

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMAND FOR UNIVERSITY DEGREE PROGRAMMES  
AND LABOR MARKET: A SURVEY OF KENYAN UNIVERSITIES**

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## ABSTRACT

The rising cases of unemployment in many countries are a worrying trend. In Kenya despite the rising levels of education, many graduates remain unemployed. Many private universities and public universities have been established to cope with the demand for university education. The increased enrolment in degree programmes and design of these courses has not been matched with information on the labor market trends. Consequently, it raises questions on the demand and market orientation of the university degree programmes and whether the university course designers are cognizant of labor market trends. The purpose of this study was to establish the sources of information relating to the labor market by university course designers. It further sought to find out the extent of partnership between employers and course designers at the university. This study also aimed at investigating the interconnection between human resource forecasting, availability of pertinent information and the degree programmes offered at the university. The selection of private and public universities to participate was done by purposive sampling. Stratified sampling was used to select degree programmes under investigation. Simple random sampling was used to pick the participants. Data was collected through administration of self administered questionnaires. Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, pie charts and tables. The study found that most university curricula for degree programmes were initially developed to suit labor market demands. However, with changes in time and technology, some programmes have reduced in relevance and no longer suit the labor market demand. Although resources are allocated to cater for new curriculum implementation every year, teaching methods are not regularly reviewed, and lecturers trained yearly on changes in curriculum. Students are also not informed on the need to change the curriculum to suit labor market demands. Most universities rarely organize conferences and workshops that invite global labor market players and have no departments that keep curriculum designers informed on trends in the labor market. There are a number of degree programmes where probability of getting jobs by the students is very low and universities should try to streamline them with the job market. This study recommends that all degree programmes and degree-offering academic units be reviewed on a regular basis in order to ensure that the courses being offered are relevant. The government, through the Ministry of Education should spearhead the establishing and strengthening of an effective mechanism of continuously monitoring the labor market signals and determine appropriate value weightings on some academic programmes so as meet labor market shortages. University programmes offered in the country should be monitored to ensure that they instill skills for self employment, self reliance and self direction on the part of the learners. This would compel the learning institutions to offer programmes that are more relevant and reduce the menace of unemployment.