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Influence of Virtual and Open Learning on Private Demand for Education: A Case of Kenyatta University, Kenya

Moses Mwangi Macharia

Masters Student, Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies,
School Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Dr. Norbert Ogeta

Lecturer, Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies,
School Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Abstract:

Virtual and Open Education has recently become a recognized field of education across the globe as the mode of education which helps large number of students to access quality educational opportunities. The purpose of was study to establish the influence of virtual and open learning to private demand for education: The objectives of the project included the following; to determine the current status of enrollment of open and distance learning in Kenyatta University; extent to which Virtual and open learning influence enrollment; challenges facing Virtual and open learning in Kenyan universities. The study was guided by Industrial production model of Otto Peters (1994). The research utilized Descriptive survey method as the main study. The target subject under study consisted of 400 virtual and open students from Kenyatta University. Through random sampling technique and proportional two hundreds (200) open and distant learners from Kenyatta University were identified. The study used purposive sampling to choose three Digital School co-coordinators. The process of data collection involved administering questionnaires and scheduling interviews with the selected individuals. The study relied on both qualitative and quantitative data. When analyzing quantitative the research used descriptive statistics and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 17). Qualitative data was analyzed by establishing the categories and themes, relationships/patterns and conclusions in line with the study objectives. Results indicated that virtual and open learning influence enrollment at Kenya Universities, where about 6248 virtual and open students have enrolled to the program. Various challenges touching on inadequate funding, network problem, delayed feedback and low teaching staff levels were identified. The study also established that the institutions offering virtual and open learning in Kenya are governed by their own institutional policies .It is articulated that the findings of this study and the recommendations therefore suggested would aid the government and universities in Kenya to achieve their goal of providing quality virtual and open education at affordable cost. It would benefit in policy on guiding on financial provision for virtual and open learning programmes, creating national Open university as well as the articulation of nationwide policies for virtual and open education and efficient use of virtual and open learning resources in providing student support services.

Keywords: *Influence of virtual and open learning, private demand for education, Kenyatta University*

1. Background to the Study

McConnell, (2014) describes contemporary Virtual and Open Learning (VOL) as planned a teaching situation which uses a broad scope of telecommunications to arrive at the students at a distance and is devised to uplift interactions of the learners and learning certification. Shin and Chan (2004) assert that the term virtual and distance learning has been applicable in various pedagogies. Even though, its main feature is that there is segregation between the teacher and the student regarding space and time. Mignon and Jurie (2012) provide the most accurate explanation. They uphold that virtual and distance learning and training comes from technical separation of the instructor and learners geographically. As a result, learners have an opportunity to carry out their studies at their own convenience irrespective of time and location. From these explanations, the detachment between the learner and the lecturer is not time but space. Virtual and Open Education is currently known all over the globe as the approach of education that assists many students to access quality education (McConnell, 2014). It makes quality education accessible at low costs to learners whose work and family engagements cannot be overlooked. They bar them from attending college on full time basis (Simonson, et al, 2014). Since Distance Education is inexpensive to assist and is not limited by geographical deliberations, it creates opportunities where traditional education has difficult in terms of its operations.

Virtual and Open education keeps it attainable for secondary school students to study without going away from home since only limited chance in the universities. This type of education has several merits over the common educational system, encompassing; accessing the teaching personnel virtually all over the globe; foundation of current interactive methodology (less reliance on rote memorization, more hands-on learning opportunities and independent research,); and,

the establishment institutions and correlation with virtual resources that could be dispense among individuals and organizations who live in disconnected areas. (Oladejo, Adewole, Fagunwa and Arewa, 2010).

Virtual and distance learning seems to provide students with an option for to offer an option for students pursuing university education but who are unable to get admission into residential mode of education which appears to be competitive due to limited chances. Virtual and Open learning can give pedagogies characterized specialized interactive learning outcomes that are coherent, equitable, and concurs with the student's need (Rumble, 2012). Research indicates that open learning is more worthwhile than common programmes, particularly with high student enrolments and a favorable encourage learner hook-up experiences. With slashed cost per unit compared to learners of residential programmes (Simpson, 2013).

