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Factors Influencing the Provision of Quality Education at Somali National University: An Exploratory Study from the Views of the Lecturers

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Abstract

Somali National University was succeeded to reestablish in 2014 after the civil war. This study aimed to explore the adequacy of teaching and learning resources and physical facilities at Somali National University (SNU) and their impact on the provision of quality education. The study involved collecting data from lecturers through a survey, which included questions related to the availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources and physical facilities. The findings of the study revealed that there are significant gaps in the availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources at SNU. Lecturers reported inadequate availability of reference books, textbooks, audio-visual equipment, computer labs, and internet facilities. Physical facilities like playgrounds, libraries, and laboratories were also rated as inadequate by the lecturers. These shortcomings have a negative impact on the quality of education provided at SNU. The study recommends that SNU should increase the availability of teaching and learning resources, improve physical facilities, provide accommodations for students with special education needs, provide regular training to lecturers, conduct regular surveys to obtain feedback, increase budgetary allocation, and collaborate with international partners to provide support. Addressing these recommendations will help improve the quality of education at SNU and provide a conducive learning environment for students and lecturers alike.

Key Words: Factors, Provision Quality Education, Lecturers, Somali National University.

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as an important tool for promoting economic growth. Nevertheless, development agencies have focused on basic education and they have ignored tertiary schooling as a means to improve economic growth and social productivity. Participants in the Dakar summit on “Education for All” in 2000, declared their support only for primary education as a carter of broad social welfare, leaving behind secondary and tertiary education (Hough, 2006). However, current evidence suggests that higher education generates both public and private gains, by creating more tax revenue, raise savings and investment, and direct to a more entrepreneurial society with more engaged citizens (Bloom, Hartley, & Rosovsky, 2006).

According to Ozturk (2018), higher education is one of the essential aspects of development. No country can attain sustainable economic development without considerable investment in higher education. Because higher education enriches citizens with knowledge that allows them to understand well the continuously changing world. In addition, it improves the quality of their lives, raises the productivity and creativity, entrepreneurship and technological advances. Other studies showed that higher education leads to robust private returns to graduates and have further shown, over the years, that the average returns are increasing and the returns now exceed those at the primary and secondary level (Montenegro and Patrinos, 2014). Higher Education plays multiple roles that go beyond educating students. Specialists summarize these roles into three separate but interrelated processes; teaching and learning; research; and community engagement (word bank, 2017).

Though universities have increased access to education, their major problem is that they have adversely affected the provision of quality education due to numerous constraints including shortage of facilities and services (Kagondu & Marwa, 2017). However, many countries have been trying to find out a solution to the problem of poor quality education. Globally, South Korea’s leap from one of Asia’s poorest countries onto the 11th world economic stage was a result from its decades-long success in offering subsidies to higher education institutions and supporting efforts to persuade lecturers and professors that are more qualified (David, 2008). Moreover, now South Korea’s government wants to turn the country into the East Asian capital of tertiary education. On a continental level, interest is also growing in higher education. In 2015, the Dakar Summit of

African Higher Education highlighted the importance and value of higher education investment in academic staff, infrastructure and facilities by governments and private sector (Moremi, 2018). Similarly, Ministers of Education in Africa in the Maputo Declaration of the Second Decade of Education for Africa 2006 also highlighted the importance of revitalizing the quality of higher education to spur economic growth (African Union, 2006). Lack of adequate financial incentives and better working conditions increase the Africa's inability to retain talented academic staff hence continuous need to train staff which comes at a high cost because the qualified workers drain from the continent (Moremi, 2018).

At region level, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) (2015), the higher education institutions have increased significantly in terms of both student enrolments and the number of institutions, which has led to a shortage of facilities and services. Therefore, these shortages will cause Kenya's higher education system to fail in producing graduates with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are crucial for vision 2030 (Wanzala, 2015). This shows that Kenya considers higher education institutions as the venues through which Kenya's development goals could be realized.

