the Perceived Quality of Learning in their Universities between those Willing and those not Willing to Transfer

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
No	131	4.215	0.042	0.486	4.131	4.299
Yes	34	2.921	0.123	0.717	2.671	3.171
Combined	165	3.949	0.059	0.753	3.833	4.064

Note: Mean difference = 1.294; Standard error = 0.104; P-value = 0.000; t = 12.437; df = 163

Influence of Quality of Learning on Student Mobility

This study sought to assess the influence of quality of learning on students' mobility in private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The choice of binary logistic regression was justified because the dependent variable (willingness and non-willingness to transfer from one institution to another) was binary. Table 4 shows the influence of quality of learning on students' mobility in private universities.

Table 4: Influence of Quality of Learning on Students' Mobility in Private Universities

Willingness to transfer	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Quality of learning	-4.128	0.760	-5.430	0.000	-5.618	-2.639
_cons	13.792	2.747	5.020	0.000	8.408	19.175

Log likelihood = -37.93; LR chi2 (1) = 92.01; Prob > chi2 = 0.000; Pseudo R2 = 0.548

The log-likelihood for the fitted model (-37.93) and the likelihood ratio chi-square value of 92.01 (Prob> chi2 = 0.000) indicate that the model parameters (the independent variable and the constant) are jointly significant at 5 per cent. The Pseudo R2 of 0.548 imply that about 54.8 per cent of the student's willingness to transfer from one private university to another could be attributed to the quality of learning (the independent variable). Pseudo R2 of 0.548 meet the statistical threshold, confirming that the willingness to transfer from one private university to another among the sampled students was well attributed to students' rating of the perceived quality of learning in their universities. The coefficient of quality of learning (-

4.128) was statistically significant at a 5 per cent level. This implies that the null hypothesis, "Quality of learning does not significantly influence student's mobility in private universities in Nairobi County in Kenya," was rejected. Therefore, the quality of learning significantly influences student's mobility in private universities in Nairobi County in Kenya.

One registrar from a church-sponsored private university in Nairobi explained:

> *The greatest course for student transfer from one institution to another is the perception of the quality of learning available in their current institution compared to the institution they seek to transfer into. Students note with great concern when they are not accorded quality learning by their institutions. The greatest triggers in students' minds on the quality of learning that they receive include consistency of classes, completion of syllabuses, competency of lecturers and lack of missing marks.*

In one of the institutions where there were very few students wanting to transfer out of the institution, the registrar reported:

> *In this university, enrolment is on a gradual increase. In fact, this year, we have a 20 per cent increase in enrolment. We are actually forced to expand some of our facilities, such as the library, in order to accommodate the increasing numbers. We are also planning to expand our computer laboratory and build additional hostels.*

In one of the institutions where there were many students wanting to transfer out of the institution, the registrar reported:

> *A key challenge with our education system is the lack of adequate lecturers. We mostly make use of part-time lecturers rather than our own staff. This makes it very hard to control the quality of learning. There are rare meetings among the teaching staff and minimal agreement on the institution's welfare. Halls are extremely crowded when common university courses are delivered. In fact, the quality of physical facilities is in jeopardy. We have very few facilities that are needed for good learning (chairs, tables, books and electronic materials, which are necessary for university learning.*

The researcher asked about the quality of the teaching force in the sampled universities. One of the registrars who was a key informant in a university where more students were expressing willingness to transfer remarked:

> *In this university, we have an acute shortage of lecturers. Most of our staff are leaving and getting absorbed in other universities. Our current staff are not paid promptly for work done. Most of them are part-time lecturers.*

The mean difference in the scores on students' rating of the perceived quality of learning in their universities (between those willing to transfer and those not willing) was computed as 1.294. The mean difference is depicted in Figure 1.