Virtual and Open education has witnessed tremendous growth worldwide in the 21st Century. It is rising so fast and has been fundamental part of the educational system mainstream, in both developing and developed nations Virtual and Open learning has been made easy by the development of computers and fast internet. More so, it has given rise to the virtual university whereby all learning takes place online. Currently, there are many private and public institutions that offer virtual and open education from certificates level to doctoral level. Virtual and Open learning has been in transcendence for over 100 years although it has been identified as a new term. Keegan (2013) asserted that it started in what was initially referred to as correspondence education that started in Europe. The University of London alleges to be the premier institution to provide VOL regarding its External programme 1858. This programme is currently recognized at the University of London and encompasses Diploma, Undergraduate and Post graduate studies. Virtual and Open learning has been utilized in many countries especially at tertiary education. In the United Kingdom and the United States of America, the University of Georgia and the Open University (UK) have pioneered in facilitating this mode of education in those countries respectively (Oladejo, Adewole, Fagunwa and Arewa, 2010). In Asia, the Open University of Japan and the India Gandhi National Open University of India lead the way in this endeavor.

Chen, Lambert and Guidry (2010) shows that over three million students in USA have been registered currently in VOL established academic courses, with an estimation of 20% of the courses being offered using technology. China has also not been left behind the central radio and television university of China (CRT) is offering various multimedia distance houses with the radio and television support by using printed and auditory education resources. Currently it is leading in modern distance education system.

Thailand also introduced open learning in the year 1971 in Ramkhamhaeng University (RU). It was designed as an "academic market". For instance, in its Open University admissions were measureless. Students were not obligated to go to classes and the fee was sensible. To do well in Exam was not compulsory for a learner to get admission. Textbooks, guideline sheets and the handbooks were the important teaching and education resources reproduced by the same university press. The major teaching method was teacher centered with the assistance of closed-circuit television applied in a conventional classroom set up. The students were also offered with laboratory facilities by the university. Ramkhamhaeng University (RU) started administering distance education system in 1995 (Miyahara, 2015).

Before virtual and open learning providers emerged in Africa, many African students attained different credentials via VOL providers in Europe and North America. University of South Africa (UNISA) was one of the leading universities to tender distance learning in the African continent, that has been offering correspondence courses since 1946. UNISA's success enabled the emergence of other VOL providers in the African continent. Examples of these are the open universities in Zimbabwe Nigeria and Tanzania which started out as providers of regular programmes and have now manifold into providing VOL as well (Perraton, 2012). The University of South Africa (UNISA) has pioneered this mode of education. Other African Open Universities incorporate the Open University of Nigeria and the Open University of Tanzania.

According to Nyerere, et al, (2012) Kenyan Universities are turning to e-learning as a tool to facilitate improved education. Virtual and Open learning is quickly becoming the preferred mode of study in Kenya since it has several benefits including programmes flexibility and courses especially with regarding what, where and when to take the study. Additionally, a learner can take other roles while studying at the same time. Some of the Kenyan universities which have introduced open learning include; Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Moi University, University of Nairobi, Kenya Methodist University and Mount Kenya University (Tarus, Gichoya and Muumbo, 2015). The virtual and open learning programs at the University intents to: provide learning spaces for aspiring learners are unable to secure chance in the internal faculties that are existing in public universities providing a chance for the adults to learn at their own rate, giving them a chance to use of the modest educational human and material resources effectively by making university education not only in classroom but also outside the school (Tarus, Gichoya and Muumbo, 2015).

In the past ten years, Kenya has evolved enormously as far as the tertiary education is concerned. Generally enrolment of learners joining the university has increased by approximately 35% with the number reaching over 324, 000 in the academic year 2013/2014 up from 240,551 in 2012/13 (Nyangau, 2014). The number further increased to 536,000 in 2015/2016. The increase more than 115% enrolment is attributed to the Free Primary Education which was introduced in 2003 giving more children from poor backgrounds an opportunity to access education and the increase in number of institutions of higher education by 320% in the last ten years. The increased enrolment has also been as a result of expansion of industrialization creating need for more qualified manpower to stir the economy a notch higher in the various fields. Expansion reaction has been a requirement for further innovations regarding educational draw close to arrive at a miscellaneous population with various demands ranging from reaction to this growth has been the demand for more unconventional educational advance towards to reach a diverse residents with many different request, ranging from strict operational hours and family roles to economic elements. It's against this back drop that this research seeks to

investigate the current status of enrollment in virtual and open learning, the influence of virtual and open learning on enrolment and the challenges that are facing virtual and open learning in Kenyan institutions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *The Current Status of Enrollment in Virtual and Open Learning*

