
The Growth of University Education in Kenya

As pointed out earlier, having recognized the importance of education in general and of higher education in the socio-economic development of the continent (see e.g., Bailey, Cloete and Pillay 2013; Damtew and Altbach 2004; Kauffeldt 2009; Moshia 1986; Nyangau 2014, 2009; Okioga, Onsongo and Nyaboga 2012; Sawyerr 2004; World Bank), African governments have declared the twenty-first century 'as a knowledge era' (Damtew and Altbach 2004). Education, more so university education, is expected to play an increasingly greater role in socio-economic development by training skilled manpower and producing and disseminating the knowledge required for a knowledge-driven economy. It should enable individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest potential; serve the needs of an adaptive, sustainable and knowledge-based economy and play a major role in the shaping of a democratic, civilized and inclusive society (Okioga *et al.* 2012). It is on the basis of such convictions about and anticipations on university education that many governments have laboured over the years to improve access, quality and relevance of university education. This has culminated in the 'massification' of higher education (Jowi 2003; Kaburu and Embeywa 2014) across many countries, including those of Africa in general and Kenya in particular. Bornout of that 'massification' of university education are multiple challenges facing the sector (Damtew and Altbach 2004; Kaburu and Embeywa 2014; Munene 2016; Muisi and Muwanga 2003; Mwebi and Simatwa 2013; Nganga 2014; Ngome 2003; Nyangau 2014; Okioga *et al.* 2012; Sawyerr 2004; Wondimu 2003) that impair the functioning of the sector, thereby severely undermining its capacity to deliver a quality and relevant education accessible to all.

This chapter keys on the growth of university education, with an emphasis on the Kenyan situation. Doing so is important because it provides the necessary background and context against which the analysis of governance in higher education

in Kenya, the subject matter for this study, will take place. The chapter focuses not just on the historical development of university education in the country but also on the factors responsible for that growth and the quality of university education in the country, including the multiple challenges that the sector is faced with. The many challenges that the sector must contend with have implications for its ability to deliver the envisioned quality and relevant education required for socio-economic and other forms of development in the country.

Origins and Growth of University Education in Kenya

The initial origins of university education in Kenya can be traced back to 1947, when the then colonial government came up with a plan seeking to establish a technical and commercial institute in Nairobi (Bailey, Cloete and Pillay 2013). In 1949, the plan mutated to encompass the East African region with the aim to provide higher technical education for the three territories of East Africa, namely Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. However, it was not until 1951 that this concept received a Royal Charter, under the name of the Royal Technical College of East Africa. The College was initially designed to provide instruction in courses leading to the Higher National Certificate offered in Britain and to prepare matriculated students for university degrees in engineering, and commercial courses not available in Makerere in Uganda (Mwiria and Nyukuri 1994). It opened its doors to the first intake of students (A-level graduates for technical courses) in April 1956 (Bailey, Cloete and Pillay 2013; Olel 2006), to become the first Kenyan higher educational institution (Ngome 2003). A working party established in July 1958 recommended, among other things, that through a process of reconstruction and addition of appropriate facilities, the College be transformed into the second Inter-Territorial University College in East Africa, a recommendation that the East African governments accepted. On 25 June 1961, the Royal Technical College was transformed into the second university college of East Africa, renamed the Royal College of Nairobi (Bailey *et al.* 2013).

Following Kenya's attainment of independence in 1963, the Royal College was elevated to the University College of Nairobi on 20 May 1964, following the establishment of the University of East Africa with Makerere, Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi as constituent colleges. This constituted the first step towards the introduction and development of university education in Kenya (Mutula 2002). The University College prepared students in the faculties of Arts, Science and Engineering for the BA and BSc general degrees of the University of London (Bailey *et al.* 2013). Later, in 1970, the University of East Africa was dissolved and the University College of Nairobi was transformed into the University of Nairobi by an Act of Parliament, the 1970 University of Nairobi Act (Mutula 2002; Ngome 2003; Nyaingoti-Chacha 2004; Nyangau 2014; Odhiambo 2011; Sifuna 2010). Since then, the University has grown to become one of the leading universities in the region, having the highest

concentration of scholars and academic programmes in the country. In 1972, Kenyatta College, a teacher-training institution located on the outskirts of Nairobi City, became a constituent college of the University of Nairobi.

After attaining political independence in 1963, the Kenya government produced a blueprint to guide development in the country titled, 'African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya'. The document recognized education and training of skilled manpower as one of the pillars of the development process. It emphasized that economic growth required ample supplies of skilled, trained and experienced manpower. As such, it was concluded that the provision of education and training to all Kenyans was fundamental to the success of the government's overall development strategy (Republic of Kenya 1965). Concerning higher education, the 1963 policy document saw its (higher education's) long-term objective to be the enhancement of ability of Kenyans to preserve and utilize the environment for productive gain and sustainable livelihoods. In this regard, quality human resources were considered essential for the attainment of national development goals and for industrial development (Republic of Kenya 1965). Buoyed by such convictions, the Kenya government enthusiastically came up with programmes to assist Kenyans to access education in general and higher education in particular. The consequence has been the rapid growth in education in Kenya that has occurred at all levels, including the university level.

Since 1972, Kenya has experienced massive growth in university education to have the largest university education system in East Africa (Bailey *et al.* 2013; Mutula 2002; Nyangau 2014; Olel 2006; Onsongo 2007). From one national university, the University of Nairobi, and one constituent college, Kenyatta University College, catering for only a few fortunate high school graduates, the country's public university system has grown exponentially, both in terms of the number of institutions and the number of students enrolled in those institutions. The genesis of that growth appears to have been the 1981 Government-appointed Presidential Working Party on Establishment of the Second University in the country, chaired by Dr. Colin B. Mackay, a Canadian legal scholar (Government of Kenya 1981). Its mandate was to investigate and report on the feasibility of establishing a second university in Kenya with emphasis on technical courses. Following the recommendations of the Presidential Working Party, Moi University was established in 1984. Soon after, Kenyatta University College and Egerton University College were elevated to full University status in 1985 and 1987, respectively, to become the third and fourth public universities in the country.

The most dramatic growth in public universities has occurred after 1990 as more Kenyans demanded access to university education and the system opened up rapidly. From four fully-fledged universities in 1987, the number had risen to seven public universities by 2007 (Onsongo 2007), with the establishment of Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (1994), Maseno University (2000) and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (2007). In 2013 the

number of public universities had more than trebled, rising to 22 fully-fledged universities after the government, in its push to meet rising demand for university education, upgraded 15 university colleges into fully-fledged universities. Today, Kenya has a total of 23 fully-fledged chartered public universities (see Table 2.1 for details) and 10 public university constituent colleges. Kibabii University is the newest of the fully-fledged universities having been chartered in 2015.

