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SUSAN M. KILONZO AND KITCHE MAGAK

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Challenges and Prospects of Social Science Research and Publishing in Institutions of Higher Learning in Kenya

Abstract: This article examines the challenges and prospects of social science research and publishing at two public universities in Kenya. Specifically, it interrogates the advances and bottlenecks of academic research and publishing by scholars at universities in low-resource settings. In such underresourced settings, publishing in international refereed journals (and books), which is the threshold for academic endorsement at Kenyan public universities, becomes a nearly impossible mission for most scholars, even the most gifted. This article has three objectives: to examine the link between teaching, research, and publishing; to explore the challenges of producing relevant and innovative publishable research literature; and to make quality research and peer-reviewed publishing relevant to local and global contexts. Through a survey study, the article attempts to shed light on the conflicts and dilemmas experienced by public university lecturers who are compelled to juggle heavy workloads, poor remuneration, consultancies, and parallel teaching with their research and publishing demands. Maseno and Kenyatta Universities have been selected to help provide examples for this analysis. Questionnaires containing open-ended questions were administered to 300 respondents consisting of university lecturers and postgraduate students. The information obtained via the questionnaires was validated through in-depth oral interviews of randomly selected respondents.

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The relentless pressure to publish, quickly and continually, dictates the sustenance of one's academic career. Scholars who do not meet the demands of this rigorous central rule in academia, regardless of the importance of whatever else they are doing in the field, are routinely marginalized by both peers and institutions. It is arguable that a significant percentage of the substandard work submitted for academic publishing is attributable to this professional pressure. This pressure is a global phenomenon but is singularly acute in low-resource settings such as in the developing world.

In Kenyan universities, the challenges of research resources and other demands, especially of the parallel programs, has meant slow progress in research and publishing activities among lecturers. The internationally peer-reviewed journals emphasize the quality of research content for any journal articles. Consequently, research papers from university lecturers, which fall short of the quality demanded, have not found a place in these journals. This has in turn meant the creation of alternatives by publishing houses, which exploit this need to provide secondary avenues. Against this backdrop, this article examines the challenges of research and publishing in international peer-reviewed journals. It does so by focusing on the challenges associated with demands of workloads and limited resources, which has been exacerbated by both the introduction of parallel studies programs and poor salaries offered to lecturers. Worse still, poor remuneration has given rise to preoccupation with consulting services by lecturers who are striving to make ends meet. Some of them have been able to publish their consultancy research, sometimes without the knowledge and permission of their contractors, in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters. The article also examines the alternatives employed by university lecturers to publish. For a fee, usually an exorbitant fee, academics who fail to meet the strict high standards of peer-reviewed journals opt for the easily accessible "commercial journals." These commercial journals are lifesavers for lecturers who would otherwise be professionally fossilized by scanty or no publications in hard-to-access peer-reviewed journals. For example, in the two Kenyan public universities under review here, career reviews and promotions are mostly pegged to publications in "internationally recognized journals" and so these commercial journals that claim to have an international face, have served the desperate lecturers well.

Located on the outskirts of Kisumu City in western Kenya, Maseno University is one of the more recently established public universities and can be categorized as rurally based. Kenyatta University, by contrast, is a peri-urban university on the outskirts of Nairobi, with a much longer academic history and more international recognition. This study sought mainly qualitative data through a descriptive cross-sectional survey and makes observations at a single point in time with interviews conducted between December 2011 and early April 2012. The descriptive survey helped us to document the opinions and attitudes of a sample population that would otherwise have proved too large for this kind of study. The study population was drawn from the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences at both universities and

consisted of doctoral students, lecturers, senior lecturers, and associate professors. The justification behind this choice of population was dictated by the publication demands made by the universities on these groups. Ph.D. students are expected to publish (with their supervisors) from their dissertations before they graduate. The other categories of the study population have to publish in internationally peer-reviewed journals in order to be considered for promotion.

