



INFLUENCE OF ORIENTATION ON ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT OF FIRST YEARS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Orientation programme facilitates the integration of new students into the university environment. This study sought to establish the influence of orientation programme on academic adjustment of first-year students in public universities in Kenya. The study used mixed methods research approach. Data were collected using survey design. Two-stage cluster sampling; simple random sampling, and purposeful sampling techniques were employed to obtain 480 respondents from the target population of 69,115. Data was collected using three research instruments, including a questionnaire, focused group discussions, and in-depth interview schedule. The two experts from Kisii University validated the tools while the test-re-test method ascertained reliability. Study findings offer evidence that advocates that the duration of the orientation programme; activities influenced the level of adjustment realized by first-year students. The study established that students had a higher academic adjustment in old universities than in new universities. Findings will enlighten university administrators, student affairs and other relevant offices design and implement appropriate policies and programmes with a variety of support packages to address the needs of first year students. The study recommends that when developing orientation programmes, universities need to identify unique features of first year students' adjustment and create programmes that first-year the needs of the increasingly diverse student population. Universities may consider adopting extended orientation program first-year granting orientation materials into the curriculum during the first semester.

KEY WORDS: *Orientation, First-year, students, old, new, university*

I: INTRODUCTION

Orientation is the procedure of guiding individuals on an activity, a job or situation (Merriam-Webster, 2020). New members were introduced to the people, roles, culture and the global environment to reduce anxiety, understand expectations, gain commitment and get familiarized with the new environment. Soria, Cark, and Koch (2013) consider orientation programme for first-year students as an effort or activities intentionally designed by an institution to help new students integrate to the university environment, promote success and development.

During orientation, new students are taken through various procedures to introduce and integrate them into university and prepare them to commence classes. The central objective of direction is students' adjustment to university life. Orientation leads to lower dropout rates and increased academic performance (Gardner, 2010; Tinto, 2012). It provides relevant information geared towards the formation of support networks that will lead to emotional, social growth, and a more positive view of the institution (Kuh, Kizie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010; Lathrop, O'Connell, & Howard, 2012). The orientation programme first implemented at Boston University in 1888 (Bigger, 2014). After that, many institutions established orientation programmes as a way of successfully ushering students into the university environment (Meuleman, Garrett, Wrench & King, 2015).

In their career advancement, students encounter situations that call for an adjustment to survive (Sevinc&Gizir, 2014). Harris (2016) considers change from high school to university as demanding prerequisite adjustment skills necessary for success in academics domains. When this is not realized, many students struggle with adjustment challenges and are at a high risk of dropping out during the first semester of their study (Ameri, Fard, Chinnam, & Reddy, 2016).

Various studies reveal that a large percentage of students admitted to universities drop out during or after their first year. For example, Aulck, Velagapudi, Blumenstock, and West (2017) indicated that each year, roughly 30% of first-year students at the United States four year

institutions do not return for their second year. Rooij, Jansen and Grift (2018) reported that 33% of first-year in the Netherlands universities discontinued their studies before the second year of the programme they initially started. While according to Hare (2016), 20% of Australian students drop in their first year of study. Data collected in South Africa reveal that 40% of students fall out of university in their first year (Macgregor, 2009). In sub-Saharan Africa, the dropout rate of Ethiopia and Nigeria is estimated at 35% and 20% respectively (Harvard University, 2017). Likewise, many new students have to leave university in Kenya (Njoroge, Wangari, & Gichure, 2016).

While there can be many reasons for student drop out, Jemal's (2012) study revealed that the majority of those leaving university do so as a result of adjustment challenges. On the other hand, Gaskins (2009) stressed that predefined student variables such as high school scores combined with environmental variables such as student living status highly determine student success. Due to transition changes experienced by new students, universities have established programmes such as counselling, academic advising, learning communities and mentorship besides orientation through which are supported to adjustment to university (Briggs, Clark & Hall 2012; DeFreitas & Bravo, 2012).

