

AN EVALUATION OF EFFICIENCY OF SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMME AS AN ALTERNATIVE MODE OF STUDY IN KENYAN UNIVERSITIES

Miriam Wairimu Ndichu^{1*}, Peter Waweru¹ and Lydia Muthoni Ndirangu²

¹ Mount Kenya University, P. O Box 342 – 01000, Thika, Kenya

² Kenya Methodist University P. O Box 267- 60200, Meru, Kenya

*Corresponding author

Postal Address: 2631-10100, Nyeri

Tel: +254721211354

Email: miwandi72@yahoo.com

Abstract

School Based Programme is an arrangement where learning takes place during the School holidays. The study was conducted to evaluate the efficiency of School Based Programme as an alternative mode of study in Kenyan universities. Descriptive survey design was done on a sample of 200 graduates. Though schools were randomly selected, respondents were purposefully selected from each school. The study was carried out in Mount Kenya region, Kenya. Data was collected through Questionnaires. More than 80% of respondents preferred the programme because it is efficient in terms of time taken to complete the course while about 65% cited low fees charged. About 50% felt that finances were a major challenge. Close to 20% of respondents suggested increased supervision of lecturers, 14% suggested an increase in the duration of study while another 14% suggested improved management of examinations. The programme was found to be efficient.

Keywords: School Based Programme, efficiency.

1. Introduction

School Based Programme (SBP) is a mode of study which provides for learning at institutions during school holidays. For this reason, the programme is most popular with teachers, both trained and untrained, who are free during this period. Teachers are pursuing university coursework to improve individual skills, qualify for salary increases and meet certification requirements. According to (Ismat, 1996), professional development rewards educators with personal and professional growth, greater job security and career advancement. The need for teacher education (TE) is due to various reforms in education sector and new policies for teacher certification (Vrasidas & Glass, 2004). Therefore various institutions offer TE which may be classified as initial

training and professional development. Teacher education refers to the education that is offered to persons who influence all aspects of education upon completion to undertake the teaching career and beyond (Ministry of Education. 2012).

Before the introduction of the famous (SBP), employees in all fields of life who desired to upgrade their academic qualification for various reasons had to seek study leave. This meant that they had to leave their duties to study while still being paid (Johnston, 1997). For this reason, most employers set minimum requirements for those hoping to pursue professional development to minimize number of employees out on study leave. One of these requirements was excellent academic qualification at the previous academic level. Therefore average performers and those who were not so good were condemned for ever. The other option was proceeding for unpaid leave. The employee would quit working to study but without a pay. On completion of the studies, the employee would continue working. This option was not popular since most of these employees had dependents.

Consequently some employees stagnated in one job group for many years and lost hope of ever getting promotion that goes with academic advancement (Villegas, 2003). They lacked chances of improving quality of their performance or even changing careers. Their social status at work and outside workplace were static and hopelessness was written all over. But Kenya is not an island. Soon, some of the educational practices in the West were catching up and before long SBP, Weekend Classes (WC) and Evening Classes (EC) started and spread like a bush fire.

2. Statement of the Problem

It is not known how efficient SBP is in achievement of educational goals. The question of efficiency arises against a backdrop rapid expansion of the programme in almost all universities. Kigotho (2009) refer to the expansion as “Teachers’ Mad Rush for Useless Degrees”. This is because SBP was initially meant for teacher’s academic development though other courses have since adopted it. What started in a few universities has been introduced in almost all universities, both private and public, a situation which has generated stiff competition for students.