The use of snowball sampling for the students gave us a total of 54 interviewees, 29 from Maseno University and 25 from Kenyatta University, the numbers guided by saturation points. For the lecturers, senior lecturers, and associate professors, we first administered 246 semistructured questionnaires, 41 for each group at the two universities through random selection of participants in departments on the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences. We then did the first analysis that would help us to rate the reliability and validity of information from the data characteristics. We considered the data we received sufficient for the study. These samples gave us a total of 300 respondents. We then simple-randomly selected participants to whom we had administered the questionnaire for follow-up. By the forty-sixth respondent, complete saturation of the information clarification had been reached. The follow-up was done through in-depth oral interviews that were transcribed but using the semistructured questionnaire that was used to interview the respondents. The in-depth oral interviews were informal and very collegial, which helped to build trust with the respondents interviewed for the follow-ups. However, despite the change in approach, the validity of the data obtained from the self-administered questionnaire was no different from the oral in-depth interviews except for a few additions that had not been noted on the questionnaires.

For analysis, the information collected through the questionnaires and oral in-depth interviews was first subjected to open coding (where we labeled by use of codes, words, and phrases in the texts) and then axial coding to create themes and categories from the labels. These themes and categories provided subtopics of discussion and narratives for presentation as guided by the research objectives.

We acknowledge that the descriptive survey employed might have been disadvantaged for generalizations because we depended on *self-reported* data as well as *on-the-spot* responses. However, we used follow-ups and our longtime experience at these institutions for checks. Where possible, we also tried not to make overgeneralizations that were not empirically supported by the field data.

The Nexus Between Teaching, Research, and Publishing

The unprecedented expansion of higher education in Kenya has had serious implications for the nexus between teaching and publishing. First, it is important to give the background of this connection.

Since the mid-1980s, public universities have expanded significantly in Kenya in response to a higher demand for university education. To emphasize this expansion Oketch explains:

In recent times, and with a rapidly expanded education system coupled with sluggish economic growth, the number of those with university education has grown more than the labour market can quickly absorb. At the same time Kenya's higher education has also become diversified in supply since the government no longer monopolizes the supply of university places as it did in the first two decades of Kenya's independence. (2009: 18)

Kenya appears to be riding the crest of the rising tide of tertiary-level expansion that is spreading across eastern and southern Africa (Hughes and Mwiria 1990: 216). This expansion is explained by the spread of both public and private universities in the country. Unlike its East African counterparts after independence, Kenya leaned toward capitalism. Higher education in Kenya took an elitist form from the beginning and operated on a *laissez-faire* basis that allowed the operation of market forces to some extent. Access to university education was secured through competitive examinations as the only consideration. The pressure was high in view of expanding primary and secondary education in the country in the 1970s and 1980s. This meant that the few existing public universities could not accommodate those qualifying from secondary schools. Private universities, therefore, became an option, especially for those with the financial means. In fact, two private university institutions began operationing in Kenya in the 1970s. The first was the United States International University (USIU), which opened a small campus in Nairobi in 1970. The second was Baraton University of Eastern Africa, established in 1980. The readiness to offer higher education on market principles later supported the steady growth of both public and private higher education institutions beginning in the mid-1980s. This steady growth was not paralleled in any other country in eastern and southern Africa, except in South Africa (Hughes and Mwiria 1990). At face value, this is an impressive development given global trends toward privatization (www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/2-kenya-edu.pdf). The privatization was not only linked to private universities. Public universities in Kenya have also applied the same approach for students who do not attain the high scores that enable them to secure direct government admission through the Universities Joint Admission Board (JAB). These students must fully sponsor their own education at higher rates than those who meet the government cutoff points. Self-sponsored students, as Otieno (2004) argues, gain entry to universities on the basis of different criteria that vary from university to university. At the very initial stages of what is popularly known as Module II or Parallel Programs, candidates had to be Form Four (i.e., the fourth and final year for a student to obtain a secondary school certificate, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education, in Kenya's 8-4-4 system) school leavers who met the minimum entry requirement of C+, but could not meet the entry cutoff point for government sponsorship. In an attempt to increase the number of self-sponsored students, various institutions have made admission conditions more flexible and accepted students from different academic backgrounds including holders of A-level certificates, the Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education (KACE) from the old 7-4-2-3 system, P1 holders, diploma holders, and certificate holders from

other government-recognized institutions.¹ The demand for higher education from all these groups has meant double intake in some universities.

