Admission and Graduation Trends in Universities: The Case of Daystar University from 2010 To 2016

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Abstract

This study looked at the gender dynamics, admission and graduation trends in Daystar University from 2010 to 2016. The study was anchored on choice theory. The descriptive research design was used for the study. The targeted population was students and data from admissions and records department was used for the analysis. The researcher used purposive sampling techniques to pick the respondents. The purposive sampling technique is a form of non-probability sampling. The study's findings showed that most of the students at Daystar University schools, that is, from the School of Communication Language and Performing Arts, School of Business and Economics, School of Arts and Humanities and School of Human and Social Sciences were females. The only school where the majority were males was in the School of Science Engineering and Health. The study results also found that the university had an upward admission trend from 2011 to 2014. However, a slight drop was experienced in 2015. The overall graduation of the students at the university decreased from 2011 to 2016. The findings indicated that females were more than males in terms of enrolments in the university. The findings also showed that the graduation of the students had been decreasing. From the findings, the arising recommendations included the need for the management of the university to examine why the number of males admissions is less compared to females. The university management should also review the programmes being offered from time to time, which might solve the challenge of gender inequality in the university. It is recommended that the university should keep an eye on admission figures in the coming years to establish whether the admission drop in 2015 was an emerging trend or perhaps was explainable for other reasons. Further, it was recommended that the university should examine the causes of declining graduation trend.

Keyword: *Gender, admission trends, graduation trends, Daystar University*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The graduation of students is measured through the number of students who complete a course within a stipulated time (Araque, Roldán & Salguero, 2015). Most students prefer to attend schools with a high number of students graduating because it illustrates student success and perhaps strong academic support (Adesoji & Adetero, 2015). On average, in countries such as the US and Italy, one student in two abandons university without obtaining any university degree. Likewise, the dropping rate of university students in New Zealand, Hungary, Mexico, UK, Poland, and Norway is more than 31%, while in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, and Japan is about 24% (OECD, 2017). The students' enrolment rate is considered to be a factor that influences the financial performance of the universities (Chinwe & Mag, 2015). In most private universities in Kenya, the majority of the students are females. Muhonja (2015) revealed that the socio-economic factors such as fathers' levels of income, number of siblings and income of the parents are the main socio-economic factors affecting the enrolment in Science-based courses among the female students in Kenya. According to Ngugi and Muthima (2017), despite the progress made over the last decade by the government in enhancing access, equity, quality, completion rates and gender parity in education and training in Kenya, the Technical, Vocational, and Education Training (TVET) continue to experience low female enrolment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses.

The amount of tuition fees and type of courses offered by universities influence the graduation rates (Lang, Chan, Pask-Aube & Swift, 2015). In a study conducted by Chiguvi, and Ndoma (2018), it found that most females enrol in private universities because they fail to secure admission into the public universities and also because most of the courses in these private institutions are in the social sciences, education, arts, business administration, accounting and computer science. Most private universities offer courses that are not technical, which justifies why most females prefer these private universities (Atieno, 2018). Furthermore, public universities are more competitive due to the cut-off marks. Thus, the increasing number of females attending private universities reflects the limited number of females who attain the minimum cut off points for public universities (Ayoola, 2014). In Daystar University, the university's graduation trend has continued to have a downward slope (Bosibori, 2018). The university has high admission rate; however, the graduation rates are low. This is an indication that some of the students do not graduate in time or drop out before graduation. The female students make most of the students in the university. The university has seven schools, namely, School of Communication, Arts and Humanities, Science, Engineering and Health, Human and Social Sciences, Business and Economics, Law and Nursing (Daystar, 2020). However, the School of Law and Nursing were not included in the study since they were new schools. In most schools, most of the students are females apart from the school of Engineering and Health, which is dominated by males

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The graduation trend at Daystar University has fluctuated from time to time (Daystar, 2016). According to Njoroge, Wang'eri and Gichure (2016), less than 70% of the students in private universities graduate in the same university they enrolled. In Nairobi County, Muchemi (2019) reported that the graduation of the students at Riara University is less than 67%. Moreover, at St Lawrence University Kenya, the university admits an average of 3700 students per year, while those who graduate yearly are less than 47%. Besides, the number of students who graduated from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa reduced significantly between 2015 and 2017 in

which 1954 students graduated in 2015, 1782 in 2016 and 1500 in 2017 (CUEA, 2018). This is an indication that most private universities in Nairobi County have a declining graduation rates.

There is scanty information on the reason why there are declining graduation trends at Daystar University. Rong'uno (2016) established that effective administrative factors, supervision process, teaching/learning resources, study programmes and student-related factors influence the completion rates positively. The study presents a conceptual gap because it concentrated on administrative factors, supervision process, teaching/learning resources, study programmes and student-related factors on completion rates while the current study focused on gender dynamics, admission trend and graduation trends. Therefore, it was evident that a knowledge gap existed in the previous studies that were ascertained by examining the admission and graduation trends of Daystar University from 2010 to 2016.

1.3 Research objectives

The research objectives of the study were:

   i.   To examine the gender dynamics in Daystar University from 2010 to 2016
   ii. To examine the admission trend in Daystar University from 2010 to 2016.
   iii. To explore graduation trends in Daystar University from 2010 to 2016

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Theoretical framework

The study was anchored on choice theory. William Glasser developed the theory in 1996. The theory reports that the behavior of an individual determines the actions that he or she will undertake. Every individual has the power to change their lives for the better based on the choices they make (Glasser, 1999). Making decisions without the influence of the external factors enhances higher achievement and commitment (Hilley, 2008). The graduation of the students has been fluctuating from country to country. Thus, students need to be allowed to choose the University of their choice, which enhances their satisfaction and becomes committed to the organization. The students' commitment toward a particular university improves their performance because of immeasurable relationships developed, thus fosters higher graduation rates (Scott, 2000).

The theory establishes that some of the factors that influence the students' graduation include the characteristics of the institution and the students' commitment (Satz & Ferejohn, 2004).Students are satisfied to attend Universities based on the institutional features such as the enrollment rates, ranking, and number of graduations per year, among others. Students use different approaches to make their ultimate decision. The decision made by the students in the universities influences their graduation period. For instance, students who abide by the institutions' rules and regulations have greater chances of graduation.

The theory was relevant to the study. The choice theory explains the importance of enabling the student to have freedom in making the decisions. This fosters a good relationship between students and institutions, thus improves the graduation rates of the students. Enabling the students to choose the University of their Choices enables them to be more satisfied and committed to completing courses (Boudon, 2003). Besides, students become responsible for their behavior in choosing a university suitable for them. Kotler (2003) and Chapman (1986) agreed that university choice and selection for students should be procedural and that the stages are equally influential to students' future life in and out of the university. Students need to be guided on the choices by parents, peers and career counselors, but they have the overall responsibility of

their choice. Therefore, the theory was relevant and it established that giving students the freedom to make choices enhances their satisfaction and commitment.

2.2 Empirical Review

Gabriel (2014) identified the determinants of the trend of demand for and supply of university education in Kenya. The study objectives of the study were to establish the level and nature of programmes offered identify the factors affecting the trend of demand and supply of university education, determine the challenges facing demand and supply and develop strategies for addressing the challenges associated with the trends of demand and supply of university education. The research employed a descriptive survey design. The target population was 1717, comprising university administrators, students and informed specialists from both public and private universities. The study's findings showed that the demand for university education keeps on increasing every year to the extent that available university capacity is unable to cope with the ever-increasing number of qualified students. The study also found that university education is expensive and the costs incurred by both the student and the government cannot be sustained. Further, the study established that the government is not clear on how much it is willing to invest in university education. The study recommended that university education be of good quality, relevant and cost-effective to determine the nation's economic prosperity. The stakeholders should make sure that university education is responsive, adoptive, and proactive to make full use of resources. Concerning financing, the government should introduce new funding strategies to promote efficiency, quality and accountability.

