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Student-Related Factors and the Rates of Completion of Doctoral Studies in Education in Public Universities in Kenya

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Abstract:
The study investigated institutional factors that that influence completion rates of doctoral studies in Education in selected public universities in Kenya. Based on the study, this paper analyses the contribution of teaching and learning factors to completion rates of doctoral studies. Descriptive survey design was used in the study. The participants comprised 115(62.09%) of a total of 184 lecturers/heads of departments in the three universities studied, namely Moi University, Kenyatta University and the University of Nairobi. The number of doctoral students who participated was 388(67.29%) of 579 doctoral students registered between the years 2009 to 2013 in the three universities. A questionnaire, document analysis guide and interview guide were used to collect data for the study. Quantitative data was coded and analysed using SPSS. Data from field notes was transcribed and organized to themes. Some data was coded and tallied based on their similarities and presented using descriptive statistics such as tables, percentages frequencies and graphs. Lack of sufficient thesis writing competence, financial constraints, family responsibility and job commitment among doctoral students' lower doctoral studies completion rates and prolong time to degree. Based on the research findings and conclusion, it is recommended that public universities' management should look for a way of providing scholarships to needy graduate students. This would help provide students but with financial constraints to pursue their university education to completion.

Keywords: Student-related factors, rates, completion, doctoral studies, education, public universities, Kenya

1. Introduction

The main causes cited for delay or failure to complete includes inadequate supervision, unmanageable thesis topics and unsustainable funding of students (Canadian Association for Graduate Studies [CAGS], 2006). Some of the efforts made to improve completion rates by most universities across Europe and America include an introduction of various policies and frameworks to encourage students to submit their theses in a timely fashion. Another measure introduced is a continuation charge payable by research students if their research work extends beyond the time limit stipulated by the university (Protivnak & Foss, 2009). For example, Harvard University introduced a programme in which doctoral students received yearly written reviews that details what is expected of them and where they stand each year. The interventions improved completion rates in some institutions. At Harvard University, the complet ion rates from the year 2005 to 2007 improved by 25 percent and 16 percent in humanities and social science respectively(College   of Graduate Studies [CGS], 2008).

On the African continent, doctoral completion rates are equally low. At Makerere University, in a follow-up of a total of 295 students who registered for doctoral programmes between the years 2000 and 2005, by November 2010, only 89(39.7%) had successfully earned the degree (Wamala, Oonyo &Acaya, 2011). Bunting and Sheppard (2012) report that doctoral completion rates in most South African universities remained below 20 percent until the year 2004 when it began to improve. The improvement was engendered by the implementation of interventions aimed at improving completion rates to about 75 percent. However, the target was not achieved. For example, between the years 2005 to 2010, the completion rates staggered between 45-50 percent.

1.1. Student-related Factors and Doctoral Studies Completion Rates

Adequate financial support has been found to promote timely completion of doctoral studies while lack of it is a major cause of attrition (Lovitts, 2001). Studies shows that about 40 percent to 60 percent of students who enrol for doctoral programmes either take exceptionally longer periods of time to complete or not complete at all (Nolan, 1999; Geiger, 1997; Tinto, 1993; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992). High drop-out rates and ever-increasing time to completion are reported as chronic problems in doctoral programmes (Lovitts &Nelson, 2000). Adequate financial support is the "nervous system" in any academic research undertaking. Lovitts (2001) note that problems related to finance are major cause of a delayed completion of a doctoral programme or dropout. Students with scholarships are most likely to complete their thesis writing within a reasonable period of time compared to their counterparts without it (Ehrenberg & Mavros, 1995). It is also argued that self-financing doctoral students are less likely to complete their graduate studies in good time compared to those who receive funding irrespective of the type (Lovitts & Nelson, 2000).

Nonetheless, financial support does not guarantee programme completion. It takes more than a financial support to complete a graduate programme successfully. Some faculties and administrators view students' failure to complete their theses in a reasonable period of time or drop-out, as a function of idiosyncrasies of individual students, such as lack of academic ability, motivation or commitment, difficulty in selecting a research topic or a change in the direction of the research topic. Lack of academic ability, motivation and commitment are some of the factors associated with untimely completion or dropout (Earl-Novell, 2006).