African universities, until the 1980s, enjoyed full financial support from their governments. Higher education in Kenya was free, with the public purse covering both tuition and living allowances (Weidman 1995). The rationale for free higher education in Kenya was based, among other things, on the country's desire to create highly trained manpower that could replace the departing colonial administrators (Chacha 2004). The implication of this was that the institutions depended on the economic performance of the states. Africa's rapid population growth, the oil-crisis of the 1980s, and the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank adversely affected virtually all economic sectors. Subsequently, it was more urgent to satisfy the growing needs in education, health care, and food (Otiende 1986). The subsequent financial crisis reduced government funding, which in turn compelled the public universities to embark on a battle for survival. Kenya, like most parts of Africa, had to reform its institutions of higher learning. It was decided that universities should endeavor to become self-sustaining—an era that saw the introduction of cost sharing in Kenya (Eshiwani 1990). In the mid-1980s, management of these institutions was decentralized to allow the institutions' leaders to decide on the best means of introducing income-generating activities. Most of the universities became autonomous from the state, and the leadership was mandated with decision making. At this time donor-support institutions from the North also became an option for the universities to further their research agendas.

Since the late 1980s, the provision of higher education in Kenya has become increasingly diversified. The diversification has taken two forms. The first form has been the establishment and growing prominence of private universities and the second has been privatization within the state universities through the introduction of "parallel" programs (Oketch 2009: 20), which in other research has been explained as resulting from the great expansion of public secondary and higher education in the late 1980s (Eisemon 1992: 157).

Kenya has seven public and nineteen chartered private universities. Both the public and private universities have several campuses and constituent colleges in most parts of the country, especially in the major cities and towns. Kenyatta University, for example, has eight campuses in several cities and towns across the country, including Mombasa, Ruiru, Nairobi, Nyeri, Kitui, Migori, and Nakuru. Maseno University has a Kisumu City Campus, learning centers in the towns of Homa Bay, Migori, and Kisii, and a constituent college in Bondo Town. The two universities collaborate with many other institutions to offer their programs.² Even with all these universities and their many campuses and constituent colleges, the demand for higher education still far outstrips the supply.

The tripartite problem of access, equity, and quality is worsened by the ever-increasing demand for higher education. For instance, out of 90,000 students who qualified for university admission in 2009 and 2010, only 31,611 found placement in

the public universities (<http://allafrica.com/stories/201106300099.html>) by the JAB, which controls government-sponsored students' admissions to the universities.

Challenges of Teaching, Research, and Publishing at Kenyan Universities

A number of interrelated factors in the academic environment can affect the linkage between teaching, research, and publishing. This research indicates that, among other reasons, the expansion of the universities in the country has created an imbalance between teaching loads, research, and publishing, putting both the lecturers and the system under pressure. The research also shows that the heavy teaching loads result mainly from the institutions' inability to employ enough qualified staff and the freedom of the lecturers to access as many part-time jobs as they deem necessary.

Increasing student numbers, diverse course/training requirements for these students, and the increasing demand for education has meant a shift in teaching and learning activities. The academics interviewed expressed concern that the heavy workloads would result in a decline in collegiality, autonomy, and increasing poor management of the universities.³ At the same time, their research activities have been diminishing, and this directly affects the quality of teaching and learning activities and, in general, the quality of educational output.

The Kenyan government may not be entirely committed to furthering research at institutions of higher learning, especially in social science research. For instance, the government gives approximately US\$120 per year—US\$10 per month—to Maseno University lecturers for research. Research is an expensive activity and poor funding or a lack of funding sounds a death knell to individual and institutional academic progress. Understandably, the government does not have the financial ability to provide adequate research funding, but US\$120 a year is less than reasonable and leaves the prospects for research and publication quite bleak.

In 2011, the Kenyan government, through the Ministry of Higher Education, announced a revision of funding policies for institutions of higher learning. The announcement has been more debilitating to social sciences, especially to sociology and anthropology—any student entering a Kenyan public university will have to cover the full cost of training (and research) without any help from the government. The announcement favors the funding of disciplines such as medicine, engineering, architecture, and actuarial sciences that are regarded as important to the growth of the economy. This decision by the government jeopardizes the place and role of social sciences in the country.