Muhonja (2015) investigated the factors influencing the low enrolment among female students in science-based courses at the tertiary institutions in Western Province, Kenya. This study used a descriptive research design. The study population constituted 271 female students enrolled in Science courses at the 10 tertiary institutions in Western Province and all the 10 principals of tertiary institutions within the study area. The study revealed that the socio-economic factors such as fathers' levels of income, number of siblings and income of the parents were the main socio-economic factors affecting the enrolment in Science-based courses among the female students.

Rong'uno (2016) examined the effect of institutional and student-related factors on Doctoral Studies completion rates in Education at selected Public Universities in Kenya. A descriptive survey design was used. The total number of participants was 115. The number of doctoral students who participated was 388 registered between 2009 and 2013. A questionnaire, document analysis guide and interview guide were used to collect data for the study. The study found out that about 50% of the teaching staff at the selected public universities were tutorial fellows, who cannot supervise PhD hence inadequate staff. Libraries lack adequate, relevant teaching and learning resources and ICT connectivity. Family responsibility, job commitment and lack of adequate writing skills derail most candidates. Academic discipline and mode of the study did not appear to be a significant influencing factor. The universities' policies are that a doctoral degree course should take a minimum of three and a maximum of five years. The five factors studied (institutional administrative factors, supervision process, teaching/learning resources, different study programmes and student-related factors) contributed 65.7% of the effects of institutional and student-related factors influencing doctoral studies completion rates. The study concluded that key factors influencing doctoral completion rates were programme requirements, inadequate number of supervisors and individual student factors, including socio-economic and lack of thesis writing skills.

Venkteshwar and Warrier (2019) examined the effect of family type on the academic performance of engineering students in India. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Based on the findings of the study, it was established that family type is one of the most neglected components in the Indian education system due to the complexity in its computation. The findings of the study reported that family type influenced the academic performance of engineering students in India. The study revealed that male students performed better in the engineering courses because of more opportunities given to them than the female students.

Njoroge, Wang'eri and Gichure (2016) examined the influence of examination repeats, semester deferments on dropping out in private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study utilized the descriptive research design. The study sample consisted of 387 current and 60 students who had dropped out of 13 private universities in Nairobi, Kenya. Data was collected through a paper-based questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The results showed that examination repeats and semester deferments influenced the dropout of students to a large extent. The study recommended mechanisms to be developed by the institutions for early detection of attrition risk to ensure students pursue their studies to completion.

Due and Mlotshwa (2018) explored the perceptions of enrolled nursing students on factors influencing their academic performance in a private nursing school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Data was collected from 100 respondents using an adapted instrument related to the factors believed to influence students' academic performance. The results showed that parental involvement in education, good and supportive relationships between nurse educators and students, classroom computer technological gadgets, internet connection, and adequate learning facilities were perceived as fostering students' better academic performance. In contrast, poor family background, use of English language for classroom instruction, and negative peer group influences led to poor academic performance. The study concluded that nursing institutions should select students with higher-level entry qualifications, identify at-risk students early enough, recruit more qualified nurse educators and upgrade their facilities.

Khan (2012) assessed the effect of different factors on students' performance at the University of Malakand. Primary data was used in the study. Students were selected to collect information regarding the factors responsible for the academic performance of students through random sampling. The study found that factors like examination system, family size, audio-visual aid, classroom size, and living status of students have a significant effect on the students' academic performance. The students' graduation was influenced by the factors mentioned (examination system, family size, audio-visual aid, classroom size and living status of students).The study recommended that university administrators and teachers be provided with the audio video facility in class rooms during lectures to improve students' performance.

Mulonzi (2014) investigated the factors influencing students' choice of universities at South Eastern Kenya University and the University of Nairobi. A descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. The targeted population was 2210 students from both University of Nairobi and South Eastern Kenya University. Among undergraduate students in their first year of study, 385 respondents were sampled randomly. Data was collected through the use of the questionnaires. The study established that accessibility to an institution was the most influential factor students considered while choosing the university to enrol. University reputation made by the specialized programmes and marketing strategies to make it famous was rated second in preference. Flexibility in fee payment had a lesser influence on students' choice of the universities. The study also established that the students' graduation rate was also a significant

factor that the students considered before enrolment. The study recommended the need to increase understanding of the importance of employing various strategies.

Mbirithi (2013) sought to investigate the nature and magnitude of management challenges that face Kenya's public universities and their implications for quality education. The study had four research objectives to; determine the nature and magnitude of management challenges facing Kenya's public universities concerning their missions, determine the implications of management challenges on the quality of university education, identify the strategies public universities have put in place to cope with challenges to ensure the quality of education and propose strategies the universities can adopt to mitigate the management of the challenges. The study employed the descriptive design. Four types of research instruments were used in data collection: questionnaires for deans of schools, chairpersons of departments and leaders of academic and non-academic staff unions, interview guides for VCs, DVCs and heads of boarding and accommodation sections, observation schedule, and document analysis. The study established that public universities that took part in the study did not have enough teaching and learning resources, especially lecture halls, computers, textbooks and library space. The study also found that insufficient funds were the biggest management challenge as they affected all other areas of research, teaching, and learning. It was also revealed that the curriculum was not adequately implemented due to inadequate teaching and learning resources and teaching staff. All these management challenges were found to have an implication on the quality of education offered in the universities. The study recommended that universities and the government establish appropriate, reliable, diversified and sustainable mechanisms for financing university operations. Commission for University Education (CUE) should institute strict quality monitoring mechanisms to universities and revise its accreditation requirements. Besides, the study recommended that graduates tracer studies be conducted among the workforce periodically, universities to put in place clear curriculum regulatory processes and recruit more lecturers.

Mahangiru (2016) investigated the factors influencing student's choice of Public Universities in the western Kenya region in the case of the University of Nairobi and Kibabii University. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study target population was 90,200 respondents representing the total number of students and University administrators from the University of Nairobi and Kibabii University. A sample size of 348 respondents from the University of Nairobi and Kibabii University was used. Census sampling was used to select the 10 University administrators in charge of enrolment. The study adopted a systematic random sampling technique to select students' sample population by picking the tenth student from their respective learning programmes using the admission lists for students. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect data. It was found that financial aid from family members or guardians, Higher Education Loans Board and Constituency development fund was essential to many students since some students were not able to finance themselves. The study also found that advertisements played a crucial role in ensuring information about the Institution are widely spread to prospective students. Parents were found to be the most influencers; most students met the minimum entry requirements for the programs they were pursuing. The study recommended that the government should put up measures in ensuring more financial aid from the Higher Education Loans Board and Constituency development fund to be allocated to the needy students. The university advertisement department should develop more marketing strategies that could be ideal for all stakeholders since most of the prospective students were not familiar with the Internet and website.

