

Full Length Research Paper

Trade liberalisation in education services: Opportunities and risks for SADC countries

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Education has become a 'commodity' widely tradable on the international market. This has resulted in the sector being subjected to multinational as well as global priorities and agreements. This paper looks at the opportunities and risks of international trade liberalisation moves in the high education sector on member countries of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). An analysis of tertiary education supply and demand conditions in the member countries as well as levels of involvement in international trade in education services was done. The world's major players in this trade were also identified and their higher education supply and demand conditions analysed. The findings shows that promotion of international trade in the sector through trade liberalisation measures in general would help provide more access opportunities for such services to students from the SADC region bearing in mind current capacity problems. However, this potential advantage can be eroded if member countries open up markets without ensuring that mechanisms are in place for international players to help in contributing to the achievement of domestic educational goals and not just their own profit motives.

Key words: Trade liberalisation, internationalisation, higher education, SADC countries.

INTRODUCTION

Education, considered in most countries primarily a government responsibility in terms of policy formulation, management as well as financing, has over the past two decades been increasingly subjected to multinational and global priorities and agreements. This is largely because in today's rapidly integrating world, education and its outcome knowledge has become a 'commodity' widely tradable on the international market. Bashir (2007) as well as Altach (2002) noted that the rapid integration of world economies through forces of globalisation has resulted in unprecedented increase in the number of students choosing to undertake their studies internationally.

According to UNESCO (2009) as well as OECD (2007) the number of students studying abroad has increased from a total of 0.6 million to 2.8 million in 2007. A trend analysis of the growth in international students shows that while it took 10 years to achieve a 50% increase worldwide in the number of students studying abroad between the years 1975 and 1985 as well as between 1990 and 1995 respectively, the same percentage was achieved only in a space of 5 years between the years 2000 and 2005. The majority of these students move to pursue post-secondary studies, university education in

particular, in the host countries. According to Australian government (2005), projections suggest that world demand for international higher education could increase to 8 million student places in 2025. The large increase in the number of students studying abroad is often attributed to the increase in trade in the sector (Larsen and Lancrin, 2002).

The inclusion of educational services in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) further highlights the prominent role commercial interests are having on the education sector globally. GATS is the first legal trade agreement that focuses exclusively on trade in services with its purpose being the promotion of freer trade in services by removing many of the existing barriers (Harman, 2004). It is administered by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

The growing role played by commercial interest in international education has significantly changed the high education environment. With the inclusion of education

under GATS, an instrument aimed at trade promotion through increased trade liberalisation measures, one can only expect commercial interests to continue dominating the high education landscape globally. It is important to note that the moves towards increased trade liberalisation measures are mostly advocated by developed countries. The Association of Africa Universities (2004) noted that powerful countries are using institutions such as the World Bank to push African countries to liberalise their educational services markets. Much as there are benefits in international trade for both the importers and exporters, opening up of the domestic market to international service providers needs to be based on a thorough understanding of the possible risks and opportunities so as to ensure an informed choice. This paper aims at contributing to this informed choice especially on the part of SADC countries.

The primary objective of the paper is thus to analyse the possible benefits and risks of international trade liberalisation moves on the countries making up the SADC region. It aims to achieve this by addressing the following secondary objectives (a) analyse the local supply and demand conditions for higher education services in the region; (b) analyse SADC countries level of involvement in import and export of educational services using international student mobility measures and (c) identify the possible policy implications of increased international trade and liberalisation moves on SADC countries higher education sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW - POLICY SHIFT IN INTERNATIONALISATION

Internationalisation of higher education through movement of students in particular is not a new phenomenon. Since the first modern universities were established, students and staff have been moving internationally between academic institutions for the purposes of sharing ideas and knowledge (Harman, 2004). The policy rationales for internationalisation have however shifted in a significant way over the years. Traditional policies for internationalisation of higher education were mostly based on promotion of social, cultural and political ties as well as capacity building for accelerated national development. In most developing countries, Bashir (2007) noted that the traditional forms of exchange in international higher education included faculty exchanges and the provision of scholarships for foreign study, financed largely by aid or inter-university partnerships for research. The traditional policies advocated the provision of scholarships by rich countries to developing country students for the purposes of contributing to the recipient countries' development.