At local level, the collapse of the central state in 1991 severely disrupted all public social services in Somalia and education system was not exceptional. The prolonged periods of instability and intermittent conflict constrained the ability of local inhabitants and the international community to rehabilitate the country's educational facilities and resources (Heritage 2013). Before the collapse of the governmental institutions, Somalia had only one public university located in Mogadishu and it was among the devastated institutions. A diverse range of actors made an important contribution to the rehabilitation and development of the education sector. Recent growth of the higher education sector has however been considerable. There are now more than 44 higher education institutions of different sizes and different capacities functioning across the country that have enrolled over 50,000 students (Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2013). Most of these institutions are privately owned. This quick growth has happened without effective central government and higher education commission. Therefore, the provision of quality educational service has suffered considerably.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines the word "quality" as it is the standard of something when it is compared to other things like it. In the education context, quality is a process that requires efficiency in achieving the agreed goals and objectives in relation to human and

developmental needs (Hawes and Stephens, 1990). For achieving the educational goals in effective and efficiency way, there are different factors that influence. For example, available qualified academic staff has implications on quality of education since they are the focal points that determines academic achievement of the learners (Dryden-Peterson & Sarah 2011). Furthermore, lecturers equipped with knowledge and skills as well as have experience in the teaching industry able to deliver the course content into the learners in appropriate and easy way (Kinyanjui, 2011). In order, lecturers deliver the course content appropriately; there must be available and adequate teaching and learning resources. That is because teaching and learning materials are useful both to the instructor and to the learner. These materials include whiteboards, projectors, table and chairs among other. UNESCO (2010) suggests that the more the availability of teaching and learning materials the better the academic performance of students and the quality of education.

In relation to the physical facilities, they are useful in educational institutions. They are the tangible buildings that are provided for the use of educational purposes (Osahen, 1998). These facilities influence the implementation of educational polices and goals because they provide conducive environment that is save and favorite. Therefore, for higher education institution to provide quality education they ought to provide adequate physical facilities.

For higher education institutions to provide high quality education, there are many factors need to be considered. However, the actual effect of the different factors in specific instances also need further investigations especially in post conflict countries such as Somalia. It has therefore become necessary narrowing down the scope. Therefore, this study had given huge interest to institutional factors to evaluate how effectively these factors effected in the provision of quality education in SNU. The study examined the availability of cadre of qualified lecturers, the physical facilities, the quality of teaching and learning materials integration in the university.

Statement of the Problem

An interview conducted by Ramadhan Rajab (2017) of University World News (UWN) with the current Somali National University rector about the rebuilding of the national university after decades of civil war, noted that the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in 2014 succeeded in reestablishment of SNU after more than twenty years of absence.

SNU is currently the only public university within the south central region of the country that provides subsidized education fees. The plan was that this university could play a crucial role in

the reconstruction and reconciliation of societies emerging from conflicts through building peace and social cohesion.

However, the entire higher education institutions in Somalia face different challenges and SNU is not exceptional. These challenges include critical shortage of qualified teaching staff; teaching learning materials; limited capacity of research and governance, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, inadequate financial support (Eno and Mweseli, 2015). Most of these challenges have been caused by lack of financial resources. Since inception of the SNU, there has not been evidence of a study carried out to establish the institutional factors that influence provision of quality education. Therefore, this study intended to investigate Institutional-Based Factors Influencing Provision of Quality Education to Undergraduate Students in Somali National University, Somalia.

Objectives:

1. To examine the availability of academic staff at Somali National University and its impact on the provision of quality education.
2. To assess the availability and adequacy of teaching and learning materials at Somali National University and their influence on the provision of quality education.
3. To explore the perceptions and experiences of academic staff and students regarding the provision of quality education at Somali National University.
4. To provide recommendations for improving the provision of quality education at Somali National University, with a focus on addressing the availability of academic staff and teaching and learning materials.