Muindi (2018) investigated the link between leadership and performance and the differences between male and female leaders in higher education institutions in Kenya. The study employed

a descriptive research design targeting 74 accredited universities in Kenya. The population was distributed into 5 distinct groups from which a sample of 43 universities were selected to be studied. A stratified sampling technique was used to attain the required sample size. This study adopted a quantitative approach to assess the leadership style of top management and universities' performance in Kenya. Both students and staff were subjected to the survey to provide data on the link between leadership and performance in their respective institutions. The study concluded that leadership styles affect the performance of universities in Kenya. Transformational and transactional leadership were found to have a significant association with the performance of universities in Kenya. The study recommended an emphasis on transformational leadership and transactional leadership in universities to boost the performance of studied institutions.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The targeted population was students and records analysis from the University's admissions and records department were used to collect data. The researcher used purposive sampling techniques to pick the respondents. Purposive sampling technique is a form of non-probability sampling in which the researcher depends on his or her judgment when choosing the members who will participate in the study (Tongco, 2007). The justification for using purposive sampling techniques was because the study was technical. The researcher examined and analysed the University admissions and graduations records that were within the study period. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used to collect data from the student population. The data is presented using charts.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the research findings and discussions:-

4.1 Admissions Trends

The researcher was interested in examining the admission trends of the students at Daystar University. This enabled the researcher to establish whether the admission to the university was increasing or decreasing from 2011 to 2015. The admissions trends in Daystar University are presented in Figure 1.
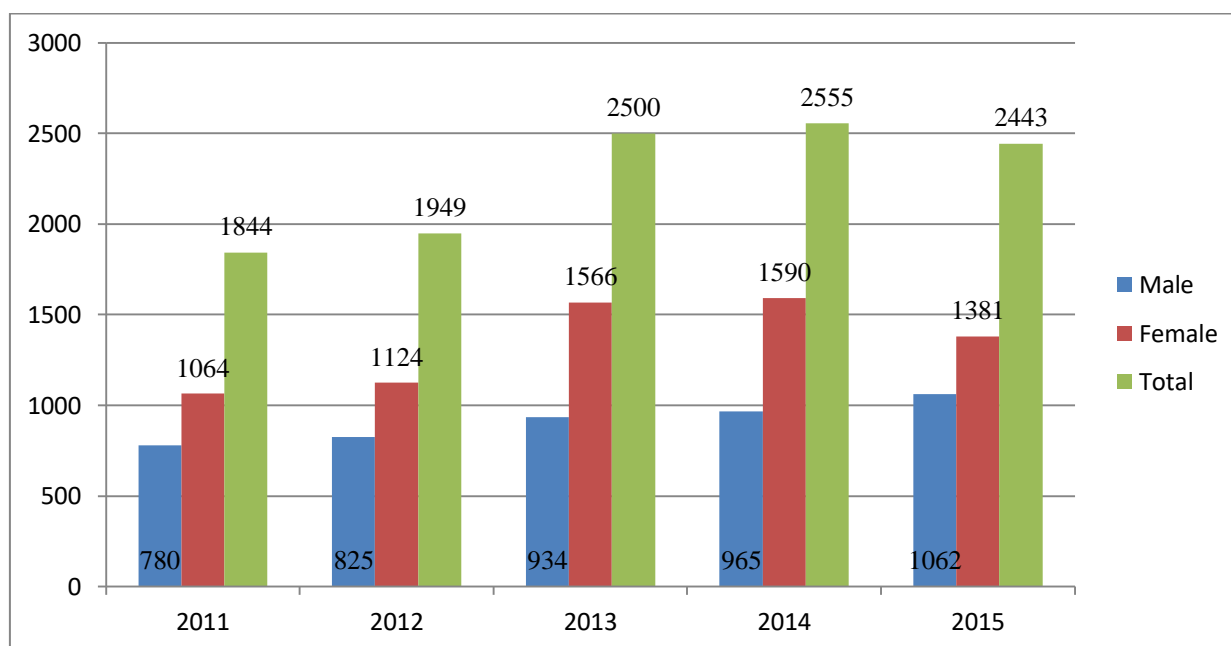
Figure 1: Admission figures (2011-2015)

Based on the presentation in Figure 1, the university had an upward admission trend from 2011 to 2014. However, a slight drop was experienced in 2015. The number of females admitted to the university exceeded those of males. This implied that more females were seeking admissions as compared to males. However, the university needs to keep an eye on admission figures in the coming years to establish if the drop was becoming a trend or is perhaps explainable for other reasons. The drop in admissions in the University contradicted with the findings of Gabriel (2014) who showed that the demand for university education keeps on increasing every year to the extent the supply of university education is unable to cope with the ever increasing number of qualified students. Besides, Mumiukha, Ngugi, Ndiga and Fedha (2015) revealed there is high female student enrolment in private universities than public universities because of less competition in these universities. Also, Mbirianjau, Chege and Oanda (2019) noted that more females enrol in private universities because they fail to secure admission into the public universities and because the course offerings in these institutions are in the social sciences, education, arts, business administration and accounting.

However, although the increase in gross enrolment for females is higher than that of males, the rate of increase has been higher for the males than for the females as indicated in Figure 2.
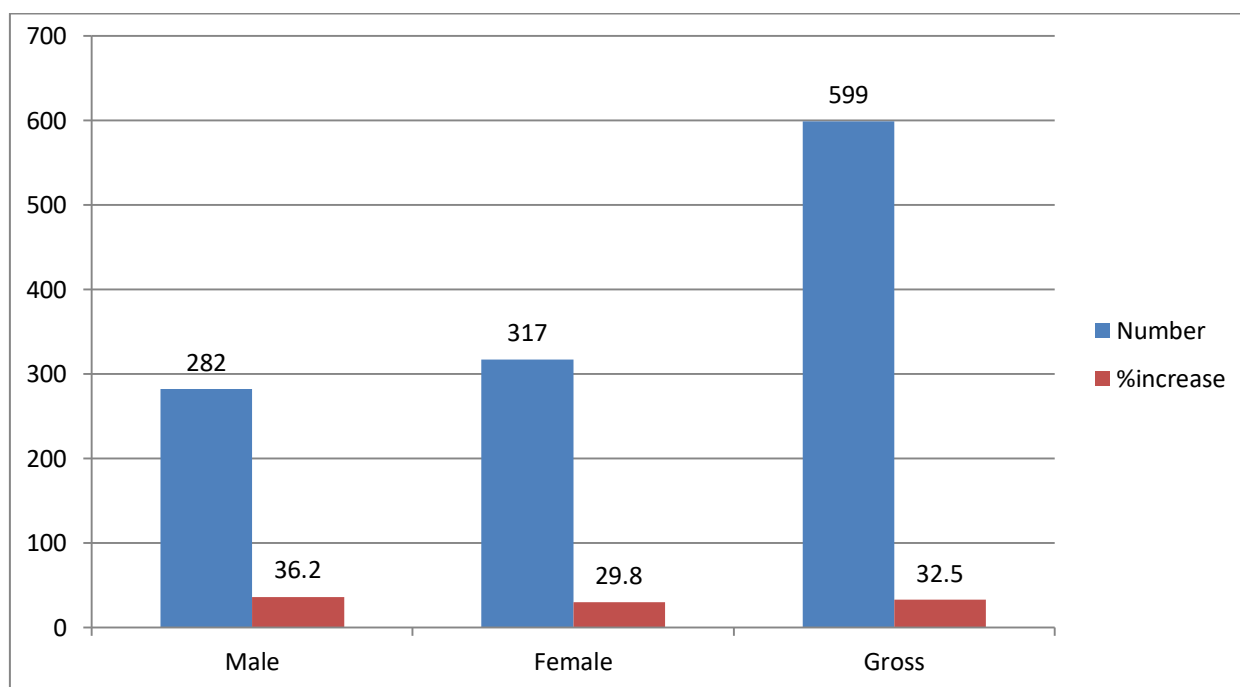
Figure 2: Male vs Female increase

As presented in Figure 2, the male admission increased by 36.2% compared to females, which increased by 29.8%. This implied that males admitted to the university were increasing higher than that of the females. The results concur with the reports by Ullman (2017) who found that males are more represented in many sectors compared to females leading to a lack of gender diversity or gender equity in institutions. The study further found that in organizations where gender diversity is lacking, employees gave lower marks to their institutions for such factors as motivation, capability, accountability and innovation.