Private higher education is the fastest growing sector worldwide; it is estimated that about 30 per cent of higher education enrolments are in private institutions (Duderstadt 2002). The growth in private universities has been particularly strong in former Soviet bloc countries, East Asia and Latin America, while many English-speaking African countries have experienced growth in the sector (Kihara 2005; Sharma 2009). According to Kihara (2005), by 2005 there were 85 private (and 316 public) universities in Africa. In Kenya, like elsewhere in the world, growth in public sector universities has been complemented by that in private universities. Kenya's private higher education though has a longer history, compared to most of Africa, and antedates the public privatization movement. Conditions for the development of private education in Kenya evolved in the late 1970s and in the 1980s. In particular, limited government funding for university education meant restricted supply of university education against a rising demand for the same, a gap that required the entry of other non-governmental players to fill (UNESCO 2005a). In lieu of this, private universities emerged as a viable option of acquiring higher education in Kenya (Mutula 2002) and have continued to flourish and coexist with public universities in the country. These offer market-driven courses and provide a conducive environment for academic excellence (Okioga *et al.* 2012).

Although the first private institutions of higher learning in Kenya were the St. Paul's United Theological College and the Scott Theological College established in 1955 and 1962, respectively (Onsongo 2007), the actual initial entry of private university education into the country can be traced to 1970 when the San Diego-based United States International University (USIU) established a campus in Nairobi (Waweru 2013), offering degrees in the names of the parent university in the United States of America (USA). Subsequently, in 1978.

Table 2.1: Universities and Allied Constituent Colleges Accredited to Operate in Kenya, 2015

	Name of Institution	Year Established	Year Chartered
	Public Chartered Universities		
1	University of Nairobi (UoN)	1970	2013
2	Moi University (MU)	1984	2013
3	Kenyatta University (KU)	1985	2013
4	Egerton University (EU)	1987	2013

5	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)	1994	2013
6	Maseno University	2001	2013
7	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST)	2007	2013
8	Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (DKUT)	2007	2013
9	Chuka University (CU)	2007	2013
10	Technical University of Kenya (TUK)	2007	2013
11	Technical University of Mombasa (TUM)	2007	2013
12	Pwani University (PU)	2007	2013
13	Kisii University (KSU)	2007	2013
14	Maasai Mara University (MMARAU)	2008	2013
15	South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU)	2008	2013
16	Meru University of Science and Technology (MUST)	2008	2013
17	MultiMedia University of Kenya (MMU)	2008	2013
18	Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOUST)	2009	2013
19	Laikipia University (LU)	2009	2013
20	University of Kabanga (UoK)	2009	2013
21	University of Eldoret (UoE)	2010	2013
22	Karatina University (KARU)	2010	2013
23	Kibabii University	2011	2015
Public University Constituent Colleges			
24	Murang'a University College (JKUAT)	2011	
25	Machakos University College (KU)	2011	
26	The Co-operative University College of Kenya (JKUAT)	2011	
27	Embu University College (UoN)	2011	
28	Kirinyaga University College (JKUAT)	2011	
29	Rongo University College (MU)	2011	
30	Garissa University College (MU)	2011	
31	Taita Taveta University College (JKUAT)	2011	
32	Kimosi Friends University College (MMUST)	2015	
33	Alupe University College (MU)	2015	
Private Chartered Universities			
34	University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB)	1989	1991
35	Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA)	1984	1992
36	Daystar University (DU)	1989	1994
37	Scott Christian University (SCU)	1989	1997

38	United States International University (USIU)	1989	1999
39	St Paul University (SPU)	1989	2007
40	Pan Africa Christian University (PAC)	1989	2008
41	African International University (AIU)	1989	2011
42	Kenya Highlands Evangelical University (KHEU)	1989	2011
43	Africa Nazarene University (ANU)	1993	2002
44	Kenya Methodist University (KeMU)	1997	2006
45	Strathmore University (SU)	2002	2008
46	Kabarak University (KABU)	2002	2008
47	Great Lakes University of Kisumu (GLUK)	2006	2012
48	KCA University (KCAU)	2007	2013
49	Mount Kenya University (MKU)	2008	2011
50	Adventist University of Africa (AUA)	2008	2013
Private University Constituent Colleges			
51	Hekima University College (CUEA)	1993	
52	Tangaza University College (CUEA)	1997	
53	Marist International University College (CUEA)	2002	
54	Regina Pacis University College (CUEA)	2010	
55	Uzima University College (CUEA)	2012	
Private Institutions with Letter of Interim Authority (LIA)			
56	Keriri Women's University of Science and Technology (KWUST)	2002	
57	Aga Khan University (AKU)	2002	
58	GRESTA University	2006	
59	Presbyterian University of East Africa (PUEA)	2008	
60	Inoorero University	2009	
61	The East Africa University (TEAU)	2010	
62	GENCO University	2010	
63	Management University of Africa (MUA)	2011	
64	Riara University (RU)	2012	
65	Pioneer International University (PIU)	2012	
66	UMMA University	2013	
67	International Leadership University (ILU)	2014	
68	Zetech University	2014	
69	Lukenya University	2015	
Registered Private Institutions			
70.	KAG -EAST University	1989	

Source: Commission for University Education 2016, the Seventh

Day Adventists sponsored the creation of the University of Eastern Africa Baraton, Eldoret, followed in 1984 by the starting of the Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA). These three were to become the pioneer accredited private universities following the relaxation of the Kenya government's grip on the provision of higher education in 1990 (Waweru 2013). Despite such growth in private university education, it was not until the 1990s that private university education approached the takeoff threshold in Kenya. While for a long time the Kenya government did not give accreditation to private colleges and universities, in the 1990s, with increased demand for university education, the government began to encourage the establishment and accreditation of private universities (Onsongo 2007). Private providers took advantage of the slow pace of expansion of the public higher education sector to venture into the university education market, thereby accelerating the growth of the private sector. Today, the sector boasts about 20 per cent of all students currently enrolled in Kenya's universities.

By 1994/1995 the number of privately funded university institutions operating in Kenya had increased to 12. These were offering mainly theological-based university-level education. Today there are 37 private institutions of higher education in the country, comprising 17 fully-fledged chartered universities, 5 university constituent colleges, 14 institutions with Letter of Interim Authority (LIA) and one registered institution. Lukenya University is the most recent private institution to be awarded an LIA in 2015. The fully-fledged chartered institutions include University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Daystar University, Scott Christian University, United States International University, St Paul University, Pan Africa Christian University, African International University and the Kenya Highlands Evangelical University. Others are Africa Nazarene University, Kenya Methodist University, Strathmore University, Kabarak University, Great Lakes University of Kisumu, KCA University, Mount Kenya University and the Adventist University of Africa. It should be noted that the CUE has recommended the de-gazetting of two of the private institutions with LIA, namely Inoorero University and GENCO University, as well as the awarding of a charter to KAG-East University, the only registered private institution. When effected, this step will increase to 18 the total number of fully-fledged chartered private universities while reducing to 12 the number of private institutions with an LIA.