Research Questions

The following research questions were the base of the study:

- I. To what extent does availability of teaching and learning materials influence provision of quality education at Somali National University?
- I. To what extent of adequacy of physical facilities in Somali National University influence the provision of quality education?

Methodology

This study applied a descriptive survey design. According to Yuko (2016), descriptive survey design is a technique of collecting data using administered questionnaires and interviews to the population sample of the study to find out the opinions of the respondents about the problem under investigation and for gathering generalizable information from the population sample. This descriptive survey design was suitable for this study because the study collected data at a particular point in time with the attention of getting the opinions of respondents about the topic under investigation.

The target population of the study constituted all the lecturers of Somali National University. For data collection, the study used a structured questionnaire to collect data from the target population of the study. Therefore, the study administered questionnaires to lecturers to gather information from them. The data was assessed for reliability, and a score of 0.80 was obtained, indicating that it falls within an acceptable range.

Data were analyzed with the intent to extract useful information and develop conclusions. Data analysis refers to the process of systematically organizing, scrutinizing, and summarizing information received from participants (Cohen & Manion). In terms of ethical consideration, the researcher sought the consent of the respondents to participate in the study by explaining to them the purpose and the importance of the research and the reason they had been selected. Moreover, the researcher informed them not to mention their names and the information they would provide would only be used for the research purpose. They were also informed to feel free to withdraw from the contribution of the study at any time.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1. Shows Gender of Respondents

Categories	Lecturers (%)
Male	79.4
Female	20.6
Total	100

Table 2. Shows The Age Brackets of Respondents.

Categories	Percentage (%)
25 – 35 years	61.9
36 – 45 years	27
46 – 55 years	7.9
56 – 65 years	3.2
Over 66 years	0

Table 3. Lecturers' Qualifications

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Bachelor	8	12.7
Master	54	85.7
PhD	1	1.6

Table 4. Shows Lecturers' Teaching Experience

Experiences	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 3 years	22	34.9
4 – 6 years	27	42.9
7 – 10 years	11	17.5
Above 10 years	3	4.8
Total	63	100

The above four tables indicate demographic characteristics of the respondents. The first table shows that 79.4% of lecturers were male while 20.6% were female. The second table showed that the majority of the lecturers 61.9% were aged between 25 and 35 years, 27% were aged between 36 and 45 years, 7.9% were aged between 45 and 55 years, 3.2% were aged between 56 and 65

years while there were no any participator for the ages above 65 in the study. In terms of the qualification of the lectures, the third table indicated that majority of the lecturers 85.7% had master degree, 12.7% of them had bachelor degree while only 1.6% of them had PhD. This gave the study an idea about that more than 80% of the lecturers of the university were master degree holders. Therefore, the study concludes that most of the lecturers in the university were qualified lecturers based on their postgraduate qualifications.

From the fourth table, 42.9% of the lecturers were found to have 4 – 6 years of teaching experience. Similarly, 34.9% of the lecturers were found to have teaching experience between 0 – 3 years. Also 17.5% had taught for a period of 7 – 10 years and approximately only approximately 5% of the lecturers had been teaching above 10 years. This meant that a very small number of lecturers had long experience in the teaching industry. Experience enables the lecturers to obtain specific commendable features including adaptability, promptness, appropriate use of instructional materials, ability to face the class with confidence, among others. Therefore, lecturers with successful teaching experience may develop positive attitude towards the specialization that will create interest among learners and this leads to the provision of quality education.

Analysis of the Study Objectives

The initial research questions were focused on two areas: firstly, examining the impact of the availability of teaching and learning materials on the provision of quality education at Somali National University, and secondly, assessing the extent to which the physical facilities at the university are adequate.

Lecturers' Responses on the Availability of Teaching Learning Resources at the University

The study sought to establish how teaching and learning resources are available in the university. Lecturers were asked to rate the availability of instructional materials in relation to

the provision of quality education. The table below shows their responses.

