

Abstract

The demand for university education has increased rapidly in the past four decades. Distance Learning (DL) emerged strongly to address challenges spurred by the rising demand for university education. The B.Ed (Arts), by DL at the University of Nairobi (UoN) provides a cost effective opportunity for individuals already in employment to access university education. However, financing the programme remains a challenge to over two-thirds of learners. As a result, dropout rates average 34% annually. The situation is aggravated by lack of an official programme to finance learners in the distance mode compared to their counterparts in regular modes. This paper reports the research that was carried out on learners' perceptions on affordability of the DL programme. In this study, data were sourced from 446 active and 227 inactive learners sampled through stratified random and purposive procedures and using Cross-tabulation with Chi Square and Binary Logistic Regression. The study found that the perceived affordability of DL was statistically associated with total number of dependants, level of income, educational attainment and gender. Overall, the regression model explained up to 70% of variance in the perceived affordability of the programme. The study recommends the need to establish a financing scheme for distance learners; base financial support on significant learner attributes and develop an effective system to verify learners' attributes to ensure effective allocation of resources.