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**SOCIETY OF
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Dynamics Reverting learners in Institutions of Higher Education in Kenya: Are Learners prepared for change?

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Abstract

This article attempts to interrogate the dynamics reverting young students in the institutions of higher Education in Kenya. It presents the dynamics reverting the young students and tries to bring forth the solutions to these dynamics. The tender age at which students join institutions of higher learning finds them unprepared for social economic conditions they encounter. Most students struggle to fit in, and with lack of proper guidance on time management they eventually find themselves engaging in destructive activities. The children join schools at their young age and learn from elementary, primary, secondary, and textually levels. The children are academically well prepared and pass well in Kenya National Examinations and qualify to join institutions of Higher Learning. These learners after graduating to join these institutions of higher learning lack proper orientation and induction before joining colleges and universities. The young learners lose their identity as they struggle to fit in without proper guidance and preparedness. The eventualities are tragic as some drop out of learning, commit suicide and others commit homicides. Other activities include peer pressure which leads to drug abuse and substance, students' apathy, involvement in religious cults, early unwanted pregnancies and marriages. All these, is a clear indication of societal moral decay and disintegration. Therefore, it is for this reason that this article addresses key issues affecting young people in institutions of higher learning and offers some suggestions to the ministry of education, stakeholders and partners in education to collaborate in introducing orientation and induction programmes as an intervention approach to rescue young lives.

Key words: *Dynamics, Revert, Learners, Institutions of Higher Education*

1.0 Introduction

Dynamics reverting young students in institutions of Higher Learning have been dealt with by many authors. Ayuma and Kiboioy (2019) explain that the tender age at which students join institutions of higher learning are unprepared for social economic conditions they encounter. As they struggle to fit in and with lack of proper guidance on time management, they eventually find themselves engaging in destructive activities.

College and university life can be very challenging especially academically and socially. Due to several variables, managing this problem is a tough nut for many students to crack. Studying can be difficult if there are too many assignments or credit units. In some classes, students are forced to attend 12–15 courses totaling up to 22–30 credit units, depending on the situation, and they are unable to manage distractions. The distractions at the University come in all shapes and sizes, and technology has only made things worse. Most frequently, using their phones to engage in lengthy conversations and calls of all kinds diverts students from their studies. As a result, they fall short of expectations (Mikulec& Hamann, 2020). Since the work is challenging, some students can receive their first failing grades, despite the majority of these students having done well in high school. Some subjects in high school are not as challenging as those in college. The expectations and grading philosophy of a particular lecturer must be understood by the student. It would be expected of the students to keep their own timetables and form disciplined study habits. No one is present to compel the student to study, attend class, or obtain a restful night's sleep. The structure that works for each student must be developed by them (Webber, 2017).



Although many classrooms are small, huge classes might be overwhelming for certain students. Some pupils can be the ones with the least background in the subject area or the youngest in the class. For many pupils, who are accustomed to being the smartest and oldest, this is a significant change. Some lecturers might not be as interesting and difficult as students anticipated. Some professors deliver engaging lectures, but not all of them. Some instructors run discussion-based classes and count on the participation of the students. It could be difficult for shy students. Assignments that include reading and writing can be challenging for certain pupils. It's possible that the amount and quality of writing necessary will be more than what was expected in high school. Some students require more writing, grammar, spelling, and other assistance. Some readings could be trickier and more challenging than you anticipate. Assignments can call for extensive reading and take much longer than what students plan. Students could have performance anxiety. Some students may adore their advisor, while others may not (Rotellar& Cain, 2016).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Time Management skills

Every student who wants to stay in university must have solid time management skills. Time is extremely valuable and cannot be gained back once gone. There is only so much that can be accomplished in a day. Learn time management skills to avoid having issues with incomplete assignments, arriving late for lectures, carryovers, etc. The learners of the new generation struggle with time management when it comes to finishing academic work such as projects, assignments, take-home tasks, and others. There are challenges faced by learners and especially in the quantity of work in institutions of higher learning. A student can be carefree one minute and then suddenly find their self-buried in essays, projects, and other obligations. As a student, everything has been completed and to their satisfaction since they are persuaded to plan their time. Although "the best you can accomplish" is far more preferred by course instructors than "satisfactory," it is crucial to distinguish between the two expressions, thus, if you give everything their best, and you strive perfection, then it absolutely needs to be done, it is always a risk to their health and a harmful waste of time (Sato, Eckert & Turner, 2018).