4.2 Graduation Trends

The researcher examined the graduation trends of the students at Daystar University. The results of the graduation trends are presented in Figure 3.
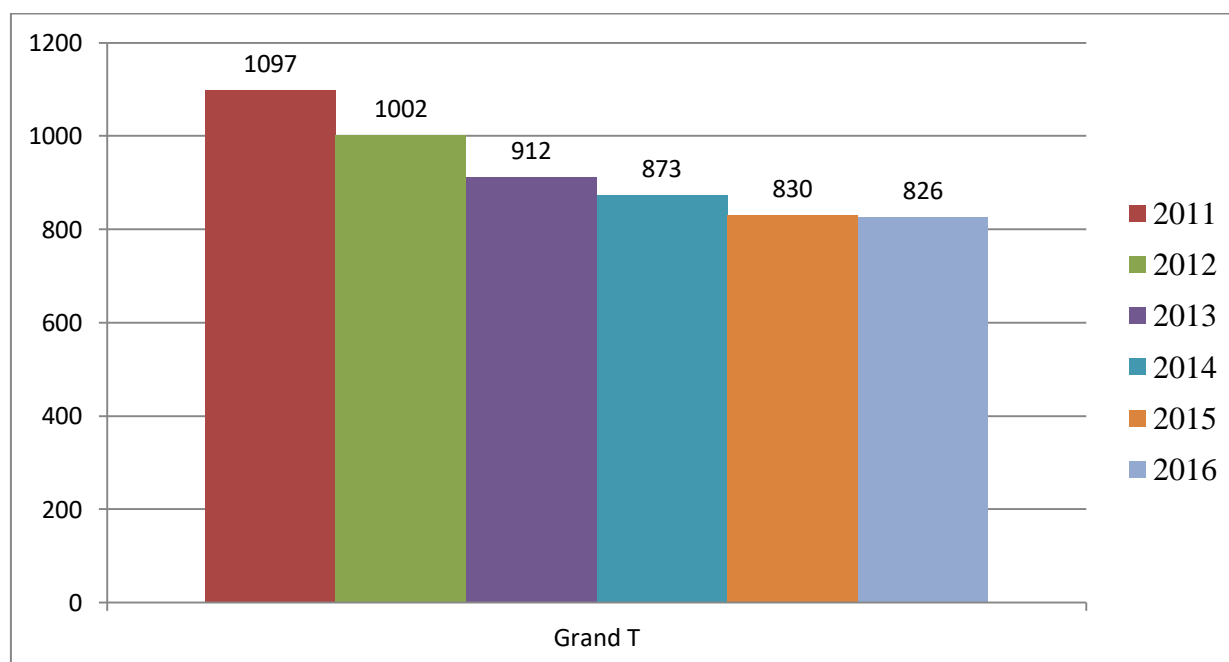
Figure 3: Graduation trends since 2010

As shown in Figure 3, the graduation of students at the university decreased from 2011 to 2016. This implied that graduation rates were declining. It may be important for the University to establish reasons for this decline. Rong'uno (2016) reported that the key factors influencing doctoral completion rates were programme requirements, the inadequate number of supervisors and individual student factors, including socio-economic and lack of thesis writing skills. Ascertaining which of these or other factors may be causing decline in graduation in the University is essential. Also, Dube and Mlotshwa (2018) showed that parental involvement in education, good and supportive relationships between nurse educators and students, classroom computer technological gadgets, internet connection and adequate learning facilities were perceived as fostering students' better academic performance which increases the graduation rates. Furthermore, Njoroge, Wang'eri and Gichure (2016) showed that examination repeats and semester deferments influenced the dropout of students to a large extent in most universities in Kenya.

Figure 4 presents the male vs female graduation trends since 2010 in Daystar University
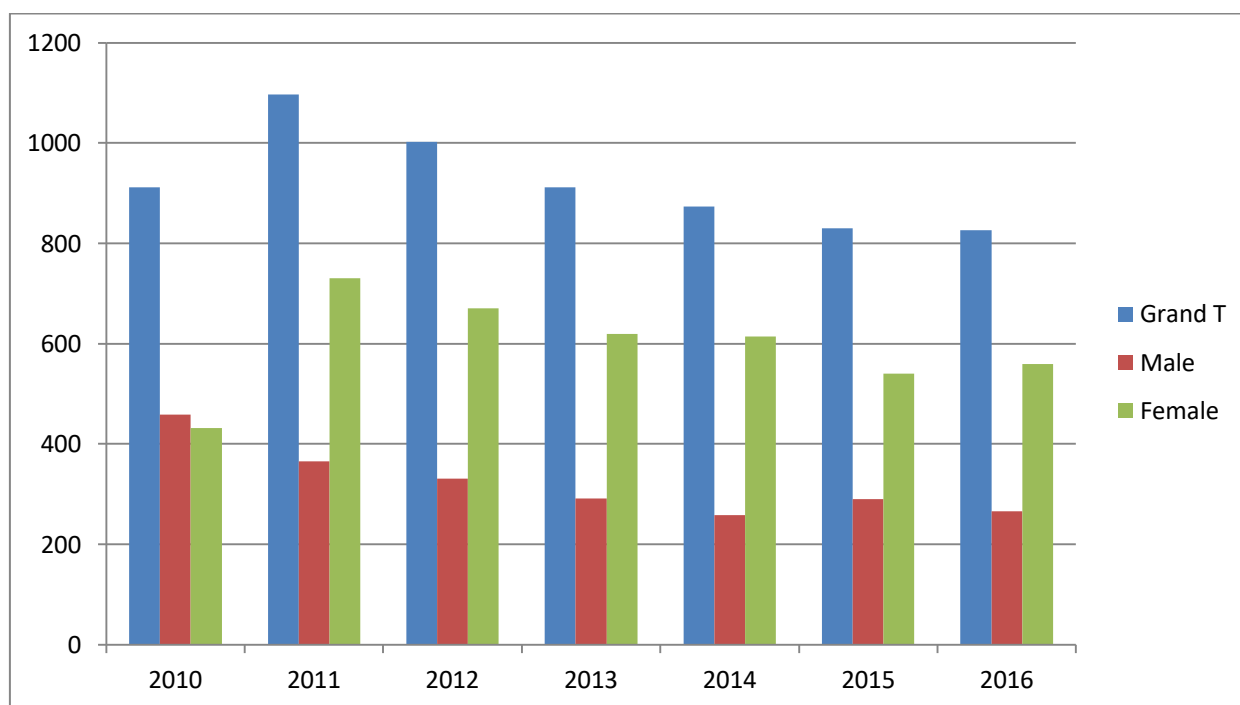
Figure 4: Male Vs Female graduation trends since 2010

In terms of gender, more males graduated in 2010; however, it was a small difference. From 2011 to 2016, females were the majority who graduated. This was expected since more females have been enrolled in the university since 2010; thus, there is a probability that in the previous years, more females have been enrolled. The results concurred with the findings of Mbirianjau, Chege and Oanda (2019) who found that more females enrol in private universities because they fail to secure admission into the public universities and also since the course offerings in these institutions are in the social sciences, education, arts, business administration and accounting. The increasing numbers of females attending private universities may also reflect the limited number of females that attain the minimum cut off points for public universities. Further, Venkteshwar and Warrier (2019) revealed that male students performed better in the science courses because of more opportunities given to them than the female students.

