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## Change Factors That Affect Student Learning in Moi University Town Campus in Kenya

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study was to assess change factors that affect student learning. The objectives of the study were to find out the extent to which social-economic, facilities, learning environment and psychological factors of the change affect student learning. The study was significant in highlighting problems resulting from change that students deal with during their learning. The study was conducted in Moi University, Eldoret town campus. The research design was a descriptive survey. The Target Population was 846 students of Departments of Tourism, Hospitality management and Tours and Travel. The sample size was 108 students who were sampled using stratified and accidental sampling techniques. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that student learning was affected by change of facilities, environment, psychological adaptation and socio-economically. Change administrators of learning institutions should ensure basic facilities that support learning and recreation are available before any change process. The results of this study can serve as a guide to managers and administrators undertaking institutional change to ensure smooth flow of change process and prevent students from facing difficult effects of change. Future scholars may establish an agenda for future research by using the knowledge gained from this study to lead to more research questions.

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**Keywords:** change, Kenya, learning, psychological factors, social change.

### INTRODUCTION

Due to the need for change, managers need to identify the problems that result from organizational changes that have to be dealt with by the respective institutions facing the consequences of the restructuring complexities. It is very important to know how to deal with changes and how to attain normalcy of operations within the organization. The approaches to such change should be analyzed to facilitate minimum disturbance of the operations of the organization or the institution facing such a change. In many cases, change requires individuals to give up familiar routines while in some cases, the loss is substantial, affecting position, power, networks of friends and colleagues. In all these situations, rituals of transition can be crucial in assisting people to grieve and let go of the old and move on to the new (Selker, 2009).

How a process of institutional change is initiated has a significant impact on how it subsequently develops. Careful thought needs to be given to individuals and agencies involved as they strongly influence chances of overall success. The question of who should take the lead is particularly sensitive. In processes of institutional change, institutions as well as people within them are inevitably engaged in "changing themselves". This implies a certain level of critical

awareness within the institutions, questioning whether there is a need for change and asking what advantages to be generated by change. Whether or not this critical awareness is present should be a key criterion in identifying which individuals or agencies are likely to take the lead. Often, specific champions of change may exhibit this awareness but work in institutions where change is actively discouraged (IFDA, 2009).

According to Richard (1992), transformation represents a vital organizational change which may be caused by forces internal or external to the organization than forces inside the organization. Key factors that can support the change process include: Development of a strategy that is based on the individual characteristics of the specific, organization mandate, structure, staff and support from the leadership of the organization, and development of strategies to deal with resistance. In addition, needed are clear organizational targets and goals with timelines to hold the organization accountable for progress, adequate resources including staff time, an internal catalyst that can mobilize resources and keep issues on the organization's agenda and an organizational strategy that holds all staff responsible (Woroniuk and Schalkwyk, 1998).

Failure to effectively plan, communicate, train and implement change strategies can squander the benefits of change and adversely affect students' morale, commitment and concentration. Various scholars have discussed the effects that inadequacy or failure to plan before a change process takes place can have on organizations and institutions in depth. Institutional change becomes fundamentally not about changing rules, but about changing expectations (Aoki, 2001).

#### **Research Questions**

- i. Do lack of adequate facilities affect student learning?
- ii. What social-economic aspects of the change affect student learning?
- iii. How do psychological factors of change affect student learning?
- iv. Does change of environment affect student learning?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Student Learning**

Learning is the process by which skills, attitudes, knowledge and concepts are acquired, understood, applied and extended. It is through learning that competence and ability to function in an environment get enhanced (UK, 2006). Hansen, (2000) elaborated student learning to have been considered partly a cognitive process and partly as a social and affective one. It qualifies as a cognitive process because it involves the functions of attention, perception and reasoning, analysis, drawing of conclusions, making interpretations and giving meaning to the observed phenomena, which are mental processes which relate to the intellectual functions of the individual. It is a social and affective process, as the societal and cultural context in which student learners' function and the feelings and experiences which they have, greatly influence their ideas, concepts, image constructions of the specific universe of functioning, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and the skills which they acquire as a consequence of these combined processes.

#### **Facilities and Change**

Problems affect teaching and learning, student and staff health, day-to-day building operations, and the long-range fiscal health of the entire education organization. Facilities problems are less a function of geography or socioeconomics and more directly related to staff levels, training, and practices, all of which can be controlled by the organization. Thus, every institution should plan to meet the challenges of effective facilities maintenance. The condition of an institution's facility is not just an issue for the facility manager as it affects the staff, students, and entire educational community (Lorenzi and Riley, 2008).