Private university education is not homogeneous. The institutions can be differentiated in terms of their missions, mandates and sources of finance. Specifically, there are the 'not for profit' religious institutions, mainly established by religious bodies. These account for the largest number of private universities in the country and base their curricula on some evangelical Christian beliefs and teachings. Among others, they include University of Eastern Africa at Baraton in Eldoret, the Catholic University of East Africa, Daystar University, Africa

Nazarene University, Kenya Methodist University, Scott Christian University, St. Paul's University, Pan Africa Christian University, Kenya Highlands Evangelical University, African International University and Adventist University of Africa. The second category comprises for-profit institutions. These include the United States International University, Kabarak University, Aga Khan University, Mount Kenya University, Strathmore University and Keriri Women's University of Science and Technology, to name but some.

Unlike public universities, private universities offer comparatively fewer programmes, with a bias toward business studies, information communication and technology and the social sciences. Most recently, though, a few private universities such as the United States International University and Mount Kenya University have ventured into science-related disciplines such as nursing, pharmacy and actuarial sciences. In addition, unlike their public counterparts which are mainly dependent on direct funding from the state (and are highly subsidized by the state), private universities depend on endowments, tuition fees and direct funding from founders and sponsors. They have to recover most of their costs from instruction and other services such as hostel accommodation. As a result, private universities are notably expensive compared to the public institutions. The only form of public funding for these universities comes in the form of student loans; but this is notably small compared to the amounts received by public universities.

To sum up, since independence Kenya has experienced phenomenal growth in university education with the public and private sectors growing side by side and complementing each other in the drive to make higher education more accessible in the country. From a single public university (the University of Nairobi) and a single private university (the USIU) in 1970, the total number of fully-fledged universities had increased to 33 (seven public and 26 private) universities and 24 university constituent colleges by 2012 (Ministry of Education 2012). By 2013 the number had risen to a combined total of 53 fully-fledged chartered public and private universities and 14 public and private constituent colleges. As evident from Table 2.1, today Kenya's higher (university) education sector comprises a total of 70 institutions, making it one of the largest higher education systems in Africa. These include 33 public and 37 private institutions. Of the 33 public institutions, 23 are fully-fledged chartered public universities. The remainder include 10 public university constituent colleges. However, the CUE has recommended the awarding of charters to four of the 10 public university constituent colleges – that is, Rongo University College, Taita Taveta University College, Murang'a University College and Machakos University College – a process that will increase to 27 the total number of fully-fledged public universities in the country. The remainder (37) are private institutions and include 17 fully-fledged chartered universities, five university constituent colleges, 14 institutions

with LIA and one registered institution. This number could drop to 37 if the de-gazetting of Inoorero University and GENCO University, as suggested by CUE, occurs.

The growth in the number of public and private universities in Kenya has been accompanied by an impressive growth in student enrolments (Ministry of Education 2002, 2012; Munene 2016; Nganga 2010; Owuor 2012). The rise in new courses offered by universities, the upgrading of public university constituent colleges to fully-fledged universities, the establishment of more constituent colleges and the expansion of private universities has boosted access to university education (Nganga 2014; Munene 2016; SoftKenya n.d). Thus, while at independence in 1963 only about 1,000 students were attending university in Kenya, over the years the overall number has grown very steadily. For instance, the total number of university students rose steadily from 67,558 in 2003/04 to about 240,551 in 2012 (ICEF Monitor 2015; SoftKenya n.d). By 2013, the number had grown to 361,379 students, reaching 443,783 and 470,152 students in 2014 and 2015 respectively (ICEF Monitor 2016). This 2014 number represents a 22.8 per cent growth over the 2013 enrolment figure. The dramatic growth in student numbers has been propped by a government policy of absorbing as many students as possible that meet the minimum admissions qualification (Boit and Kipkoech 2012; Gudo, Olel and Oanda 2011; Nyaigotti-Chacha 2004; Odhiambo 2011; Owuor 2012; Wangenge-Ouma 2012).

The rise in student numbers has been most dramatic in public universities compared to their private sector counterparts, with the bulk of enrolments occurring in the public sector (Mutula 2002; Ngome 2013). Enrolments in public universities increased steadily from 3,443 students in 1970 to about 20,000 students by 1989/1990 (Ministry of Education 2012). The numbers skyrocketed with the 1990 intake of 21,450 students, increasing to a total of 41,000 students. By 1998/1999, total enrolment in public universities had climbed to 42,020 students (Mutula 2002), reaching 67,558 students in 2003/2004. The number increased to 159,752 students by 2009/2010, reaching 198,260 students in 2010/11 and about 240,551 students in 2011/12 (ICEF Monitor 2015; Ministry of Education 2012; Nganga 2014; SoftKenya n.d). By the end of 2013, enrolments in public universities had reached 276,349 students (ICEF Monitor 2015; Nganga 2014). The dramatic growth in enrolments in 2013 resulted from the admission of record numbers of students by public universities, beating their fast-growing private sector rivals and defying infrastructure constraints that have been dogging them.

In contrast, the contribution of the private sector remains minimal, mainly because the majority of private institutions have limited capacity with annual admissions ranging from 500 to 2,000 students (Ngome 2013). In 1998/1999, for example, despite the large number of private universities in Kenya, their

enrolments remained relatively low compared to the public sector, standing at 4,181 students (Mutula 2002). This number had reached 9,541 students in 2003/2004 and rose to 37,179 students in 2009/2010 (Ministry of Education 2012). By 2012, enrolments in private universities had reached 45,023 in 2012 (Ministry of Education 2012), climbing to 48,211 students in 2013 (Nganga 2014). Today, the sector is estimated to accommodate only about 20 per cent of all students enrolled in universities in the country

Despite the massive expansion in numbers of students attending university in Kenya, the proportion of females' enrolment remains relatively low. According to Ngome (2003), for example, of the 1999-2000 enrolments in public universities, female students made up only about 30 per cent, with their under representation being especially noticeable in engineering and technical-based professional programmes. The situation, though, was better in private universities where females comprised 54.5 per cent of the 1999-2000 total student enrolment (Ngome 2003). This is understandable because relative to public universities, private universities admit students with relatively lower average mean grades; overall males tend to outperform females in national examinations and dominate admission to public universities. In addition, most private universities offer social sciences, education, arts, business administration, accounting, and computer studies and therefore easily admit most females who fail to secure admission into the public universities (Ngome 2003). Of the 324,560 students enrolled in universities by the end of 2013, at least 60 per cent were males. During 2013, for example, female student enrolment increased by 25 per cent to 131,375 compared to male enrolment which surged by 42 per cent to 193,185 (Nganga 2014).

Factors Responsible for the Growth of University Education in Kenya

The rapid growth in higher education has been occasioned by a number of factors (Gudo *et al.* 2011; Ngome 2003; Okioga *et al.* 2012). From the broader perspective, the expansion of university education can be understood mainly within the context of the undue emphasis that governments, the world over, have placed on education in general and on university education in particular as an engine of socio-economic growth and development (see e.g. Bailey, Cloete and Pillay 2013; Damtew and Altbach 2004; Kauffeldt 2009; Mosha 1986; Nyangau 2014; World Bank 2009). In virtually all nations, universities are expected to make a sustained contribution to development by equipping human resources with relevant knowledge, skills and value systems through their diversified academic programmes and through the generation and dissemination of relevant knowledge (Bailey *et al.* 2013). Kenya, for example, recognizes that the education and training of all Kenyans is fundamental for socio-economic development (Ministry of Education 2012). The government sees the country's future as a prosperous and internationally competitive nation to be dependent on the university education system. By recognizing the importance

of university education in fostering national development, many governments, including those on the African continent, have endeavoured to improve access to, relevance and quality of education (Okioga *et al.* 2012). This has been responsible for the 'massification' of higher education that has occurred on the African continent as a whole and in Kenya in particular, since the 1990s.