For students to adjust academically, Mohamed (2012) supposed that they need higher intellectual, critical thinking, and academic writing. Whereas Salami (2011) and Mudhovi (2012) suggest that students ought to embrace new methods of instruction: and adjust to a shift from subjects at secondary to discipline-based at the university (Abdullah et al., 2009).

Statement of the Problem

University education is associated with significant social and economic outcomes. It is the hope of the government, parents and university administrators that students who join university would successfully engage and acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities that will help them compete favourably in the competitive world of work upon graduation. However, this is not often the

case, as some students encounter academic adjustment challenges. Other students develop inferior study habits and poor time management. As a result of these challenges, some students end up dropping out while in the first year. Universities have put up orientation programmes as one of the most common intervention strategies to help first-years assimilate to the academic life of the new university environment. It is through the programme; students handle the problems they face when they join the university. Even though it is evident that first-year students do gain meaningfully as a result of participation in the various forms of orientation programmes, their effectiveness remains questionable. Therefore, this study sought to find out the influence of the orientation programme in the adjustment of first-year students in public universities in Kenya.

Research Objective

The objectives of the study were to find out the influence of orientation programme on first-year students' academic adjustment in public universities in Kenya.

II: LITERATURE REVIEW

First-year students face academic challenges as they do not know how to plan out priorities and opportunities that align with the many goals of college life. According to Kitsantas and Winsler (2017), college is a time for pursuing a wide array of activities and interests, and each event takes time. Brint and Cantwell (2010) enumerate the following as some of the activities undertaken by university students; attending lectures, doing homework, studying, and writing papers, work for pay, extracurricular activities, leisure, and social events. Unfortunately, some students find it challenging to create the needed balance to attain their set goals, thus end up encountering academic difficulties. For instance, research by Crisp et al. (2009) indicates that first-year students often underrate the number of hours of independent study that would be required for their course. Nevertheless, according to Bembenutty, (2009) and Ramdass and Zimmerman (2011), senior and high achieving students learn to balance homework and other activities with ease by setting clear academic goals, estimating how much time a task requires, practising good study habits, and monitoring their learning progress.

Both formal and informal interactions with lecturers and fellow students on academic matters are essential in promoting academic adjustment. Hong, Shull, and Haefner (2011) argued that active interaction between faculty and students serve as a source of guidance and support. This argument aligns with Klein (2013) who posits that relationships and meetings with faculty, counsellors, advisors, or other students provide the social network to strengthen academic knowledge and increase the information needed for students' overall success. Accordingly Deil-Amen (2011) reported that studies reveal that although many students acknowledged family support, 92% identified a college-specific agent or agents who were helpful to their sense of adjustment, comfort, belonging, and proficiency as university students. Moreover, Deil-Amen's (2011) study findings indicated that students' interactions with faculty were considered more crucial for the creation of networks of relationships that enable them to function effectively than interactions with advisors or counsellors.

According to Pascarella, Salisbury, and Blaich (2011), faculty teaching skills and their sense of support can impact students' ability to adjust to college as well as their overall college outcomes. Similarly, Barnett's (2011) study on the importance of faculty support found that support promoted academic adjustment in college, while Deil-Amen (2011) reported that in-classroom interactions were dominant mechanisms of socio-academic integration. These findings confirm and extend Klein's (2013) conclusion that students say a greater sense of belonging when contact with faculty over academic matters cultivates a connection between the student and the faculty that take after features of the family. Moreover, faculty who take a step in to help first-year students navigate within the organization enhance their adjustment by providing the needed information for students to overcome procedural obstacles.

On the contrary, Lack of faculty support can contribute to sense isolation, and may lead to adjustment challenges. For example, a study by Sevinc and Gizir (2014) with 25 first-year students on factors negatively affecting university adjustment from the views of first-year university students in Mersin University indicated that the relationship with faculty and teaching

quality of faculty significantly changed academic adjustment. Students described their faculties as less caring, warm and supportive and that both formal and informal relationships between students and faculty were relatively infrequent. The frequency and quality of student-faculty interactions have also been recognized as a vital component in academic adjustment (Kim & Sax, 2009). Besides, Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya (2010) found that students' academic adjustment and self-concept are enhanced when students have an off-campus contact with faculty; feel respected by them, and perceive them as being approachable.