Newton, (1992), comments that organizations and people need to address the issue of change to avoid settling into patterns of behavior which may be comfortable and effective in the short-term, but may prove to be limiting and unhelpful over a longer time scale. A common belief in educational circles is that what are needed usually are more resources if change is to occur successfully. However it is patently clear that more of the same can have the reverse effect leading to maintenance of the problem or of the status quo. Once the desired changes have been described, different options for achieving those changes need to be thought through and choices made regarding how to achieve them. Strategic choices about what sort of changes to attempt, taking into account the time and resources available, can only be made after general change has been broken down into a series of more specific changes in relation to the different institutional actors and agencies involved. The actions required to bring about this change can be developed, taking into account the incentives that influence subjects of changes, and, for each action, identifying who can undertake it, when, and what resources are required in terms of time, money and materials. To complete the planning process, wider implications and potential collateral effects of each of these changes are considered and efforts made to pre-empt any possible negative impacts (IFDA, 2009).

#### **Psychology of Change**

McKinsey (2003), posit that organizations can transform attitudes and behavior of their subjects by applying psychological breakthroughs. However, success depends on persuading hundreds or thousands of groups and individuals to change the way they work, a transformation that will be accepted only if subjects can be persuaded to think differently about their jobs. Subjects of change will alter their mind-sets only if they see the point of the change and agree with it-at least enough to give it a try.

Lawson and Price, (2003) comment that large organizational change programs are notoriously difficult to run as they involve changing the way people not only behave at work but also think about work. Sometimes, however, changing individual mindsets is the sole way to improve an organization's performance. Psychologists in the fields of adult development have made several important discoveries about the conditions that have to be met before people change their behavior. First they must see the point of the change and agree with it at least enough to give it a try. Then the surrounding structures, rewards and recognition systems for example, must be in tune with the new behavior. People must also see colleagues they admire modeling it and need to have the skills to do what is required of them. Applying these insights on its own doesn't have much impact. Managers find that applying strategies greatly improves their chances of

bringing about lasting changes in the mindsets and behavior of people in an organization and thus achieving sustained improvements in performance.

In his views about change, Donn, (1989) opines that it is human nature to resist anything new, especially if it is significantly different and difficult to implement. Professionals can't be forced to change overnight; rather, it must be done carefully, cooperatively and slowly. Each person must have the opportunity to study and consider the change being promulgated, and then if reasonable, to provide input on how such changes can occur. There must be support, cooperative planning, modifications, and the time to learn how to effectively manage the change. However, there are problems that impede most innovation's implementation such as lack of money, poor communication, professional rivalries, bureaucracy, and so forth.

Hawkins (1989) comments that it can be counter-productive for administrators to give their marvelous scenarios for their future and be involved in the thinking through and planning of the changes in order to have an opportunity to react then understand the need for change and then adapt to the future necessities. It is easy to think that one has worked through the issues and come up with a good solution, thus other people need only to accept the rightness of the solution, and do not need to go through the thinking process (Hawkins and Shohet, 1989).

According to Lorenzi and Riley (2008), it is easy to change the things that nobody cares about. For those implementing change, it is critical to identify roles of the change masters, identify what roles the others involved in the process are playing, being careful to recognize multiple roles, identify carefully which role is speaking when one is communicating with those playing multiple roles and monitor throughout the process whether any roles are changing.

**Social Economic Impacts Of Change**

Selker (2009) posits that change involve loss. In many cases, change requires at the minimum that individuals give up familiar routines, other cases, the

loss is substantial, affecting position, power, networks of friends and colleagues, and such. In all these situations, rituals of transition can be crucial in assisting people to grieve and let go of the old and move on to the new. The strategies for overcoming the barriers to change are quite diverse and touch on every aspect of an organization. No organization can begin using all the strategies at the same time or even in a short period of time. A better approach is to focus on one or two until they become part of the normal way of operating until they become engrained in people's habits. Only then is it time to introduce another strategy. In this way, over time, the organization gradually improves its abilities to learn rapidly, to adapt to new conditions and to embrace change.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was conducted in Moi University, Eldoret town. The study used descriptive survey method of research design. Target Population was 846 students of Moi University undertaking Bachelor's degrees in Tourism, Hotel and Hospitality management and Tours and Travel Operations. Stratified sampling was used to classify the students into strata of departments and further strata of year of study. Accidental sampling was used to select the actual respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires which were validated using pilot test. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Personal Information**

Majority (60%) of the respondents were male. The students were from the department of Hospitality (34%), Tourism (40%) and Tours and Travel (26%) comprising second years (37%), third years (34%) and fourth year (29%).

**Inadequate Facilities**

Majority of the respondents agreed that lack of facilities such as a library, reading tables in their hostels, dining halls and blackboards and utilities such as electricity and water, affected learning. This is clearly shown in figure 1 below.