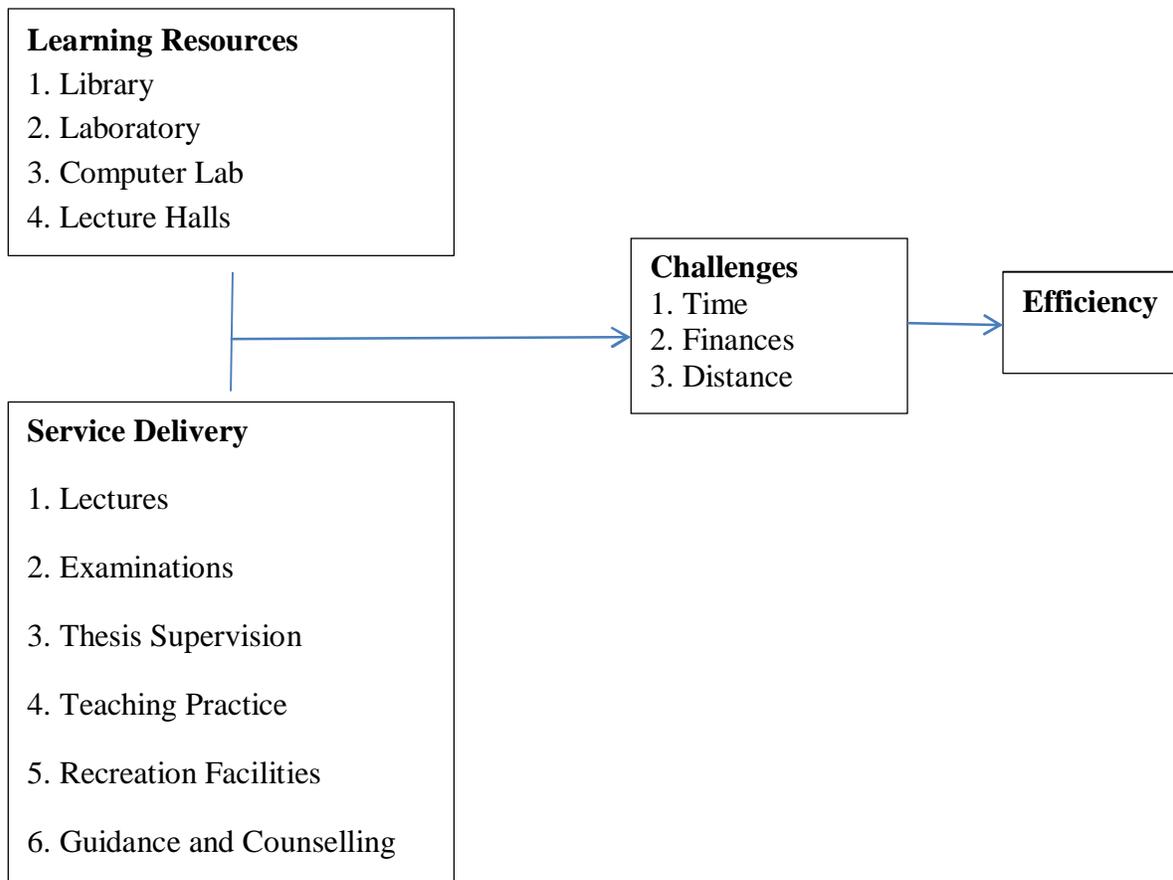
To survive the competition, universities have formulated all sorts of strategies which include reduced duration of study and low school fees. And if Kigotho (2009) report is anything to go by, then in some universities students are studying for only six weeks per year. This is with respect to regular programme where students study for six months per year, excluding exams time. Furthermore, most of the regular students are not working and so they have plenty of time for assignments and private studies to complement lectures.

Another concern is preparedness of universities to implement SBP. Most depend on associate faculty while they lack permanent premises. School based students are scattered in different areas in urban centres where universities rent temporary facilities (Kigotho, 2009). And to make matters worse, many students are not members of respective university libraries as they are registered in universities academic sites where there are no libraries. As a result, they lack of textbooks and other

resource materials and thus depend almost entirely on lecturers' notes which are sketchy Kigotho (2009). In conclusion, Kigotho (2009) describes school based learning degree programmes as inferior to full-time or parallel courses both inside and outside the universities.

Efficiency of SBP in return affects quality of services offered by teachers thus making it a national issue. Solving any issues arising will be very important given that Kenyans, especially teachers are spending fortunes on their professional development.

3. Conceptual Framework



4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate effectiveness of School Based Programme as an alternative mode of study in Kenyan universities. The findings of the study were meant to contribute towards improvement of the programme which is very instrumental in growth of education sector.

5. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were

- i. To assess availability learning resources in institutions offering school based programmes.
- ii. To assess adequacy of learning resources in these institutions.
- iii. To investigate service delivery to the students.
- iv. To establish challenges facing this programme.