A second broad factor accounting for the expansion in university education is the increasing complexity of modern societies and economies, thereby demanding a more highly educated and trained workforce (Okioga *et al.* 2012). In addition, globally universities have increased in response to the expanded roles and occupations in contemporary societies that require university testing and certification (Chacha 2004; Okioga *et al.* 2012). As Chacha (2004) underlined, academic certification is necessary for most positions of power, authority and prestige in most societies. There is also the perception that university education guarantees a lifelong secure career (Gudo *et al.* 2011). This bestows great power on universities. In this regard, education is considered the answer to the changing nature of the job market characterized by frequent changes of jobs that create the need for further education and training, the desire to advance current employment and create prospects for future careers (Gudo *et al.* 2011).

A leading factor specific to the Kenyan context that is responsible for the expansion in university education is the growing segments of the population that demand university education (Onsongo 2007; Republic of Kenya 2006). In particular, the widespread belief that a degree is required to get a good job, or to advance in a job demand has elevated the importance attached to university education, making it a necessity for success. This in turn has increased the need among many Kenyans, especially those in the middle class, to access university education. The expanding demand for university education has been associated with the increase in the number of secondary school leavers meeting the minimum qualifications (average grade of C+) for university admission that was triggered in part by the massive expansion of primary education (Onsongo 2007), accompanied by increased transition rates from primary to secondary school.

A second factor explaining the growth of university education within the specific context of Kenya is the flexibility afforded by university institutions. According to Gudo *et al.* (2011), individuals who attain lower qualifications are finding universities more flexible than before. Previously, the only way of entering a university was a convincing pass in the Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education (KACE) or, since 1987, the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Today though, individuals who scored lower passes are joining universities, sometimes through the longer route of studying for a certificate, followed by a diploma before one can enroll for a degree programme. Such flexibility has been responsible for Module II group of students which thrives in virtually all public universities in the country.

Concerning private universities in particular, several factors have favoured their emergence and expansion in the country. First, as elsewhere in Africa, private university expansion sprang forth largely due to the public system's failure to meet the demand for higher education. With an ever-growing need to increase higher education provision in the country, it became increasingly impossible for the public sector in Kenya to cater for all those who qualify for university admission (Mwebi and Simatwa 2013; Ngome 2003). Despite the phenomenal growth in the number of public universities, these could only absorb a small proportion of secondary school graduates who met the minimum requirements for university entry. The situation was compounded by the financial inability of the government to continue subsidizing an ever-expanding public university system (Graham and Stella, 1999). This was especially so after the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in 1985 as part of the reform initiatives driven by the World Bank and bilateral donors. The programme called for reforms in the education sector, including the reduction of subsidies to university education. The inability of the public sector to meet the demand for a university education created the need to complement government-managed higher institutions of learning (Mwebi and Simatwa 2013) as well as a gap that called for the entry of other non-governmental players to fill such gap (UNESCO 2005a). According to the Ministry of Education (2012), the government recognized that, without a working partnership between the public and the private sectors in the financing of education, it was going to be hard to address the problems of access, equity and quality. As such, it strongly encouraged private sector partnership as articulated in Sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 and in the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (Government of Kenya 2005). This resulted in the privatization and liberalization of higher education (or the opening up of the sector to private players) and to the provision of incentives to encourage the growth of private sector education (Ministry of Education 2012). This explains the mushrooming of private universities as a viable alternative for acquiring university education in the country (Mutula 2002; Okioga *et al.* 2012).

A second catalyst to the growth in private university education in Kenya is the instabilities that characterize many public universities. Because of poor governance (Mutula 2002), public universities have been pervaded by indiscipline among students. The situation has been aggravated by political meddling, manipulation and intervention (Mwiria, Ngethe, Ngome, Ouma-Odero, Wawire and Wesonga 2007) that has persisted in these institutions. Jointly, indiscipline and political meddling have not only disrupted academic life; they also did occasion major strikes, demonstrations and frequent closures. This has resulted in the prolonging of the minimum time required to complete degree programmes (Mutula 2002; Mwiria *et al.* 2007). According to Mutula (2002), some students take up to six years to complete what should be a four-year basic degree. Matters are compounded by the double intakes that force cohorts to take long vacations to

allow others to be on campus. The growth of private universities has provided alternative avenues for acquiring university education to those who do not desire to deal with such rot in public universities.

The Quality of University Education in Kenya

Like most of her counterparts on the African continent, Kenya recognizes that the education and training of all Kenyans is fundamental to development. As such, the country has always placed education as a priority at all levels, promoting it not just as a basis for social mobility but also as a factor of national cohesion and socio-economic development (Kinuthia 2009; Ministry of Education 2012; Nyangau 2014). In particular, the government sees the country's future as a prosperous and internationally competitive nation to be dependent on the university education system. According to the Ministry of Education (2012), the country's university education system is expected to create sustainable pools of highly trained human resources equipped with the skills required for the country to experience socio-economic development and to remain globally competitive in a rapidly changing and more diverse economy. This will enable the country to actualize the national ambition of being a knowledge-based economy. Given the centrality of (university) education in Kenya's development, the government has, since independence, invested heavily in all sectors of education with the goal to widen access at all levels. Such investments resulted in the country experiencing exponential growth in primary, secondary, tertiary and university education. The term 'massification', which refers to the transformation of a previously elite system to a mass-oriented one as participation expands dramatically (Trow 2000), is frequently utilized to denote the phenomenal growth experienced at the level of university education.

For the university education sector to deliver its mandate, quality of education is of essence. This means that the education delivered by universities must not only be accessible, equitable and relevant to the needs of the economy and society, but must also meet high quality standards. For private universities in particular, quality education is also a major factor for survival. To compete effectively with their private counterparts and to justify the high fees charged to clients, private universities can only rely on the quality factor; they must offer quality education (Kalai 2010). It is the quality aspect of university education that is the subject of the debate ensuing hereafter. Although the construct of quality in higher education is subjective and its meaning contested, with different stakeholders contextualizing it differently relative to their contexts (Nyangau 2014), in our view a quality university education should be one that produces graduates who are fit for (having the requisite skills to discharge) their roles and responsibilities in the labour market. We share the sentiments expressed by Harvey and Green (1993) that the quality of an education system can be evaluated in terms of the

fitness for purpose or the extent to which it is able to facilitate the attainment of the stated goals and objectives; in this case by producing graduates who have the knowledge and skills to drive the country's socio-economic growth and development. As Cheng and Tam (1997) indicated, that quality is, by and large, a function of input, process and output of the system.