Delayed completion or dropout is also linked to two other factors, stress (Lovitts, 2001) and social isolation (Ali & Kohun, 2006). Personal social factors are key traits to academic success among doctoral students (Cavazos, Johnson, Fielding, Castro & Vela, 2010). With regard to stress, doctoral students face enormous demands upon their time, energy, endurance, patience and organizational skills. Peer guide and social support are viewed by graduate student as providing a free environment for exchanging ideas and receiving guidance towards meeting programme requirements and progress towards a timely degree completion (Papalewis, 1995).Lee (2009) notes that students' unique traits like self-discipline and positive self-concept, have positive impact on the student's overall success. Furthermore, students' desire to achieve a doctorate degree, motivates them to manage the stress and cope with it (Protivnak &Fass, 2009).

Students with adequate peer group moral support, family support and other forms of social support, tend to experience less stress and are more likely to persist and complete their theses in time (Torres & Solberg, 2001). However, studies show that parent support/ involvement have less influence on doctoral studies (Cavazos *et al.*, 2010; Ceballo, 2004). Although the study revealed little evidence of positive influence of a parent support on doctoral success, there was a strong evidence of spousal support. Social and academic environment within the faculty and supervision process, appear to play the role of parental support and thus promote student resiliency and timely completion. Further support for the positive influence of institutional environment is contained in Hoskins and Goldberg (2005). The report noted two components influencing doctoral success, namely academic and social-personality.

Academic match referred to a positive relationship between the students' goals and aspirations with doctoral programme and course work, whereas social-personal match involved relationship with faculty and peers. Learning style, intelligence and level of intrinsic motivation are positively associated with a timely completion (Lovitts, 2005). Contrary to this, some traits like dependency and procrastination are associated with delayed completion (Terrell, 2002).

Strayhorn (2005) observes that despite decades of good effort and good deal of research studies on students' persistence, the rate of graduate completion in the United States have not changed applicably. That the rate of completion has remained slightly above 50percent with six out every 10 enrolled not completing a four-year programme after six years. The main reasons noted are those related to financial support as most of those who failed to complete in time come from low-income backgrounds (NCES, 2003).

A study conducted by Amini *et al*. (2008) has revealed four themes that medical students believe to lead to their doctoral success. These are: personal abilities, attitudes, beliefs and motivation, efforts and perseverance and supportive factors. Although universities may effort to ascertain entry behaviour of a student before registering the student, the other factors, like attitude and beliefs, may be difficult to neither ascertain nor control. It therefore takes the effort of an individual student to make personal efforts to overcome such kind of challenges.

The students emphasized efforts and endurance more than intelligence in medical doctoral schools. Mentor support from supervisors and peer group were also rated high. Student demographic variables such as age, gender and marital status, to some degree, influence thesis completion rates (Wao &Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Men and younger candidates are likely to finish in a relatively less time compared to women, older and married students (Lott, Gardner &Powers, 2009; Price, 2006). Female doctoral students more often face family responsibilities and lack of adequate time which to some extend become obstacles to completing their theses in good time (Eitel &Martin, 2009; Heenan, 2002). Therefore, it is presumed that in average, male students have slightly higher thesis completion rates compared to their female counterparts in the same programme – all other conditions held constant.

The main responsibilities are those related to the family and job. In regard to socialization and conventions, African cultures are typically not flexible enough to allow women with children, whose schedules and responsibilities are often demanding, much humble time for the busy and quite demanding doctoral studies programmes (Gardner, 2008). This seems to explain the reason why in many doctoral programmes, the number of male students is slightly higher than that of female students. Further, balancing doctoral studies with family and work-related responsibilities is a challenge to many doctoral candidates across institutions and academic programmes (Wasburn-Moses, 2008). However, Castro, Garcia, Cavazos and Castro (2009) note that women attribute their doctoral academic success to their individual attributes, such as independence, internal locus of control, resolve and perseverance. Secondly, the capitalization of external negative factors as sources of motivation to improve themselves seems to be common among these class of women. They use education to escape the past and overcome socio-economic insecurity.

Smith (2007) note that the time needed to devote to doctoral studies and the time away from family, more often results in worry, anxiety and at extreme cases, family breakdowns. Students who encounter mental or family problems during their doctoral studies, often experience additional duress. Since women typically bear more responsibility for home and child care, problems in this domain are likely to affect them to a greater magnitude than their male counterparts. Lovitts (2001) note that 70% percent of the drop-outs cited personal reasons for their exit. Therefore, socio-economic and psycho social issues related to the students seem to influence the completion rate, and time to-completion.