6. Methodology

A descriptive survey design was employed. According to Orotho (2009) a survey emphasizes frequency on number of answers to the same questions by different people. It is used to describe attitude, preferences, habits and other behavior which make it suitable for this study. The design was suitable due to the large number of target population, which comprised teachers who have studied under SBP.

The study was conducted in Mount Kenya Region which has most institutions of higher learning. Institutions were randomly selected while participants were purposefully selected to target only those teachers who have advanced their study. A total of 200 questionnaires were self-administered given that all respondents were highly literate.

The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics and presented in frequency distribution tables, pie charts and bar graphs.

7. Results

The findings revealed that out all respondents, 54% studied in public universities while 44% studied in private universities. The researcher started by investigating reasons behind choice of university with following results.

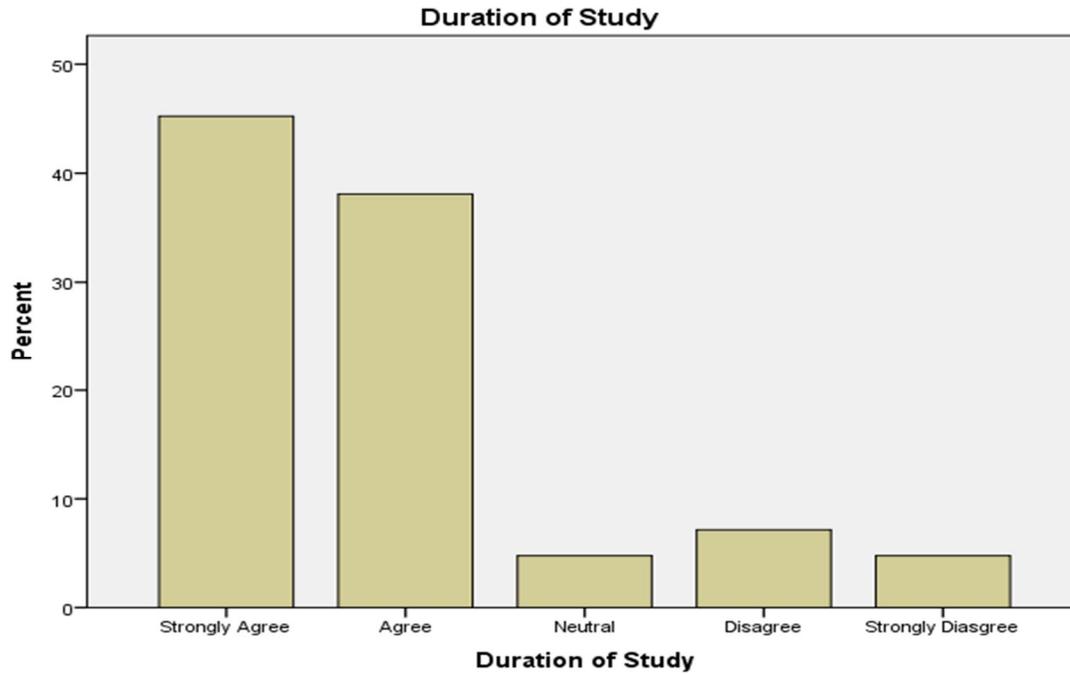


Figure 1: Duration of Study

From figure 1, more than 80% strongly agreed or agreed that the duration of study was a factor in their choice of university. Other reasons were fees charged which was supported by 65%, reputation 77%, location 63% and availability of resources 65% who strongly agreed or agreed.