The centrality of quality for the university sub-sector in Kenya is underlined by the sub-sector's vision of providing a globally competitive quality education, training and research for sustainable development (Ministry of Education 2012). This is accompanied by the mission to produce graduates who respond to the needs of the society, whilst upgrading the skills of the existing workforce, developing the community and business leaders of tomorrow, as well as the ability to start new businesses to employ Kenyans thereby contributing to the country's economic well-being. So to speak, to realize its mission, university education in Kenya has to promote socio-economic development in line with the country's development agenda; achieve manpower development and skills acquisition; promote the discovery, storage and dissemination of knowledge; encourage research, innovation and application of innovation to development; and, contribute to community service (Ministry of Education 2012). Jointly, the vision, mission and objectives of the university sub-sector echo the Kenya government's goal of having a sustainable, quality and relevant university education for national development.

Existing research suggests that in Kenya, like in most other African countries, the 'massification' of university education raises questions about the quality of higher education. The fast growth of the sector has occurred without effective strategies for ensuring the maintenance of a healthy balance between quality and quantity. Specifically, the rapid expansion in university education in the country has not been accompanied with the provision of resources necessary for the maintenance of high standards, quality and relevance (Okioga *et al.* 2012). This has undermined considerably the quality of the education offered by the sector as well as that of the final product, i.e. the graduates themselves (Kaburu and Embeywa 2014; Munene 2016; Nganga 2014; Nyangau 2014; Odhiambo 2011; Okioga *et al.* 2012). To illustrate, Kaburu and Embeywa (2014) concluded that in many Kenyan universities, quality has become a misnomer (it does not exist). According to them, universities have become production lines where they are biting more than they can chew. Similar sentiments were expressed by Odhiambo (2011), who concluded that universities in Kenya produced graduates who are ill-equipped to compete effectively in a globalized economy. These sentiments are inconsistent with the anticipation that universities in the country will prepare a well-educated, highly-trained workforce for industrialization, modernization, and global citizenship (Nyangau 2014).

Factors Affecting the Quality of University Education in Kenya

The source of the declining quality of university education is the myriad of serious challenges consequent from the phenomenal growth in university education that the sector is faced with (Nganga 2014; Nyangau 2014; Munene 2016). The leading challenges include insufficient or declining funding, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, inadequate and poorly trained academic staff, increasing academic fraud and poor governance. Jointly, these challenges constitute major catalysts to the declining quality of education that is facing universities in Africa in general, and in Kenya in particular. They not only impair the functioning of the sector they also undermine its capacity to effectively deliver on its mandate of a quality and relevant education (Munene 2016; Nganga 2014; Nyangau 2014; Okioga *et al.* 2012; World Bank 2000a). In sum, the challenges as identified have resulted in declining academic achievement and quality of university education. A more detailed profiling of these is presented below starting with insufficient or declining funding.

Insufficient or Declining Public Funding

For the university system to guarantee quality it must be adequately funded. This means that the providers of higher education must be prepared to infuse the finances necessary for the system to deliver quality education that meets the human capital requirements and research demands of the country (Kauffeldt 2009). Unfortunately for Kenya, the dramatic expansion of enrolments in the public universities has occurred simultaneously with declining funding received from government through the Ministry of Education. Government subsidies to public universities are no longer enough, making the funding of the sector one of the biggest concerns in Kenya. According to Munene (2016), for example, the 1990s, as the period marking the rapid increase in the number of universities in the country the bulk of which are public, coincided with the adoption of a market-based policy of financing public universities by the government, thereby ushering in an era of reduced state support for higher education. Since then, government funding for public universities, including the average per capita expenditure per student, has continued to diminish. To illustrate this fact, the *Economic Survey 2014* showed that subsidies to public universities grew by six per cent during the period to reach US\$624 million, from US\$588 million in 2012 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2014); meaning that enrolments to public universities rose seven times faster than funding.

Funding cuts by government have made it difficult for universities to cater to the growing numbers of students taking courses. This has forced public universities to explore alternative strategies (or avenues) for expanding their revenue bases (Ministry of Education 2012; Nganga 2014; Munene 2016;

Mutula 2002; Nyangau 2014). The implementation of the so-called 'Parallel' or 'Module II' programme, which allows public universities to admit privately-sponsored students who fully pay for the cost of their education, is a step in this direction. Such programmes have become increasingly common in Africa. Recent research shows that self-sponsored students are dominating public universities in Kenya (Odhiambo 2011; Sifuna 2010; Wangenge-Ouma 2012). Other measures put in place by public universities to generate extra revenue to augment meagre government allocation include cost-recovery measures and introduction of commercial ventures such as shopping malls, funeral homes, industrial parks, rented-out property and provision of catering services (ICEF Monitor 2015; Nganga 2014; Nyangau 2014; Munene 2016).

The admission of fully-paying students in public universities through Module II and other paid programmes has created the partial privatization of the public sector of university education. This has become a major challenge to the growth of the private sector of university education. It should be noted that, unlike public universities which are heavily dependent on government funding, private universities mainly depend on tuition fees for their revenue and, therefore, are self-sustaining and less likely to suffer the financial crunch evident in the public service. The strategy of the public sector relying on paid programmes to supplement government funding though could be undermined considerably if the directive by the CUE to universities to terminate the offering of diploma and certificate courses by July 2015 (ICEF Monitor, 2015) is eventually effected. By increasing student numbers as well as being good sources of revenue, these courses have become a major cash cow for many public sector higher education institutions. As such, ending them would be a major financial blow to many public universities. Of course, such a move would also hurt private universities. A large number of them experience their highest enrolments at the Certificate and Diploma levels. The only exception is the United States International University which does not offer Certificate and Diploma programmes.

That dwindling financial resources undermine the quality of education provided by public universities is not a moot issue. As stated earlier, to guarantee quality education the university system must be adequately funded. Among other things, sufficient funding is required to develop, maintain and equip teaching and learning facilities such as libraries, laboratories, classroom and office space; to develop and constantly improve the quality of programmes offered; to create a conducive living environment for students; to train and remunerate staff well so as to keep them motivated and committed to their work and to fund research activities. This is consistent with the sentiments expressed by the Ministry of Education (2012) that, among other key ingredients, the quality of education must be founded on not just the students admitted but also on the learning environment created, the curriculum or programmes adopted and the academic staff in the institution. Although commercial ventures and other entrepreneurial

activities offer what appear to be viable alternatives to government funding, if not handled carefully they can be detrimental to the quality of the education provided by (public) universities. Where universities become too focused on revenue generation (commercial ventures), for example, their attention is likely to be diverted from their core business of providing a quality education. This is consistent with the sentiments expressed by Santiago, Tremblay, Basri and Arnal (2008) that universities are no longer viewed as centres of academic progress but of entrepreneurship, with professors, heads of departments viewed as line management and the vice-chancellor being the chief executive. In addition, where students must pay for their education, sometimes the need to attract, retain and satisfy customers may be met at the expense of quality of the education provided to them. In this regard, 'Module II' can thrive at the expense of regular programmes as well as lead to the lowering of academic standards as universities lower minimum entrance requirements to attract those who did not find admission into regular programmes.