The rapid integration of world economies witnessed particularly in the past three decades has had significant effects on all sectors of the world economy including the

education sector. Developments in the field of information technology have for example, helped in reducing the transactional costs often associated with international study. Information flows between people from geographically distant regions as well as the physical flow of people themselves has greatly increased. This has made it possible for prospective students to know what is being offered by educational institutions from all corners of the world. Multiculturalism has become the norm in major regions of the world, forcing many people to work or live in communities with other people coming from different parts of the world. There has also been increased growth in multinational organisations. This has resulted in demand for skilled labour that can be deployed to work in countries and cultures other than their own. OECD (2007) noted that the growing internationalisation of skilled labour markets witnessed in the 80's and the 90's fostered individuals' incentives to gain an international experience as part of their studies thereby helping in boosting demand for international education. With the world's population projected to grow from 6 billion in 2000 - 7.6 billion by 2020 (U.S Census Bureau, 2009) one can expect continued participation growth at all levels of education.

These developments have added a lot of financial pressure on the providers of higher education, as demand for space increased at too fast a rate while funding in real terms had not been keeping pace. Grebennikov and Skaines (2007) as well as Kinnel (1989) noted that in many countries there has been a dramatic fall in real terms in the proportion of government funds allocated to universities especially since the late 1980's and early 1990's. With the prospect of bleak financial outlook, universities are forced to look for other sources of revenue. Kinnel (1989) further noted that many developed countries discovered that one such source of revenue can be found in recruiting full fee paying international students. Thus commercial interests, revenue generation in particular, started gaining more ground in the provision of educational services. Nelson (2003) noted that trade in education increases the number of international students and the range of countries of origin without requesting cost subsidy by a country's tax payers. The Australian Government (2005) noted that some commercial reasons for internationalisation include the fact that provision of international educational services and postgraduate studies in particular, offers opportunities for skilled migration. This was said to be particularly the case in such countries as Australia, Germany, Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the United States where export of postgraduate studies is a form of skilled migration aimed at strengthening competitiveness in key industries by addressing among other things the problems of ageing populations and skill shortages.

International trade in general including that in educational services is associated with benefits in favour of not only the exporters but the importers as well. For example,

international education helps provide educational services to students coming from countries where such services are not available or where supply capacity problems exist. Thus through international education the human capital needs of the importing countries can be enhanced. Marfouk (2007) noted that there is plenty of evidence indicating that nations better endowed in human capital experience rapid economic growth and development. It is however important to note that much as there are benefits to both the importing and exporting countries derived from international trade, in the case of educational services, if the balance is not well managed the potential benefits to importers may end up being eroded. There is thus much need for a better understanding of the dynamics of international trade in educational services especially from the developing countries' perspective.

METHODOLOGY

In order to provide a detailed analysis on the topic, a number of issues have been investigated. On the local supply and demand side, the paper has looked at the absolute levels of tertiary enrolment over the period from 1999 to 2007 and the corresponding gross enrolment ratios (GER). Comparing the 1999 and 2007 figures allows one to see if there have been any significant increases in participation levels at tertiary level in the region. The GREs on the other hand allows for a deeper analysis of the situation by looking at the number of pupils enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education. It thus allows one assess the general level of participation in a given level of education.

In terms of participation levels in importing and exporting of educational services, the paper has focused on internationally mobile students. According to Bashir (2007), Bourke (2000) and Kennedy et al (2000) the most visible aspect and major component in the internationalisation of higher education over the past three decades continues to be the movement of students to universities abroad. In this regard the paper looks at the changes that have taken place between 1999 and 2007 in terms of total number of students studying outside their country of origin. Related to this, an analysis has been done of outward mobility ratios; major host destinations of international students from SADC countries and levels of international students hosting by SADC countries. Outward mobility ratio expresses the likelihood of students from a particular region or country to pursue their education abroad. An analysis has also been conducted to identify the world major hosts of international students and their supply capacity for tertiary education services.

The main sources of data used in the analysis include UNESCO's Institute for Statistics country reports (UIS) as well as Global Education Digests 2003 and 2009. The years of analysis were primarily chosen in consideration of the availability of data with the 2007 statistics being the most currently available comprehensive data set.

FINDINGS

According to Table 1, most SADC countries have experienced significant expansion in total enrolment at

tertiary levels. The biggest growth took place in Angola with an increase in enrolment levels of 520%. This big jump, way above every SADC country, can be attributable among other factors to the political situation in Angola. For 27 years between 1975 and 2002, the country suffered from civil war. The end of civil war helped bring much needed social order in the country, giving opportunity for many of its students to enrol in the domestic tertiary institutions. What can also not be disputed is the success the country has achieved in growing its tertiary education supply capacity. This is because social order without supply capacity generation could not achieve the great results witnessed in Angola.

Other countries that have done well over the years to increase tertiary enrolment levels with averages of 100 percent and above include Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Mozambique, Lesotho, Malawi, and Botswana, in order of enrolment growth. Moderate increases of at least 50 percent were witnessed in Madagascar, and Mauritius. South Africa had the lowest increase of the 15 member countries with a 17 percent increase over the period. It is however important to note that South Africa had already the highest tertiary enrolment figures in comparison with all the SADC member countries. Further analysis of the available data in Table 1 shows that in 1999 the total SADC enrolment figure was 862 thousand, 73% of which was taken up by South Africa alone. The figures for 2007, also shows that South Africa is way above all other SADC countries whose data is available.