2.2 Financial Constrains

For many people, having money issues is arguably the biggest obstacle to getting a good education and improving their studies. However, if you truly desire something, you can always find a way to get it (Periyakoil, Neri& Kraemer, 2016). One of the Dynamics that students confront in college in the twenty-first century is money issues. When working and attending school, many students find it challenging to make ends meet. Students must alter their academic and employment schedules in order to solve this money issue. Students' experiences with changes and financial hardships are influenced by their prior education, experience, course requirements, background, and history. Students are still in a tight financial condition as a result of the sharp increase in college costs. Financial issues can result from heavy workloads from classes, a desire for financial and personal independence, and a lack of adequate support systems. As the expense of higher education in both public and private educational institutions continue to climb, students in higher education need more money to meet the cost of study and living in universities. Due to limited resources and escalating educational expenditures, students may have financial issues in their daily lives (Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016).

Some students only rely on scholarships and student loans for financial help because they have no other options. Some students are orphans or come from low-income families. Because they worry about their academic standing, some students may also be scared to take on part-time job. Small businesses have not yet received finance from either governmental or private sources. For students, especially those from low-income households, inadequate funding or a lack of financial support is a burden because it might impact their academic performance (Msigwa, 2016).

The usage of debit and credit cards, which can cause users to spend more than they can afford, the absence of a spending plan or budget, and debt incurred as a result of high and unsustainable tuition prices are all potential sources of financial difficulties for college students. Most college students find themselves in debt because of escalating prices for things like tuition, housing, food, supplies, and transportation. This is because they borrow money to cover these expenses. Students said that although the additional hardship funding allotment was significant for many reasons, it was mostly used to cover necessities of life including food, rent, and home expenses. A secondary concern was using the money to support lifestyles or hobbies (Zainudin, Mahdzan&Yeap, 2019).



2.3 Bedevilments

The two most frequent types of bedevilment experienced by students such as sexual bedevilment and bedevilment from cult members. The majority of sexual bedevilment cases involving female students involve male students or any other person with money. The majority, if not all, institutions have adopted this as the norm, and any students who don't comply will be at the mercy of the teachers who are Randy (Olaigbe&Fagbenro, 2021).

Numerous students at Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) encounter sexual bedevilment, which has negative effects on their mental, physical, and intellectual well-being. Evidence suggests that between 50% and 90% of female undergraduates encounter sexual bedevilment at school. Peers, instructors, and staff members from IHE are just a few examples of the many people who might harass students. Depression, PTSD, embarrassment, alcohol usage, and disruptions to academic experiences are some of the unfavorable effects of sexual bedevilment. IHEs' inadequate responses may make victims' trauma symptoms worse. Gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation are three overlapping categories that have not received much attention in sexual bedevilment studies in the past. These identities and their intersections may affect the risk and results of sexual bedevilment, according to emerging data and theory (Wood, VothSchrag& Busch-Armendariz, 2020).

2.4 Social Dynamics

Taking time off to socialize and have fun is not a taboo. Sometimes the workload in school might be too overwhelming and the best way to unwind is to attend social functions. Socializing is not a problem but still, many students find it difficult to balance schooling and fun. Not knowing when to have fun and when to study has greatly affected the academic performance of many. Partying is good, hanging out is also good but academic success is the major reason for being in school and should not be neglected (Biesta, 2020).

2.5 Health

Health concerns are common among students. Some students have unintentionally become book worms in an effort to achieve their predetermined goals of succeeding; they read nonstop for long periods of time without taking pauses or eating a balanced diet. This has led to many people losing it. In addition to this, diseases are frequently contracted when more than three pupils must share a room and a toilet. This presents a significant difficulty for students who reside in university dorms (Fennelly, 2020).

Approximately 75% of young adults aged 18 and over reported to feeling hopeless at some point in 2017 according to a recent study, according to Clinical Psychiatry Times. For a variety of reasons, teens and young adults are especially prone to suicide ideation and self-harm during their high school and college years. Many cases of mental health struggles in high school and college students arise from environmental factors at home, among friends, through extracurricular activities, jobs, academic pressures, and more. While many students are predisposed to mental health issues due to genetic family history, this is not always the case.

