

marking Practices in Higher Education in Kenya: The Case of Public Universities

Magutu, Peterson Obara; Mbeche, Isaac M; Nyamwange, Stephen Onserio; Nyaoga, Richard Bitange

Abstract:

Benchmarking has been used as a tool, a methodology and a technique for continuous improvements in sectoral operations to gain and maintain competitive advantage. This was a survey of benchmarking practices in higher education in Kenya, the case of public universities, whose objectives were; to document the benchmarking activities in the public universities; to establish the challenges facing the public universities in benchmarking. Cross sectional survey was used in this study to collect data from the six public universities with their respective campuses/schools in the population of interest. The respondents were senior administrators and the academic staff. Of the 53 informants who were sampled, 31 responded, thus, a response rate was of 58 percent. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and summarize the data before presenting it in the form of proportions, means, tables and graphs. This was in line with the first and second objectives, which were actually answered in relation to the benchmarking practices in the academic function of public universities in Kenya. The study found out that continuous improvement systems in Kenyan public universities are good, not excellent. The external drivers of change/continuous improvements in public universities are the customers/students as opposed to legislation, while the major internal trigger of change is the actual performance. The public universities effectively and successfully benchmark for continuous improvement. The Kenyan public universities use action research and performance indicators as the sources of referencing information on benchmarks. The most common type of benchmarking in use is development/improvement benchmarking and planning to make use of international benchmarking. Finally, the three critical factors that have influenced the success of benchmarking practices are: time and resource availability: limited duration, comparability and compatibility, which are reasons why the institutions don't practice international benchmarking.