In the past ten years, Kenya has evolved enormously as far as the tertiary education is concerned. Generally enrolment of learners joining the university has increased by approximately 35% with the number reaching over 324, 000 in the academic year 2013/2014 up from 240,551 in 2012/13 (Nyangau, 2014). The number further increased to 536,000 in 2015/2016. The increase more than 115% enrolment is attributed to the Free Primary Education which was introduced in 2003 giving more children from poor backgrounds an opportunity to access education and the increase in number of institutions of higher education by 320% in the last ten years. The increased enrolment has also been as a result of expansion of industrialization creating need for more qualified manpower to stir the economy a notch higher in the various fields. Expansion reaction has been a requirement for further innovations regarding educational draw close to arrive at a miscellaneous population with various demands ranging from reaction to this growth has been the demand for more unconventional educational advance towards to reach a diverse residents with many different request, ranging from strict operational hours and family roles to economic elements.

VOL is described as a strategy of allocating the chances which are more required in university education (Agalo and Agalo, 2014), even though this has not been entirely accomplished in Kenya. In opinion of Nyerere (2016), inadequate physical and financial capacity in the Kenyan universities has affected many individuals hence they lack the development of lifelong skills. Agalo additionally notes that VOL is systematically giving an essential substitute means for the marginalized and those limited by time and space to join universities on regular learning. Despite the increased enrolment in virtual and open learning, the benefits have not met the threshold for the need for higher education (Nyerere, 2012).

The Ominde Commission of 1964/65, the first education commission in Kenya proposed the offer to come about with VOL. The establishment of an advisory commission to take charge of VOL in Kenya dates back to the Ominde Commission (Kenya Gazette, 1966). The Act of parliament of 1966 together with establishment of Adult Education at the University of Nairobi was a milestone of the recommendations contained in the Commission's report

After the Ominde Commission, succeeding similar commissions such as the Gachathi report (1976), Mackay report (1981), Kamunge Commission (1988) and Koech Commission (2000), suggested incorporation of VOL as Kenya's effective modern means of making education accessible efficiently (Nyerere et al., 2012). Moreover, a Section of Paper No. 1 published in 2005 suggested the enactment of a National Open University. However, this is yet to be substantiated, apart from several institutions in Kenya (both private and public) have supported VOL. Some of the main suppliers include: Maseno University, University of Nairobi, Egerton University, Kenyatta University, Mount Kenya University, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya Methodist University, Moi University, Multimedia University of Kenya and Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology.

The trend of VOL within the nation has increased as demonstrated by many learners in 2007 advocating for programs that are granted by foreign varsities or in collaboration with local universities. This shows the effects of VOL programs at Kenyan universities since it has become common process of delivery of educational programs (Agalo and Agalo, 2014). Various approaches to convey VOL in Kenya have been discovered.

Majority of the universities providing VOL are ardent about convincing the public, stakeholders and academics about quality of VOL programs (Ogunlela and Ogunleye, 2015). However, several Lecturers have increased concerns with the quality of learning because of the minimized interaction between the learners and the instructors, due to the nature of VOL teaching methodology. And, as Akeusola, Daniel and Iyere (2011) noticed that the experts still believe that "same-time, progress has cleared the skepticism about its quality and same-place" interaction is the key to the success of the learning experience. The issue now is for the institutions offering VOL to improve and enhance QA systems as necessary instrument for enhancing public confidence. As highlighted by (Ogunlel and Ogunleye, 2015), transnational qualification and QA guidelines have been discovered nationally and internationally to regulate and guide VOL programs in all institutions.

Kenya has experienced many issues concerning DL because many Kenyans do not trust the process not only the quality of the programs but also concept of virtual and open learning (Odera and Mayeku, 2011). There have been many arguments on the meaning of VOL and the quality of higher education. Sallis (2014) realized that the quality of university education is a common but difficult concept; it is multi-dimensional and accommodates wide features including: the process deployed for attainment of objectives; and to what extent goals are attainable. Kenya is among the countries troubled embattling the issue of quality of higher education, particularly in Virtual and Open learning (Odera and Mayeku, 2011). From their research, Odera and Mayeku (2011) and Nyerere (2012) realized found that there is no congruent programme for virtual and open learning at the national level. Higher institutions have the responsibility of ensuring the quality of the programmes that they offer together with the Commission for University Education (CUE) which has the mandate of approving the courses of all accredited universities across the country. VOL lacks a unique implementation framework but, as a measure to identify the significance of quality learning through VOL; institutions are coming up with strategies to enhance quality. The higher institutions has same methods to quality assurance by using seven key areas of institutional activities that have an impact on VOL delivery: curriculum and instruction, mission of the institution, institution structure, materials, faculty assistance, student learning results and student support (Odera and Mayeku, 2011).