Inadequate Teaching and Learning Facilities

Most universities on the African continent in general, and in Kenya in particular, lack the physical facilities required for effective teaching and learning (Akinwumi 2008; Kaburu and Embeywa 2014; Mwebi and Simwata 2013). The rising enrolments in the midst of declining government funding and support and the consequent crisis occasioned by it, have left (public) universities without decent teaching and/ or learning facilities (Munene 2016; Mutula 2002; Nyangau 2014; Okiooga, *et al.* 2012). The institutions are experiencing acute shortages of facilities that are essential for the existence of a suitable learning and teaching environment (Okwakol 2008). In some instances, universities have experienced a general decay and a near collapse of the good physical facilities that existed during the 1970s and 1980s (Okiooga *et al.* 2012) when universities enjoyed significant budgets from government.

The acute shortage of teaching and learning facilities in many public universities manifests itself in many forms. First, public universities experience shortages of classroom (lecture halls) space (Nyangau 2014; Munene 2016; Okwakol 2008) due to the lack of funds to facilitate the necessary ongoing development and maintain such facilities. Some institutions are littered with deteriorating and crumbling buildings (Kauffeldt 2009). Second, public universities are also characterized by the lack of spacious libraries that are adequately equipped (stocked) with current reading materials (Kauffeldt 2009; Munene 2016; Mwebi and Simatwa 2013). Despite serving large numbers of students, such libraries tend to have outdated collections and restricted internet connectivity as a result of funding cuts. This means that students and faculty often work without access to essential components of university work, such as current textbooks and academic journals.

A third manifestation of inadequate learning and teaching facilities in public universities is the lack of basic computer laboratories that are well maintained and have adequate supplies, tools and equipment (Munyasi 2010; Mwebi and Simatwa 2013; Nyangau 2014; Odebero 2010). This restricts students' access to communication technology, denies them access to current information sources and restricts teaching to traditional methods (Munyasi 2010; Mwebi and Simatwa 2013; Nyangau 2014; Odebero 2010; Okwakol 2008).

The fourth pointer to the inadequate teaching and learning facilities characteristic of public universities in Kenya is the lack of adequate and sufficiently equipped science laboratories and workshop equipment for effective teaching and learning (Gudo *et al.* 2011) in institutions offering scientific and technical subjects. This undermines considerably the practical elements of the curricula offered. In addition, many universities lack sufficient funds to sustain a meaningful research capacity (Kauffeldt 2009; Munene 2016; Mwebi and Simatwa 2013). Finally, students in public universities must also contend with distracting living conditions, due to poor quality hostels and official accommodation without adequate healthcare facilities (Mwebi and Simatwa 2013; Okioga *et al.* 2012).

As compared to public universities, private universities tend to have good facilities and infrastructure (Mutula 2002; Okioga *et al.* 2012), on account of having always remained under the microscopic watch of the CUE, formerly CHE, which insists on adherence to strict standards and regulations by these institutions. Library facilities are well endowed with book budgets compared to those in the public sector (Mutula, 2002). They tend to have sufficient as well as current books, journals. Most private universities also have modern infrastructure such as classrooms and offices as well as information and communication technology and internet connectivity allow access to electronic sources of information (Okioga *et al.* 2012).

Inadequacies in teaching and learning facilities in public universities in Kenya undermine their capacity to offer quality education (Gudo *et al.* 2011; World Bank 2000a). Existing research evidence suggests that rising enrolments without corresponding increases in facilities pose a great threat to quality of education provided by universities (Akinwumi 2008; Mwebi and Simatwa 2013; Ngolovoi 2006; Odebero 2010; Ogot 2002). The poor quality and shortage of physical facilities subject students to difficult learning conditions, thereby causing the quality of education provided and hence the quality of the graduates produced by these institutions to deterioration. According to Gudo *et al.* (2011), the ultimate consequence is the mass production of graduates who have certificates without matching academic and technical competence, which in turn makes attempts by universities to meet their objectives a mirage and an exercise in futility. Speaking specifically about the Kenyan situation, Ogot (2002) posited that the quality of higher education in Kenya could be questionable because of inadequate facilities.

A major outcome of insufficient teaching and learning facilities facing many Kenyan public universities is overcrowding. The significant growth in enrolments coupled with declining funding has resulted in more and more students joining universities whose facilities were originally designed to accommodate far fewer students (Boit and Kipkoech 2012; Mutula 2002; Nyangau 2014; Odhiambo 2011; Sifuna 2010; Teferra and Altbach 2004). The obvious outcome of this is overcrowding especially in classrooms. In some universities, for example, sometimes as many as 1,000 students occupy a single classroom. According to Nyangau (2014: 12), 'so severe is the crisis of overcrowding that it is not uncommon to find students standing inside or outside of lecture halls or even perched on windows during lectures'. Similar sentiments are expressed by Gudo *et al.* (2011) who posited that the shortage in classroom space causes students to miss sitting space or to attend lectures sitting outside of the classroom. Overcrowding makes classes increasingly hard to teach and manage effectively (Gudo *et al.* 2011). It also leads to students' lack of concentration and attention to lectures. This has obvious detrimental effects on the quality of student learning, the overall quality of the education received by learners and on the quality of graduates.

Inadequate and Poorly Trained Academic Staff

Central to the success of higher education institutions are the educational resources (or inputs) available to them (Kauffeldt 2009; UNESCO 2005b). These, in addition to buildings and equipment, include the people (staff), necessary to be able to offer well-designed academic programmes (Kauffeldt 2009). A sufficient, highly qualified and effective faculty and sufficient supporting staff are crucial for a quality university education. These should also have sufficient resources to support their efforts, including adequate classroom space, adequate and well-equipped laboratories, adequate library space equipped with current reading materials, access to the most up-to-date computer and other communication technology and access to adequate research funds. Unfortunately, many universities experience tremendous growth in enrolments without an equivalent growth in staffing, thereby suffering severe deficiencies in the academic staff vital to deliver a quality education. In Kenya, for example, the demand for teaching staff outstrips the supply in both public and private universities (Gudo *et al.* 2011). Furthermore, because of the funding crisis affecting Kenyan (public) universities, lecturers are poorly trained and, thus, not properly qualified (Nyangau 2014; Munene 2016).

The staffing situation in most African countries is compounded by brain drain (see e.g., Damtew and Altbach 2004; Kauffeldt 2009; Kelly 2001; Effah 2003; Ngome 2003; Saint 2004; Seth 2000; Wondimu 2003) that has involved the flight of well-qualified academics mostly to North America and Europe, and in some cases to Southern Africa, where pay is much better. This is mainly caused

by the poor remuneration of academics, the undervaluing of faculty and non-conducive working environment (Gudo et al. 2011; Kauffeldt 2009). These make it difficult for universities to recruit and retain good scholars in their fields as there are often more lucrative opportunities in the business world or in some foreign lands. As a result of brain drain, a significant proportion of faculty teaching in many universities in Africa in general, and in Kenya in particular today, do not have the minimum academic qualification of a PhD.