The foregoing research findings indicate that academic adjustment to the university has a bearing on academic success. The guidance provided to first-years to enable them to function independently, clear guidelines on course selection, teaching methodology, frequency, and quality of student-faculty interaction in and out of the classroom, faculty support and teaching skills of faculty influence students' academic adjustment. On the other hand, research has revealed that students who are not guided well to attain self-regulation skills and acclimatize to university academic environment, who lack faculty support and guidance in and out of class encounter academic challenges. Therefore, these findings suggest the need to find out how orientation programme enhances first year students' academic adjustment in public universities in Kenya.

III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Research design is the overall strategy used to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical manner so as to address the research problem (Trochim, 2020). The design establishes the outline for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. This study utilized a descriptive-survey research design. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) explain that descriptive-survey research design is a type of research that uses surveys to gather data that describes a population, situation, or phenomenon that is being studied. Descriptive analysis aims to accurately and

systematically describe a people, location or event and can use a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate one or more variables. In this study, data were collected using surveys, in-depth interviews, and focused group discussions. Descriptive-survey research design was considered appropriate for this study because it allowed the use of a study to gather large volumes of data from a large population within a short period of time. Besides, the design allowed the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect data without manipulating any of the variables.

The use of mixed methods approaches to collect data allowed the researcher to collect diverse types of data that captured different dimensions on the influence of orientation programme on adjustment of first-year students in public universities in Kenya thus, providing a complete understanding of the research problem. This is in line with Creswells' (2014) assertion that integrating quantitative and qualitative data provides a comprehensive analysis of the research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone. In this study, the researcher administered questionnaires to first-year students that yielded Quantitative data, while qualitative data was drawn from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted among student leaders and peer counsellors, and in-depth interviews schedules conducted among student counsellors and deans of students. Burke and Larry (2012) argue that utilization of both qualitative and quantitative data neutralized the weaknesses of each form of data and therefore, produces results that are superior to the ones provided by either qualitative or quantitative research alone.

The population of the study

According to Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen Irvine, and Walker (2019), a population is a group of elements that possess the characteristics sought that may lead to drawing inferences. The target population for the study was first-year, second-semester students; student leaders, peer counsellors, student counsellors, and deans of students in Kenyan public universities. The first-year students formed the first category of respondents, and student leaders, peer counsellors, student counsellors, and deans of students established the second category.

The target population of the First category of respondents

According to the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Services (KUCCPS) (2017), 88,457 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) candidates were placed in public and private universities; 71,089 students in public universities while 17,368 in private universities. However, statistics from respective universities Academic Registrars' offices indicate 69,115 students reported; 39,233 males and 29,882 females. Table 3.2 below shows how the target population was distributed. First-year second-semester students were considered suitable because the adjustment is a process. Therefore, having stayed in the university for one semester after having gone through orientation in the first semester, they were presumed to have gone through the adjustment process and become more aware of the services available and operations of the university.

The target population of the second category of respondents

The target population for other university respondents was 2170. This comprised 217 student leaders, 1860 peer counsellors, 62 student counsellors and 31 deans of students

Table 1: Distribution of the second category of the target population

Respondent	population	Sample
Student leaders	217	27
Peer counsellors	1860	36
Student counsellors	62	9
Deans of students	31	9
Total	2170	81

Source: Researcher (2020)

The additional 81 respondents were considered vital as they encountered first-year students as they report to the university during orientation and are responsible for handling student concerns, and make decisions on the campus-related issues presented to them.