2.2. *The Influence of Virtual and Open Learning on Enrollment*

Virtual and open learning is well known at higher institutions of learning since it is available and flexible to both teachers and students regardless of their geographical position. Individuals and organizations are considering open education since they can learn while doing other responsibilities. Studies have indicated that the benefit of virtual and open learning are clear an explainable and are being accepted quickly. However, there has been a debate that the quality of instruction might be low. The quality is not compromised. Several reasons play a major role in its progression; firstly, it opens new opportunities for learners who might not be able to take part in the learning process. Secondly, it allows the university to enroll many learners with fewer instructions hence offering a cost-effective strategy of delivering university education. Thirdly, learners can prove lifelong learning after graduation regardless of lifestyle or location (Hart, 2012).

Due to this success, the advantages of VOL have caused higher education institutions to execute some VOL classes, even if on an experimental term. Consequently, society in general can greatly access education and increase their literacy skills (Hart, 2012). The growing need for adult training, the emphasis at lifelong learning, and the significance and value of VOL has become widely known (Rumble, 2012). With reference to the United States' Department of Education (2001) the number of Virtual and Open learners has increased faster than the regular students. The growth of VOL enrolment in tertiary institutions requires a more flexible and different delivery system to meet learners' needs and interests (Anderson and Dron, 2011). VOL is purposed to ensure agreement with the features of the adult learner and by maintaining their employment while studying, virtual and open students can continue to gain in work experience while pursuing the goals of education (Mehdipour and Zerehkafi, 2013).

As stated by Simonson, Smaldino and Zvacek (2014), DE means that learners can access more and better learning materials that in the past. Rural and inner-city learners can enroll in courses that were only available to suburban places. Handicapped and disabled learners can have access to the same courses as everyone else if they are institutionalized. Adults can develop their career or basic skills if they get specialized training without being away from work stations or home. Learners can learn from teachers and fellow learners in other countries. Generally, DE creates many new learning opportunities for many individuals (Simonson, Smaldino and Zvacek 2014).

Adult learners differ from regular students. Majority of adult students have roles (e.g., families' roles and jobs to attend) and experiences (e.g. the need to earn an income Transportation, childcare and domestic violence) that can hinder the learning to take place. Many Kenyans join graduate studies when their lives are full of interruptions. Part time students go to the lecture rooms with distractions in their minds. (Nyerere, Gravenir and Mse, 2012). Most adults enter educational programs on a voluntary basis and can manage to study around work and family roles.

The findings of a survey done by Nyerere (2012) on tele-course participants were that about two thirds were female, and half of the learners were above thirty years old. More than half had at minimum of one dependent and two thirds were married. Eighty percent were employed, and more than half were employed full time while studying (Sheets, 1992). According to Park and Choi (2009) more current data seem to concur with these statistics. Over seventy percent of VOL graduates were in full time employment. This concludes that big percentage was employed while they were studying.

2.3. *Statement of the Research Problem*

As evidenced from the background, the demand for university education in Kenya has been increasing over the years. More individuals are enrolling for university education currently compared to any time in the Kenyan history. Despite the overwhelming effort of converting Universities constituency colleges to fully pledged University in many county by the government the demand for more institutions of higher learning has outgrown the number of available fully-fledged and interim universities. To cope with the increased demand for high education universities have taken measures to absorb as many students as possible. Among the measures include, change in the method of delivery of content from the traditional face-to-face to virtual and open learning. Distance education enrollment in Kenyan universities growth rates are accelerating. A study by Duke, Francis and Nagro (2017) revealed that virtual and open education enrollments increased for the seventh straight year and thus the need for the study to investigate the influence of virtual and open learning on private education for demand in Kenyatta University.

2.4. *Purpose and Objectives of the Study*

The core purpose of this research was examining virtual and open learning influencing private demand for education at Kenyatta University. To determine the current status of enrollment of virtual and open learning in Kenyan Universities and to establish the influence of virtual and open learning on enrollment in Kenyan Universities .

