AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING DEMAND FOR MASTERS IN EDUCATION DEGREE: CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, KENYA

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Education is regarded as both type of consumption and investment. People want schools sometimes, as they want TV sets-a status symbol. They want their children to learn to read because they will enjoy life more as a result. These are just some of the consumptions benefits of education. Future levels of production are not developed simply on labour and physical capital- but on technical knowledge and the skills of the labour force and these are provided by education (Maureen Woodhall, 1974). There is now an even greater demand for tertiary education from non-traditional learners who have appeared on the scene; these are "mature" students i.e. those who are 30 years and over, who either had missed the opportunity of benefiting from higher education, or who want to improve on their qualifications, or who desire a career change. Lifelong learning is now a common trend worldwide. The demand for education is high in institutions of higher learning especially in the University of Nairobi. The population increases year in year out leading to some universities running short of facilities and staff. It has been noted that very many people from various sectors of the economy have gone for higher education especially Master in Education (MED). Most of the students go for school based programme. The main purpose of this study was therefore to determine the factors influencing demand for Masters in Education Degree at the University of Nairobi Kikuyu Campus. The objectives of the study were to find out whether an increase in pay could have led to demand for Masters’ in Education Degree in the UON, to inquire whether the need for more knowledge and skills could have made students join MED, to find out if teaching in the University could have made students join MED in the UON, to establish whether other factors like to proceed to PHD, competing with spouse, to avoid frustration at the work place, making use of extra money, and others could have led to students joining MED Degree, and to determine the future job options in which the MED students can fit after the Masters programme. The research method that was used was descriptive - case study design. A population of 513 Master of Education students, 4 heads of department and the Dean of school of Education were used. A sample size of 103 (20%) respondents of the MED students was used by use
of stratified sampling. For the four heads of departments and the dean of school of Education, purposive sampling was applied. The research instruments used were questionnaire and interview schedules. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data by use of statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS). The data was presented in the form of tables, bar charts, figures and percentages. From the analysis it was seen that the major reasons for doing masters were to proceed to PhD and eventually become university lecturers, to acquire more skills and knowledge and to get better pay. To compete with the spouse, avoid frustration in the work place and making use of the extra money could not be left out. The recommendations of this study include: increasing the number of institutions of higher learning to cater for the high number of MED students to enable them acquire more knowledge and skills which is a requirement for vision 2030 to be attained. There is also need for further studies to be done to establish the sources of fees for the MED in the University of Nairobi.