

Mass Education Aspirations and the Quality Demand in the Delivery of Higher Education in East Africa: Consequences of Migration from Elitism

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of the current mass education aspirations on the quality demand in the delivery of higher education in East Africa. The population comprised appointed quality assurance officers/directors for chartered Universities in the region which are both public and private. The sample used was 41 directors of quality assurance who were invited for the management quality assurance workshop in Tanzania by the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) out of whom only 35 returned completed and usable questionnaires. The specific objectives were; (1) to determine the relationship between student assessment and the current mass education aspirations; (2) to assess the relationship between the quality of teaching by the academic staff and the current mass education aspirations in the region; (3) to analyze the relationship between the quality of facilities and infrastructure such as library, ICT and the current mass education aspirations. Results revealed that; (1) the current increased numbers of students in higher education demands that universities strengthen the student assessment process [$r = .743^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$]; (2) the present numbers of students in universities requires more well trained staff to provide quality teaching [$r = .709^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$]. It was further revealed that there is also a significant association between the present student numbers in universities and the current demand for better facilities in terms of physical infrastructure and library space [$r = .787^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$] and ICT [$r = .696^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$]. It was therefore concluded that there is need for a deliberate move by all universities in the East African region to ensure that they put in place proper student assessment practices, the required infrastructure and ICT facilities and ensure quality teaching and learning in the whole process.

Keywords: mass education, quality, higher education, elitism

1. Introduction

As universities all over the world confront the realities of migration from elitism to mass education, there are a number of challenges that have occasioned a host of related problems for the different stakeholders. Almost all universities are in fact not only grappling with funding, leadership and governance issues but with, above all else, quality assurance in the whole process. Quality assurance agencies in the different parts of the world have accused both government and private universities of failure to adhere to the elitism practices that ensured effective realization of the higher education missions and objectives. Surprisingly, universities as custodians of academic and historical data are very much aware that it is quality that accompanied elitism during the 1960s up to the early 90s but they at the same time seem to pretend that the present is even better than the past. Given the current student numbers and the general upsurge of programmes that universities offer at present, there is need to practically answer the common question as to whether quality teaching and management is as expected and or even possible anymore. The main purpose of the study therefore was to examine the influence of mass education aspirations on the quality demand in the delivery of Higher Education in East Africa.

According to Wahlen (1998), quality assurance in higher education aims at maintaining and raising quality in terms of research, analysis, assessing acceptability, recruitment, appointment procedures and different mechanisms and systems. The aim of quality assurance in higher education is to guarantee the improvement of standards and quality in higher education in order to make higher education meet the needs of students, staff and financiers (Lomas, 2002).

The study by Harvey (2007) observed that there are five distinctive definitions of quality that can help educators understand what comprises quality teaching. First, qualities as “excellence” in that standards are surpassed in distinctive ways. Second, quality can be defined as “value for money” where a quality institution satisfies the demands of public accountability by focusing on efficiency and accountability for public funds. Third, quality may be seen as “fitness for and of purpose”, the purpose being that of the institution, for instance getting students to learn sciences efficiently and with the required effectiveness. Fourth, quality as “transforming” in which quality teaching is teaching that transforms students’ perceptions and the way they go about applying their knowledge to real world problems. Lastly, quality as “perfection” with a focus on the process in ensuring that specifications are being met perfectly with no defaults and therefore zero defects in that educators aim at getting the things right first time.

Given the present high demand for higher education in the East African region and the worldwide phenomenon of educational expansion, large class sizes have become a part of the teaching setup at universities. According to Mulryan-Kyne (2010), large classes are common at institutions of higher learning in a number of countries which poses challenges to both experienced and inexperienced educators. The research by Onwu and Stoffels (2005) noted the factors which can affect the learning environment in such institutions including the lack of physical space, diminished opportunities for students to participate actively in the learning process, impersonalizing of teaching, among others.

Consequently, the specific objectives of the study were;

- a. To determine the relationship between student assessment and the current mass education aspirations.
- b. To assess the relationship between the quality of teaching by the academic staff and the current mass education aspirations in the region.
- c. To analyze the relationship between the quality of facilities and infrastructure such as library, ICT and the current mass education aspirations.

Hypotheses

- a. The present numbers of university students (mass education) significantly demands for better student assessment strategies.
- b. The present numbers of university students (mass education) significantly calls for more teachers with better teaching strategies.
- c. The present numbers of university students (mass education) significantly demands for more teaching facilities and better infrastructure.