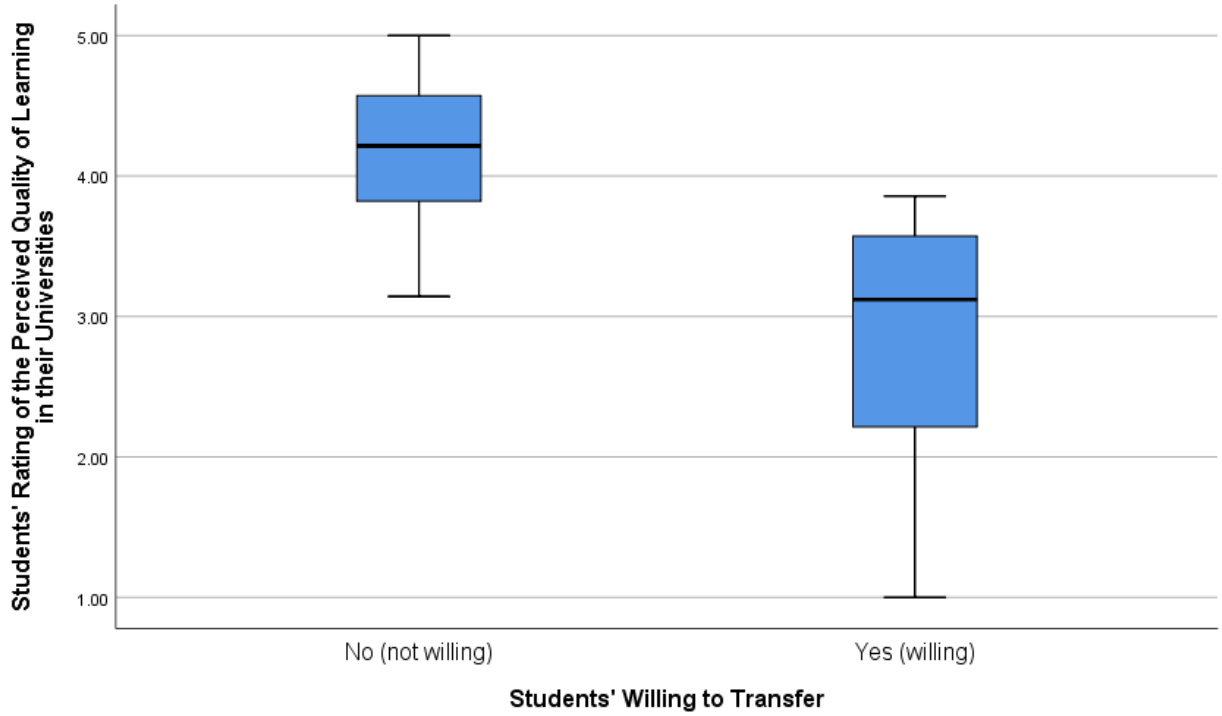

Figure 1: Comparison of Students' Rating of the Perceived Quality of Learning in their Universities between those Willing and those not Willing to Transfer

The calculated t-value of 12.437 at 163 degrees of freedom indicates that the mean difference was statistically significant at a 5 per cent level ($p<0.05$). This implies that quality of learning significantly influences student mobility in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya.

The findings of this study agree with Cañado (2015), who recorded that the greatest reason why students move from one institution to another in their higher education is the search for quality education. According to Cañado (2015), the aspect of quality pervades all aspects of the university. Increased student mobility is therefore associated with the search for opportunities for universities that can offer quality education. Most students choose universities on the basis of the perceived quality of education that it offers.

The findings of this study are also consonant with van Bouwel and Veugelers (2009), who argued that the quality of learning takes pre-eminence among students' choices of colleges since, to most of them, education is an asset that increases their potential and provides opportunities for them to thrive in the labour market. Consequently, students engage their financial resources, hoping to increase their chances for employment in the future. In this regard, most students choose to enrol in institutions where they are convinced that quality is offered in the hope of yielding them higher returns in the future.

This study's findings also agree with Luciano (2014), who examined the learning value in higher education institutions and its influence on student mobility. In their findings, it was noted that student mobility is influenced by the quality of learning. According to Luciano (2014), the quality of the curriculum constitutes the framework that seizes the sum total of the student's educational experiences, including the university goals and objectives, learning content organisation, pedagogic strategies, learning activities, exploitation of resources, spatial issues and assessment of achievement.