2.5. *Theoretical Framework*

This study was supported on the industrial production model of Otto Peters. This model, which, according to Garrison (2000), was realized in 1960s. It focuses on the analysis of the virtual and open education structure and approves the contingency of industrial production methods adoption like division of labor; minimize unit cost, organization to recognize economies of scale and mass production. (Peters, 1994). This approach is about organization of educational procedures for the realization of economies of scale. The background of this study being a growing nation, inadequate resources have prevented the satisfactory provision of university education to concur with the demand. Hence there is a need to search for other methods or strategies of providing higher education like virtual and open learning program, a method that has an ability of escalating access with no expanding the available amenities. Thus, the economies of scales are advantageous to this mode of delivery.

Peters argues that this model, which had a great impact and still controls the context of distance education today, is excellent due of the structural hindrance and the depend on self-instructional print packages. However, the model is not a theory of teaching or learning, according to Garrison (2000), but it has contributed to clear information regarding the open education organization. Peters (1994) also explains the industrial approach as “objectification of the teaching process,” which minimizes the types shared learning and keeps students away from personal interactions and vital discourse.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

According to Orodho (2005) research can be viewed as outline, schemes or plans that are utilized in the creation of solutions to tackle research problems. The project used descriptive survey design that is deemed ideal for amassing information concerning the attitudes, perceptions, opinion, knowledge habits or any other social and education issue of people (Orodho and Kombo 2002). The choice for this design was suitable because it allowed the researcher to collect in-depth information on respondent’s attitudes, opinions and perceptions concerning the influence of virtual and learning on private demand for education.

3.2. Location of the Study

The location of the study was in Kiambu County at Kenyatta University. KU is situated approximately 23 kilometers away from the central business district of Nairobi along Thika Super Highway on a 1,100 acre land. The mandate of the university includes teaching, research and community service (KU, 2011).Kenyatta University is the core of Africa Virtual University in Kenya. The university has rebranded its virtual and open learning to include e-learning (digital school) which is geared towards improving the delivery of educational services to students. Kenyatta University is one best public University in Kenya and has well established digital school; therefore the findings can be generalized for other universities in Kenya.

3.3. Target Population

The aim population of this research was 400 students enrolled in digital school from Kenyatta University. The study also involved three digital school coordinators from Kenyatta University to act as key informant.

3.4. Research Instruments

The researcher used two research instruments interviews for virtual and open learning coordinator and research questionnaires for Virtual and open learning students. Quantative data collected was analysed using statistical package of social science (SPSS)and presented in frequency tables and pie charts. The qualitative data was analysed thematically and was presented in narrations.

4. Discussion of Research Results

4.1. Reflections of the Results on the Current Status of Enrollment of VOL

The researcher investigated total number of VOL students’ enrolled programme for the last three year. This because enrollment to VOL as compared to total population of Kenyatta University students’ population will indicate the influence of VOL to private demand for education and if the enrollment rate is increasing ,which are factor influencing increase of enrollment rate. The enrollment trend of VOL students is well illustrated in the table below.

Year	Total Number of VOL Students	Percent of VOL Student of KU Population
2019	2575	3.7%
2018	2015	2.9%
2017	1658	2.4%
Total	6248	8.9%

Table 4.1 Shows the Enrollment Rate of VOL Students

Source: Researcher’s (2019)

The study findings revealed that VOL students in 2019 were 3.7% of KU students’ population, which was an increase from 2018 which was 2.9% and in 2017 it was 2.4%.This implies that the enrollment of VOL students has been increasing since 2017.Therefore, current population of VOL students is 8.9% of the KU entire population of students. This because of high demand of higher education, VOL programme is offering most of the courses and flexibility of the programme. One of the coordinator indicated that;

The numbered of courses offered through VOL programme have increased and society have changed perception towards VOL, which resulted to high enrollment rate to the programme for the last 3 years.

The research also investigated the academic qualifications that the respondents were achieving after their university education. This is because Virtual and Open learning platform offers a wide array of courses which are either in the humanities, human health, social, education, agriculture, animal health, and hospitality categories. Moreover, these

courses are offered at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The various academic qualifications attained by the respondents from the university are illustrated in figure below.