Sample and the Sampling Techniques

A sample is a representative of the total population under study while sampling is a process used in statistical analysis in which a predetermined number of observations are taken from a large community (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The methodology used to determine the sample depends on the type of analysis being performed. The researcher employed two-stage cluster sampling; simple random sampling, and purposeful sampling techniques to obtain a sample. Cluster sampling is a sampling method in which the entire population of the study is divided into externally homogeneous, but internally heterogeneous; groups called clusters (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). The researcher clustered the 31 chartered public universities into old and new universities. The ancient universities were considered as those that had been in existence for more than ten years; they were seven (7) while the new universities were those chartered from 2010 to date and numbered twenty-four (24). Mugenda & Mugenda (2013) stated that 30% of the population makes an excellent representation to generalize the findings. The researcher sampled 9(30%) out of 31 universities to participate in the study. Further, these universities were clustered into urban and rural. That is, those located in major cities and those found in a more or less rural setting.

Then after identifying the clusters, simple random sampling technique was applied to obtained two (2) old universities, one from an urban setting and another from a rural setting. Likewise, the researcher selected seven (7) new universities, three (3) from an urban environment and four (4) from a rural setting using a simple random sampling technique.

Using Slovin's formula, a sample size of 398 first-year university students from 69,115 students was sampled. In addition, purposive sampling technique was used to test 81 second category of respondents from 2170 respondents. This comprised 27 student leaders, three (3) from each university (those who hold critical positions in the student leadership such as; Chairperson, Secretary-General, and Academic Secretary, 36 peer counsellors, four (4) from each university, nine (9) Student Counsellors one (1) from each university, and nine (9) Deans of Students, one (1) from each university were interviewed. Thus, the total number of respondents, including students was 479.

Sample size

The sample size is the number of items selected from a population to constitute a sample for the study. This sample size was chosen at a 95% confidence level and margin error/precision level of 0.05. Slovin's formula shown below was used in determining the sample size that was required. This sample size was sufficient to generalize findings and draw a conclusion for the study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n=Sample size required

N = Target population

e = Margin error

1= Constant value

$$n = 69,115 / 1 + 69,115(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 69115 / 173.788$$

$$= 398$$

A sample of 398 students was used. Each university sampled, the original sample size was obtained by using Probability Proportionate Sample (PPS) formulae. The table below shows the sample distribution of the students:

$$S = \frac{n N_i}{N}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N_i = cluster population, and

N = population

Table 2: Population and sample size

University Category	First-year Student sample	Population
Old Urban	111	19 275
Old Rural	86	14 934
New Urban	103	17 887
New Rural	98	17 019
Total	398	69 115

It is clear that using Probability Proportionate Sample (PPS) formulae, 19 275 students from old urban, 14 934 from old rural, 17 887 students from new urban, and 17 019 students from new rural universities were obtained.

Table 3: Distribution of the sample for the study

University Category	First-year Student	Peer counsellors	Student leaders	Student Counsellors	Deans of students
Old Urban	111	4	3	1	1
Old Rural	86	4	3	1	1
New Urban	103	12	9	3	3
New Rural	98	16	12	4	4
Total	398	36	27	9	9

Source: Researcher (2020)

Table 3.3 shows the distribution of first-year student samples, peer counsellors, student leaders, student counsellors and deans of students in the four categories of universities.

IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to know how each university rated in the academic adjustment component. Students were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the formulated items. The data was analysed using Mean and standard deviation. The measurement of whether the information provided, and activities carried out during orientation assisted first-year students in public universities in Kenya to adjust academically was on a Likert scale of 4, with a 4 for strongly agree, three agree, two disagree, and one strongly disagree. So with mean scores ranging between 2.2 and around 3.0, implies that the majority of respondent were inclined towards disagreeing or agreeing with various statements made. Table 4.7 below shows the means and standard deviations per categories.

The mean and standard deviation were computed to establish how academic adjustment compared among the four categories of public universities. The results are in Table 4.7

Table 4: Mean and standard deviations of academic adjustment in university categories

University Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Old urban Universities	109	3.0056	1.04216
Old-rural universities	84	2.9851	.98949
New-urban universities	100	2.2327	1.06428
New-rural universities	97	2.4287	1.05447
Total	390	2.8774	1.05096