Despite the decision by the government not to support social sciences, nevertheless, research, learning, and teaching activities in social sciences remain crucial. This is exhibited by the increasing demand for social science disciplines and the complementarity between pure and social sciences. The general lack of adequate government financial support for the social sciences and the call for fiscal autonomy

of public universities in the country has led to a huge increase in student admissions and rapid expansion of fundraising at constituent colleges and campuses.

As mentioned earlier, extremely limited government/university funding is available for research and publishing. Academics are increasingly expected to spend time acquiring external research funding if they are to succeed in their research activities. The data obtained from both Maseno and Kenyatta Universities indicates that there is minimal, if any, money allocated for international conferences. Ironically, participation in international conferences is one of the major considerations for advancement, including promotion in the workplace. At Maseno University, for example, the office of the vice-chancellor decides on approvals for research funds. The amount is limited, so only a few scholars can benefit. Some of the lecturers interviewed said that because competition for the available funds is so intense, the allocation is not exactly fair. The funds only cover travel costs for conferences and workshops. No field research grants are available at the university. All our interviewees noted with concern that the universities have to improve research funding because this is one major avenue through which research in universities can advance. About 89 percent of the interviewees noted that they had never received support of any kind from their universities for conducting research for publication. Most of them claimed to use their own funds while a few had received research grants from external institutions. The respondents argued that social sciences are marginalized in funding opportunities and that most calls for research grants favored pure sciences. The few available opportunities for social science research were competitive and emphasized multidisciplinary studies, which have yet to be well-grounded in these institutions.

As mentioned earlier, the other significant challenge that faces social research and publishing in the public universities under review is low remuneration. Low pay has a devastating and lasting negative impact on teaching, research, and publishing. In a bid to make ends meet, most lecturers seek alternative sources of income that compromise the quality of their teaching, research, and publishing. Since these institutions insist on certain basic publication and postgraduate supervision minimums for promotion, lecturers turn to avenues such as the aforementioned secondary journals. Another strategy used by the lecturers to secure promotion is excessive postgraduate supervision workloads that greatly compromise the quality of their work. It is little wonder, therefore, that there is a general public outcry about the quality of graduates, especially postgraduates, produced by public universities. Chain production of half-baked postgraduates directly affects general performance in higher education since a number of these graduates get absorbed into the university system as lecturers. This creates a vicious cycle of academic mediocrity—undertrained, underpaid, underfunded academics will either not produce or will do poor teaching, poor research, and poor publication. Evidently, the prospects for research and publishing are inextricably tied to adequate funding.

The heavy teaching loads in Kenyan public universities directly affect research and publishing. The aforementioned rapid expansion of public university education has translated into massive student admissions that far outstretches the available

capacity of faculty and the universities. The universities have had to stagger academic years, which means that lecturers teach throughout the year for at least four consecutive years, as a Kenyatta University sociology senior lecturer observed:

Research and publishing require both time and funding. Funding is not available so let's not even go there. Let's talk about time. I have been teaching for the past ten years without leave because of this academic calendar staggering thing. There has never been time in the past ten years when we have had regular semesters. A scholar needs time to do serious research. (Interviewed February 22, 2012)

The teaching overload associated with regular programs is exacerbated by the addition of "commercial programs," which include school-based, evening, and part-time degree programs. The school-based programs,⁴ for example, are offered during school holidays in April, August, and December. These classes run for twelve hours, every day of the week, beginning at seven o'clock in the morning. Two courses are taught every day alternately for three consecutive hours. Twelve hours of nonstop teaching and learning is, to say the least, perniciously unproductive to both lecturers and students. It is obvious that any lecturer immersed in this teaching program has little to no time for research and publishing. Indeed, some lecturers who are preoccupied by these "commercial programs" as a way of making additional income have professionally stagnated:

