

Introduction

The education industry is regarded as one of the most crucial since it helps shape pupils and students into social, political and economic leaders. Additionally, it helps them become astute thinkers and contributors to national welfare and the improvement of humankind in general.

Globally, literacy levels have increased on average, compared to the situation a decade ago. New technology and trends in markets have forced the adoption of improved teaching and training methods to keep up with the dynamism. This report will look at the university and college sector within the education industry from a general perspective, before specifically targeting the Kenyan university education sector. It will provide an analysis of the various challenges and opportunities as well as regulation affecting the sector. A conclusion will summarize the key points of the report.

General Overview

University and college education globally is divided into the public and private aspects. While public university education is subsidized either partly or fully by governments or local authorities, private university education is financed by the student in their individual capacity. The variations between the two become clearer with the quality of education provided, the resources made available and the degree of prestige associated with a given institution. Due to government or local authority funding, public universities and colleges are generally either at par or slightly inferior when compared to their private counterparts.

Affordability of tertiary education has remained a barrier to the attainment of college and university education. The nature of such a level of education requires that institutions adequately

equip themselves with resources, maintain and develop new infrastructure and become engaged in activities outside the academic sphere. On this account, tuition and other fees lock out many high school and secondary school leavers globally every year. The United States' cost of university education is perhaps one of the most expensive in the world. Between the 2002-2003 and 2012-2013 academic years, the cost of tuition, room and board in the United States rose 39%. Public institutions averaged \$15,022, private non-profit institutions averaged \$39,173 while private for-profit institutions averaged \$23,158. In recognition of the impediment that financial burdens pose to students, some countries have done away with tuition fees altogether. Some European countries have scrapped tuition fees, the most notable being Germany, Finland and Austria. The countries which are yet to follow suit in the abolition charge very low and affordable tuition fees, the most notable being France and Italy.

While in the past universities relied on their own expertise and staff in the administration of course content, the changing nature of global education has called for more and more networking. Courses requiring technical and in-depth research have become more complex as the needs of national governments and individual facilities shift. Therefore, collaborations between different universities around the world have become a norm. Not only do such collaborations provide the necessary knowledge needed to complete the projects embarked on, they also allow access to increased funding. Student exchange programs have been on the increase, giving students exposure to both academic knowledge and cultural exposure. It is estimated that international students from such programs contributed up to \$15.5 billion to the United States' economy in the 2007-2008 academic year, with the global worth of international student exchange amounting to \$45 billion.

The Sector in Kenya

In Kenya, university and college education is also split into public and private education, with colleges and universities in the country offering a range of courses. A number of institutions have also partnered with the private sector in pursuit of various technical fields of work and research. With the granting of charters to colleges and technical training institutions, the number of universities in the country has increased dramatically. In addition to this, new universities and colleges have sprung up in recent times, which has served to raise the standards of higher education and competition in the sector.

While each institution offers a range of courses, there are some higher learning institutions which are identified as specializing in selected courses, toward which they direct increased attention and inject more resources. These will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Competitive Environment

In terms of the competitive environment, analysis will be categorized into public and private universities and colleges. Due to the presence of a large number of institutions, only a select few which form the main players in the sector will be used in the analysis. However, there will be reference to other institutions falling in the set categories.

Public Universities and Colleges

The University of Nairobi (UoN) is one of Kenya's earliest tertiary institutions, established in 1956 as the Royal Technical College. It is regarded as one of Kenya's most renowned public universities and exists under establishment according to the Universities Act of 2012. The

university offers a variety of courses ranging from law to economics and engineering. It has partnerships with foreign universities such as Sangmyung University from Korea, underscoring the aforementioned collaborative nature of modern institutions. The University of Nairobi is also engaged in partnerships with non-academic organizations such as the French Agency for Development to address development-related issues outside the academic circle. Its main campus is located in Nairobi.

Kenyatta University (or KU) was established in 1985 as the Kenyatta College. It is one of the country's major public universities and boasts several satellite universities countrywide. The institution initially specialized in the Arts especially education-related degree courses, but it also offers a range of courses including medicine, law, economics and engineering. Kenyatta University is also engaged in hospitality, having acquired the North Coast Beach Hotel in Mombasa. Partnerships include projects with the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Chandaria Foundation and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, a 2006 government initiative. Its main campus is located in Kahawa, on the outskirts of Nairobi.

Moi University is a public university with several satellite campuses. It was established in 1984 and offers a range of courses from diploma to postgraduate level. Moi University has formed collaborations with foreign higher learning institutions such as The University of Newcastle Australia and the University of Bayreuth. Additionally, it has partnered with other institutions such as the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa and the African Network for Internationalization of Education. Its main campus is located in Eldoret town in the western side of Kenya.

The Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, also known as JKUAT, is a teaching and research institution. It specializes in the administration of engineering-based courses and agriculture-based research. Established in 1978, it became recognized as a university through the JKUAT Act of 1994. The university partners with a range of institutions in academics, research and development and technology transfers. Some of these include Cooperative College of Kenya, Embu College, Direct Channel Simbitech Kenya, Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), Mt Kenya University and the Kenya School of Monetary Studies. JKUAT's main campus is located in Juja, 36 kilometers from Nairobi.

There have been a number of colleges and polytechnics which have attained university status in the country, raising the number of public universities across the country. Some of the other public universities in Kenya are Egerton University, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Multimedia University of Kenya, Pwani University, South Eastern Kenya University and Technical University of Kenya.

The Kenya School of Law (KSL) was established in 1963. It offers advocate training programs, paralegal studies and continuing professional development courses as well as research in connection to legal issues. KSL is regarded as the most prestigious legal training institution, existing as the only bar school in the country. Its mandate is the development of legal professionals in Kenya. It operates as a public college under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and is located in Nairobi.

Kenya Utalii College (KUC) is one of the country's most recognized and renowned institutions, established in 1975 and recognized under the Tourism Act No.28 of 2011. The college

specializes in hospitality and tourism management, offering degree, diploma and certificate courses. It has been involved in collaborative ventures with both local and foreign institutions. Some of these include UoN, the Kenyan Ministry of Tourism, Makerere University, Manchester Metropolitan University and Dr Livingstone International University of Tourism Excellence and Business Management. KUC is under the Ministry of Tourism and is located in Nairobi and Mombasa.

The Kenya School of Monetary Studies (KSMS) was established in 1997 under the Companies Act Cap 486 of the Laws of Kenya. It is primarily a financial training institution and seeks to build capacity to improve the financial sector both locally and overseas. KSMS is also involved in research into the financial sector. It is located at Survey, a few kilometers from Nairobi.

Private Universities and Colleges

Strathmore University began life as Strathmore College in 1961, being awarded a charter in 2007 by the Commission for Higher Education. It is formally recognized under the Universities Act Cap 210B of the Laws of Kenya. It offers courses in accountancy, information technology, finance, commerce, management and administration. Strathmore University partners with the University of Navarra and the OECD Higher Education Programme. It is located in Nairobi.

Africa Nazarene University is an institution of the Church of the Nazarene International, and was established 1993, in accordance with the Universities Act of 1985. The university has law and business schools and offers courses in religion and community development, mass communication, criminal justice, education and information technology. Africa Nazarene University partners with other Nazarene institutions globally. These include Korea Nazarene

College, Eastern Nazarene College, European Nazarene College and Mount Vernon Nazarene University. It is located 24 kilometers from Nairobi's central business district.

Riara University stemmed from the Riara Group of Schools, a brand founded in 1974. The institution is fairly new in the country as compared to other universities. It offers courses in law, education, business, computing sciences and computing sciences. It is located in Nairobi.

The Australian Studies Institute (AUSI) is a private college in Kenya which offers bridging, certificate, diploma and university articulation courses. The college has partnered with Navitas, a global education provider so as to avail a wider array of study options to students enrolling with them. Navitas is itself known to affiliate with other institutions such as the Australian College of English and Perth Institute of Business and Technology. AUSI is located in Nairobi.

There are a number of other private universities and colleges in Kenya offering a range of majorly diploma, certificate and computer-based courses. These include Alliance Francaise, Bloomsbury Business School, Cornerstone Training Institute, Beauty Point College, Compuera College and Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Kenya.

Student Organizations

Within the universities themselves there exist student organizations whose functions include the articulation of student needs to the administration. Such organizations are more outspoken in public universities than in private institutions in Kenya. Within the University of Nairobi, the Students Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) was set up in 1982 with the objective of student representation within the university. Kenyatta University's equivalent of this is the Kenyatta University Students Association (KUSA). Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture

and Technology has JKUSA while Moi University has the Moi University Students Organization (MUSO). Private universities' student organizations include Strathmore University's Strathmore University ISACA Students Group (SUISG) and the Catholic University of East Africa Student Organization.

Financing Education

The financing of higher education in Kenya is subsidized by the government as far as public university education is concerned, whereas college and private higher learning is financed by the student with or without the aid of their family. The colonial government initially set up the Higher Education Loans Fund in 1952. In 1995, the Government of Kenya established the Higher Education Loans Board (commonly known as HELB) under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. It exists under an Act of Parliament Cap 213A. HELB is mandated with the disbursement of loans, bursaries and scholarships to deserving students to assist them pursue higher education. Students in need of the loans and bursaries make written applications. After completion of their studies and upon getting employed, the loan's repayment is done through salary deductions.