Concerning age or disability, Goode (2007) note that most students enrol for doctoral study programmes when they are already around 30 to 40 years of age. Most of them have family responsibilities as well as job commitments. Thus, while many study programmes may require full time registration, the actual reality of many students is of being part time due to the need for paid jobs. For such students, it can be difficult to access the research cultures of their departments. Farrar and Young (2007) observes that disabled students can encounter difficulties with all aspects of the infrastructure: administration, communication, research management,

fieldwork and social experience. The kind of support needed is usually in the form of material resources, guidance and information. Some institutions may not have in place the kind of support needed by different people with different disabilities.

2. Materials and Methods

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The design was appropriate because the study tried to find out the factors associated with delayed completion of doctoral studies in education at public universities in Kenya. The findings may also be generalized to a wider representation of the population. The study targeted all students registered for various doctoral programmes in Education in Kenya's public universities between the years 2009 and 2013, heads of departments and lecturers (professors, senior lecturers and lecturers) in the departments of education. The study involved the University of Nairobi, Moi University and Kenyatta University. The three institutions offer doctoral programmes in education and are also the oldest in the country. They are also well established in terms of the number of professors and lecturers with doctoral degrees. The findings may, therefore, be generalized to all education doctoral programmes in universities in Kenya.

In order to ensure that the minimum empirically acceptable number of respondents is achieved, the study target 80% of the target population. However, only 62.5% responded. The total number of professors and doctors (senior lecturers and lecturers) as at 31st December 2014 and the proportion of those who participated were as summarized in Table 1 below.

	Staff establishment			Actual responses			
University	Professors	Doctors	Total	Professors	Doctors	Total	%
UoN	6	30	**36**	1	22	**23**	63.88
MOI	13	38	**51**	3	31	**34**	66.67
KU	20	77	**97**	8	50	**58**	59.79
Total	**30**	**145**	**184**	**12**	**103**	**115**	**62.50**

Table 1: Number of Lecturers and the Sample Size

A total of 115 participants was selected representing 62.5 per cent of the target population. The sampling procedure for doctoral students registered in the three universities between the years 2009 and 2013 was as shown in Table 2 below.

Universities	Gender			Target (80%)	Actual response		Total	%
					M	F		
Nairobi	90	76	166	133	62	54	116	69.88
Moi	77	90	167	134	74	61	135	80.84
Kenyatta	126	120	246	197	78	59	137	55.69
Total	**293**	**286**	**579**	**464**	**214**	**174**	**388**	**67.01**

Table 2: Student Enrolment, Target Size and Actual Respondents

A total of 67.29% of the students participated. In all cases, purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used. Under stratified technique, the study ensured that all the departments offering doctoral study programmes in Education at the three universities were represented. Under purposive sampling technique, the study targeted, among others, doctoral candidates who experienced prolonged time-to-degree (10 years or more) and those who had timely completion (five years or less of studies). With respect to HoDs, only those who had been in that position for at least two years were involved.

Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. Questionnaires were used to collect data from doctoral students and lecturers. Heads of departments were interviewed. The lecturers interviewed were those who earned the degree within five years from the time they were registered for the programme. This category of respondents was identified from document analysis. Most of the students interviewed were those who had been in the programme for more than eight years and had not earned the degree.

Doctoral enrolment and completion records were analysed in order to study completion rate- line-trends and time-to-degree. The documents analysed were mainly policy documents, staff establishment records, student enrolment statistics and graduation booklets. The aim was to establish policies and regulations guiding practices in the institutions. Document analysis also provided the teaching staff establishment and the total number of students enrolled for different study programmes in the schools of education at the three universities. This was used to compute: (a) the overall lecturer/ student ratio and (b) doctoral student completion- line-trends. The documents were obtained from HoDs, schools of postgraduate studies, the examination offices, official websites, admission offices and the universities' central ICT centres. The information derived from these offices and documents were student enrolment statistics, staff establishment, graduation statistics and policies guiding practices at each of the universities.