You know, it does not make any sense to use your little money to engage in research work that you are not even sure will be published anyway. At least in teaching parallel-program students, you are sure that you will be paid. Maybe you can use some of that money to research and publish. (Linguistics lecturer, Maseno University, in-depth interview, March 3, 2012)

Since public universities became autonomous, the state has little or no control over the teaching, research, and learning activities on the campuses. This autonomy has led to the uncontrolled proliferation of subsidiary campuses and colleges, which compounds the existing understaffing. To cope with the acute shortage of academic staff, the two universities have employed lecturers who are mostly holders of master's degrees with scanty research and teaching experience or none. Under the intense pressure to hire teaching staff for their expanded programs, these universities are not as concerned about the qualities of these master's degrees as they should be. An overloaded, inexperienced academic scenario does not auger well for academic research and publishing. Demand for their services means that they can teach at several of the campuses in one semester. They do not have restricted workload. Their aim is to make as much money as they can by teaching extra courses at different universities in an effort to supplement their meager salaries. Some give lectures on more than five campuses in one semester. This eats into their research time as well as into their preparation time for the courses that they teach.

No issue is more basic in modern higher education than the relationship between research and teaching. And no issue occasions more superficial thought and ret-

gressive criticism both outside and inside the academy (Clark 1997). The challenges of educational demand, the teaching workload, and the output are mostly exhibited in the end products. In Kenya, for example, the challenge has been that despite the “qualifications” of the graduates of these institutions, those hiring the graduates have to commit their resources to training them before they can fully fit into the job market. Studies in other African countries have revealed the same thing (Cosser 2010). This research, however, revealed that graduate assistants are allocated full course loads of three courses per semester, which they teach without any supervision from experienced lecturers. In a follow-up interview about this concern, a graduate assistant noted:

My letter of appointment clearly states that I should teach topics of the course I am training in under the supervision of a senior lecturer. This means that I am not even allowed to teach a full course. I have three full courses that I teach and examine under. Remember that I only have a maximum of three years to complete my masters’ program; if I fail, my contract will not be renewed. I therefore have to learn how to balance the teaching and research work if I want to maintain my job here. (Postgraduate student, Maseno University, in-depth interview, January 13, 2012)

The doctoral students at the two universities are under the same pressure. In fact, in Maseno University, lecturers enrolled in doctoral studies and are not successful in getting external scholarship funding do not get study leave to work on their research. They are assigned the same teaching course loads as their colleagues who have finished their studies. They also have the challenge of ensuring that before they graduate, they must publish an article, from their thesis, in an international peer-reviewed journal. Accomplishing the tasks of teaching, research, writing, and publishing has been a challenge for most of them. Some lecturers find the demands simply too daunting, and they fall into despair from their academic stagnation.

This study revealed disparities in granting permission to be away for sponsored research purposes in overseas countries. In Maseno University, for example, the workloads of those departing for studies abroad are covered by their colleagues, and so permission in most cases is granted without a hitch. However, in other public universities, we learned that securing permission from the administrative authorities remains a challenge. Being away for three weeks or more has consequences, as a respondent from Kenyatta University argued:

My vice-chancellor is not very keen on how some of the members of staff carry out their research. I have now secured quite a number of research opportunities at different institutions overseas but, unfortunately, I cannot be granted permission to be away for more than three weeks because I must teach. The last time I went out on research to one institution in Europe for three months, my salary was not paid and the institution stopped giving medical services to my family, which to me was quite a blow because besides the sponsorship for research activities, the host institution in Europe was not compensating for my salary loss at my university in Kenya. It is not easy to secure these research positions, which help us to publish our work. Publications are deemed necessary as indicators of one’s

academic progress, yet neither our institutions nor the government are keen on research and publishing, especially for social scientists. What is the way forward for us? I have decided not to ask for permission to be away because I know it cannot be easily granted. I therefore have, on certain occasions, attended conferences and seminars outside the country without permission. On other occasions, I have had to make private arrangements with colleagues without informing the administration. (“Dr. Mwatsaro,” Kenyatta University, in-depth interview, February 24, 2012)

