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THEME: Strengthening Research and Innovations for Climate Adaptation and Sustainable Development

Assessing of the impact of Climate Change on Academic Performance among University Students from Kajiado County

Charity Muraguri
St Paul's University, P. O. Private Bag, Limuru, 00217, Kenya
Corresponding Email:cmuraguri2010@gmail.com

Abstract

Climate change is perhaps the most considered environmental challenge of our time and a key discussion to many researchers who have recognized its impact to the society and development of a country. Unfortunately, such importance to academic performance has partially been embedded on the fact that climate change only affects agricultural activities. To investigate this issue, two issues were identified lack of lecture attendance due to constant movement while looking for pasture to graze their animals and lack of finances to pay fees. Research shows that climate change has consequences beyond agricultural and pastoral effects and indeed that climate change has now impacted on students' performance. The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which climate change affects performance of students from Kajiado County. Faced with various dynamics, university students from Kajiado County often faced with decisions to graze their animals or to concentrate of academics alone. The students have continuously resulted into finding ways of continuously attaining both goals. Despite their actions, the levels of academic performance are considered low compared to counterparts from other areas. Consequently research has not linked poor academic performance to experiences driven by climate changes. This study was directed towards linking poor performance to climate change. This study used quantitative survey design where purposive and random sampling techniques were employed only among university students from Kajiado County The survey was intended to get their response on the extent to which climate change had affected their performance and to extracting specific data from the group. A survey questionnaire was developed using factors adopted by past research in similar area, and through focus group discussions and key informant interviews.150 questionnaires were administered and only 98 were received back which is 65.33% which is adequate to make research inferences. Kajiado County is relatively an area of Maasai pastoralist. Research has shown that the County tree cover has reduced to a worrying 15% hence this has resulted into prolonged drought, crop failure and increased average temperatures. Quantitative data was analyzed through use of SPSS software in order to draw meaningful results from the large body of qualitative data, while content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data collected through focus groups and interviews. The results of the findings suggested a significant relationship between climate change and university students academic performance. The research suggest that the government should come up with consensus plans drafted to mitigate the impact of climate change on university students performance and which would otherwise reduce the impacts.

Key words: Climate change, academic performance; higher education, Kajiado County, university