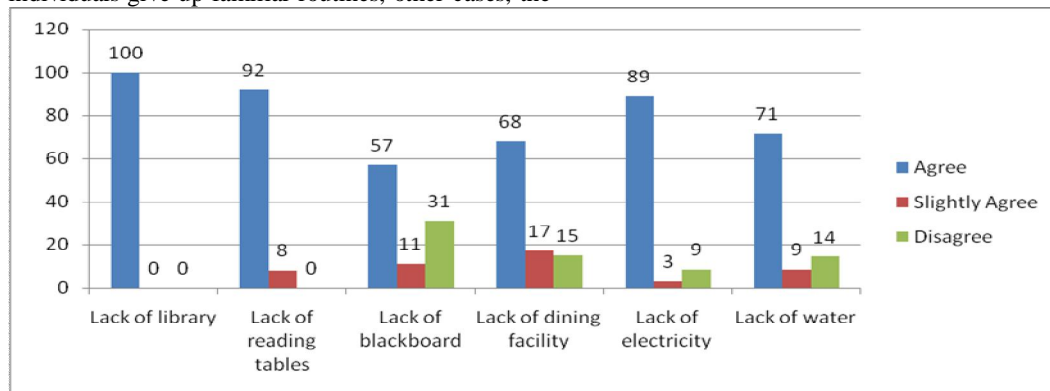


Figure 1: Lack of facilities

**Socio-Economic Change Factors**

Students, socio-economic aspects of change environment are very significant. Majority of students agreed that lack of clubs and societies, recreational facilities like playing fields, lack of

student leadership affected the learning process. Impulse purchases led to increased expenditure that was unwanted due to their proximity to shopping malls. This is as in figure 2 below.

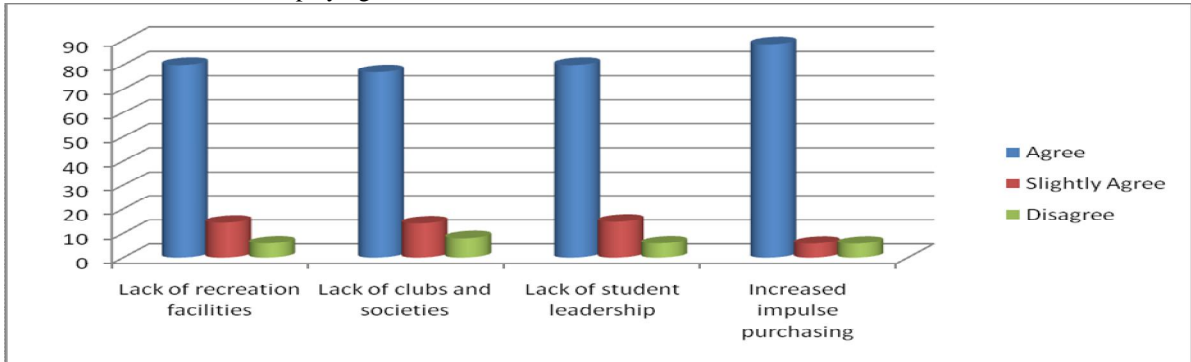


Figure 2: Socio-economic factors

**Psychological Factors**

Students' learning is affected by psychologically factors of change. Majority of students agreed that change increased stress, interferes with their study

patterns and results in their change of attitude towards the university. However, a small majority disagreed that change affected their perception about learning as shown on figure 3 below.

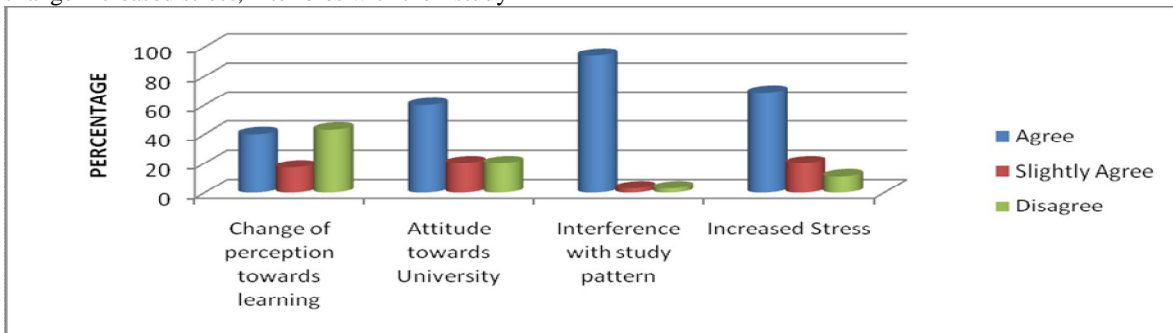


Figure 3: Psychological aspects

**Environmental factors**

Majority of students agreed that environmental factors affected their learning. Specifically, noisy

residential area and lecture halls affected their learning as well as pollution around their residential places. Disturbance caused by neighbors selling by the roadside resulted to a lot of noise as shown in figure 4 below.