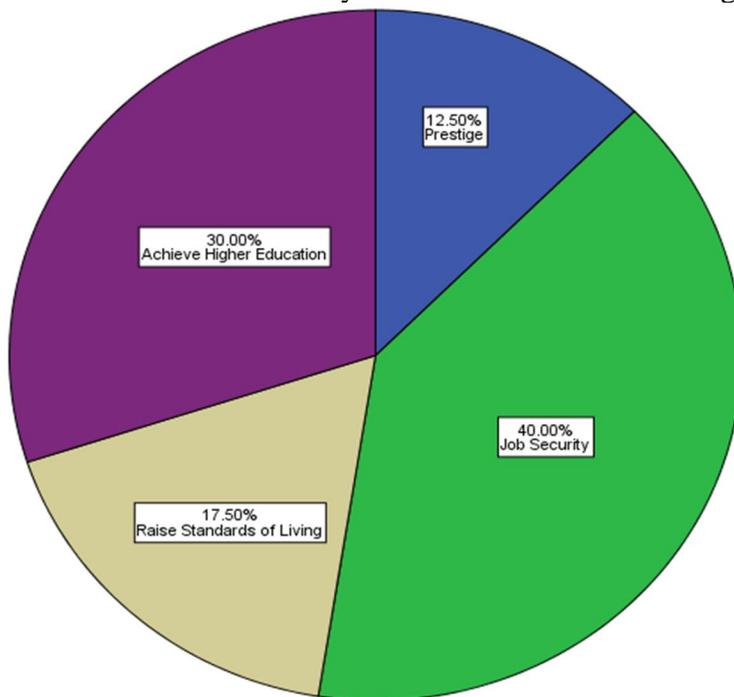


Figure 2: Objectives of pursuing Higher Education

From figure 2, about 40% of respondents cited job security as the main objective for pursuing further education. Achieving higher education had close to 30%, raising standards of living 16% and prestige 16%.

The study revealed that the main reason for further studies was salary increment with 93% either strongly agreeing or just agreeing. This was followed by promotion and knowledge gain, each at 88%. Others were social status with 77% and career change 58%. The least important of the reasons were peer pressure and to occupy oneself, each with 28%.

On learning resources, those who rated library as good or very good were 60% while computer lab had about 50%. Though only 16% of respondent had pursued science oriented course, 50% of them rated science lab as good or very good.

Service delivery was assessed in terms of lecture attendance by lecturers, which was termed as very good or good by 65% of respondents. Lecture delivery was rated at 65%, examinations management 58%, Thesis or project supervision 65% while teaching practice had 42%. The poorest services were guidance and counseling 27%, recreation facilities 32% and services by non-teaching staff 39%.