At the two universities, most lecturers who are engaged in meaningful research depend on donor funding, especially from the North. While sponsorship from the North cannot be opposed, it is also true that it compromises the researcher’s autonomy. Funders have certain areas of interest, which means that African researchers must either be interested in the same areas or develop an expedient interest to secure funding. In their search for external funding, academics face new unfamiliar conditions. Increasingly, research grants must be obtained on a competitive basis (Leisyte, Enders, and Boer 2009). Applying for these external research funds is technical and time consuming. Worse still, there are no guarantees that the applications will be successful. More often than not, they are unsuccessful. Many scholars give up after a few failed attempts. With virtually all research funding sources blocked and no possibility of promotion, these scholars slowly turn into academic dinosaurs. The ultimate sufferer is the student and the overall academic progress of the institution.

This study indicated that 91 percent of the social researchers who had applied for donor funding in the past ten years were denied. However, 6 percent indicated that their research depended on donor funding and only 3 percent had benefited from the National Science and Technology Council of Kenya. The council’s primary objective is to follow up on federal science and technology investments, which focuses on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education. This 3 percent, therefore, said that they had to team up with pure science scholars to qualify for the STEM research grants. The interviewees lamented that it was not fair of the government to provide grants for pure sciences and technical subjects while paying little or no attention to social sciences.

Promotion and review for academic staff for higher job grades in all the public universities in Kenya are pegged to the lecturer’s ability to teach, supervise, research and publish. At Maseno University, for example, publishing in noninternational peer-reviewed journals is not enough. The University Review Committee strongly emphasizes that international peer-reviewed journals are of high standards and are the most credible. While this condition seems reasonable to a casual observer, the devil is in the definition of “international peer-reviewed journals.” International peer-reviewed journals seem almost exclusively to refer to journals from Western Europe and North America. National (Kenyan) and regional journals are shunned, as indicated by most of our interviewees. In this article, we contend that until African universities begin to regard their own journals with respect, the future of academic

publishing is bleak indeed. The journals that our universities consider “international” are local journals of other countries. These are the journals in which scholars in Kenya are encouraged and sometimes forced to publish. It is important to point out, however, that African universities must produce international peer-reviewed journals that compete effectively with any journals anywhere in the world. This quality might be indicated by the willingness of scholars from other countries and continents to publish in them. This is not to imply that publishing in international journals has no merits. It is true that articles for most of the highly rated world journals go through a very rigorous review process and their qualities are good. With so many challenges, African scholars are hugely disadvantaged in the competition to publish in these revered journals as the challenges noted earlier on suggest.

The field data show that 42 percent of those interviewed have had their research papers published in international peer-reviewed journals. More than half of this 42 percent have published in online publications, which make publishing somewhat easier than in the past. They noted that the process to publish even in reputable online journals is still long and rigorous but has helped many put their publications in the “international” limelight. This is to some extent highlighted in the following section.

Negotiating the Research and Publishing Challenges in Kenyan Universities

The noted challenges translate into mostly mediocre research writings that do not meet the stringent demands of international peer-reviewed journals or book chapters. Needless to say, numerous research papers from Kenyan university scholars have not found a place in these highly competitive journals. This dearth of quality publication avenues has in turn given birth to the creation of secondary publishing alternatives, which exploit this dire need to publish. These secondary journals, easily accessible at a fee that is labeled a “handling fee,” are mostly online journals. Their charges range from US\$500 to \$700. Others, incredibly, charge US\$50 per page. Notably, some of these secondary journals bear titles that capture the “international” and “peer-reviewed” terminologies that Kenyan university review boards look for to judge a publication acceptable. The review process of these journals as well as the speed at which the papers are accepted and published after the necessary payment has been made are clear indicators of the questionable quality of the published research papers and the journals themselves. The marketing techniques, the blind approach used to solicit reviewers even in fields that are not relevant to one’s specialization, and the speed with which they publish the papers are indicative that these are money-making outfits that not entirely concerned about quality. The ease with which lecturers can publish in these journals was evidenced in many responses, but we highlight one:

I have been serving in the position of a lecturer for more than thirteen years. I can’t be promoted to the next level because I do not have the necessary publications

in an international peer-reviewed journal. Why can't we make our own journals international? Well, since there are international peer-reviewed online journals that publish for a fee, I will definitely look at that option in order to publish. (Lecturer, Kenyatta University, in-depth interview, February 24, 2012)