Table 5. Lecturers' Responses on the Availability of Teaching Learning Resources at the University

Resources	Very inadequate %	Inadequate %	Adequate %	Very adequate %
Textbooks	33	40	16	11
Reference Books	34	27	14	15
White boards	4	5	22	69
Projectors	4	10	32	54
Audio-Visual Equipment	20	33	30	19
Internet connection ports	40	36	17	13
Computer lab	17.2	31.8	33	17.6
Tables and Chairs	2	6	23	69

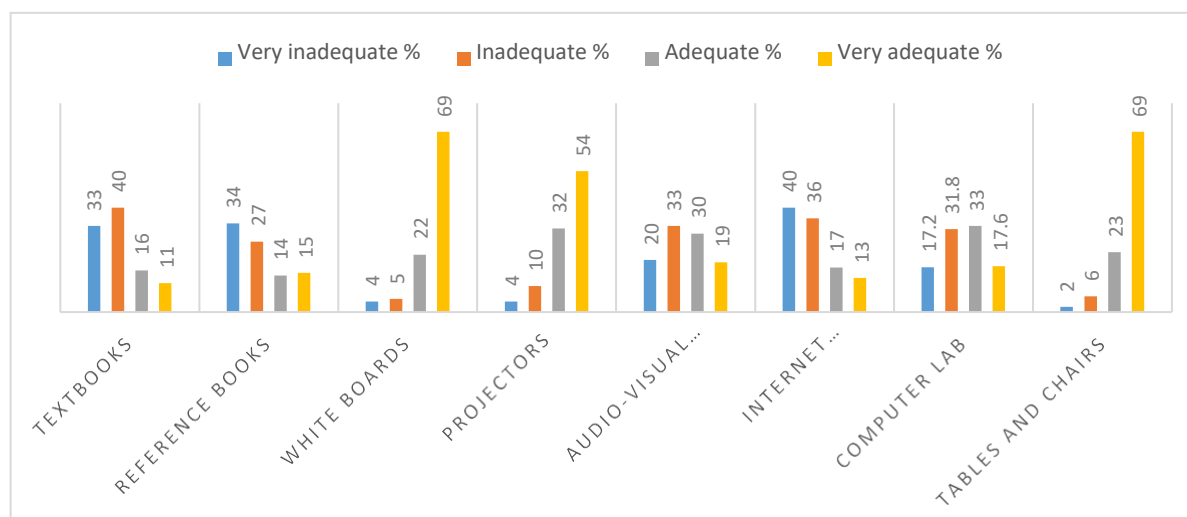


Figure 1. Lecturers' Responses on the Availability of Teaching Learning Resources at the University

From the table (5) and figure (1), 33% of the lecturers rated there was very inadequate textbooks in the university, 40% rated there was inadequate textbooks while 16% said there was adequate textbooks, 11% of lecturers said there was very adequate textbooks. Reference books were also

rated. The results showed that 34% of lecturers said that there were very inadequate reference books in the university, 27% said there were inadequate reference books while 15% rated as very adequate and 14% rated as adequate existence of reference books in the university. Majority of the lecturers 69% rated that whiteboards were very adequate; 22% rated as whiteboard adequate while 5% rated as inadequate and only 4% rated as very inadequate. Projectors were rated very adequate by 54% of the lecturers while only 4% rated as very inadequate. Those who rated projectors as adequate were 32% while only 10% said they were inadequate. Adequacy of audio-visual equipment was rated very adequate by 19% of the lecturers while 20% gave a very inadequate rating of audio-visual equipment. Those who rated adequacy of audio-visual equipment as adequate were 30% while 33% said audio-visual equipment were inadequate. The results also showed that 40% of lecturers said that internet connection ports were not available in the university; 36% also agreed that internet connection ports were inadequate while 17% rate as adequate and 13% rated as very adequate. Adequacy of computer labs were rated 33% of the lecturers as adequate while 31.8% rated as inadequate. Those who rated computer labs as very adequate were 17.6% of the lectures while 17.2% rated as very inadequate. Finally, in relation to tables and chairs, only 2% gave a rating of very inadequate while 69% gave rating of very adequate. Those who rated chairs and tables as inadequate were 6% while 23% of the lecturers said that they were adequate.