Elitism in terms of university education meant to be educated under properly planned and well managed academic characteristics of a university. Such universities were mostly in Europe and Asia with a few in Africa. They would produce only highly sought graduates, with a leading edge in research and technology transfer that were essentially attributed to complementary factors such as (1) high concentration of talent of both quality teachers and students, (2) abundant resources to offer a rich teaching-learning outcome and the conduct of research, and (3) favorable governance structures that encourage strategic vision, innovation and flexibility to manage resources without being encumbered by bureaucracy. The leaders were trusted and supported by both students and staff because they worked with integrity and demonstrated intellectual acumen and insight. Universities had four main sources of financing that's to say government budget funding for operational expenditures and research, contract research from public organizations and private firms, the financial returns generated by endowments and gifts with insignificant tuition fees from students. Therefore elitism outcome was generally characterized by the highest number political leaders such as prime ministers, cabinet ministers, permanent secretaries, governors, major corporate owners and directors, academicians, officers of the judiciary and very many other public servants in their various categories and ranks who were not only well educated as such but offered service with a lot of civility and serenity.

In the last half century, the most salient of these trends is undoubtedly the dramatic expansion of higher education worldwide. For example in 1970, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimated that there were roughly 32.5 million students enrolled in higher education worldwide. In the year 2000, this estimation increased to nearly 100 million and in 2010 to 178 million. This translates into 4.3% average annual growth in tertiary enrolment which is a very rapid growth when compared to the 1.6% average annual growth in the world population over the same period (UNDP, 2012). There has also been an accelerating expansion starting in the mid-1990s, with a 5.9% average annual growth of higher education enrolments in the first decade of the 21st century. The number of higher education students is forecast to further expand to reach 263 million by 2025 (Daniel, 2009). Similarly, the number of students enrolled in Higher Education by 2030 was also forecast to rise to 414.2 million in 2030 (Calderon and Mathies, 2013).

The study by Hovdhaugen and Aamodt (2008) noted that with the massification of higher education, new modes of government monitoring and control have to be developed. Monitoring and assessment of institutions and staff should be accompanied with an intensified assessment regime for students' selection, instruction and grading. There is an increasing focus on university rankings which have so far been based mostly on the research output and research quality, but new initiatives to include also students' learning outcomes are visible in most universities. According to Shulka (1996) mass education is an aspiration and desire to create a universal society of enlightened persons, persons with understanding, feelings and an attitude of co-operation, helpfulness, sharing and many other traits.

As a result of the present massification of access to and participation over the past half century, higher education systems have experienced an increase in higher education providers, with a burgeoning of new Higher Education Institutions established across the globe to respond to the growing demand. As a matter of fact, the majority of Higher Education Institutions operating today were established in the past century (Guri-Rosenblit and Sebkova, 2004).

2. Conceptual Framework

In developing the conceptual framework for this study, the independent variable comprises the current quality demands including; (1) better teaching learning strategies; (2) more qualified personnel; (3) better student assessment strategies; (4) more physical infrastructure and library space; and (5) better teaching materials and ICT while the dependent variable comprises the mass education aspirations to produce; (1) persons with academic might; (2) persons who are innovative; (3) persons who are creative; (4) persons with integrity and character; (5) persons who are helpful and hopeful; (6) persons who are transformative; (7) persons who have feelings of patriotism; and (8) persons who are imaginative. The moderating variable for this study are the government policies as shown in Figure 1.