Feelings of inadequacy can emerge in students. There is peer pressure to act or think a specific way, even to consume more alcohol than one would like to. Courses might be more difficult than anticipated, and drugs might become easily accessible for studying and partying. While some students may need to work one or two jobs to pay the bills, other students may have their family cover all of their expenses. It's not as if the privilege does not come with a specific set of requirements. A busy schedule, a lack of resources, and the everyday demands of life can cause eating healthily and exercising consistently to start to slip. Students who are being exposed to other cultures and ways of life for the first time in their lives may also find it to be quite difficult. All of these situations, as well as others, have the potential to exacerbate already present mental health problems or cause the emergence of new ones that could last the remainder of their lives (Kahan, 2019).

2.6 Relationship Dynamics

Most of the time, especially in the early years of schooling, it is not advisable for students to get involved in relationships. This has nothing to do with terrible relationships. For no other reason than that dealing with relationship difficulties can be very demanding and time-consuming, and not all students are able to handle their distracting effects. Recent studies have revealed that a significant proportion of student suicides are caused by breakups in relationships. While having social interactions in tertiary institutions may have certain advantages, such assisting students in adjusting, there are also drawbacks. The rise in alcohol usage among college students is one of the main issues with



intimate friendships. Students who live with alcohol-dependent roommates often succumb to peer pressure and begin drinking themselves. This might be the outcome of some kids' desire to blend in and be accepted by their peers. Students living in residence halls are more likely to consume alcohol than those living in private housing since these settings are known to be connected with heavy drinking (Hernandez, 2019).

Furthermore, these kids' academics will typically suffer as a result of their heavy drinking. Typically, male students are more severely impacted by these demands than female students. It has also been acknowledged that student peer groups can have an impact on their adjustment, socialization, and academic success. It is suggested that there is a substantial association between student participation in higher education and academic performance. The academic achievement of a student will suffer if they do not feel included in their peer group. However, this sense of belonging is primarily reliant on shared traits including race, gender, academic ability, and political background. If a person does not share any of these traits, then there will be no sense of belonging, which will negatively impact academic performance. Additionally, it mentioned how social connections can interfere with academic success. The majority of friendships that do not involve academic discussions are like this. The situation is different, though, when the friendship involves scholarly endeavors. Students in friendships or romantic relationships can have differing notions about their relationships, which causes the participants to feel less satisfied in their interactions. Being in the same institution as people with whom one has deep relationships has another drawback in that if they are not as committed as that person is, it will be obvious and will ruin the relationship. The commitment to emotional and physical intimacy required in romantic relationships extends to friendships to some level (Jones, Lueras& Nagel, 2018).

2.7 Depression

The number of depression cases at universities and colleges has peaked. There are several reasons why students get sad, including rape, interpersonal trauma, and low academic achievement. When this occurs, people turn to drugs, excessive partying, etc. to find solace. Suicide ends up being the sole option in the majority of situations. The prevalence of depressive illness is much higher among first-year students, students from underprivileged backgrounds, and students who live off campus. Year of study, academic performance, religion, and college attended are other factors that are significantly linked to higher depression levels. Students who used smoke, binge drank, or were older were more likely to suffer from depression. Increased societal pressure to succeed and students' lack of life skills are often cited as the root causes of this problem by experts and academicians. Students today are heavily indebted. Additionally, students now face fewer employment opportunities than those of past generations. These additional worries can cause college students to experience depressive episodes (Bhujade, 2017).

2.8 Orientation of students in institutions of higher education

Higher education orientation programs remain one of the most effective strategies for promoting college and university student persistence and retention (Deggs, 2011). Orientation brings new students and institutions together to recognize the individual and personal needs of students as they enter a new environment (Mann, 1998). This is important because understanding each student's individual needs helps college and university administrators provide students with effective and positive interactions within the college environment, ultimately increasing students' intentions, goals, and commitments (Tinto, 1975, 1988, 1990). According to Osoro and Nyamwange (2023) many of the challenges that new students present are centred on relationships. They further argued that although students are advised to visit the counseling centers for guidance, very few visit the facilities. This shows that students need to be handled by professional counselors and not anybody who has counseling skills.