According to a study done by Bett (2006), he noted that quality of education has direct relevance to availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources. Based on the findings from SNU lecturers, it was obvious that the university had available teaching and learning materials in terms of whiteboards, chairs and tables, projectors. However, the university campuses lacked adequate reference books, textbooks, audio-visual equipment, computer labs and internet. Students should get access to read number of textbooks and reference books to broaden their knowledge and understanding. Limiting students to the lecturer's notes, does not improve the knowledge and discussion ability of the learners. In addition, internet facility is also important in this 21st century. At this century, quality education cannot be existing without availability of adequate high-speed internet.

Adequacy of Physical Facilities in the University

The study sought to establish how the physical facilities were adequate in relation to the number of students in the university. The following table shows lecturers' responses on

adequacy of physical facilities in the university

Table 6. Adequacy of Physical Facilities in the University

Resources	Very inadequate %	Inadequate %	Adequate %	Very adequate %
Lecture classes	2	6	34	57
Play Grounds	34	44	16	6
Accommodation Facilities	71	29	-	-
Catering Facilities- Restaurant	11	21	46	22
Washrooms (gents and ladies)	7	19	37	38
Computer labs	13	30	38	19
Library	15	30	34	22
Laboratories	26	33	29	13
Power and Lighting	3	7	37	53
The running water	15	14	32	39

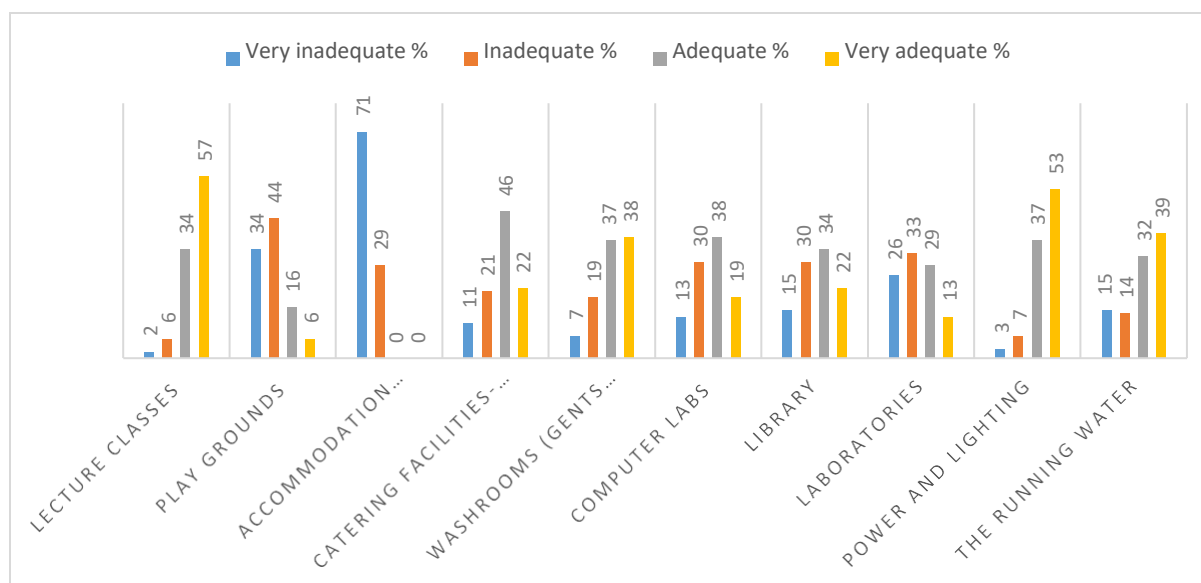


Figure 2. Adequacy of Physical Facilities in the University

From the table (6) and figure (2), the researcher notes that 52% of the lecturers rated the adequacy of lecture classes as adequate; 24% rated as very adequate while 16% rated as inadequate and 7% of the lecturers reported that lecture classes were very inadequate. With regard to playgrounds, 48% of the lecturers cited that playgrounds were very inadequate; 32%