4.3 Schools Graduations

This section examines the graduation trends by gender and level of study in the different schools in Daystar University. Figure 5 discusses the graduation rates between males and females in the school of Communication Languages and Performing Arts.
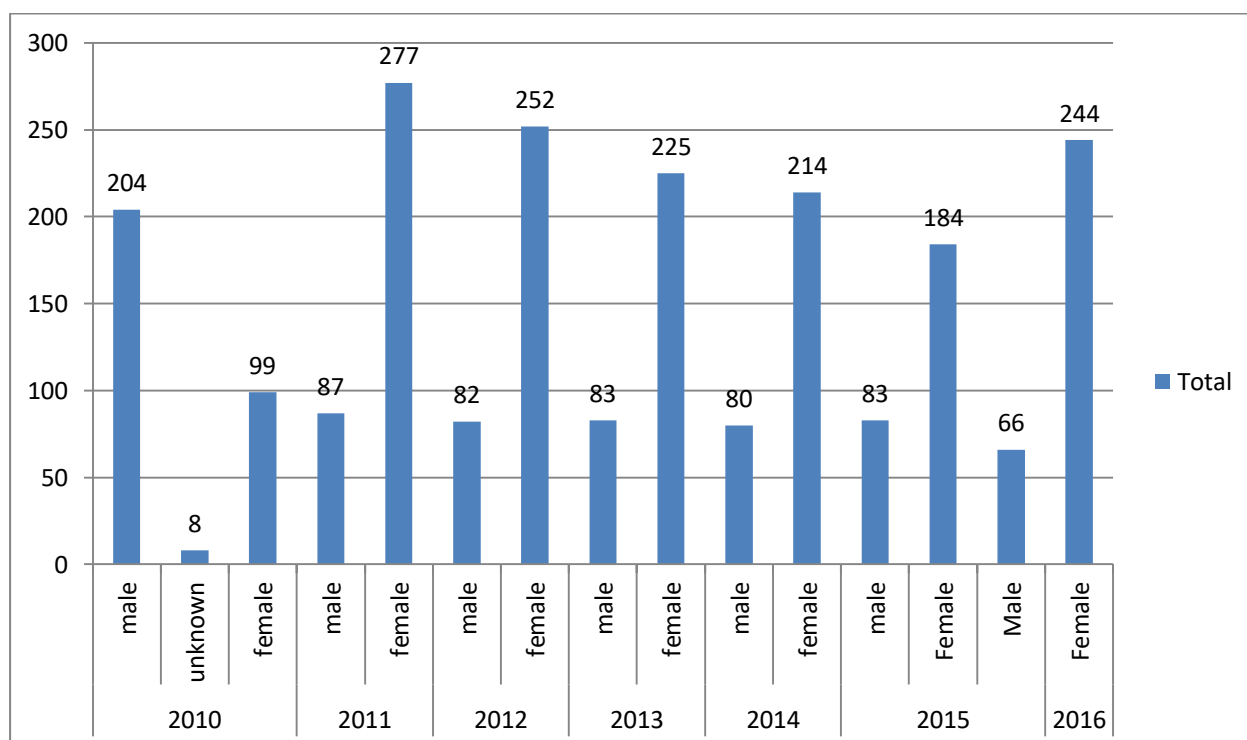
Figure 5: Graduation trends by gender in SCLPA

Based on the results presented in Figure 5, females were the most graduates from the School of Communication Languages and Performing Arts (SCLA). For instance, the female graduates increased to 244 in 2016 from 184 in 2015. The male population dropped from 83 to 66 in the same period, as demonstrated in Figure 5. A report from the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) of 2017 showed that 37% of males were enrolled in teachers training colleges compared to 67% for females. According to the MoE report (2017), between 2006 and 2010, the proportion of male and female enrolment to teachers training college was almost equal. However, with time, the enrolment difference has consistently widened. These reports were indicative of more female enrolments in arts related courses, hence higher expectations of increase in female graduations in these courses.

Further, Muhonja (2015) revealed that the socio-economic factors such as fathers' levels of income, number of siblings and income of the parents were the main socio-economic factors affecting the enrolment in Science based courses among the female students. Ngugi and Muthima (2017) noted that more males were enrolled in a more technical course than females. Moletsen and Reddy (2011) showed that women's participation in industrial Science, engineering and technology courses was few and most of them concentrated on accessible courses such as arts. Therefore, this confirms with what was opined by another study done in South Africa that the government has failed to make efforts of retaining women in the engineering profession, which has contributed to low participation (Lourens, 2014). Lauren (2014) revealed that career patterns are influenced by a variety of forces, including gender-role stereotypes. Some of the factors included financial, cultural and sociological factors.

4.4 Dropping graduation trends per programme level and school

The study sought to find out if the dropping graduation trends were same for every programme level and school: diplomas, undergraduates, masters and PhD. The following figures indicated the graduation trends by level, school and gender.

4.4.1 Dropping graduation trends in School of Communication Languages and Performing arts (SCLPA)

The researcher examined whether the dropping of graduation trends was the same for every programme level and school: Diplomas, Undergraduates, Masters and PhD. The findings are presented in Figure 6, 7, 8 and 9
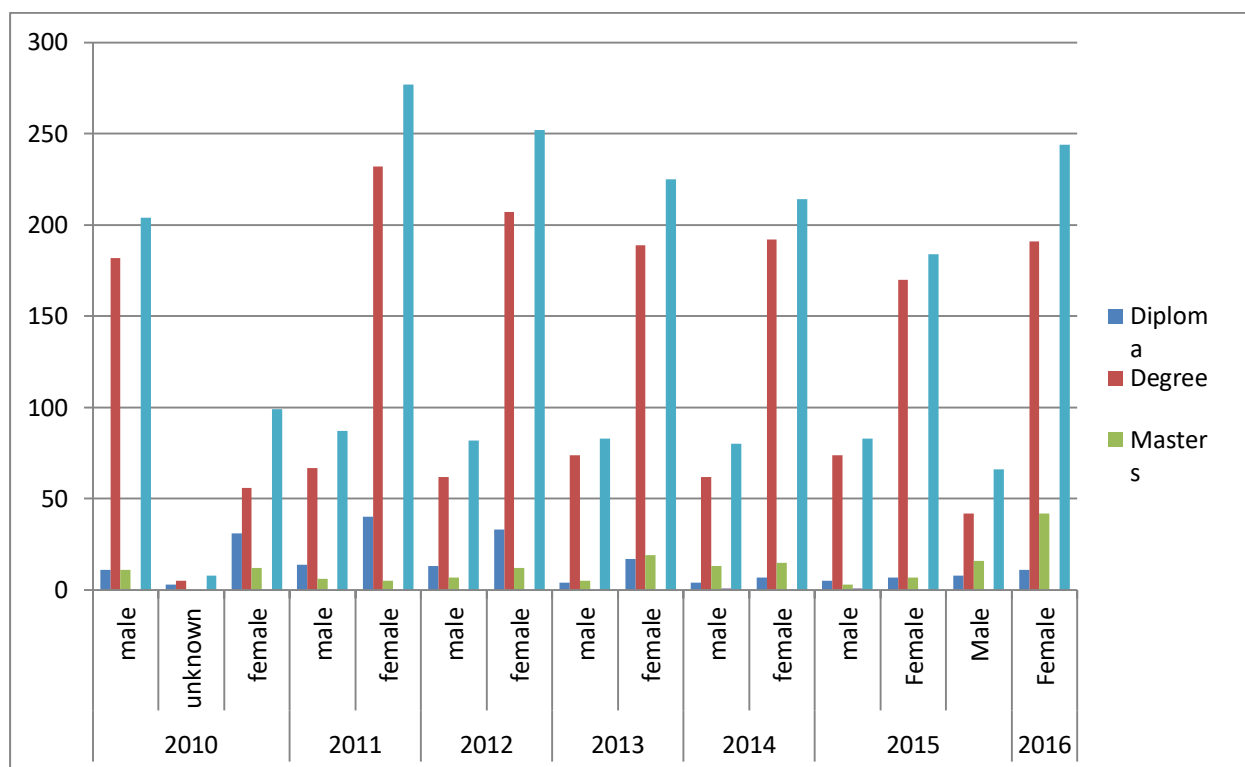

Figure 6: Dropping graduation rates in SCLPA by gender and level of study

Based on the results presented in Figure 6, most of the dropping graduation rates between 2010 and 2016 from the school of communication were those undertaking diploma courses. This was closely followed by those at the at the degree level. The drop in graduation rate was less from the masters and PHD level. This implied that the highest drop in graduation rates in the School of Communication Languages and Performing Arts were diploma students. The dropping graduation trends in the school may be attributed to a number of factors. It is likely that some of the students may have delayed graduations or may have dropped off from the University. Delayed graduations or the dropping off might have been contributed by numerous factors, one of them being the financial factors. The results concur with the findings of Osman, O'leary, Brimble and Jahmani (2017), who reported that the delay in graduation or drop out of the students is attributed to external factors, internal factors and demographic factors. Also, Khan (2012) found that factors like examination system, family size, audio-visual aid, classroom size, and living status of students have a significant effect on the students' academic performance.