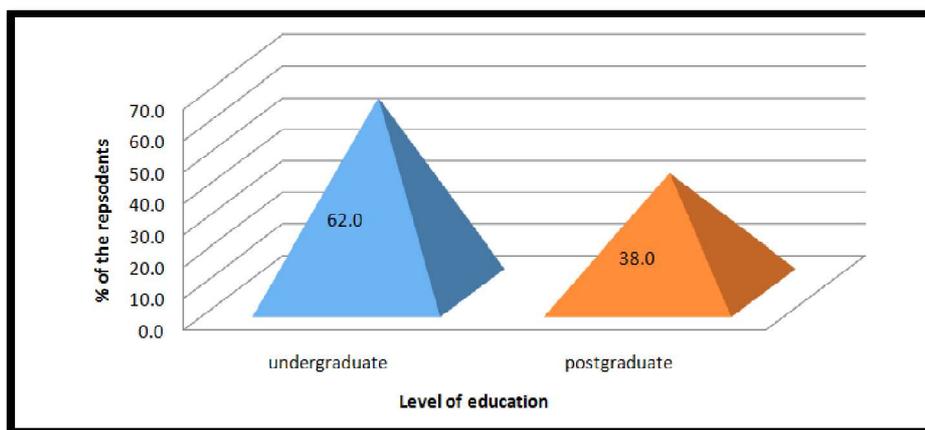


Figure 4.1: Education Status of the Respondents

Source: Researcher's (2019)

The study findings revealed that those who participated in the study 62% were undertaking Undergraduate Degrees from the university. Additionally, 38% of the respondents were undertaking postgraduate studies from the university with various qualifications in the Masters, Post Graduate Diplomas as well as Doctorate Degree. This indicate that majority of the students had enrolled in the programme were undergraduate due its flexibility.

The year of study of respondents was also considered during the study, the importance of this variable in the context of this study, lies in its capacity to aid the evaluation of the performance of the respondents, as well as the progress they have made in their careers since joining the virtual and open learning, this variable as such helps evaluate the importance of the knowledge and expertise imparted in the respondents their professional fields. The years of study for the respondents are as illustrated in the figure below.

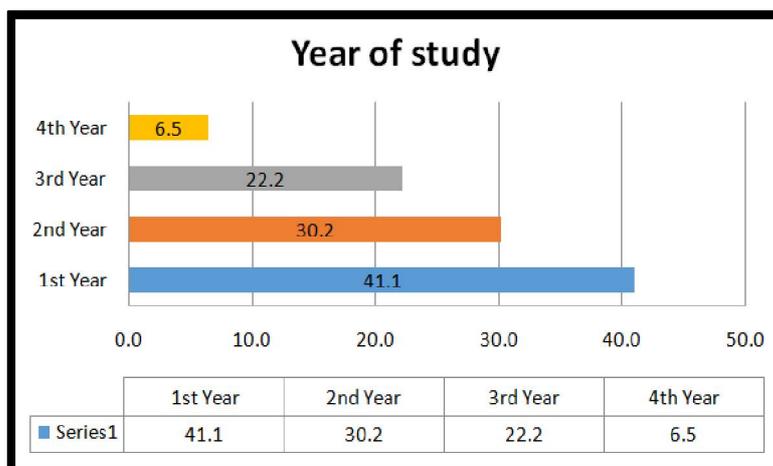


Figure 4.2: Year of Study of the Respondents

Source: Researcher's (2019)

Study revealed that Most of the respondents (41.1.2%) were in the first year, 30.2% attested to be in second year, 22.2% in third year, while small proportion 6.5% were in fourth year of their study. Consequently most more than half of the respondents (58.2%) were in their second year of study. This implies that there high rate of dropouts of VOL student due to many factors such as; lack of support from lecturers and negative attitudes towards the VOL .One of coordinator indicated that;

High dropout rate of the VOL students is the main challenges facing VOL due to lack of support from the lecturers and negative attitude of the society towards VOL.

Further, the respondents were required to indicate time taken to complete their academic career from the university was also put into perspective. Ideally, it is easier to complete the some academic qualification within a short time such as the post graduate others like undergraduate. The time taken to complete academic qualification also shows the hardship students have to go through in management of the virtual and open learning. The time taken by the respondents to complete their programs is as shown in figure below.