To cope with the severe shortages in academic staff, universities have adopted varied strategies. In some universities, survival tactics have included assigning graduate students and tutorial fellows full teaching responsibilities (Odebero 2010); some of them teaching both junior and senior students. A second coping mechanism is increased workloads for faculty (Gudo *et al.* 2011; Owuor 2012). According to Owuor (2012) in many Kenyan universities lecturers who teach 36 hours a week, lecturers who have no offices, overcrowded lecture halls/rooms; and, limited library facilities, commonplaces. In addition, the shortage of qualified academics has forced many to fill existing academic positions with under-qualified (or incompetent) persons, including graduates from unaccredited universities in India and North America (Gudo *et al.* 2011; Kauffeldt 2009), with public universities being the most affected. Normally, such persons would not have qualified to join the university system. Other survival tactics include encouraging Master's students to elect to take the project instead of the thesis option because it is less rigorous compared to the thesis and the appointing of supervisors from other disciplines where they have no basis on content (Odebero 2010). With specific reference to supervision, for one to be effective, one must not only be in the same discipline as the student but, most important, also share the research interests of the student.

No doubt, the quality of university education suffers a great setback due to inadequate, poorly trained and incompetent academic staff (Gogo 2010; Ngolovoi 2006; Ogot 2002; Oketch 2009). For effective teaching to occur at the university, it requires a minimum ratio of lecturing staff against the number of enrolled students. Based on the Commission for University Education (CUE), the recommended lecturer-student ratio should be 1:50 for theoretical-based courses and 1:20 for practical-based courses [Commission for University Education, n.d (b)]. The shortage of academic staff has rendered it impossible to meet these thresholds.

Poor pay, lack of incentive or reward for good performance and the undervaluation of academic staff by universities (Kauffeldt 2009) cause those who occupy teaching positions in Kenyan universities to have low commitment to their work and to play a limited role in the life of their employing institution (Okioga *et al.* 2012; Standa 2007). Many of them spend most of their time moonlighting; doing consultancy work, working part-time at several institutions or engaging in other forms of income-generating activities so as to be able to

supplement the meagre pay earned from their full-time job. This distracts them from performing their roles effectively. They devote little attention to research or improving their teaching. The situation is best summed up by Bloom and Ahmad (2000:24) who stated that:

Many faculty work part time at several institutions, devote little attention to research or to improving their teaching and play little or no role in the life of the institution employing them. Faculty members are often more interested in teaching another course – often at an unaccredited school – rather than increasing their presence and commitment to the main institutions with which they are affiliated. With wages so low, it is difficult to condemn such behavior.

Bloom and Ahmad's (2000:24) sentiments are echoed in a commentary appearing in a copy of the *Chronicle for Higher Education*, titled 'When family Ties Bind African University', in which Holm (2010) writes:

Many, if not most African academics dedicate surprisingly little time teaching, advising students, conducting research, writing scholarly articles and serving as administrators. Often they are away from their universities for a combined period equals as much as half or more of the academic year.

A closer look at some of the coping mechanisms embraced by universities to deal with the shortage of academic staff reveals that they are detrimental to the delivery of quality education and negatively influence academic rigour (Gudo *et al.* 2011). For instance, assigning tutorial fellows and graduate students full teaching responsibilities undermines the quality of education provided by universities. The gravity of the adverse effects of this practice is best understood within the context of the reality of the poor quality of (lack of rigour in) postgraduate training in many universities today. The heavy workloads many lecturers have to carry render them ineffective in their teaching, supervision and assessment of learners. This is supported by Ngolovoi (2006), who expressed that increased workload and lack of competence among lecturers could be affecting the delivery of quality education to university students in Kenya. Moonlighting and the consequent excessive absenteeism also negatively impact on quality. The net effects of these are poorly trained graduates who employers must invest in considerably for them to acquire the knowledge and skills required to perform competently the duties and responsibilities assigned in the work environment. The effect of poorly trained lecturers is especially evident in the training of postgraduate students, where students are expected to acquire research skills which most of their mentors (lecturers) may have a poor mastery of.

Increasing Academic Fraud

The declining quality of universities must also be viewed within the context of the entire education system in Kenya (Mutula 2002). Specifically, the rising

rate of examination cheating and grade inflation that pervades the primary and secondary levels of education in the country is responsible for students who join the universities with high grades that do not mirror their intellectual capacity (Mutula 2002). Although this has gone on for many years, the peak of cheating in examination appears to have occurred in 2015, with students even in the most rural of areas being able to download and openly discuss examination questions for most courses using social media engines such as *WhatsApp*. This prompted the government, through the Ministry of Education, to suspend the top officials of the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). In their place new officials were appointed with the mandates to investigate the causes of the rampant fraud and to streamline the management of the examination process in the country. The fraud and grade inflation that have characterized the lower levels of education have serious implications for the quality of students joining public and private universities in the country.

The culture of fraud and cheating affecting the lower levels of education in Kenya has infiltrated universities, further undermining the quality of the graduates produced. The situation is complicated further by the mediocre academic climate prevailing in many universities. Because of such a climate, the quality of teaching and learning has been eroded significantly and there has occurred a surge in academic fraud, evident through acts such as plagiarism, fabricated references, students impersonating each other in exams and lecturers demanding money or sexual favours in exchange for passing grades (Nyangu 2014; Munene 2016). To illustrate, most recently, the CUE cancelled five doctoral degrees awarded by Kisii University after it emerged that the five students had only studied for six months each before receiving their doctorates. The situation has been aggravated further by the sprouting of essay writing 'mills' and other assignment completion businesses, which is occurring in tandem with the increasing numbers of university students. This has prompted the Commission for University Education to issue the warning that undetected cheating is damaging the quality of graduates; sentiments that are shared by many other stakeholders. The ultimate outcome is degree holders with limited intellectual capacity. Some universities have initiated steps to cut on the level of academic dishonesty among students by introducing technological software, such as *Turnitin* and *Blackboard*, to detect plagiarism. However, there are indications that technological loopholes are allowing savvy students to beat academic plagiarism software (see e.g., Heather 2010; Fearn 2011). In his paper titled, 'Turnitoff: Identifying and Fixing a Hole in Current Plagiarism Detection Software', Heather (2010) revealed that beating the plagiarism detection system is simple. These sentiments were echoed by Fearn (2011) who indicated plagiarism detection systems are open to simple cheats allowing students to evade detection when submitting copied material. This definitely erodes the utility of such software is the fight against poor quality of education in universities.

Poor Governance

Another major challenge facing higher education in Kenya today is poor governance (Kauffeldt 2009; Nyangau 2014; The World Bank/UNESCO Task force on Higher Education and Society 2000). Good governance is essential for the performance of higher education systems, particularly in countries suffering from scarce or limited resources like Kenya. To be effective, universities require visionary, creative and inclusive leadership. According to the Task Force on Higher Education and Society (2000), good governance promotes education quality. Whereas good governance alone may not be a sufficient condition for attaining quality education, it is certainly a necessary one. A poorly governed institution will neither flourish nor deliver quality education (The Task on Higher Education and Society 2000). This study focuses on the broad subject of governance in higher university education with a specific emphasis on students' participation (or involvement) in governance and decision making processes. A detailed review of the status of governance in universities and of student participation in the governance process is presented in Chapter Three.