The findings of this study are in agreement with McCowan (2018), who, according to his study, the quality of learning is a major determinant of the

students' preferences related to the academic institutions of their choice. Quality in an institution of higher learning is characterised by elements of participation, practices and results. Hence, attention ought to be paid to the preliminary substructure and employees provided by these institutions.

The findings of this study agree with Aleshkovski et al. (2020) who, according to them, quality of education is one of the key factors that is considered by most university students in their choice of academic institution and in determining whether to remain in the chosen institution for a long time till the completion of their educational goals. Quality of education is a major indicator of student and institutional success in higher education. Quality of education is a primary indicator of institutional performance, especially in private universities. In order to survive in an environment where education is becoming expensive and hardly accessible to poor students, private universities are obliged to market themselves through their ability to offer high-notch education.

The results of this study agree with Yao-Chuan (2017), who argued that quality of learning is an important consideration that students make in choosing to remain in an academic institution or to transfer to another institution. Most students take campus image as a proxy for quality of learning. Campus image and quality of learning influence students' decision to remain in an academic institution where they have been placed. Using a sample of international students studying in Taiwan with 210 students as respondents, it was found that if the image is negative, most students try to transfer to institutions where the image is positive. The institutional image significantly influenced students' choices of studying at Taiwan University. This study uses the method of direct interview and questionnaire. Similarly, Saputro (2017) found that campus image significantly influenced students' decisions in choosing a study institution as well as transferring away from an institution. Even though the product or brand of the university is largely unknown, students often choose their institutions through the image of the campus.

The findings of this study concur with Kim et al. (2020), who said that quality education is a driving force in influencing student mobility in universities. Quality education is now viewed from a broader perspective, especially after the COVID-19 outbreak. The concept of quality education among institutions of higher learning has never gained interest among stakeholders more than it did after the outbreak of Covid 19. Though there was massive disruption of academic programmes in most universities, institutions that were able to implement drastic transformation programmes that could enhance the quality of higher education (HE) delivery through online platforms actually benefited a lot. On the other hand, institutions that were rigid in their programmes and could not offer quality higher education ended up losing a lot of their students. It, therefore, means that quality education is highly related to the material digitalisation process in higher learning/university institutions.

The results of this study agree with Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010), who studied first-year undergraduate students' decisions of choice of university in Ghana. The study findings showed clearly that the teaching quality was one of the reasons that students made a choice to join a particular university. Teaching quality was considered a universal reason that applied to all students in their choice of universities, irrespective of where they come from.

The findings of this study agree with the World Bank (2019), which, in one of its studies in the Kenyan context, found that the quality/standards in Kenyan universities are associated with the trends in enrolment. One of the main reasons for students' mobility between institutions is the need to move into institutions that offer quality education. According to the World Bank (2019), the number of academic staff found in most universities has grown disproportionately to the number of students joining these universities. Consequently, universities need more suitable staff to teach, and this negatively affects the quality of the learning in universities and consequently numerous transfers.

The findings of this study are consistent with Alexander (2015), who asserted that quality education

gives students the skills and knowledge they need for the job market. Alexander (2015) argued that the quality of learning education has even wider benefits in many instances, including its potential to develop individuals in ways that help develop society more broadly. Students in institutions of higher learning often compete to get opportunities to study in universities that are known to offer quality higher education. A policy that is aimed at enhancing quality education should emphasise student employability and the alleviation of labour shortages.

The findings of this study are consonant with Mukwambo (2020), who found that universities need to work hard to produce quality graduates who are up to the task in the job market. The education system should be more inclined towards quality education delivery than just teaching. A proper education system in a university setup should also guide a student on the soundness of various choices that can be made in the course of their career practice. A proper education system should instil qualities that can enable graduates to deliver when employed in various sectors of the economy. The system should also support those students who intend to employ themselves rather than be employed. Higher education among students should be a unique opportunity for gaining skills on how to make the right choices in life. The outcome of the higher education system should be graduates who are able to think critically. Institutions offering higher education should embrace good policies that support the quality of learning among students.