4.4.2 Dropping graduation trends in the School of Business and Economics (SBE) by gender and level of study

The researcher sought to examine the dropping graduation trend in the school of business and economics and the results are presented in Figure 7
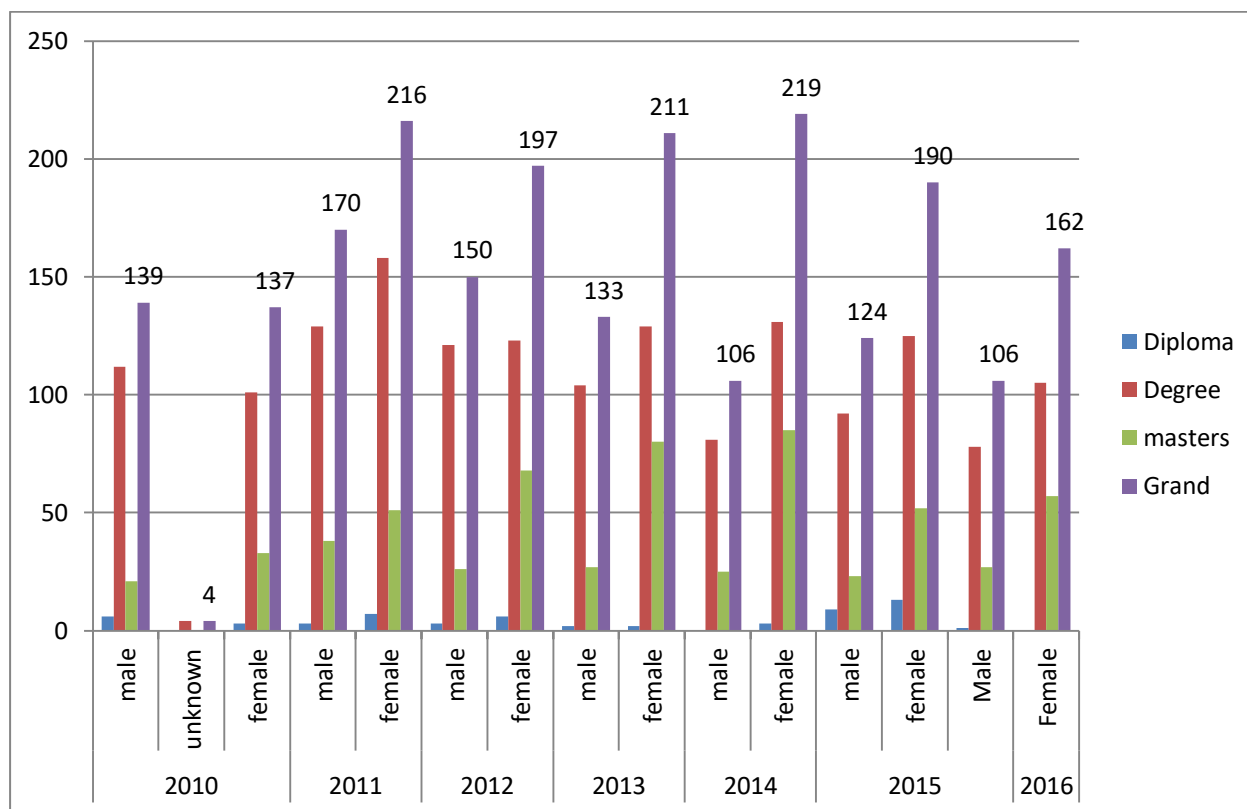

Figure 7: Drop out from school of business and economics by gender and level of study

As per the presentation in Figure 7, the highest drop in graduation rates in the school of business and economics were degree students, followed by master's students and finally the diplomas. Thus, it is essential for the University to establish reasons for the dropping graduation trends in the school. This may be indicative of students delaying in graduating or some dropping out along the educational journey. There are many factors that may contribute to this as indicated by Mbirithi (2013) who reported that insufficient funds is the biggest challenge and affects all other areas of research, teaching and learning, thus, may influence the delay in graduation or dropping out of school.

4.4.3 Dropping graduation rates in the School of Arts and Humanities

The researcher was interested in examining the drop in graduation rates in the school of arts and humanities by gender and the findings are presented in Figure 8.
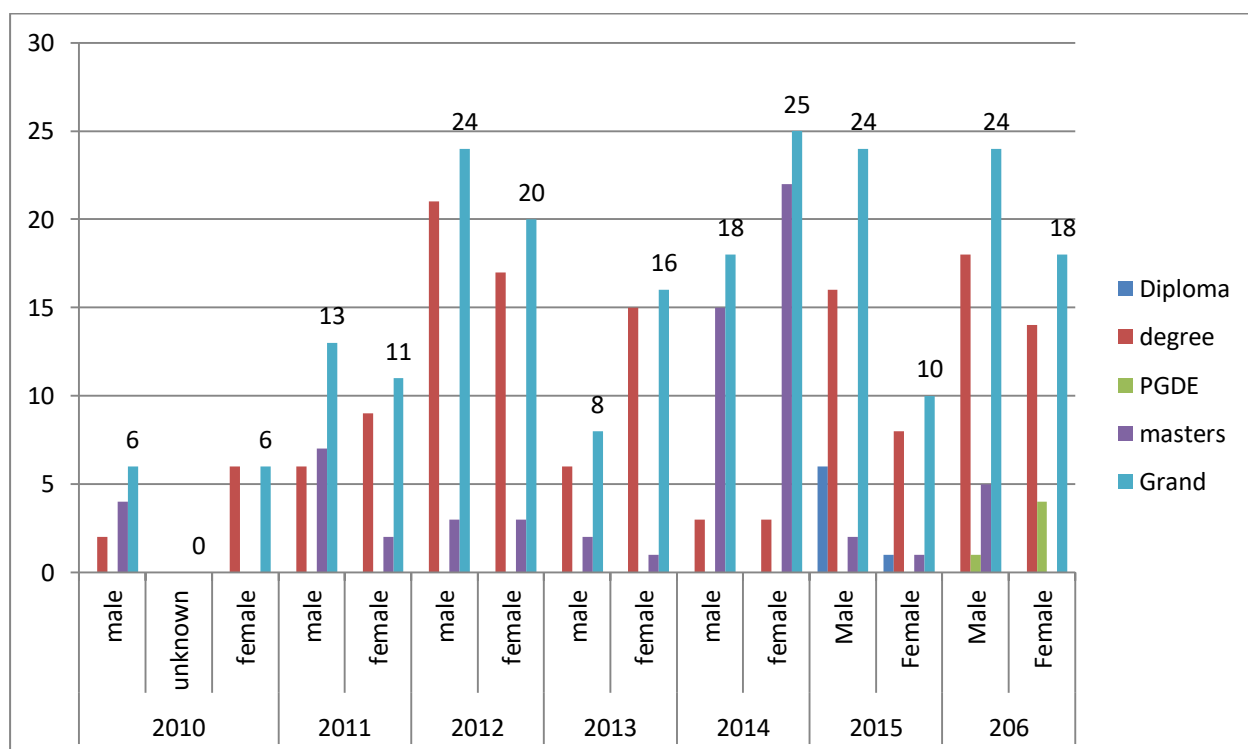
Figure 8: Dropping graduation rates in the school of arts and humanities by gender and level of study

The dropping graduation rates in the School of Arts and Humanities had the highest delay in graduation or drop out from the diploma level, followed closely by masters' programmes, degree programmes and lastly, the Post Graduate Diploma Education (PGDE) level as shown in Figure 8. The dropping graduation rates in the school may be attributed to delayed graduations or drop out from the system. Factors that may influence delayed graduations or dropout rates may include leadership styles. Muindi (2018) found that leadership styles affect the performance of universities in Kenya. Transformational and transactional leadership were found to have a significant association with the performance of universities in Kenya.