Data from closed-ended questions was coded and organized into themes based on the research variables investigated. It was coded and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Data from open-ended questions and interview were reduced, coded and tallied based on their similarities and integrated with data from closed-ended questions. The analysed results were presented using descriptive statistics such as pie charts, ratios, tables as well as percentages.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Student-related Factors and Doctoral Studies Completion Rates in Public Universities
The study examined student-related factors that influence doctoral completion rates based on Likert scale of 1=SD, 2=D,3=U, 4=A and 5=SA. Seven items were presented to the respondents to comment and the responses were as summarized and presented in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Statement	KU			MOI			UoN			Mean
	N	Mean	Std Dev	N	Mean	Std Dev	N	Mean	Std Dev	
Many students fail to complete their theses in a timely fashion due to lack of academic writing skills.	58	3.48	1.06	34	3.76	1.08	23	3.91	1.20	**3.71**
Lack of communication skills, argumentation and logical presentation among students cause prolonged completion of thesis writing process	58	4.41	0.62	34	4.15	0.86	23	4.09	1.08	**4.21**
Difficulty in selecting research topic or change in direction of it is associated with prolonged completion	58	4.16	0.87	34	4.18	0.94	23	4.39	0.65	**4.24**
Family, job and other social responsibilities among student contribute to prolonged completion	58	3.69	0.98	34	3.85	1.13	23	5.70	2.75	**4.41**
Demographic factors such as age and gender can influence time to degree.	58	4.28	0.76	34	4.41	0.89	23	4.61	0.58	**4.43**
Lack of adequate financial support can cause prolonged completion	58	3.91	0.94	34	4.24	1.12	23	3.96	1.19	**4.03**
Lack of adequate skills in review of literature cause prolonged completion	58	4.39	1.24	34	4.58	0.71	23	4.04	0.56	**4.33**
Valid N = 115										**4.19**

Table 3: Student-related Factors and Doctoral Studies Completion Rates (Lecturers' Responses)

Table 3 provides a summary of lecturers' responses to items testing student related factors. Lecturers rated most of the items high. This meant that majority of the respondents strongly believe that all the items tested are significant student related factors influencing doctoral studies completion rates. On whether or not inadequacy in thesis writing skills among doctoral students contributed to prolonged time-to-degree, lecturers agreed (m=3.71) that indeed lack of thesis writing skills was a contributing factor to a prolonged time to degree. During interview sessions, most respondents both lecturers and students affirmed that inadequacy in thesis writing skills was one of the major undermining factor on timely completion of doctoral study programmes. Lecturers mentioned several reasons against the factors surrounding students and therefore hinder them from earning the degree in a timely fashion. Most of the reasons are within the students' socio-economic live. Lack of adequate funding, job and family responsibilities and socio environmental among some.Table 4 provides a summary of the students' responses to student related factors influencing doctoral studies completion rates.

	KU			MOI			UoN			Mean
	N	Mean	Std Dev	N	Mean	Std Dev	N	Mean	Std Dev	
Doctoral students fail to utilize the teaching/learning resources available	148	4.22	0.84	114	4.74	0.63	125	4.57	0.84	**4.51**
Lack of student intrinsic motivation and commitment cause prolonged completion	148	3.88	1.06	114	3.89	1.18	125	4.30	0.85	**4.02**
Difficulty in selecting research topic or change in direction of it is associated with prolonged completion	148	4.06	1.08	114	4.02	1.14	125	4.27	0.87	**4.11**
Family and peer group moral support helps students to realize a timely completion	148	4.49	0.69	114	4.02	1.14	125	4.27	0.87	**4.26**
Lack of adequate financial support causes prolonged completion	148	3.98	0.87	114	4.08	1.09	125	3.89	1.06	**3.98**
Valid N = 388										**4.18**

Table 4: Students-related Factors and Doctoral Studies Completion Rates (Doctoral Students' Responses)

Table 4 provides the summary of students' responses to items presented under student related factors. Just like lecturers, students also rated most of the items high. This means that majority of the respondents strongly believe that all the items tested are significant student related factors influencing doctoral studies completion rates. During interview sessions, most students affirmed that inadequacy in thesis writing skills was one of the major undermining factor on timely completion of doctoral study programmes. Lack

of adequate funding, job and family responsibilities were the main factors related to the students and undermine completion of doctoral studies in a timely fashion.