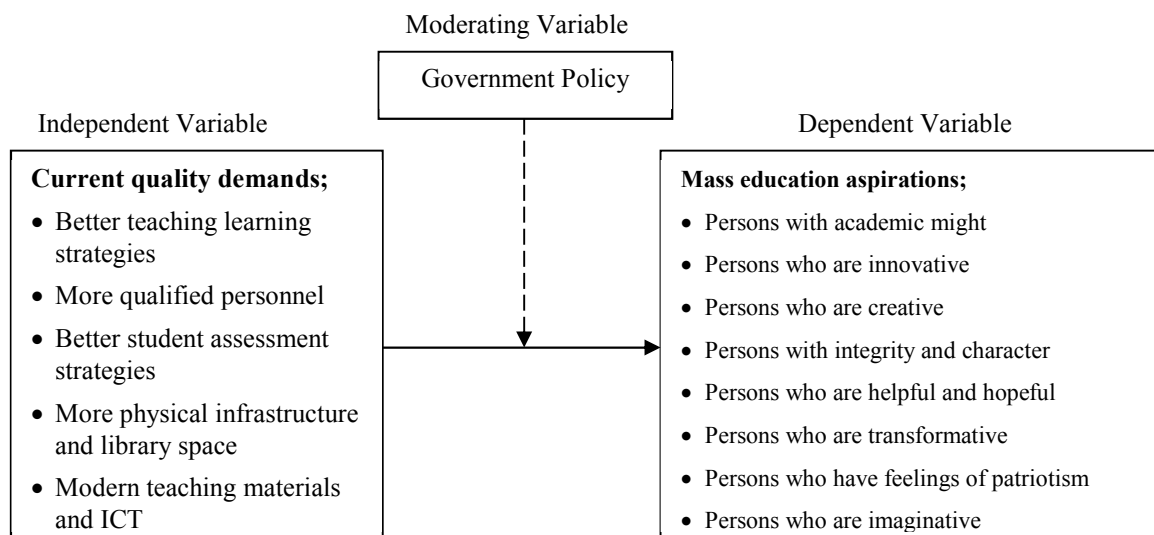


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Literature review

Higher Education Institutions today include an increasing number of non-traditional students, those who did not enter directly from secondary school, are not from the dominant social groups in terms of gender, socio-economic status or ethnic background, or are not studying in a full-time, classroom-based mode (Schuetze and Slowey, 2002). They are serving first-generation higher education students seeking social mobility, representatives of economic or social minorities as part of equity policies, adults and lifelong learners looking to update/upgrade their skills, etc. These diverse student bodies each have their own constraints and challenges to overcome. Higher Education Institutions are thus required to adapt their provision so as to respond to all needs and help all students thrive.

It was noted by Maringe and Sing (2014) that assessment remains a sticking point in the context of large and demographically diverse Higher Education classes due to the continued use of traditional approaches which emphasize essay and multiple choice testing. In the context of large classes, the use of essays, which allow for more in-depth processing of information, is also decreasing in application. As such, teachers in universities turn to multiple choice testing which is easier and quicker to mark but which does not provide for in-depth processing of ideas by students. In addition, assessment is still largely driven by summative purposes related to a need to obtain forms of evidence of learning and mastery. There is much less in evidence in Higher Education that its use as a tool for learning and as strategy for improving both teaching and the learning experience of students is being developed sufficiently.

According to CHE (2010), the dilemma many university lecturers face is how to cope with the need to teach more students in their classes. This is because they are faced with insufficient teaching and learning support material and resources in addition to poor infrastructure. According to Bligh (2002), given the difficulties associated with incorporating interactive, discussion based and student centred teaching in lecture driven pedagogies, students who are taught in large classes demonstrate limited thinking skills, depend largely on low level learning skills, which emphasize memory and regurgitation of knowledge.

The research by Chen (2004) noted that the development boom of higher education has provided more young people with opportunities to receive a higher education, but it also strains the resources at colleges and universities when teachers and facilities fail to be improved at the same pace. Such sudden increase in student enrolments brings about sudden constraints of resources which are the necessary preconditions for the healthy development of higher education. This results later in a sudden slowdown of enrolment enlargement due to cutbacks in the scale of recruitment or the closure of underperforming colleges. The same restraints are

appearing too during the latest great enrolment expansion, being the typical by-products of the process of mass expansion. Such practices have negatively affected the quality of teaching, angering students and parents.

On the same note, Chen (2011) augments that crowded classes make students feel agitated, and overloaded teachers have less time for their own professional development, leading to anxiety about instruction quality. Moreover, physical facilities fall far short of those needed for student expansion. The deficiency of labs causes more students than is desirable to conduct experiments at one time in one group, even just to watch experiments performed by the teacher. The insufficiency of classrooms impels students to do their work in their crowded dormitory, school authorities to rent adjacent houses around the campuses and to re-use the canteens and other possible spaces usable as classrooms. The scarcity of library resources shortens the cycle of book borrowing and the lengthening span of opening time. Additionally, it is even difficult for students majoring in some programs to perform their fieldwork.

Similarly, Epri (2006) adds that the shortage of learning materials is common in institutions with large class sizes. According to Green and Doran (2000), overcrowded lecture rooms can cause shortage of instructional materials, inadequate school library collections and limited storage space for learning resources. Students attending institutions with insufficient learning material are handicapped in their academic achievement.