This study agrees with Moorthy et al. (2019), who, in their investigation of factors affecting students' choice of higher education institution in Malaysia, found that quality of learning is a major factor that influences students' mobility among institutions in their search for quality education. University reputation was observed to have a strong influence and persuasive power on student's University selection decisions since it was believed to be correlated with the quality of learning.

The findings of this study agree with Mwebi and Simatwa (2013), who investigated the expansion of private Universities in Kenya and its impact on quality and completion rate. Mwebi and Simatwa (2013) examined the growth of non-governmental higher learning institutions in Kenya. The effect of quality of education on the rate of completion was studied (and vice versa). It was discovered that the rate of student registration in private universities was low, and the completion rate was perceived to be too high. In addition, the likelihood of transferring from privately owned higher learning institutions was minimal, and the completion rate was not high. Universities that are highly affected by transfers are those without the necessary resources for quality learning in higher institutions. These facilities include libraries, playgrounds, hostels, lecture halls, health facilities and laboratories.

The findings of this study agree with Akinwumi (2008), McCowan (2018) and Ngolovoi (2008). Akinwumi (2008) explained that the quality of education in universities is threatened by the rising number of students' registration without the relative increment in the physical learning facilities. On the other hand, McCowan (2018) emphasised that insufficient resources and personnel have contributed to the poor quality of university education in Kenya. In addition, according to Ngolovoi (2008), overworking and lack of qualifications by some teaching staff affects the quality of education offered in higher learning institutions.

The findings of this study agree with Kara et al. (2016), Kimathi and Henry (2014) and Okwakol (2008) in their separate investigations. Kimathi and Henry (2014) explained that facilities in Kenyan universities have failed to match the rising number of students registering. Lecture halls and office spaces are the most affected facilities. Due to this, private higher learning institutions had to advertise themselves as superior institutions in order to draw more students than the government universities, which always admit many students every academic year. Private higher learning institutions are competing for students based on quality standards. Students in private universities pay a lot of fees. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the institution to offer quality education to justify the high fees they charge (Kara et al., 2016). On the other hand, Okwakol (2008) emphasised that the majority of higher learning institutions lack physical learning resources such as classes, offices, and library and

laboratory spaces to provide a conducive learning and teaching environment.

This study is consistent with Alexander (2015), who argued that excessive enrolment growth negatively affects the quality of education provided to university students. The teaching, learning and academic environment is negatively affected when many learners are supposed to share limited resources. In extreme cases, learners are assessed in a sub-standard manner, with some lecturers resorting to multiple-choice tests, fill-in-the-blanks and short-form answers as coping strategies to deal with a huge population of students. When the workload is too much, most lecturers resort to delivering their teaching through more lectures and less student group work, research projects, individual or group presentations, laboratory sessions, in-class hands-on learning activities, field trips, role play, homework, case studies or dialogical interactions with students. In this context, lecturers are not able to identify struggling students, let alone schedule individual meetings with them in their teaching-learning process assistantship. Due to workload, overburdened lecturers reserve less time to engage in research or personal professional development, eventually lowering the quality of learning that they deliver.

The study by Mwebi and Simatwa (2013) agrees with this study. In their investigation, Mwebi and Simatwa (2013) discovered that 55 per cent of laboratory equipment in higher learning institutions needed to be in a better state to conduct experiments, compromising the quality of learning in private institutions. As a result of this, only half of the experiments were conducted. In addition, most universities have not embraced the use of computers to run their teaching activities and to store student's information. Furthermore, poor quality was attributed to a lack of utilisation of the digital age computer-assisted learning, web connectivity and network learning in offering quality education in higher learning institutions.

This study is concurrent with the Republic of Kenya (2006), which discovered that the quality of teaching and research in universities is highly affected by the quality and availability of learning material, especially information technologies. Furthermore, there is no match between the increasing number of students in higher learning institutions and the expansion of physical resources and academic infrastructure. On the other hand, the existing infrastructure in the universities is inadequate, broken and in a bad state.

This study agrees with Gogo (2010), who found that only teaching staff with PhD should be allowed to conduct lectures in universities. According to Gogo (2010), the quality of education is likely to be affected due to the lecturers' lack of competence. Most lecturers teach at more than one university. Due to the heavy workload, the lecturers are not able to deliver quality and are teaching students only to pass exams.