of them rated the playgrounds as inadequate while 7% of the lecturers said that playgrounds were very adequate and 12% said that they are adequate. Available space for accommodation, majority of the lecturers approximately 71% rated very inadequacy and 27% rated as inadequate. In relation to the catering facilities, 21% of the lecturers rated that they were inadequate; 11% reported that catering facilities were very inadequate while 22% of the lecturers said that catering facilities were adequate and 46% rated them as very adequate. With regard to lecturers' washrooms, 7% of the lecturers rated that they were very inadequate; 19% rated that the lecturers' washrooms were in adequate while 37% of the lecturers reported that adequacy of lecturers' washrooms were adequate and 38% of them said that they were very adequate. In addition, the lecturers rated the adequacy of the computer labs in the university. So that 13% of them rated that the computer labs were very inadequate; 30% of them also rated as inadequate while 38% of the lecturers rated the computer labs as adequate and 19% of them rate that the computer labs were very adequate.

The table also showed that, 30% of the lecturers said that library facility in the university was inadequate; 15% of them also cited the adequacy of library facility was very inadequate while 22% of the lecturers reported as very adequate and 34% as adequate. Laboratories were rated as inadequate by 33% of the lecturers; 26% of them also rated as very inadequate while 13% rated as very adequate and 29% of the lecturers were rated the adequacy of the laboratories in the university as adequate. With regard to power and lighting, 37% of the lecturers rate them as adequate; 53% also reported that the adequacy of power and lighting in the university were very adequate while only 3% said that they were very inadequate and 7% said that power and lighting were inadequate. Finally, 32% of the lecturers said that the adequacy of water in the university was adequate; 39% of them also rated as very adequate while 14% of the lecturers rated that they were inadequate and approximately the same percentage said that adequacy of the water in the university was very inadequate.

The lecturers were also asked to express their opinion about how physical facilities could be utilized to promote quality of education and most of them said that comfortable physical facilities enhance the reputation of the university and attract more students that are new. Furthermore, they said that adequate physical facilities boost morale of both students and staff as well as ensure the realization of set educational goals and objectives in the university.

From the information provided the lecturers in relation to the adequacy of physical facilities in

the university, mostly they point out that the physical resources in the university were inadequate. Therefore, this shows that the university need for quick and appropriate response in the provision of adequate physical resources as they have an influence on the performance of the learners. Moreover, the study noted that the university buildings did not cater for students with special education needs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that there are significant gaps in the availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources at Somali National University (SNU). Lecturers reported inadequate availability of reference books, textbooks, audio-visual equipment, computer labs, and internet facilities. In terms of physical facilities, playgrounds, libraries, and laboratories were also rated as inadequate by the lecturers. These shortcomings have a negative impact on the quality of education provided at SNU, and it is crucial to address these issues to promote better learning outcomes.

Recommendations:

To address the issues raised by the study, SNU should take the following steps:

1. Increase the availability of teaching and learning resources such as reference books, textbooks, audio-visual equipment, computer labs, and internet facilities.
2. Improve the physical facilities, including playgrounds, libraries, laboratories, and lecture halls, to cater to the needs of the students and lecturers.
3. Make the necessary accommodations for students with special education needs.
4. Provide regular training to lecturers on the effective use of teaching and learning resources to enhance their teaching skills.
5. Conduct regular surveys to obtain feedback from students and lecturers on the adequacy of teaching and learning resources and physical facilities, and address any issues raised in a timely manner.

6. Increase the budgetary allocation for the provision and maintenance of teaching and learning resources and physical facilities.
7. Collaborate with international partners to provide support in the provision of teaching and learning resources and physical facilities.

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