The research by Bandary (2005) noted that quality education encompasses a range of elements including; (1) the level of student achievement; (2) the ability and qualification of staff; (3) the standard of facilities and equipment; and (4) the effectiveness of teaching. According to Grace and Oluwatoyin (2016), large classes present more challenges for classroom management, student control, marking, planning, and assessment.

4. Methodology

The population comprised all quality assurance directors for Universities in the East African region. The sample for the study was 41 directors of quality assurance from different Universities in the East African region who were invited for the management quality assurance workshop in Tanzania by the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) out of whom only 35 returned completed and usable questionnaires. In other words, a total of 35 Universities participated in the study with 9 from Uganda, 10 from Kenya, 13 from Tanzania, 2 from Rwanda and 1 from Burundi. The questionnaire was designed on a five point Likert Scale ranging from (5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree) for the different items concerning Mass Education aspirations and the Quality demands in the delivery of Higher Education in East Africa

The reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The coefficient for this questionnaire was 0.976 which demonstrated that the questionnaire was quite reliable for use.

Data analysis was based on both descriptive and inferential statistics which was processed using SPSS version 20.

5. Analysis

Mass education comprised the dependent variable and it was measured by the extent to which the current education has the ability to produce creative, innovative and patriotic individuals. The full details of the responses to these items are summarized in table 1.

Descriptive statistics in table 1 shows that despite the increasing numbers of students, institutions have the ability to produce persons who are innovative (79.5%), creative (70.5%), and imaginative (77.3%). On the same note, an average number (54.5%) agreed that the current type of education has the ability to produce persons with academic might and as well produce persons with integrity and character (65.9%). In addition, it was agreed that the current education is able to produce patriotic individuals (61.4%) and an average number (56.8%) also agreed that the current education has ability to produce persons who promise human brotherhood. Also, a similar number (56.8%) agreed that the current education has ability to produce persons with mental, moral and spiritual alertness. It is also noted from the analysis that the current education has the ability to produce persons who are helpful and hopeful (72.5%) and 54.5% of the respondents agreed that mass education has the ability to produce persons who are transformative.

Table 1. Responses on Mass Education

No.	Response According to you, the current education has the potential and ability to produce...	Responses		
		SA & A	N	D & SD
		%	%	%
1.	Persons with academic might	68.2	15.9	15.9
2.	Persons who are innovative	79.5	15.9	4.5
3.	Persons who are creative	70.5	11.4	
4.	Persons who have integrity and character	65.9	13.6	20.5
5.	Persons who are helpful and hopeful	72.5	20.5	6.8
6.	Persons who are transformative	54.5	22.7	22.7
7.	Persons with mental, moral and spiritual alertness	56.8	18.2	27.3
8.	Persons who have feelings of patriotism	61.4	13.6	25.0
9.	Persons who promise human brotherhood	56.8	22.7	20.5
10.	Persons who are imaginative	77.3	13.6	9.1

5.1 Student assessment and the current mass education aspirations

Analysis of the descriptive statistics in table 1 below reveals that majority of the respondents (80%) agreed that student assessment has improved the quality of education. Additionally, 65.7% of the respondents agreed that students are learning more due to an institutional focus on the assessment of student learning while 68.6% agreed that faculty have a professional obligation to regularly assess what students are learning. Results also reveal that frequent communication with colleagues has improved student assessment practices (60%) while an equal number (60%) agreed that university teachers regularly assess what students are learning. However, 74.3% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that from an educational standpoint it is necessary to monitor what students learn.

Table 2. Some responses on the Quality of Student Assessment and Evaluation

No.	Response	Responses		
		SA & A	N	D & SD
		%	%	%
1.	Student assessment has improved the quality of education at this institution	80.0	11.4	8.6
2.	Students are learning more due to an institutional focus on the assessment of student learning	65.7	17.1	17.2
3.	From an educational standpoint, it is necessary for us to regularly monitor what students learn	25.7	0.00	74.3
4.	The effectiveness of teaching is enhanced when faculty regularly assess students	51.4	14.3	34.3
5.	Student assessment techniques accurately capture what they are learning in lecture rooms	82.9	2.9	14.3
6.	Faculty have a professional obligation to regularly assess what students are learning	68.6	14.3	17.1
7.	Frequent communication with colleagues improves student assessment practices	60.0	31.4	8.6
8.	University teachers regularly assess what students are learning	60.0	11.4	28.6