Table 4.7 shows that the mean for academic adjustment in Old –urban university was (M=3.0056, STD=1.04216), Old-rural university (M=2.9851, STD=.98949), New-urban university (M=2.2327, STD= 1.06428), and New-rural university (M=2.4287, STD=1.05096). It is evident that the mean was highest in old-urban universities and lowest in new-urban universities. The difference observed was attributed to the way academic orientation is carried out in the different categories of universities in terms of; the kind of academic activities students are exposed to, the amount of information or details were given, the areas of emphasis, the experience of the facilitators and student facilitator ratio, the amount of time, and the level at which the exercise is conducted that is, at school/faculty or departmental level. The study established that old universities have carried out an orientation programme for first-year students for a longer period. As a result, they have addressed the concerns raised by students on academic adjustment issues over time and improved on the content covered, mode of presentation, and areas of emphasis. In addition, old universities have more experienced faculty staff addressing first-year students during academic orientation compared to new universities where students are oriented by relatively junior staff. The experience and expertise of academic staff in old

universities translated to higher adjustment levels among first years compared to new universities.

Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) among student leaders and peer counsellors and in-depth interviews with Student Counsellors and Deans of Students in the universities studied were conducted. In-depth interviews conducted with Deans of students and student counsellors yielded essential data on the structure and activities of orientation programme in public universities across the country, as well as their perspective on orientation programmes' influence on adjustment of first-year students. The qualitative information obtained seemed to support the above quantitative findings, as indicated below.

Deans of Students and Student Counsellors were asked the duration they had served in the respective offices because this has a bearing on their experience in interacting with and in conducting orientation for first-year students. Demographically, it was established that the least period interviewees had served as deans and counsellors was eleven months and the highest period was fourteen years. Though the average number of years was three, those from old universities had served longer. Further, the interviewees were asked whether there is an orientation programme for first-year students in their universities. All respondents from both old and new universities confirmed that there is an orientation programme for first-year students in their institutions which is conducted immediately after the registration of newly admitted students before the commencement of classes. The interviewees were further probed on what their experience was concerning first-year students' attendance of orientation programme. The interviews yielded various responses, but the attendance percentage ranged between 73 % – 82%.

The respondents were asked about the duration or the number of the days' orientation programme is conducted and whether the period is adequate to address adjustment issues of transitioning students. The respondents indicated that the duration of orientation programme ranged between

three to seven days with the majority of respondents from both new and old universities indicating that the programme takes three to five days depending on the period of intake and the number of students admitted. Nevertheless, the most common period was five days long. During the central intake when most universities receive students admitted by Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Services, the programme takes more days because of the enormous numbers of students and the activities they have to undertake.

The respondents were further probed whether, in their own opinion, the duration of orientation was adequate to sufficiently assist new students in attaining adjustment. Whereas some respondents felt that the length is sufficient, the majority indicated that the range is not appropriate. The following were identified as the main reasons they felt the period was not adequate: there are a number of activities undertaken; the student population handled is diverse in terms of background and needs; students have barely reported to the new institution, and as a result, many are in a state of confusion, excitement or lost thus, may not follow what is going on; it is not possible to adequately cover some emotional and social issues that are critical to students' adjustment. One participant from a new-rural university put it in this manner:

“The programmes’ activities are so congested; students get exhausted because they have to move from one activity to another with little or no time for reflection and internalization the pieces of information provided.... Sometimes I sympathize and feel like we end up confusing the students because of bombarding them with too much information within a short period of time.”

Majority of the respondents felt that if it were possible, some of the information could be spread out to cover two weeks or the entire semester because some of the aspects require more time especially in the social and emotional spheres where many things are learned out of experience or much practice.

Further, the respondents were asked to highlight the major activities carried out during orientation. The following emerged as the everyday activities that cut across all the universities sampled: General welcome and introduction to college from Student Affairs Office; Rules and

regulations governing student general conduct; Introduction to campus life and opportunity to meet other new students; Tour of the campus; An overview of student services such as guidance and counselling, spiritual nourishment, accommodation, catering, security, games and sports, and student clubs and organizations; Academic advising on fees collection, deferment of studies, interfaculty and intra-faculty transfers, Study and examination timetables, examination malpractice; Faculty advising on course selection and registration, course codes, study skills, teaching methodology and grading system; An overview of the institutional structure, policies, and regulations as they relate to student conduct; Library tour and guidance on utilization of its services; and finally the Vice Chancellor's address popularly known as matriculation.