4.4.4 Dropping graduation rates in the School of Human and Social Sciences (SHSS) by gender and level of study

The researcher examined the drop in graduation rates in the SHSS by gender and level of study. The findings of the results are presented in Figure 9.
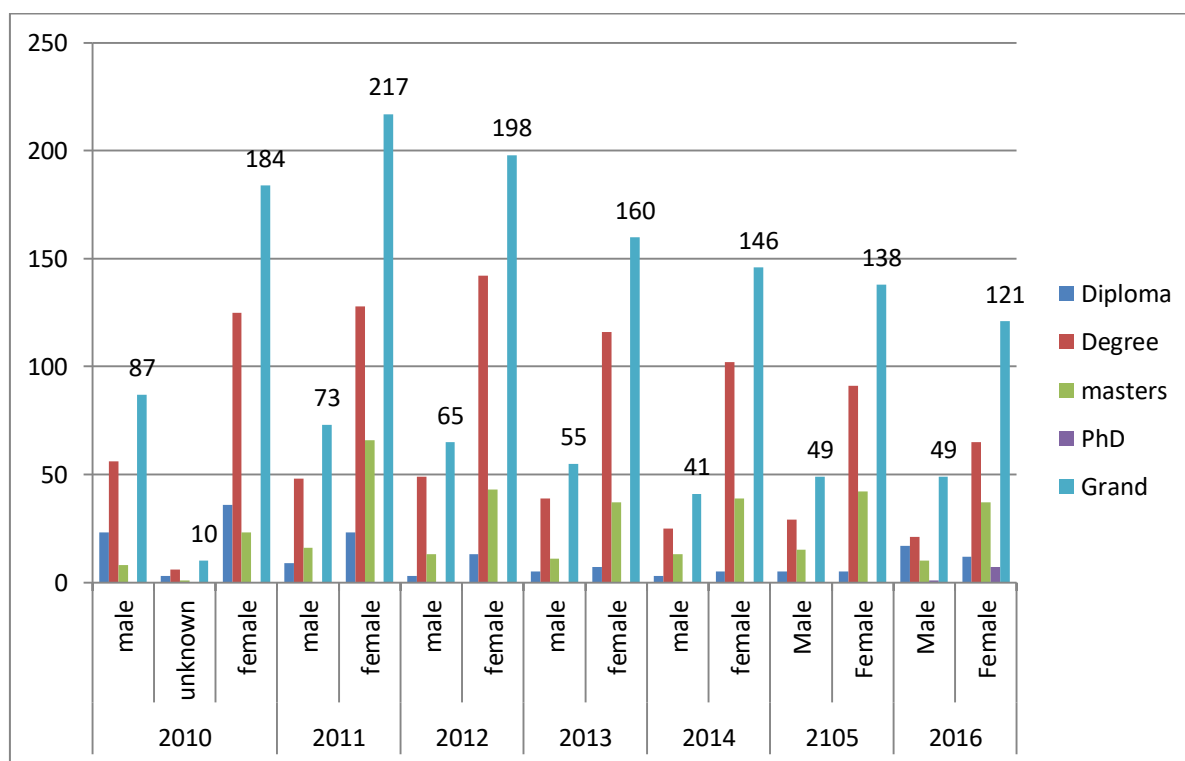
Figure 9: Dropping graduation rates in the SHSS by gender and level of study

Based on the results from Figure 9, the greatest drop in graduation rates in the School of Human and Social Sciences was in degree programmes. The second highest was masters, then diploma and finally PhD. Based on gender, the highest drop was among females. This is justified because the majority of students were females. This implies either delayed graduations or dropping out of school by some students in the school. To mitigate these challenges it is vital for the institution to examine the reasons behind delayed graduations or likely drop outs. In a study done by Mbuva (2018), it found that it is essential for students to get supportive staff, focusing on students' individual and academic needs, and positive modelling, enhance student commitment in universities for them to continue and complete their studies. This is corroborated by Njoroge (2016) who showed significant negative relationship between student-faculty interactions contributes to increased student attrition rate. Besides, Muchemi (2019) showed that examination repeats and semester deferments influenced the dropout of students to a large extent.

4.4.5: Dropping graduation rates in the School of Science Engineering and Health (SSEH) by gender and level of study

The results of the drop in graduation rates in the School of Science Engineering and Health by gender and level of study are presented in Figure 10.
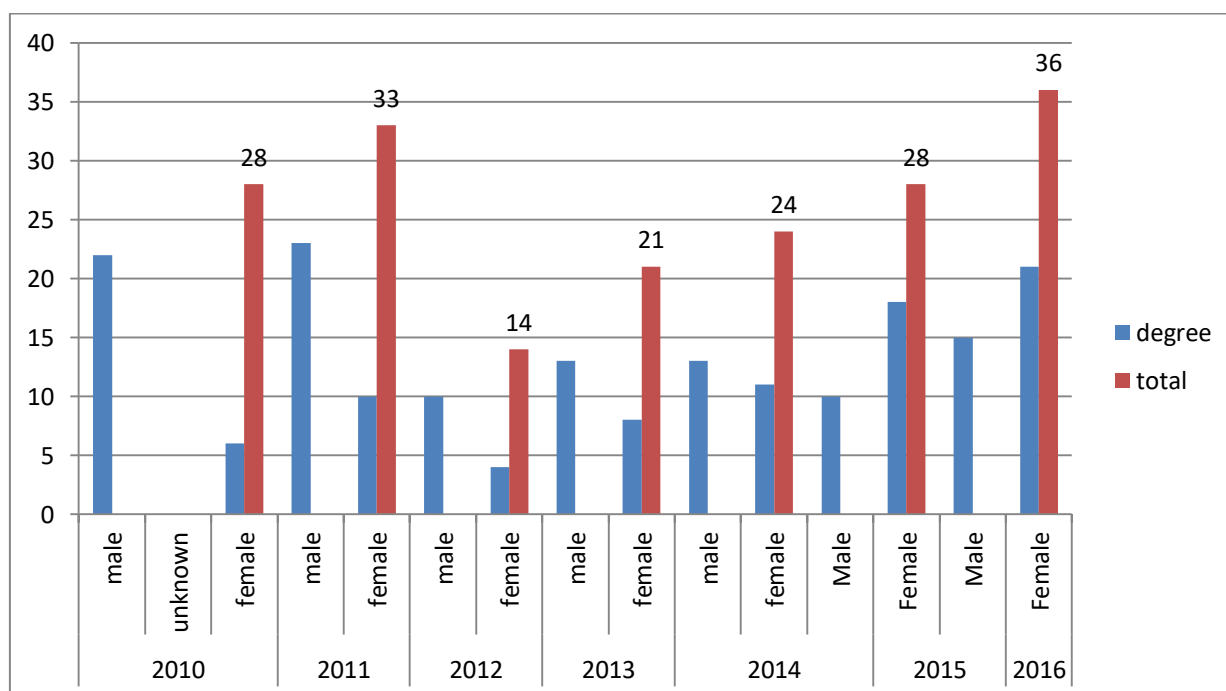
Figure 10: Dropping graduation rates in the SSEH by gender and level of study

Based on the results presented in Figure 10, the highest drop in graduation rates in the SSEH was in under graduate degree programmes. On the side of gender, the highest drop in graduations was among the males. This is explained by the fact that the school have few diploma programmes and at the time no masters programmes. The drop in graduation rates may be attributed to delayed graduations or drop out from the degree programmes due to various factors as suggested by Osman, O'leary, Brimble and Jahmani (2017) who reported that delayed graduations or drop out of the students may be attributed to external factors, internal factors and demographic factors. Further, Mahangiru (2016) found that sometimes, parents were significant in determining the delay or drop out of the students. Moreover, Khan (2012) revealed that examination system, family size, audio-visual aid, classroom size and living status of students influenced the graduation of the students.