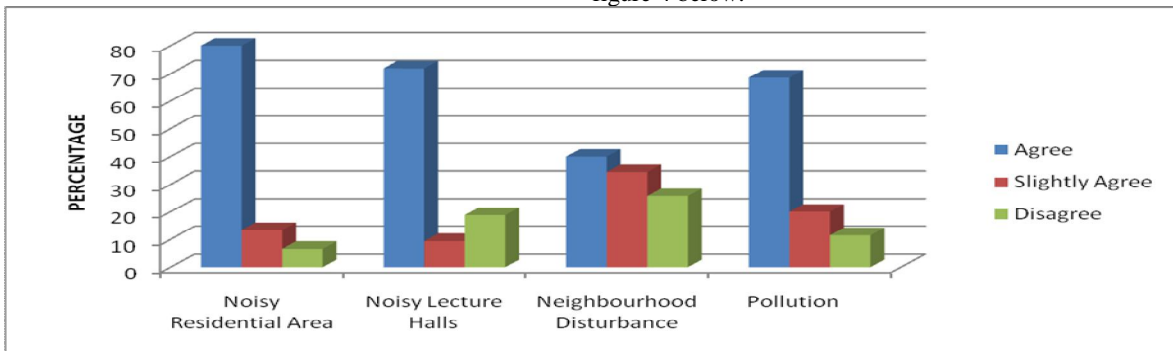


Figure 4: Environmental factors

**Learning aspects affected by change**

Results on student performance showed that majority agreed that change affected learning in terms of reduced concentration, lateness to attend lectures, reduced retention and attention change and worst of

all drop in performance. All these result from the lack of facilities, socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors of change discussed earlier. The effects on learning are as shown on figure 5 below.

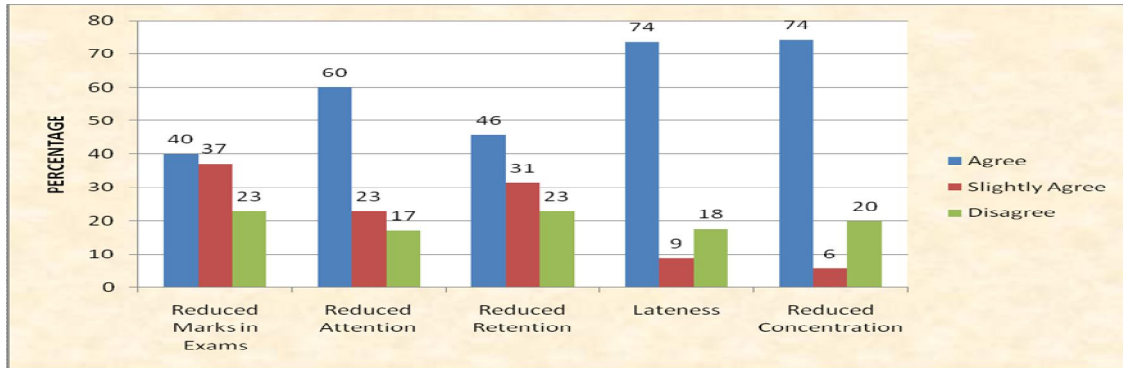


Figure 5: Effects of change on students learning

### LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was a cross-sectional examination of one institution. As such, the reported results may be limited in their applicability to other educational institutions and universities. Another limitation of the study was that the sample population of the study consisted of students learning in a preselected university and school based on the assumption that most town campuses experience the same. It is possible that if the study was conducted on other students of other universities and campuses including rural settings, the magnitude and direction of the factors of change might be different. Consequently, the situation in the town campus may not be generalized to other campuses in the university. With regard to the methodology, the interaction of the researcher and the respondents could have influenced the responses and their interpretation.

### CONCLUSION

Lack of facilities, aspects of socio-economic, psychological and environmental affect student learning which result in their inability to concentrate, reduced attention and retention, low attendance rate and consequently, poor performance. Change management ought to entail selfless planning, insightful implementation, consultation with, and involvement of, those affected by the changes. Change must be rational, practicable and quantifiable. Before starting any change, the following questions are important: What do we want to achieve with this change? How will we know that the change has been achieved? Who is affected by this change, and how will they react to it? How much of this change can be achieved, and what help is needed in the change?

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