This study is consistent with Oketch (2009) and Odebero (2010) in their different studies. Oketch (2009) emphasised that some lecturers in universities teach masters students, yet they are not competent even in technical courses, which require experience to teach. On the other hand, staff retention is another challenge that is being overlooked in universities. Newly started higher learning institutions do not find it hard to get new teaching staff, but once they are hired, they find it hard to retain them. Without permanent lecturers in private universities, there will be no quality education. This is because the part-time lecturer may leave for permanent jobs in other institutions, and the university may end up employing unqualified teaching staff. In their bid for economic efficiency, universities use less money while they generate more income (Odebero, 2010).

The findings of this study agree with Luciano (2014), who found that the quality of education is directly related to students' mobility and enrolment in academic institutions. In the higher university sector, the quality of education is mostly linked with class size, effectiveness of assessment and availability of learning resources. Class size is computed as the number of students enrolled in a particular course or the number of learners that a teacher (lecturer) is responsible for. It is different from student to faculty ratio. The size of the class in higher education is considered an important factor that determines the quality of learning and, by extension, students' mobility (transfers from one institution to another).

The results of this study are consistent with McCowan (2018) findings that teaching skills, academic experience and level of commitment to teaching are important aspects that significantly influence the quality of teaching and learning in universities. Students who feel that they miss a good opportunity for high-quality education tend to despise the learning institution where they are enrolled and eventually seek to transfer (when it is possible).

This study is consistent with Mbabazi (2013), who asserted that availability and access to teaching and learning resources are paramount in influencing the quality of education in universities. Some of the key teaching and learning resources that are of immense significance in most institutions include libraries, classrooms or lecture halls, laboratories, computers/laptops, and other ICT-related devices. Investment in teaching and learning resources is responsible for increased student enrolment in most institutions. Poor teaching and learning resources often result in massive transfers from institutions as students seek to be placed in institutions where there are superior resources. Overcrowding and resource constraints are the outcomes of universities that increase their student enrolment without a reciprocal increase in facilities' capacity.

This study concurs with Alexander (2015), who argued that excessive growth in enrolment negatively affected the quality of education provided to students in universities. The teaching, learning and academic environment is negatively affected when many learners are supposed to share limited resources. In extreme cases, learners are assessed in a sub-standard manner, with some lecturers resorting to multiple-choice tests, fill-in-the-blanks and short-form answers as coping strategies to deal with a huge population of students. When the workload is too much, most lecturers resort to delivering their teaching through more lectures and less student group work, research projects, individual or group presentations, laboratory sessions, in-class hands-on learning activities, field trips, role play, homework, case studies or dialogical interactions with students. In this context, lecturers are not able to identify struggling students, let alone schedule individual meetings with them in their teaching-learning process assistantship. Due to workload, overburdened lecturers reserve less time to engage in research or personal professional development, eventually lowering the quality of learning that they deliver.

Discussion

Most of the respondents scores on perceived quality of learning in their universities ranged between 4 -5 (52.1%) and 3 – 3.99 (39.4%). The mean difference in the scores on students' rating of the perceived quality of learning in their universities (between those willing to transfer and those not willing) was computed as 1.294. The calculated t-value of 12.437 at 163 degrees of freedom indicates that the mean difference was statistically significant at a 5 per cent level ($p<0.05$). This implies that quality of learning significantly influences student mobility in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya. Similarly, the binary logistic regression results confirmed that the coefficient of quality of learning (-4.128) was statistically significant at the 5 per cent level.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion: In conclusion, the quality of learning significantly influences student's mobility in private universities in Nairobi County in Kenya. Students prefer being in institutions of learning that can guarantee them quality education to enable them to get opportunities to thrive in the labour market.

Recommendation: The study recommends that private universities should invest in their respective infrastructure that is meant to ensure superior learning possibilities. There is a need to invest in qualified lecturers, classrooms, libraries, laboratories and many other things that contribute to quality learning. Student's mobility in private universities is in favour of institutions that are perceived to offer quality education.

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