Testing the relationship between student assessment and the current mass education aspirations

After the descriptive analysis above, a correlation matrix was generated to establish the relationship between student assessment and the current mass education aspirations. As indicated in table 2, there was a positive and significant correlation between student assessment and the current mass education aspirations ($r = .935^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$). The major finding as expected here is that there is thirst for a modern improved student assessment system to be in place. University faculties in the East African region are challenged to ensure that their assessment techniques accurately capture what students are learning in lecture rooms. Lecturers must demonstrate that they can provide regular assessment to the learner and avoid only the summative type of assessment. This is because practical learning requires that the faculty assesses students on a regular basis.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Quality of teaching by academic staff	-				
2. Better student assessment strategies	.901**	-			
3. More physical infrastructure & library space	.862**	.896**	-		
4. Teaching materials and ICT	.957**	.891**	.882**	-	
5. Mass education aspirations	.709**	.743**	.787**	.696**	-

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

5.2 *Quality of teaching by academic staff and the current mass education aspirations*

The analysis of descriptive statistics in table 4 shows that 85.7% of the respondents agreed that the available academic staff participate in intensive writing or research projects, 62.9% agreed that the available teachers stop lectures to make sure students understood the material and an average number (54.3%) agreed that the available teachers collaborate with colleagues from within and outside their discipline on teaching issues. In addition, an average number (51.4%) agreed that the available teachers receive high teaching evaluations from students. Similarly, 74.3% agreed that the available teaching staff participate in interdisciplinary course development or projects while an average number (48.6%) agreed that the current teaching staff spend a good amount of class time addressing student questions and a similar number (48.6%) also agreed that the current teaching staff provide feedback immediately after each assessment. Also, 62.9% of the respondents agreed that the current teaching staff stop lectures to make sure students understood the material while a few respondents (31.4%) agreed that the current teaching staff meet students outside of formally scheduled times and 71.4% of the respondents agreed that the current teaching staff use student peer groups to reinforce course learning. On the contrary, 74.3% of the respondents disagreed with the fact that the available teaching staff coordinate the improvement of student writing skills across all disciplines.

Descriptive statistics in table 4 also show that majority of the respondents (94.3%) agreed that the current teaching staff foster research and a critical spirit in students. Similarly, 91.4% of the respondents agreed that the current teaching staff relate the teachings to the professional environment. Additionally, it was agreed that the current teaching staff facilitate students' own inquiry (82.9%), demonstrate the correct way to solve a problem (80%) and decide the activities to be done throughout the course of study (88.6%). On the same note, majority of the respondents agreed that the current teaching staff need improved instructional strategies or methods (74.3%), improved classroom/learner management (82.9%) and an average number (51.4%) agreed that the current teaching staff need better instructional media utilization while a few respondents (48.6%) agreed that the current teaching staff need better technologies for teaching. However, 48.6% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the current teaching staff let students develop answers that may be incorrect when they can just explain the answers directly and very few respondents (34.3%) agreed that the current teaching staff allow students to think of solutions to practical themselves before they are shown how they are solved.

Table 4. Some Responses on Quality of Teaching by the Academic Staff

No.	Your teaching staff...	Responses		
		SA & A	N	D & SD
		%	%	%
1.	Collaborate with colleagues from within and outside your University on teaching issues	54.3	8.6	37.2
2.	Participate in intensive writing or research projects	85.7	5.7	8.6
3.	Receive high teaching evaluations from students	51.4	5.7	42.9
4.	Spend a good amount of class time addressing student questions	48.6	34.3	17.2
5.	Participate in interdisciplinary course development or projects	74.3	8.6	17.2
6.	Stop lectures to make sure students understood the material	62.9	14.3	22.9
7.	Provide feedback immediately after each assessment	48.6	14.3	37.2
8.	Meet students outside of formally scheduled times	31.4	45.7	22.8
9.	Use student peer groups to reinforce course learning	71.4	14.3	14.3
10.	Coordinate the improvement of student writing skills across all disciplines	17.2	8.6	74.3
11.	Foster research and a critical spirit in students	94.3	5.7	0.00
12.	Relate the teachings to the professional environment	91.4	5.7	2.9
13.	Facilitate students' own inquiry	82.9	2.9	14.3
14.	Let students develop answers that may be incorrect when they can just explain the answers directly	8.6	42.9	48.6
15.	Allow students to think of solutions to practical problems themselves before they are shown how they are solved	34.3	45.7	20.0
16.	Decide what activities are to be done throughout the course	88.6	8.6	2.9
17.	Demonstrate the correct way to solve a problem	80	11.4	8.6
18.	Need improved instructional strategies or methods	74.3	14.3	11.4
19.	Need better instructional media utilization	51.4	14.3	34.3
20.	Need improved classroom/learner management	82.9	2.9	14.3
21.	Need better technologies for teaching	48.6	42.9	8.6