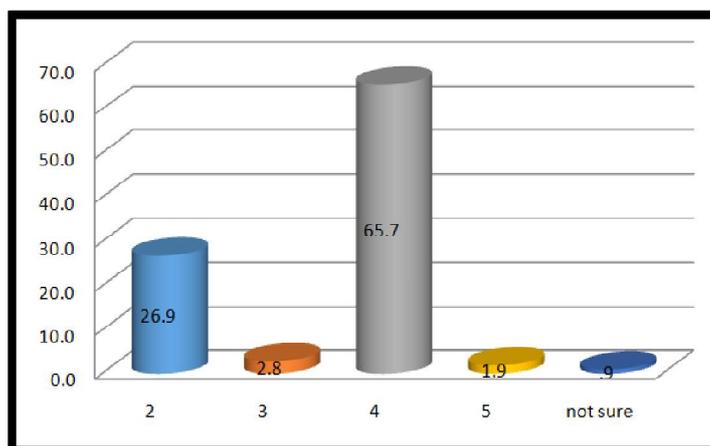


Figure 4.3: Years Taken to Complete Various Degrees Pursued
Source: Researcher's (2019)

Responses given by the respondents indicated that of the total, 65.7% were to complete their academic qualification within 4 years; twenty seven percent of them were to take two years to complete their academics, 2.8% were to take three years. However, 1.9% of the respondents were to take 5 to complete their degree and additionally 0.9% respondents were not sure the time they would take to complete their studies in the virtual and open platform. This indicates majority of VOL students graduate within time frame hence encouraging more learners to enroll to VOL. This study concurs with Nyerere (1992) who found out that more 95% of VOL students were graduating within expecting timeframe while about 5% needs extra time to complete their students due to other factors.

The respondents were also asked to reveal their employment status. The status of employment of respondents is important to this study, given that the aim of university education is to prepare individuals for the job market. The employment status of the respondents as such sheds light on whether virtual and open education was for the employed or unemployed. The employment status of the respondents is illustrated in figure below:

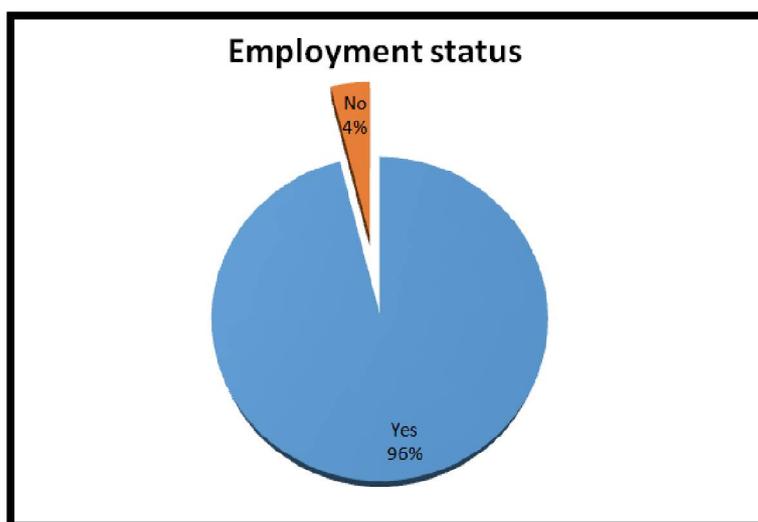


Figure 4.4: Employment Status of the Respondents
Source: Researcher's (2019)

Findings from the research established that 96% of the respondents came from the formal employment sector while 4% of the respondents indicated they were not employed. This implies that many of the students are work while studying. This study concurs with Sheets (1992) who found out that more 70% of VOL students were employed while studying due to flexibility of VOL.

4.2. Reflections of the Results on the Influence of Virtual and Open Learning on Enrollment

The main objective of the study was to explore the connection between enrollment and virtual and open learning. This study attempted to establish how virtual and open learning influenced enrollment of students in the platforms. Findings on the perception of students with regard to the association between enrolment and virtual and open learning are carried in Figure below.

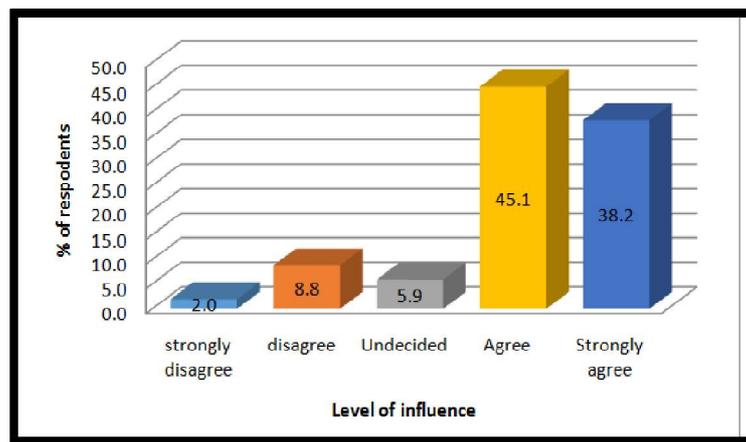


Figure 4.5: Perception on the Influence of Virtual and Open Learning on Enrollment
Source: Researcher's (2019)

