THE DEATH OF ACADEMIA: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DECLINE IN ACADEMIC QUALITY AND THE DECLINE IN QUALITY OF STUDENT SOCIAL LIFE

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ABSTRACT

It was the purpose of this research to determine whether there was indeed a decline in academic and social lives of students. The main focus was on the quality of academic life as perpetuated in the university, and whether this education impacts on students’ conduct. The hypothesis was thus that there has been an overall decline in the content and quality of education that is being administered in the universities, and that this lowering has resulted in a decline in quality of student life in the social, political and economic aspects.

This dissertation tries to demonstrate the link between the decline in the quality of university education and the students’ hedonistic, decadent behavior. It delves into the academic, social, economic and political lives of students with a view to determining the factors that lead to misconduct and potentially harmful or destructive behavior in students.

The study was conducted in the University of Nairobi, the oldest and largest institution of higher learning in Kenya, during the period of April to July, 2011. A random sample of 30 students from different years and degree programs were the respondents. The primary method of gathering data was the questionnaires handed out to the respondents to fill. Several key informants were also used to delve deeper into topics such as examination cheating, drug abuse, alcoholism, commercial sex work and campus politics.

The results indicate that there has indeed been a severe decline in the quality of academics, especially as perceived by the students. There has also been a decline in standards of conduct on the social, political and economic spheres of the students’ lives.

The study serves the important role of bringing to light issues of the quality of university education currently on offer, and the impact it has on students in their formative years. It thus makes it feasible for students, the administrators, policymakers and other stakeholders to get to the root of student grievances and come up with peaceful, lasting solutions such as dialogue instead of the hostile standoffs and violent confrontations that are the mainstay of current solutions to university students’ problems.