Testing the relationship between the quality of teaching by academic staff and the current mass education aspirations

After the descriptive analysis above, a correlation matrix was generated to establish the relationship between quality of teaching by the academic staff and the current mass education aspirations. As indicated in table 2, there was a positive and significant correlation between the quality of teaching by the academic staff and the current mass education aspirations ($r = .709^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$). This finding demonstrates the need for more academic staff that are both lacking in terms of quantity and quality in the present institutions of higher learning. Mass higher education demands that there is a deliberate move by universities to enhance quality teaching and ensure that the teaching staff are trained to interact with students in a friendly manner. The present mass education demands that lecturers improve on learner management and are given better technologies for teaching large classes. They are expected to also participate in intensive research writing so as to not only attract more funds but also provide students with the necessary skills that are required in the job market as investigated here.

5.3 Quality of facilities and infrastructure and the current mass education aspirations

Before conducting correlation and regression analyses, descriptive statistics was first analyzed. Results reveal that majority of the respondents (80%) agreed that lecture facilities are adequate while a similar number (80%) agreed that the library is adequate and up-to-date. On the same note, 65.7% of the respondents agreed that laboratories are adequate and up-to-date and also 57.2% of the respondents agreed that environmental health and safety standards in the institutions meet the local requirements in all respects. In addition, 85.7% of the respondents agreed that the institutions have interactive whiteboards. In the same way, 82.9% of the respondents agreed that target class students are allowed to use the personally owned devices. However, 54.3% of the respondents disagreed that computers in the institutions are out of date and/or need repair. Also, 60% of the respondents agreed that teachers use ICT to provide feedback and/or assess students' learning.

Table 5. Some Responses on the Quality of Facilities and Infrastructure

No.	Response	Responses		
		SA & A %	N %	D & SD %
1.	The lecture facilities (lecture halls, small course rooms) are adequate	80.0	2.9	17.1
2.	The library is adequate and up-to-date	80.0	2.9	17.1
3.	The laboratories are adequate and up-to-date	65.7	8.6	25.7
4.	Environmental health and safety standards meet the local requirements in all respects	57.2	22.9	20.0
5.	Computers in the institutions are out of date and/or needing repair	37.2	8.6	54.3
6.	There are sufficient number of internet-connected computers	68.6	14.3	17.1
7.	The institution has interactive whiteboards	85.7	5.7	8.6
8.	Target class students are allowed to use the personally owned devices (Laptops, tablet, smart phone)	82.9	2.9	14.3
9.	Teachers use ICT to provide feedback and/or assess students' learning	60.0	11.4	28.6
10.	The accommodation facilities are inadequate	65.7	14.3	20.0
11.	There is enough land for the university to expand	80.0	5.7	14.3
12.	The institution needs more PhD staff to engage in research projects and publication	77.1	11.4	11.4

Testing the relationship between the quality of facilities and infrastructure and the current mass education aspirations

After the descriptive analysis above, a correlation matrix was generated to establish the relationship between the quality of facilities and infrastructure and the current mass education aspirations. As indicated in table 2, there was a positive and significant association between the present student numbers in universities and the current demand for better facilities in terms of physical infrastructure and library space [$r = .787^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$] and ICT [$r = .696^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$]. The finding here underscores the importance of facilities in the present mass education context in the East African region. Universities are challenged to ensure that accommodation facilities are adequate so as to provide a congenial atmosphere not only for the learner but also for the instructor. Institutions should ensure that ICT facilities are availed all the time as and when needed and also ensure that students are allowed to use devices such as laptops, tablets and smartphones in accessing modern and up to date information.