Testing of the null hypothesis (student-related factors have no influence on doctoral completion rates) was conducted to determine whether or not independent variable (student related factors) have any significant influence on the dependent variable (doctoral completion rates).The results were as presented in Table 5 below.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig
1 Constant	2.569	0.349		7.366	0.000
Supervision factors	-1.024	0.214	-0.256	-4.779	0.000
a. Dependent variable: completion rate					

Table 5: Regression Coefficient for Student Related Factors

Table 5 interprets the standardized regression coefficients (Beta). In estimating the contribution of student factors to completion of doctoral studies, it was established that student factors had a significant contribution to doctoral completion rates (p= 0.00). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Looking at the responses to all the factors related to the students, the immediate impression is that student related factors seem to be the major determinants on doctoral completion rates. For example, the first item requested the respondents to comment on whether inadequacy in thesis writing skills among doctoral students contributed to prolonged time-to-degree. This item was presented to lecturers only. The assumption was that students, just like many other human beings, might not accept liability in terms of lack of writing skills. Lecturers agreed (m=3.71) that indeed lack of thesis writing skills was a contributing factor to a prolonged time to degree. During interview sessions, most respondents both lecturers and students affirmed that inadequacy in thesis writing skills was one of the major undermining factor on timely completion of doctoral study programmes.

The findings of the current study are in agreement with Siegel (2005) who noted that high entrance scores contributed to success. Similarly, Karns, Gardiner and Marshal (2008) report that personal situation of the student including academic ability and language skill determine the time to degree. The second item was on personal ability to communicate. The item was presented to lecturers and HoDs only on the same grounds as in item one. The respondents strongly agreed (m=4.21) that difficulty in personal self-expression undermines the individuals' timely completion. Most students interviewed mentioned identification and application of the most relevant statistics like T-test, Chi-squire test etc. as some of the area that are most daunting in thesis writing process.

The third item required the respondents to comment on whether challenges related to topic selection or change in the direction of it influence time-to-degree. Both the lecturers and students strongly agreed (m=4.24 and m=4.11, respectively). A good number of students said they had to seek advice from their supervisors. Most common challenges cited included difficulty in identifying a researchable topic in the area of one's discipline and narrowing it appropriately. The fourth item required the respondents to comment on whether or not family and job commitment among doctoral students influenced time to degree. Both lecturers and students agreed (m=4.41) and (m=4.11) lecturers and students respectively, giving an average mean of 4.26. Their responses indicated that family responsibility and job commitment are some of the major derailing factors in timely completion of doctoral studies.

During interviews, 70.87% of lecturers interviewed and 90.68% of the students indicated that family responsibility and job commitment are some of the major derailing factors in timely completion among doctoral students. One of the lecturers noted that: "the main causes of delayed completion are issues related to external variables like job and family commitment, financial needs, supervisor/supervisee rapport and too committed supervisors" (Personal Communication, Lecturer, 2015).A similar comment was recorded from a student who commented: "most of the doctoral students are working and family members. They have divided attention between doctoral work and roles related to work and family. Students' work should be promptly attended to once it is received despite other work that the supervisor was doing" (Personal Communication, Lecturer, 2015).

 Some students reported that they become impatient when they are asked to keep on waiting for unspecified period of time. The current findings are in line with Jimenez (2011) and Smith, Maroney, Nelson, Abel and Abel (2006) note that doctoral education students work full-time as principals, administrators or teachers with academic responsibilities serving to intensify demands on their energy, commitment and time. This explains why education graduate students take longer period of time to degree as compared to their counterparts in other disciplines.

The fifth item required the respondents to comment on whether demographic factors like age and gender can influence time to degree. The responses showed a sharp difference between the perception of lecturers and that of students. While lecturers across the universities agree (m=4.43) that age, gender and other demographic factors strongly influence time-to-degree in doctoral studies, students on the other hand disagreed (m=2.86). Most of the lecturers interviewed across the universities belief that age, gender and other demographic factors strongly influence time - to-degree. About half of doctoral students believe that demographic factors have any significant influence.

The respondents were asked to comment on whether or not lack of adequate financial support among students could be a cause of prolonged completion. Both lecturers and students agreed (m=4.03) that financial related challenges among students lead to a prolonged completion of doctoral studies and a major cause of drop-out. It is however undoubtedly that finance is the backbone of continuation in doctoral studies. Even though so, students' optimism and expectations of a bright future upon acquiring the doctorate for example a well-paying job, diminishes the pain of cost constraints. When students' experience with their departments and

supervisors are more positive, they are more likely to accept greater financial burdens in order to continue attendance than when the experiences are unsatisfactory.