The Constituency Development Fund or CDF was established in 2003 under President Mwai Kibaki. The aim of the fund was to avail funds for a variety of development projects within constituencies and at the grassroots level. Part of the funds were set aside for availing bursaries to assist students from needy families attain education. University students make written applications to receive the bursaries.

Challenges

Student Loan Delays

HELB loans have been known to suffer significant delays in disbursement, occasioned by the ever increasing number of students making applications. As such, these delays have inconvenienced many applicants, forcing some of them to call off semesters, which has in turn prolonged their university stays and become detrimental to the national economy and labor force. In the most extreme cases, funds have not been disbursed to student applicants at all, further aggravating the problem.

Corruption Allegations

The funds set up to avail students with fees have frequently been marred by corruption allegations and fraudulent dealings. Owing to the frequency of such allegations and the damaging repercussions they posed, the Kenyan Parliament repealed the CDF Act 2003 through the enactment of the CDF Act of 2013.

Institutional Financial Constraints

Due to the inadequacy of funds in public higher learning institutions or delayed fund disbursement, such institutions have had development projects stalled. In some cases, administrations have resorted to increasing student fees to cater for infrastructure development, which has placed students on the receiving end, forcing many to drop out. Fee increments have also been at the center of several student strikes and demonstrations.

Academic Fraud Allegations

There have been a number of allegations of students buying pre-written projects and term papers rather than delivering their own work as is required as part of their courses. This is illegal as it contravenes the rules on academic honesty, integrity and originality of work presented. In other cases, fraud has been fueled by cases of lecturers engaging in intimate relations with students in exchange for grades. This not only undermines the quality of graduates produced, it also grossly contravenes moral and ethical practice.

Opportunities

Increased Scholarship Offers

The Kenyan landscape is filled with young vibrant student, most of who are highly capable of advancing their education and held back by financial constraints. The availing of more scholarships would help ease the burden on local institutions which are forced to take in a large number of students, thus compromising the quality of education. International scholarships would help absorb more students into international universities and allow more local students secure places in the country.

Fund Set-ups

With the corruption allegations around government-managed funds such as the CDF, the need for privately managed funds comes to the fore. Since overseeing disbursement would have less bureaucratic red tape and legal formalities, it would be easier to identify needy students and give grants and loans based on merit. Initiatives such as Equity Bank Limited's *Wings to Fly* have

enabled students get international scholarships. With the establishment of more funds, more students would have access to learning opportunities.

Additional Partnerships

Although Kenyan universities have been noted to partner with other institutions to advance educational and research causes, colleges lag behind in this regard. Local and foreign institutions have an opportunity to work with colleges and assist them in providing high quality education and exposure to their students. With over 100 public and private universities and colleges with either few partnerships or none at all, there is a feasible niche that awaits taking advantage of. Such opportunities as academic projects, research and development and even infrastructure development and maintenance make for mutually beneficial partnerships.

Strict Enforcement of Rules

In cases of examination and other instances of fraud, stiff penalties should be set and enforced against those found guilty of committing them. Lecturers who are found guilty of engaging in sexual misconduct with students should also have their contracts terminated and be prosecuted to curb such rampant cases of moral decadence.

More can still be done to improve the quality of university and college education in Kenya, the above merely provide a few guidelines on where to start in the pursuit of such elevated standards.

Regulation of the Sector

The Commission for University Education replaced the Commission for Higher Education as a regulatory authority. It is established under the Universities Act No.42 of 2012 of the Laws of Kenya. It is mandated with the regulation and accreditation of universities and programs in a bid to promote the objectives of university education. It also oversees the continual improvement of the quality of education provided.

The Ministry of Education itself exercises regulatory authority within the sector. Its mandate originates from Cap 4 Articles 43, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57 and 59 of the Laws of Kenya. The government grants charters to universities through the ministry. Specific university and college-related functions include university education policy management, overseeing the science, technical and innovation policy, national polytechnic management and management of institutes of science and technology.

Conclusion

The university and college sector in Kenya is highly competitive and diversified. The granting of charter to colleges, effectively upgrading them to university status has served to provide students with additional options. Private and public institutions have engaged foreign and local institutions to pursue a variety of academic and technical research ventures. Regulation within the sector is not strict and thus reduces the level of risk involved, since it is easier to comply to regulatory requirements by a few rather than many authorities. Despite the challenges that exist in the sector such as financial difficulties both on the part of institutions and students, there exist opportunities for local and foreign institutions and investors to plug the holes. By so doing,

the Kenyan education system which is already the most competitive and successful in East Africa can rise to global prominence and help forge the social, political and economic leaders of the future.