The study reveals that 83.3% were in the opinion that virtual and open learning influenced enrolment of students with 45.1% and 38.2% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the mode of study influenced enrolment due to its flexibility, affordability, it aids students who cannot study fulltime, allow people work while studying, contrary 10.8% disagreed with the opinion that the mode of study influenced the enrolment of students in the study program for the slow rate of adaptability, managing work and school at same time and other cases stress of exams. This study therefore agrees with Nyerere (2012) who argues that VOL influences enrollment due to flexibility and affordability. Results from key informants indicated that the enrolment of students into the VOL has increased over time for their 9877 students in the platform and this represents 14.1% of the entire students' population of KU. One of the Coordinator indicated that: *VOL have given majority employed, people living with some disabilities and those who came from very far a chance to continue with their studies due to its flexibility and accommodative qualities and affordability, which resulted to increase of enrolment for the past 4 years.*

Another coordinator said:

Due promotion anxiety by most employed civil servant prefer enrolling to VOL which flexible and manageable by working class hence resulting increase of enrollment.

The trend had improved for the past years for they worked there for more than four years and being able to observe the trends where in year 2017, 2018 and 2019 students in the platform represented the following percentages 2.4%, 2.9% and 3.7% of entire students' population of KU respectively. This study concur with Duke, Francis and Nagro (2017) who found out that virtual and open education enrollments increased for the seventh straight year.

5. Conclusions of the Study

Virtual and open learning has performed an important role in the improving the standards learners despite their family commitment. It is designed to remedy those who cannot afford the fulltime leaning mode and it creates a causative atmosphere for deprived to affix establishment of upper learning. It was discovered through the study, that the natures of the virtual and open leaning: influenced enrollment of open learning programme, majority engaged in different field and it remedied their desired to achieved more education though physical facilities weren't obtainable, this was an element that influenced enrollment of virtual and open learning in different universities.

It was believed that learners were able to learning in different location without necessary moving to the university. Learners support services influenced enrollment into virtual and open learning programme. Most of the respondents reported the lack support services on internet connectivity leading to inconsistent leaning among the students. More so they faced challenges of delayed reply on the assignment, lack of experienced lectures, less time allocated to learning and failure to cover the syllabus. More surprisingly Straggles in Adapting to the program was experienced by a majority of the respondents due to delayed communication in the changes in the time table and in some other cases non- attendance of the classes.

From the finding it can be concluded that virtual and open leaning has had success despite the various challenges and it is more suitable for the committed individuals for they can advance their skill and still tackle their daily duties. With good support and timely planning, the platforms can be improved attracting more enrolment and building of the reputation.

6. Recommendations of the Study

The university ought to concentrates on sensitization on distance education to totally different completely different individuals by victimization different mean that of communication to extend the come about.

The government ought to take into account funding virtual and open learners through loans from teaching loans board to ease the burden of trying to find education fee. This may cause maintaining the space learners and inspiring additional to affix the program and thus scale back drop out. There would like for awareness campaigns targeting the community, parents, directors, lecturers, and students.

The government ought to intensify the virtual and open education program together with the university at the O level to scale back the extent of illiteracy. The study also recommends the need for technical support for both students and staff to ensure better delivery. This will multiply the morale of the learners and build on the reputation of the VOL program

The study recommends establishment and implementation of nationwide policies on VOL to tackle among other issues, programmes financially supporting, human resource development, and quality assurance. This research thus recommends the government to mobilize all the stakeholders to establish infrastructure that would enhance the application of technology in the provision of VOL.

The study recommends that VOL programmes be considered in the country's budgetary allocations to support especially the programs' human capital development.

The study recommendation that the lecturer levels be raised to reduce individual workload. The programme administrators should also respond to the issue of low compensation to ensure staff motivation. The study also recommends sensitization of society and VOL stakeholders about the advantages of VOL and the needs to change from conventional learning to virtual and opening learning due to its accommodative qualities, affordable, assessability and flexibilities.

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