Asked whether they are sponsored or are self-sponsored, the response showed that 81.43% of the respondents were self-sponsored. The rest were either partially or fully sponsored. On whether or not they had ever applied for scholarships, majority (58%) noted that they had not. Among those who had applied, most of them did not receive any financial grant. The few who succeeded were either employees of the funding organization or were from arid regions of the country and were being supported by their constituency bursary kid. A very small fraction reported having received grants from none governmental organizations like DAAD among a few other organizations.

The findings of the current study are in line with those of Lovits and Nelson (2000) who note that self-financing doctoral students are less likely to complete their graduate studies than students who receive funding irrespective of type. Earl-Novell (2006) report that full fellowship students are more at risk of no-completion than their funded counter-parts. During interview session, students and lecturers made some suggestion. Aminada, a student the University of Nairobi, noted thus:

> ➢ Before a student is registered for a doctoral study programme, the department responsible should carry out a needs assessment on the student's preparedness in terms of work commitment, financial support and experience. This will ascertain whether the student is capable to pursue the degree to completion or not (Personal Communication, Aminada, 2015).

Ng'eno (Moi University) emphasized that organizing concept paper presentation as part of the course is necessary to familiarize the student with thesis development skill (Personal Communication, Ng'eno, June, 14, 2015).Several students and lecturers noted that most of the doctoral students are working and family members who have divided attention between doctoral studies and roles related to work and family. Majority suggested that students' work should be accorded prompt attention once it is received. On T/L resources, many noted that most books have to be imported because very few authors have articulated on the local context. They suggested that local professors should publish widely to give students good literature to review.

Regarding student-related factors, it is a universal reality that most doctoral students have many challenges such as family and job responsibility, financial constraints and tress partly caused by isolation and delayed feedback from supervisors and external examiners. Although student related factors, appear to be the main factors influencing doctoral studies completion rates, none of it stands on its own. All the five factors examined are intertwined and the kind and magnitude of interplay between and among them, combine to determine the overall outcome. For example, the efficiency and effectiveness of supervisors largely depends on the decisions, policies and practices of the university management. A prudent university or faculty management will ensure a prudent supervision process is in place and vice versa.

Issues to do with remuneration of lecturers, timely payment of supervision impress and other forms of incentives, are controlled by the management. Therefore, supervisors being adequate or inadequate, motivated or not motivated, overloaded or not overload are factors of university management. Similarly, lack of adequate number of relevant T/L resources, policies and requirements governing various study programmes, are all directly linked to the management. Students' delayed completion or drop-out may not necessarily be associated with lack of academic expertise, financial or other external variables like family and job commitment come into play. In any case, a student is usually enrolled with a proven academic ability. Armed with full knowledge of financial requirements in form of fees and other stipend expenses, the student enrols with a determination to complete in a timely fashion. Why then should the student delay or decide to discontinue? Some of the factors behind students' academic turmoil are associated with the other four factors (institutional, supervision, programme and T/L resources). For example, if there is lack of adequate guidance from the supervisor, delayed reading and return of students' work, lack of appropriate referent materials or a fragmented study programme, all these among others will combine to deter the students' timely completion.

After a thorough examining, analysis and triangulation of the research findings based on items presented in relation to research objective one, it is worth pointing out that out of all the areas examined, three major factors featured out prominently as factors with more influence than the rest. These are student per capita, lack of commitment by the university/faculty management to improve completion rates and time to degree and policies governing doctoral study.The student per capita is a challenge that has emerged as a result of high student enrolment without commensurate number of lecturers. Lack of commitment by the university manage is linked to lack of statistics on completion rates.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Lack of sufficient thesis writing competence, financial constraints, family responsibility and job commitment among doctoral students' lower doctoral studies completion rates and prolong time to degree. Based on the research findings and conclusion, it is recommended that public universities' management should look for a way of providing scholarships to needy graduate students. This would help provide students but with financial constraints to pursue their university education to completion. Moreover, education foundations, constituency bursary, boards, county bursary boards, banks and other willing donors should solicit funds for full or partial scholarship for doctoral candidates. This would cushion some of them from financial turmoil.

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