However, the manner of execution and depth of material coverage varied from one institution to another. This will be elaborated as we narrow to the individual facets of orientation addressed in this study. Besides, some activities emerged specifically to universities such as; assignment of students to mentors in the faculty, meeting with orientation organizers and upper-class students in small groups, private meetings and team building activities, identification of vulnerable or at-risk students, a particular programme for international students.

Student leaders and peer counsellors were asked whether the duration or the number of days orientation programme is carried out in their respective institutions was adequate. Their responses concurred with the Deans and Student counsellors findings. Majority of student leaders and peer counsellors new universities indicated that orientation programme takes three days while the remaining indicated that it takes five days. Those from old universities reported that orientation takes 3-5 days. The general feeling on the duration was that it wasn't adequate. A peer counsellor from one of the new universities had this to say:

“I did not benefit much from orientation programme simply because I missed the first day's activities and by the time I settled to learn more, I learnt that it was closing ceremony that was in progress. I was shocked and frustrated because I real wanted to understand what real goes on. I wished it could be repeated.”

Student leaders and peer counsellors were asked to give their views on orientation programmes' influence on first-year students' academic adjustment. Focus Group Discussions were conducted with student leaders and peer counsellors and a majority of student leaders, and peer counsellors from old universities felt that orientation assisted first-year students' academic adjustment to a large extent and expressed satisfaction in the way academic advising was done. The general consensus of the FGDs indicated that academic advising was done at faculty and departmental levels. First-year students had the opportunity to interact with faculty and senior students and were issued with brochures outlining the programmes, career progression and guidelines on what was expected of new students. Further, the discussions revealed that much of the information was digitized and they were encouraged to log into the appropriate links for more details. One student leader from an old university said:

The first faculty meeting we had over a cup of tea was the most memorable experience I have ever had. I received valuable course-related information that has been important for my studies. The lecturers covered most of the areas I could have experienced difficulties.

Similarly, the majority of focus group discussion members from new universities agreed that the orientation programme did assist first-year students in adjusting academically to some level. The discussions established a general agreement that academic advising and course registration for first-year students was done at the faculty level. However, unlike in the old universities, they lamented that there were no faculty brochures issued to students. Further, 2 of the peer counsellors expressed their dissatisfaction in the manner in which academic orientation was done. They indicated that in some faculties, shallow information was given by the faculty, and some members were not available to attend to the concerns raised by first-year students. Nevertheless, one participant from the new urban university added that first-year students in some faculties benefited from digitized materials on academic matters and career progression. As a result, there was a high likelihood of the first-year students in many new universities forgetting the details on academic advising amidst the confusion of being in a new environment and therefore realizing lower adjustment levels in relation to their counterparts in old universities.

Student leaders and peer counsellors were probed on the adjustment challenges they handle from first-year students, especially during their first semester. From the discussions, it emerged that student leaders and peer counsellors from both old and new universities handle almost similar academic adjustment challenges from first-year students. Majority of the FGD members emphasized that first-year student complained about intra-faculty, inter-faculty transfer challenges and confusion in course registration due to the length of time taken to effect the changes and Lack of proper guidance in some incidences. In the same way, some participants pointed out that first-year student had challenges of locating lecture rooms, especially in new universities, because the lecture rooms were so many and were located in different places.

Predictably, some expressed that new student complained that by the time they located the next class, the lecture was either mid-way or over, and this was so disappointing for the students. On the other hand, the discussions established that location of lecture rooms in old universities was not much of an issue because most of the lecture rooms are located in the same building as per faculties or schools. Further, the discussions revealed a general agreement that first-year students complained that the faculty never helped them come up with plans on how to develop practical study skills, how to handle the academic workload and the significance of interacting with faculty staff.