At the two universities studied, most lecturers publish in these paid online journals as a group in order to share the cost. In one extreme case, a group of seven lecturers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds published one article in a paid international online journal in order to share the US\$500 fee. The publications can be freely accessed online, which makes it easy for the authors to download their papers as evidence that they have published in "international peer-reviewed" journals. Both Kenyatta and Maseno Universities are becoming concerned about the quality of some of these online journals and have consequently blacklisted some, arguing that the review process lacks rigor and focuses more on the money than the substantive quality of the articles. Lecturers at these universities cannot use their publications in these blacklisted journals to secure promotions.

This study also revealed that due to the advantages that researchers and postgraduate students can achieve from these second-choice journals, doctoral researchers, who are required to have at least one publication from their dissertation before they can appear for their defense, have used these journals to have their papers published quickly. Some of those interviewed argued that it is almost impossible to have their research articles published by renowned journals in less than a year. These paid online journals offer fast and convenient alternatives for those who want to graduate in the shortest time possible, as noted with relief by a Maseno University doctoral student:

These (paid) online journals are lifesavers. I was so desperate to publish an article from my thesis in the so-called international peer-reviewed journal in order to meet the requirement. I have tried quite a number of them and nothing is forthcoming. This leaves me worried because it will take me long to defend my dissertation. A colleague pointed me to the right Web site and the rest is history. I paid some money and got my article published in a month. (Lecturer, Department of Music and Theatre, Maseno University, in-depth interview, March 4, 2012)

From the noted challenge of course loads, lecturers who teach and supervise postgraduate students have found it easy to use the postgraduate students to do research and publish with them, especially from their master's and doctoral dissertations. This approach has ensured that they have new publications that can earn them promotions. Quite a number of the professors that we interviewed noted that they have not had time to conduct and publish their own research. However, they hastened to point out that their postgraduate students have been a rich source for their latest publications. The lecturers who find little or no time collect field data have at times hired postgraduate students to do fieldwork research for them. The downside to this approach to research and publishing is that there is a large burgeoning group of widely published scholars who have minimal research experience. As educators, they are missing out on a crucial component of scholarship—research.

The study revealed a nascent but rapidly growing collaboration between the two universities and the communities around them. These collaborations are strongly supported by the Kenyan government and donor organizations that work with these universities. For example, both universities run AIDS Control Units that provide voluntary counseling, testing, and treatment services to students and neighboring communities. This initiative was proposed by the vice-chancellors of the public universities in a workshop organized by the Commission for Higher Education in 2001. These collaborations provide scholars, especially from social sciences, in these universities with unique affordable opportunities to carry out publishable research.

The provision of consulting services by lecturers at the two universities under review has major implications for teaching, research, and publishing. As much as 36 percent of the respondents are involved in consultancy work. Most of them explain that consultancy work readily supplies ample data that can be used to write articles quickly for journal publication. This is because, first, the consultants are themselves scholars and are involved in the research. Second, the research is fully funded. The only hurdle is to get permission from the relevant organizations to publish the research findings. Of those engaged in consulting work, 42 percent have published from data gathered in the course of their assignments. However, the majority argue that due to the demanding nature of consultancy work, including designing, developing research tools, training research assistants, pretesting the tools, conducting the research, processing and analyzing the data, and writing reports, little time is left for them to engage in academic writing for publication, which is quite different from development work writing. Some respondents indicated that though they have the data and permission to publish, they keep postponing the writing process because there is always another consulting assignment to be undertaken:

I have so much ready raw data that I have collected over the past fifteen years of consultancy. All I need is to sit down and write. But I keep postponing that because there is really good money in consultancy as compared to the university promotions. I believe that if the system can pay the lecturers reasonable salaries, the face of research and publishing in our universities would transform overnight. You know, it is hard to think philosophically on an empty stomach with children screaming for the basics you can't afford, yet you pride yourself on being a university teacher. (Lecturer, Maseno University, in-depth interview, February 26, 2012)