6. Discussion

It has been observed here that the steady expansion of higher education appears to some observers to constitute a serious threat to academic standards. The question of standards under the present mass education aspirations demands that institutions maintain the required quality in not only teaching, student assessment but also continuously ensure that facilities and infrastructure required are up to date and maintained to effectively deliver higher education. According to Bandary (2005), quality education encompasses a range of elements including the level of student achievement; the ability and qualification of staff; the standard of facilities and equipment; the effectiveness of teaching, planning and administrative processes; and the relevance of programmes to the needs of students and the nation in an emerging global knowledge economy.

Needless to mention, massification of education in the East African universities has created several problems and challenges including poor physical infrastructure, resource shortages, large class sizes, declining quality of research and of the teaching and learning process. This view has been supported by Teferra (2015) who observed that that the teaching learning process in the African region has been compromised by the shortages in infrastructure besides the human resource component. Meanwhile, the study by Mohamedbhai (2008) concluded that the massification of education implies that the more universities recruit students for various programs, the worse they become due to the innumerable challenges faced.

According to Hornsby (2013), it is the increased prevalence of large class teaching and learning environments that have adversely affected the quality of the education irrespective of the continent. This has led to poor student performance, motivation and engagement and has impacted negatively on the ability of students to gain valuable problem solving and critical thinking skills. This situation has been exacerbated by the fewer economic resources that both public and private universities are grappling with, the demand by the regulatory bodies for all universities to ensure that the highest quality standard of service notwithstanding.

The worry expressed by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (2006) vividly puts it that as class size increases above recommended levels, safe and effective instruction becomes compromised.

This manifests itself in many ways such as decreased instructional time due to management issues, insufficient amounts of equipment and activity space, decreased ability of teacher to provide individualized instruction, among others. This study supplements the above findings and demonstrates that in the present mass education environment, universities should ensure that teachers are provided with better technologies for teaching and learning. Both public and private universities need to ensure that there is professional development of academic staff that work with the required charisma and professionally develop their skills in relation to improved classroom/learner management, improved instructional strategies that are integrated with effective instructional media utilization. Instructors must be able to meet students outside of formally scheduled times and also facilitate students' own inquiry.

Contributing to the question of resource scarcity, Bamba (2011) argued that large classes are characterized by certain common problems including insufficient physical environment, difficulties of assessing students' knowledge and feedback, and inadequate teaching resources. This observation has been supported by Wedell and Malderez (2013) who concluded that one setback related to the physical environment of overcrowded classroom remains insufficient furniture and facilities. Therefore, in order to bring back the glory days of elitism in the mass education context, universities should ensure adequacy of lecture facilities, the library and up-to-date laboratories.

In the same context, professionals in the education sector have warned that large class size compromises quality in that teachers are unable to evaluate students' work continuously. According to Shamim et al. (2007), it is due to this lack of on-going assessment of students' performance that teachers are unable to identify the learners' problems, know their progress, provide them with appropriate feedback and finally provide them with remedies based on feedback from their assessment. This study therefore empirically demonstrates that unless instructors in the various universities in the East African region ensure that the assessment techniques accurately capture what students are learning in lecture rooms with feedback immediately after each assessment and are provided with adequate facilities to engage students with thoroughness, the quality of graduates is not only compromised but the general migration from elitism to mass education will have little technical impact on ground other than mere numbers of graduates.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study clearly brings out the consequences of migration from elitism to mass education that need urgent proactive attention by all stakeholders which include insufficient physical environment, difficulties of assessing students' knowledge and feedback, inadequate teaching resources and insufficient furniture and facilities. Conversely, given the increasing numbers, the aspirations of mass education can only be realized in the present context with a significant increase in funding to harness the needed resources including the human capital. Only by doing so can the desired quality expected be maintained. The expected outcome would be universities that are able to produce graduates who possess the academic might, who are innovative, creative, transformative, imaginative, can serve with integrity and character, are helpful and hopeful with mental, moral and spiritual alertness. The findings here also revealed that in order to realize the such education aspirations, there is need for a deliberate move by all universities in the East African region to ensure that they put in place proper student assessment practices, the required infrastructure and ICT facilities and ensure quality teaching and learning in the whole process. Put another way, without the necessary infrastructure, the aspirations of mass education still remain a hoax. All institutions regardless of whether they are private or public are therefore challenged to refocus their strategies and ensure that there is not only effective teaching but also the required modern infrastructure are put in place with professional staff who are willing to provide the required instruction to deliver the education agenda from a theoretical one to a modern practical oriented one that was practiced during elitism era which was characterized by quality teachers and students, abundant resources, innovation and flexibility.

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