For good governance to exist in universities, the institutions must uphold the following six key principles of governance: academic freedom; shared governance; clear rights and responsibilities; meritocratic selection; financial stability; and accountability (Kauffeldt 2009). Academic freedom denotes the right of scholars to teach and publish without controls or restraints from the institutions that hire them or the primary stakeholder, that is, government (Kauffeldt 2009). The principle of shared governance involves notions of cooperative governance and participation in critical decision-making by all those involved in higher education. It expresses the need for faculty and student representation and participation in decision-making (Kauffeldt 2009). It is this principle that is the locus of this study. The study interrogates the extent of students' involvement in the governance processes in both public and private universities in Kenya. The existence of clear rights and responsibilities in universities is manifested in mutually agreed conditions for university operations that provide a stable environment for decision-making. Adherence to the meritocratic selection principle of good governance requires that the selection and promotion of faculty, administrators and students be based on broadly defined merit (Kauffeldt 2009). This is essential to the functioning of higher education. The principle of financial stability refers to the adequacy of funding for universities to be able to meet their demands and to execute their mandates effectively. The final principle of good governance is accountability. It represents the obligation universities and their managers have to justify their activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results of their activities in a transparent manner.

Existing evidence suggests that universities in many African countries in general, and in Kenya in particular, routinely violate the principles of good governance with great frequency. This means that universities in Africa suffer poor governance. In

particular, political interference especially in public universities makes adherence to the principles of good governance a near impossibility (Kauffeldt 2009). In many instances, the intervention is based on the perception that universities constitute a potential threat to fragile and often not well-established political systems and therefore must be closely monitored (Saha 1993). Political meddling can impact negatively on the learning environment and stability in universities. While political activity on campuses has helped address injustices and promote democracy the world over (Okioga *et al.* 2012), it has also inappropriately disrupted campus life including research, teaching and learning. This affects adversely the quality of education provided by universities.

Existing evidence suggests that political meddling has continued to undermine the implementation of this principle. In addition, the lack of cooperation in institutional governance abounds in many universities. Turning to rights and responsibilities, the evidence suggests that whereas many universities have drafted and passed legislation to guide academic freedom, the tendency is for events to occur outside of or around the policy framework, thus creating a culture of uncertainty (Kauffeldt 2009). Another pointer to the existence of poor governance practices in many universities is the politicization of appointments and promotions (Kauffeldt 2009), thereby defeating the very principle of meritocracy that is core to good governance. Concerning the financial stability principle, evidence abounds showing that university education in many African countries, including Kenya, often functions under turbulent financial conditions. The situation is further compounded by the limited financial resources available especially to public universities (Kauffeldt 2009; Ministry of Education 2012; Nganga 2014; Munene 2016; Mutula 2002; Nyangau 2014). In Kenya some progress has been made to instil a sense of accountability especially through the establishment of semi-autonomous agencies, like the CUE, to regulate university education. However, there is still a fair degree of state and higher education system enmeshment that leaves little space for these agencies to operate with the independence necessary to actualize true accountability (Bloom and Ahmad 2000; Kauffeldt 2009).

Other

Other challenges facing university education in Kenya worth mentioning here include the mushrooming of new satellite campuses all over the country and the existence of a weak regulatory framework. To cope with the rising numbers some universities, in the name of meeting the high demand for tertiary education and to raise money for the parent university, have established campuses in cities and towns located in environments that are not conducive to learning such as next to pubs, restaurants and supermarkets, among others. Such satellite campuses are normally cheap and of low quality. They lack even the most basic facilities, such

as libraries and internet access and are normally staffed by a handful of academic staff who in most cases do not have more than a Master's degree; in some instances even that Master's degree is of questionable credibility. The mushrooming of satellite campuses creates a mediocre academic environment that is not conducive to quality education. As a result, the sprouting of such campuses has become a major concern for Kenya's Commission of University Education (CUE), which has ordered the closing of sub-standard campuses by both public and private universities.

Although the Kenya government established a body, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) later renamed Commission for University Education (CUE), to regulate university education as early as 1995, the body initially focused on the accreditation of private universities, leaving public universities' growth virtually unregulated (or unchecked) for years. It was not until 2013 that the CUE's mandate was expanded to cover public universities. The CUE recognizes the need to regulate, coordinate and assure quality in university education. The body, though, has continued to perform poorly on account of the lack of organizational, technical and human capacities to monitor and enforce quality compliance (Munene 2016).

Strategies for Alleviation of Poor Quality of Education

According to Munene (2016), a combination of strategies is necessary to restore quality, especially at Kenya's public universities. For such strategies to succeed, though, it calls for the involvement of the state, regulatory authorities and the institutions themselves. As a first step, Munene (2016) recommends a differentiated public university system for Kenya, with a small number of research universities specializing in high-level research and graduate training. In this regard, he identified the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Moi University, Egerton University and the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, which are older and more established, as having the academic and other resources to assume such a role, leaving other newer institutions established to focus on good-quality undergraduate and Master's level training. A second recommendation for addressing the poor quality of education in Kenya offered by Munene (2016) is change in the funding model utilized by the government. According to him, the current 'one-size-fits-all' approach has failed, and instead programmes should be financed according to how expensive they are to prepare and teach. Thirdly, Munene (2016) emphasizes the strengthening of the university education regulatory oversight. More specifically, he recommends the upping of the budget allocated to CUE if the commission is to harness its technical and human resources for effective monitoring and quality enforcement. However, to be effective, the commission must work very closely with professional associations and internal university quality assurance units. In addition, Munene (2016)

suggested that universities must set up faculty development programmes to train academic staff about the complexities and changing nature of an academic career. Such training is imperative if Kenyan academics are to be introduced to modern teaching strategies that appeal to an evolving student demographic.

Staying with academic staff, it is imperative that universities rethink the remuneration and incentive packages offered to them, as well as initiate improvements in the overall working conditions faced by staff. In our view, it is only through the payment of livable wages to academics that Kenya will move closer to having professional academics who are committed to their work of teaching and research as well as to the life and activities of their organizations. Today's full-time academic employees have perfected the art of functioning like part-time employees whose loyalty lies elsewhere. As indicated earlier, many university academic staff spent the bulk of their time moonlighting; doing consultancy work, working part-time at several institutions or engaging in other forms of income-generating activities so as to be able to supplement the meagre pay earned from full-time employment (Bloom and Ahmad 2000; Holm 2010; Okioga *et al.* 2012; Standa 2007). For the majority of them, the institution employing them provides a contact address rather than a source of livelihood. Finally, to grow quality research among faculty, universities must invest more money in the sector. There is need to supplement the money set aside by universities for research; though the institutions must create capacity among faculty for grant application and competition.