College student engagement (Kuh, 2003; Kuh et al., 2005), starting with new student orientation, plays a key role on college and university campuses by improving student satisfaction and persistence. Some of the students especially first years might take a lot of time to adjust to the new environment. Low rates of student persistence and degree completion have caused concern for administrators at most colleges and universities (Museus et al., 2017). This worry relates to the effect of dissatisfied students on other students' happiness and success and the potential for it to negatively impact the institution's financial strength. Student attrition researchers have focused on academic reasons for student departure rather than nonacademic reasons (Jenkins et al., 2013).

However, understanding the cocurricular lessons, such as orientation, student leadership, athletics, campus employment, and how they influence students' decision to leave, is important because these factors also affect student attrition (Astin, 1999; Hurtado, et al., 1998). Thus, institutional leaders must develop and maintain a community that



supports student persistence and satisfaction, beginning with new student orientation (Manns, 2002; Stewart et al., 2015). Over the years, however, new student orientation programs have shifted, and although their purpose has remained, the structure and delivery method has transformed.

Nevertheless, to orient students to all aspects of their new academic, social, and co curricular life, programs should be longer than 1 day and begin well before classes start (Attinasi, 1989; Deggs, 2011). Orientation professionals who oversee programs, especially summer programs, should understand how a sense of belonging develops prior to, during, and after the program. Belonging matters because students develop a sense of community and institutional identity during their first semester of college (Manns, 2002). Developing a student's sense of belonging begins during the orientation; therefore, orientation professionals must think about how all aspects of their programs encourage a sense of belonging.

A student's feelings of belonging affect their motivation, engagement, achievement, and overall persistence (Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 1995; Zumbrunn et al., 2014). Connection and feelings of belonging are critical to persistence to graduation. Therefore, orientation professionals must understand their impact begins before campus arrival. Students who feel rejected and lack a sense of belonging represent a major cause for concern. Consequently, student engagement (Kuh 2001, 2009), which begins during orientation, represents one solution to college retention problems (O'Keeffe, 2013). To ensure that students persist at their institutions, administrators must develop strategies to enhance the perception of the educational environment for all students (Barry & Okun, 2011).

Understanding why a student fails to persist does not always directly inform how institutions can solve the problem (Tinto, 2006). Additionally, Maguire's (1976) assertion that enrollment management matters to the student experience still resonates, especially at small private institutions. The need for enrollment management stems from the complexity of the basic requirement of every admissions department. They must recruit the next year's class while balancing student experience with headcount goals, net revenue, quality and composition, yield, and retention (Maguire, 1976). Retention starts at recruitment and becomes orientation the moment a student registers for their first classes. It is important to understand how positive college experiences, such as an orientation program, influence and impact student persistence and success (Tinto, 2006). First-year experiences are critical to college persistence (Ribera et al., 2017). In a collaborative and structured fashion, colleges and universities can improve student access, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.

Orientation involves a thoughtful programmatic service effort designed to facilitate the transition of new students to the institution while also preparing them for the educational opportunities and student responsibilities they will encounter ("NODA OTR Definitions," 2012). Additionally, administrators use orientations to integrate new students into the institution's intellectual, cultural, and social climate while supporting new students' families and loved ones. Consequently in, orientation programs facilitate students' assimilation and socialization to college (Pasarella et al., 1986) while bringing new students and institutions together to recognize students' individual and personal needs as they enter a new environment (Mann, 1998). Orientation and transition programs and services should be tied to the institution's mission and to its students' overall positive development (Pope, 2001).

Orientation programs benefit from basic planning and careful thought around the intended outcomes, such as equipping students with the tools needed to navigate their transition (Zis, 2002). Orientation professionals should focus on how the entire campus staff can work to meet students' expectations and establish identified outcomes (Zis, 2002). For example, prior to the start of classes, students can benefit from social activities that develop their social engagement skills (e.g., communication, negotiation, collaboration, and making friends; Thomas, 2013). College and university administrators must integrate programs and processes that create a robust and healthy college environment for student learning and retention. Possibilities include living-learning communities, new student orientation, specific first-year transition activities, and coordinated study programs (Kerby, 2015). Actions intended to improve student persistence must be calculated, strategic, systemic, and well-reviewed.

3.0 The dynamics in relation to postgraduate students

Some postgraduate problems are likely to be faced by everyone, whether they stay on to study or put down their pens. Here are some problems they are likely to face after they have graduated: the choice to continue studying or not. They may make this choice before graduating, or they may take a break from studying for a while. But at some point, they



will have to decide whether to carry on with education or not. This is likely to be the first problem they will face as a postgraduate. They need to talk to friends, parents, tutors, lecturers and any contacts they have within the industry that they want to go into.

