

Graduate Students' Perception of the Design and Management of Graduate Programs: A Case Study of Egerton University

Abstract

This study was designed to provide information on the quality of educational programs as perceived by graduate students so as to remain competitive in the provision of higher education. Graduate programs are self-sponsored and students ought to receive value for money, quality teaching and service. Unlike undergraduate students who apply to the Joint Admissions Board (JAB), graduate students choose to enroll at Egerton University and are therefore 'true' customers. A cross-sectional survey design was used and a modified HEdPERF-SERVPERF scale consisting of three dimensions of program design and management was used to collect data. 138 graduate students were sampled and were between 25 and 52 years with a mean of 36.84 years. Females comprised 23.2 % while males were 76.8 %. Student loyalty was expressed by 40.6% of the Graduate students being alumni of Egerton University. Majority of graduate student (79.0 %) were self-sponsored while 20.3 % had sponsorship from various organizations. A positive perception was obtained for quality of interaction with administrative staff (72.5%), faculty and department staff (62.3%). The respondents were dissatisfied with communication on academic and administrative issues at the department and faculty level, lack of feedback, procedures for research, thesis defense schedules and interactions with the finance department. It is recommended that the university, improve communication and management of graduate programs, assist graduate students secure scholarships and train frontline employees on people skills.