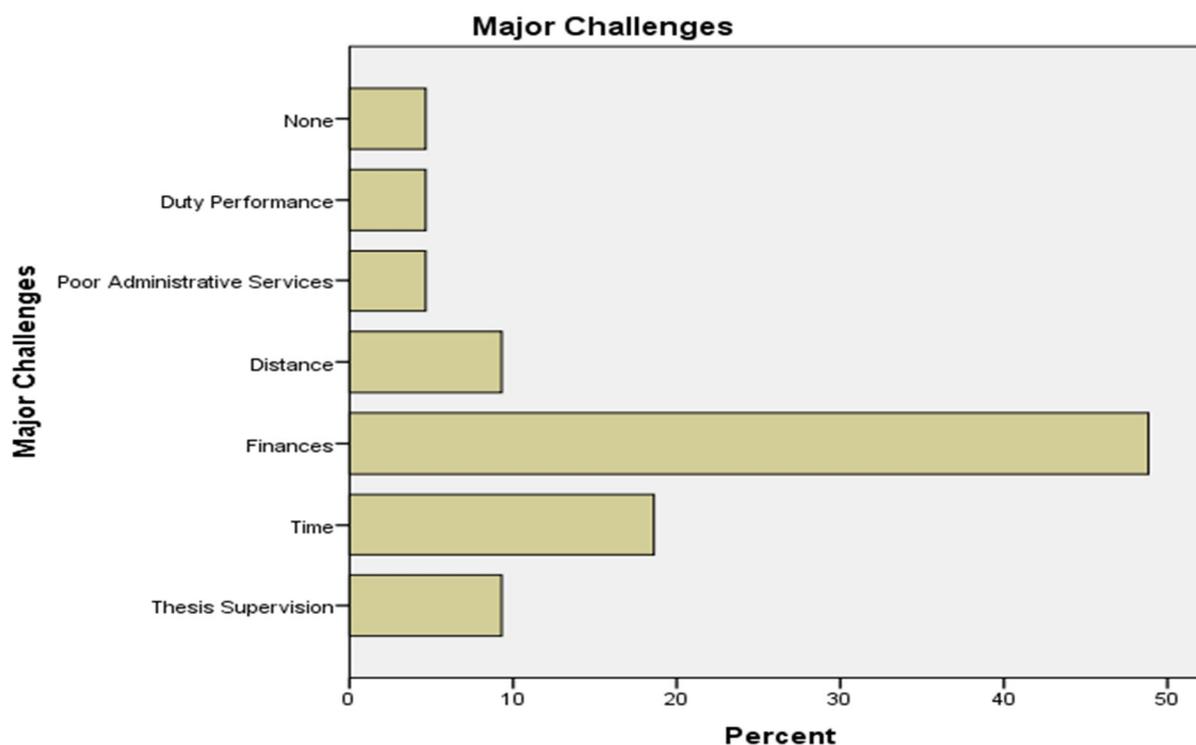


Figure 3: Major Challenges Faced by Students.

From figure 3, the major challenge for students pursuing SBP is finances with almost 50%, followed by time with about 20%. Thesis supervision has close to 10%.

Table 1: Suggestions for Improving the Programme

Suggestions	Percent
Increase Study Duration	14.0
Increase Supervision of Lecturers	32.6
Improve Exams Management	14.0
Constantly Evaluate the Programme	4.7
Separation of Administrative and Lecturing Duties	2.3
Reduce of Fees and Increase Scholarships	23.3
None	9.3
Total	100.0

According to table 1, about a third of respondents suggest increased supervision of lecturers while about 20% suggest implementation of measures to reduce fees charged. Improved examinations management and increased duration of study come in third, with 14% each.

8. Discussion

Though learning resources were rated as average, that is, about 50%, a lot of improvement needs to be done in this area. Library was the rated best at 60%, which is still wanting. Institutions should ensure they have well equipped libraries and laboratories to facilitate knowledge gain, since teacher main role is to transmit knowledge to learners. It follows that if teachers are knowledgeable, learners too will be knowledgeable. Evidence also suggests that attention to teacher learning can impact directly upon improvements in student learning and achievement.

Ironically, most teachers pursue professional development so as to have a salary increment, which explains why the programme is crowded even with various shortcomings.

It is worth noting that though lecturer have been portrayed in bad light, a lot of good has been said about them. This is an indication that though a few lecturers are lazy and absentees, majority are role models to their students. Guidance and counseling is ironically almost not there. This because people under pressure need this service most.

Since this programme is self-sponsored, students strain a lot financially

9. Recommendation

From the discussion above, the following are recommended;

1. Government should subsidize education even for self-sponsored students.
2. Evaluation at all levels of the programme should be stepped up.
3. Study duration should be increased to reduce straining

10. Conclusion

SBP has increased access to higher education and its very efficient in terms of money and time.

Reference

- Goodall, J., Day, C., Lindsay, G., Muijs, D, Harris, A. (2005). *Evaluating the Impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)*. Retrieved from <http://www.ser.stir.ac.uk/pdf/228.pdf>
- Ismat, H-. A. (1996). Making Time for Teacher Professional Development. ERIC Digest. Retrieved from http://www.ied.edu.hk/edchange/resource/education4_2_2.html
- Kigotho, W. (2009). *Teachers' Mad Rush for Useless Degrees*. Retrieved from http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=1144022275&story_title=Teachers%E2%80%999-mad-rush-for-useless-degrees
- Ministry of Education. 2012. *Task Force on the Re-Alignment of the Education*. Retrieved from www.vision2030.go.ke/cms/.../Task_Force_Final_Report_Feb_20123.pdf
- Orodho, J. A. (2009). *Elements of Education Research and Social Science Research Methods*. Nairobi: Kanezja Publishers.
- Vrasidas, C. & Glass, V.G., (2004). *Online Professional Development for Teachers*. Retrieved from <http://books.google.co.ke/books?hl=en&lr=&id=2zxIOMi2uCMC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=teacher+professional+development&ots>
- Johnston, B. (1997). Do EFL teachers have careers?.
http://203.72.145.166/TESOL/TQD_2008/VOL_31_4.pdf#page=7
- Villegas-Reimers, E. (2003). Teacher professional development.
http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Research_Challenges_and_Trends/133010e.pdf