Losing old friends and making new ones may be another problem. During their Bachelor studies, they may have had a close group of friends. They were all thrown into a new course and housing together at the same time. They were pretty much all the same age and embarking on a new chapter of their life together. However, now they are likely to be going their separate ways, they may find that some of those friendships disintegrate. This is completely normal, they are no longer seeing each other as much, so it happens.

As a postgraduate, it can be hard to make new friends. If they go home, their childhood friends may not be around anymore, or they may have grown apart. As they get a role in their chosen career path, they will likely make new friends, though it can be a little difficult as people who are older and more experienced are no longer “off-limits” for friendships.

Key friendships have already been made and their network of friends may not be around anymore. They therefore, try to find other postgraduates to connect with, and get involved with social groups in attempt to form new friendships at their Unit.

Comparing themselves to others may be another challenge. With social media, it's not hard to see what everyone else is doing. They may see that their friends have taken a different road to theirs and start comparing themselves to them. It's completely natural to do this, but they should not let it get to them. They ought to remember that what's right for their friends might not be right for them, and they only get a small snapshot of someone's life on social media. If they find their self-making comparisons between their chosen path and their friends, it might be time to unplug for a little bit. They need to focus on their own life, their nearby friends and what makes you happy.

Lack of life skills after graduation may be a challenge too. College and university life can be the absolute best years of a person's life; full of fun, freedom and meaningful learning that helps you on the way to getting the career that you have always dreamed of. However, suddenly leaving the comfort zone of college and being thrust in to the big wide world can often be a daunting and scary time for new graduates. Though they may be equipped for certain niche careers, they also need to have learnt and know how to apply a number of important practical life skills in order to be able to fully embrace and adjust to this new, fully-adult life. To help any graduate along, here are seven skills that everybody should have mastered before they leave college:

i. Time Management

While at college, if they happened to oversleep and miss a class, the worst that can happen is that they have to make up for the missed learning another time. This isn't the case in the working world, and if they are late to their job then the likelihood is that they are going to be out of work pretty quickly! In the last year of their college experience, make the serious effort to never be late for appointments; it will stand them in good stead for the transition.

ii. Critical Thinking

Gaining a grasp of critical thinking allows them to be more creative in both the way that they learn and the way that they tackle different problems in life. They never know what their life after graduation is going to throw at them, so consider taking a few philosophy classes to help open up their mind and be able to use more logic, more reason and see from more than one perspective.

iii. Public Speaking

The idea of public speaking can be a seriously daunting one for the shy students among them, but the more their work on their 'voice' while in the comfort zone of college, the more confident and successful they will be when it comes to applying this skill in the real world. Perhaps they have a go at a few debate classes before they graduate. It will give them heaps of experience and momentum for occasions like important job interviews.

iv. Research

Research is part and parcel of higher learning. Fine tuning research skills is very important and a distinguishing feature to be able to boast after learners graduate, as a good research mind will always have a plan B for a situation and will know how to begin tackling almost any problem.



v. Software Skills

It is a sign of the times that computer and software skills are more important to have than ever before. Almost all good graduate jobs these days will involve a considerable amount of computer and online work, so the more proficient they are in these areas from the get go, the more successful and fast moving their career will probably be.

vi. Business Writing

Business writing or formal writing, is essential in the post-graduation phase, as they will probably be spending most of their time composing job applications and personal statements to various companies. The more impressive their writing is, the more chance they will have at being noticed and asked for an interview.

vii. Teamwork

Though they may have been able to get through college keeping their self to their self and burying their head in their books, mastering teamwork is going to be an integral part of succeeding in the real world. The majority of careers involve interaction and collaboration with others, and they could be the smartest person in the room, but if their attitude remains somewhat selfish with regards to work, they will struggle to succeed.

4.0 Way forward

The lecturers and researchers in the institutions of Higher Education need to:

- Develop a strategy on guidance and counseling for the learners before joining these institutions of higher learning.
- The ministry of education, stakeholders and partners in education to develop a curriculum which offers orientation and induction programmes
- Develop an intervention approach to rescue young lives.
- Develop critical and creative skills to handle futility of change to adopt in the new environment

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