A Kenyatta University lecturer who engages in consulting work corroborated this view:

I earn less than \$1,000 per month from my job as a lecturer. Publishing will earn me a promotion after five years and an increment of less than \$100. Why then not use my time in consultancy? When I win a bid for consultancy in one go, it is a fortune. The good thing about being a lecturer is that I only teach for a maximum of nine hours per week. I can use the rest of the time to do consultancy. I can also take a leave of absence, go make money, and come back to my permanent job of lecturing. Though this job is lower paying, it is permanent and gives someone a sense of prestige. When people in the village call you a professor, you feel

honored, though you earn less than some of them. (Lecturer-consultant, Maseno University, in-depth interview, February 26, 2012)

Such lecturers typically only take the mandatory course load and save the rest of their time for consulting work, as opposed to their colleagues who spent their time teaching the parallel courses to earn extra income. Either way, research and publishing mostly suffer. Widespread lack of incentives and poor remuneration demoralizes lecturers. The lack of enthusiasm is also linked to meager research resources and a lack of government funding. Similar to this is what Kinyanjui (2007) refers to as “other issues that require rethinking.” These include the way staff are recruited, utilized, and rewarded, and how their teaching and research environment is accommodated; how the universities are funded and account for their resources, and how they are governed; and how the sector can drive socio-economic development.

Conclusion

The challenges facing research and publishing in Kenya, exemplified by Maseno and Kenyatta Universities in this article, are unquestionably daunting, but therein lies the redemption. The ability of African scholars to write, edit, and publish their research from the South needs to be supported and acknowledged by the universities' management. This is especially so in the review process. This research should not be dismissed as of poor quality or the scholars denied the chance to be rewarded and honored as they should be by the institutions of higher learning. At the same time, this is research that should be publicized and highlighted in the development agenda. The increasing emphasis on societal knowledge, the globalization of services, the technological revolution, and interest in economic welfare has necessitated inter-related and inseparable missions (García-Aracil and Palomares-Montero 2010): teaching, research, and dissemination of ideas (publishing). The direct connection between university research activities and socioeconomic development cannot be repudiated (Martin and Etzkowitz 2000). It is, therefore, evident that the debate about encouraging and improving research and publishing opportunities in these institutions and the role this has on wider discussions of education and development remains salient. This article agrees with Wangenge and Langa (2010) that excellence in teaching and research is a crucial ingredient for promoting and supporting both national and regional economic development in highly qualified skills, new knowledge, leadership, and innovation. Performance in these institutions should be rated on excellence in scholarship; teaching and learning; research and development; management processes; and engagement with the community. However, “excellence” is seen as a key resource for the institutions to advance and survive in competitive environments in gains from knowledge transfer, patents, enrollments, and prestige in the scientific community and in public at large. These issues were echoed by our research findings, and although some of the scholars, especially those involved in consultancy work and part-time teaching, felt that their engagements

paid better than the little benefit they get from the difficult publishing process, the relevance of this cannot be overemphasized. Serious support from the government to scholars from the South is needed. The government can part with more than \$10 a month for scholars who need to engage in serious research that will in one way or another result in furthering the development agenda. In Kenyan public universities, exemplified by the two institutions under study, the adage “publish or perish” is more real than its metaphorical import. Commitment from the government and university management boards is therefore essential.

Notes

1. The seven years of primary, four of secondary, two of high school, and three of university (7-4-2-3) education system was inherited from the British colonial government by Kenya at independence in 1963. The system was replaced by the educational system of eight years of primary, four of secondary, and four of university (8-4-4) in 1985. A P1 holder is a primary school teacher whose qualification is a Teachers’ Training Education Certificate. It is the lowest qualification in primary school teaching. These teachers normally upgrade their qualifications through a diploma and degree training at the university.

2. An in-depth interview with two members of academic staff from both Maseno and Kenyatta Universities (January 13 and February 22, 2012, respectively).

3. The same traits were observed in research done by Anderson, Johnson, and Saha (2002).

4. School-based programs are academic programs that are tailored for in-service teachers during school holidays. They can be diploma or degree programs.

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