4.5 Gross graduation trends observations

Figure 11 presents the total graduation trend observations. These are the Postgraduate Graduation trends by school. The School of science, engineering and health did not have post graduate students at the time.
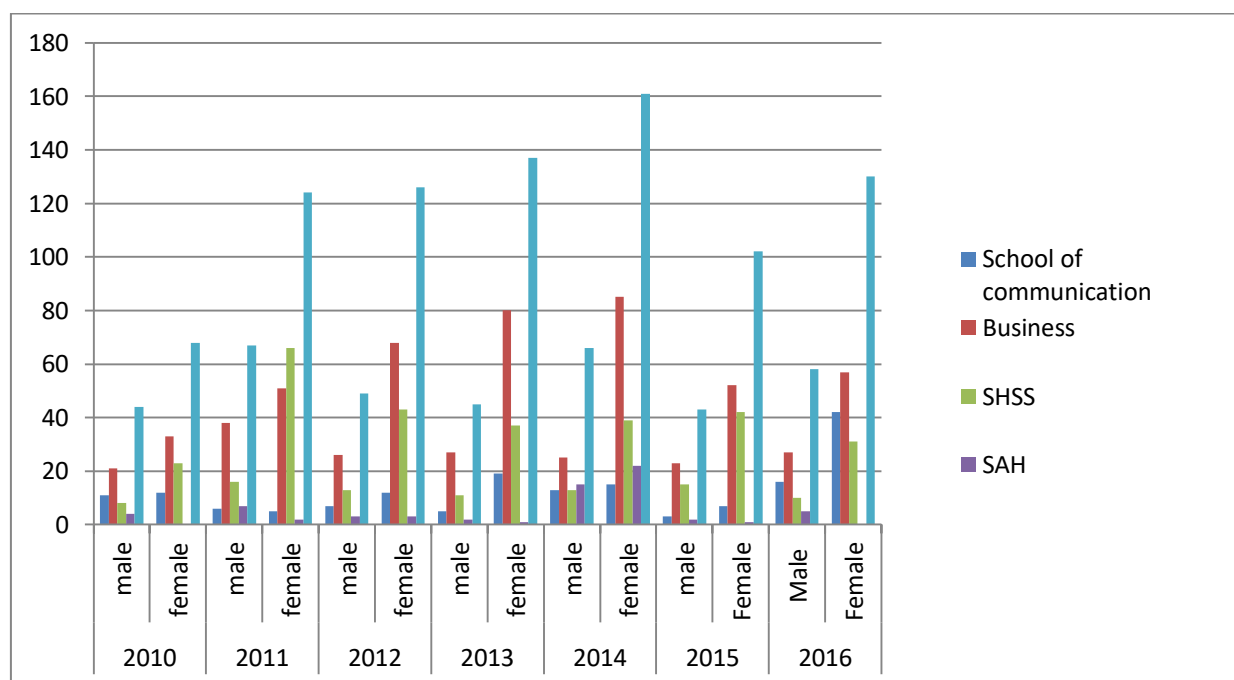
Figure 11: Postgraduate graduation trends by school

As presented in Figure 11, the school of communication has largely experienced declining graduation rates for both males and females since 2010. There was drop safe for a slight rise for female graduates in 2013 but then dropped in 2014 and 2015. There was a significant increase in 2016, where the female population rose from 7 in 2015 to 42 in 2016, and the male population rose from 3 in 2015 to 16 in 2016. In the school of business and economics, its experienced growth from 2010 to 2014 for the female population, while the male population declined in 2012 and became relatively steady since then. The female population significantly declined in 2015 down from 85 in 2014 to 52 in 2015 and increased marginally in 2016 to 57. In addition, from the school of human and social Science (SHSS), it also experienced a rise in 2011, followed by consecutive declines in 2013 and a marginal increase in 2014 and 2015. In 2016 however, there was a rather sharp drop for both male and female grandaunts. Lastly, there was a low graduate population from the school of arts and humanities except for 2014 when they graduated 37 students as opposed to only three in 2013 and another 3 in 2015. This figure rose to 5 in 2016. It might be interesting to establish what happened in 2014.

The results concur with the findings of Njoroge, Wang'eri and Gichure (2016) that showed that examination repeats and semester deferments influenced delay in graduations or dropout of students to a large extent in most universities in Kenya. Mbirianjau, Chege and Oanda (2019) found that more females enrol in private universities because they fail to secure admission into the public universities and since the course offerings in these institutions are in the social sciences, education, arts, business administration and accounting hence explain the higher graduation rates in private universities.

4.6. Content Analysis

The researcher held focus group discussions (FGDS) with postgraduate students. Five of the FGDS comprised of masters and PhD programs students at Daystar University. The researcher asked the respondents their general views about Daystar and the following emerged from the master's students regardless of their programs. They indicated that Daystar education is holistic. Daystar students in the field were viewed very positively and even their practicum experiences

indicated they were preferred over students from other institutions. They particularly liked the spiritual components incorporated in Daystar University student life for example, the prayer days. They were excited they could access their results wherever they were and delighted with the promptness of issuing of course outlines by lecturers at the beginning of semesters. Generally, the students hold positive perceptions about the University and marketability of the University's programs. However, the FGD participants indicated that the handling of withdrawals from courses registered in a semester needed to be reviewed. The participants felt like the university took too long to respond to withdrawals from courses that had been done using proper procedures and suggested that this needs to be relooked. The FGD participants also indicated that parking space was a problem for them in Nairobi Campus. Further, some participants noted that departmental changes that affected them directly were done and there was no timely communication with the students. Some stated that they were graduating, and they had never participated in student evaluations; therefore, they felt they did not get the opportunity to raise issues of concern they had with some classes.

They also explained that there were several course content similarities in some courses, hence a need to review the programme. A few pointed out the need to avail sufficient textbooks, online and general resources necessary for their programs.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it was concluded that the university had an upward admission trend from 2011 to 2014. However, a slight drop was experienced in 2015. The university needs to keep an eye on admission figures in the coming years to establish if the drop was becoming a trend or is perhaps explainable for other reasons. In addition, the number of females that were admitted to the university exceeded those of males. This implied that more females were seeking higher education in private universities as compared to males. The graduation of students at the university decreased from 2011 to 2016. Most of the schools in the University had a declining graduation trend.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study made the following recommendations based on the study findings:

1. It was recommended that the management of Daystar University needs to examine why the number of male admissions is less compared to females. This might be attributed to the courses being offered in the university not being attractive to males. Thus, university management needs to review the programmes being offered from time to time, which might solve the challenge of gender inequality in the university.
2. It is also recommended that the university need to keep an eye on admission figures in the coming years to establish whether the admission drop in 2015 was becoming a trend or perhaps was explainable for other reasons. This will enable them to come up with strategies that will lead to a consistent increase in the admission.
3. In addition, it is recommended that the university need to examine the causes of declining graduation trends.

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