In-depth interviews were conducted with Deans of Students and Student Counsellors to obtain their views on the influence of orientation programme on academic adjustment of first-year students among public universities. The interviews with Deans of Students and Student Counsellors from both old and new universities revealed that orientation programme did assist first-year students in their academic adjustment to a large extent. Much of the information yielded from the interviews on how faculty orientation and advising was done agreed with the data from the FGDs. Nevertheless, the majority of the Deans and Counsellors observed that some

faculty were not fully committed and did not give student adequate information on critical areas of academic concern. For instance, one participant indicated that students lack correct information on selection of courses for purposes of career progression. As a result, many suffer and would want to change their course even in year three.

Further, Deans of Students and Student Counsellors were asked whether they handle any academic adjustment related challenges from first-year students, especially during their first semester. In general, the majority confirmed that during the first semester the offices are a beehive of activities as a result of attending to a number of academic challenges emanating from first-year students. The common problems identified include the following: indecisiveness on the programme of study and career choice, inter/intra-faculty and inter-university transfers, poor study skills, confusion and missing of lectures due clashes and chaos in timetable interpretation, and deferment of studies due to lack of school fees.

Specifically, two deans from new universities emphasised that they handled issues concerning congestion in lecture halls, inter-university and interfaculty transfers from first-year students who were at the verge of dropping out of university. Such students were unsuccessful in their interfaculty removal because there was no quorum in the courses they wanted to either transfer from or to, while others received the feedback too late when the whole exercise had been concluded. One dean from a new university lamented:

“These issues are so serious that you find a student not settled and wants to change a course or transfer even in their second or third year of study. Such concerns adversely affect the emotional ... and the general performance of the student.”

The foregoing qualitative information gathered, appeared to be in support of the quantitative data that orientation programme assisted first-year students to adjust academically. However, the

level of adjustment seemed higher in old universities compared to new universities. In old universities, academic advising is done in smaller groups at faculty, and departmental standards and first-year students are issued with brochures, thus promoting better interaction between students and faculty.

In addition, students have access to online materials that offer additional support. On the other hand, there seemed to be limited interaction between faculty and students in new universities. Moreover, students had limited time to go through orientation activities on academic and faculty advising, and the supplementing materials are few compared to their counterparts in old universities. Thus, this could have had a bearing on the depth and amount of content covered, leading to lower student adjustment levels in new universities.

V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Orientation programme on academic adjustment of first-year students in public universities in Kenya assisted first-year students in old-universities in realize higher academic adjustment levels compared to students in new-universities. However, in procedure on deferment of studies, and teaching methodology employed at the university, the adjustment was highest at old-rural universities followed by old-urban universities, new-rural universities, and lowest at new-urban universities. Contrastingly, there was no difference in adjustment on the interpretation of course codes of the Units of Study, the significance of regularly collaborating with other students, and forms of examination malpractices and their consequences between old-urban universities and old-rural universities. However, new-rural universities realized higher adjustment level compared to new-urban universities in the interpretation of course codes of the Units of Study, and insignificance of regularly collaborating with other students.

The differences realized in student's academic adjustment were attributed to the duration, and the manner orientation programme was conducted in the different categories of universities in terms of; the kind of educational content and activities students are exposed to, the amount of

information or details were given, the areas of emphasis, the experience of the facilitators, and student facilitator ratio. In old-rural universities, academic advising of first-year students is conducted in smaller groups at faculty, and departmental levels and students are issued with brochures, thus promoting better interaction between students and faculty. Additionally, in some institutions, students have access to online materials that offer additional support. On the other hand, there appeared to be limited interaction between faculty and students in new universities because academic advising is done at the faculty level thus limiting the amount of information, activities or details availed to the students. Moreover, students have limited time to go through orientation activities on academic advising, and the supplementing materials are few compared to their counterparts in old universities. This means that students at old-rural universities receive detailed and specific information and reference material and therefore, attained higher adjustment compared to their counterparts in new-rural universities.

In addition, the study's realization that there were differential adjustments in academic sub-variables among the categories of universities, it was noted that the variables that scored highest are those that deal with more or less logistical issues whereas the variables that deal with academic content and would significantly predict academic success scored relatively lower.

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