Although most SADC countries over the years managed to increase their tertiary enrolment levels, a look at the Gross Enrolment Ratios show that all countries of the region are seriously lagging behind the global average in terms of the capacity of their tertiary education system to enrol students in tertiary level age group. The global GRE average was at 18% in 1999 increasing to 26% in 2007. All the countries in the region had GER values less than the world average. South Africa and Mauritius are the only countries with GRE values greater than 10. The rest had values of 6 or less. Table 1 also shows that only seven countries in the region had managed to increase their GRE values over the years namely, Angola, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius and South Africa. Mauritius was the only country that managed to significantly increase its GRE value over the years jumping from 7 - 14 while the others experienced marginal increases of mostly one or two points.

In terms of participation in international education activities, Table 2 shows that in general there has been an increase in the number of students from the countries in the region going abroad to study. There were in 2007 a total of 85,853 SADC students that studied outside their country of origin. Of the eleven countries for which comparative data over the years was available, only one, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) experienced a decline in the number of students going to pursue studies

Table 1. Tertiary enrolment levels 1999 - 2007.

SADC Country	Total Enrolment 1999 (000)	GER 1999	Total Enrolment 2007 (000)	GER 2007	% Change in Enrolment
Angola	7.9	1	49 ⁻¹	3 ⁻¹	520
Botswana	5.5	3	11 ⁻²	5 ⁻²	100
DRC	60.3	1	238	4	295
Lesotho	4.1	2	8.5 ⁻¹	4 ⁻¹	107
Madagascar	30.8	2	58	3	88
Malawi	3.2	-	6.5	-	103
Mauritius	7.6	7	14 ⁺¹	14 ⁺¹	84
Mozambique	10.3	1	28 ⁻²	1 ⁻²	172
Namibia	9.6	7 ⁻¹	13 ⁻¹	6 ⁻¹	35
Seychelles	-	-	-	-	-
South Africa	632.9	14	741 ⁻¹	15 ⁻¹	17
Swaziland	4.9	5	5.7 ⁻¹	4 ⁻¹	16
Tanzania	18.9	1	55	1	191
Zambia	23.2	2	-	-	-
Zimbabwe	42.8	3	-	-	-
World Averages	92 million	18	151 million	26	64

Notes: +n/-n: data refers to the year n years after/before the reference year
Sources of data: UNESCO-UIS (2009), UNESCO (2009).

Table 2. Internationally mobile SADC students 1999 - 2007.

Country	Mobile students 1999	Outward mobility ratio (%) 1999	Mobile students 2007	Mobile students% change	2007 Outbound Mobility Ratio (%)
Angola	4,467 ⁺¹	-	7,327	64	15 ⁻¹
Botswana	3,775	60	6,882	82	88.8 ⁻²
DRC	4,485	7	3,377	-25	1.6
Lesotho	-	-	3,901	-	47.5 ⁻¹
Madagascar	2,658	8	4,155	56	8
Malawi	1,137	32	1,837	62	30.7
Mauritius	4,579	62	7,448	63	41 ⁻¹
Mozambique	2,007 ⁺¹	16 ⁺¹	2,409	20	10.6 ⁻²
Namibia	-	-	10,663	-	60.8 ⁻¹
Seychelles	232	-	510	120	-
South Africa	4,628	1	5,746	24	0.8 ⁻¹
Swaziland	-	-	3,059	-	57.9 ⁻¹
Tanzania	2,477	12	4,138	67	8.3
Zambia	2,385	9	3,817	60	-
Zimbabwe	-	-	20,584	-	-
World Average	1.75million	1.9	2.8 million	60	2

Notes: +n/-n: data refers to the year n years after/before the reference year
Sources of data: UNESCO-UIS (2009), UNESCO (2009).

abroad. All the other ten countries experienced significant growth in international student mobility.

In analysing international mobility of students, it is also important to look at the figures of mobile students in rela-

tion to those domestically enrolled. Outbound mobility ratio measures the number of students from a given country studying abroad as a percentage of the total tertiary enrolment in that country. According to UNESCO (2006) high outbound mobility ratios can indicate either high interest in international studies or deficits in educational provision at home. According to Table 2, except for DRC and South Africa, all the other SADC countries whose data was available had excessively high outward mobility ratios when compared with the global average which was at 2 in 2007. Countries such as Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland, had their internationally mobile students accounting for more than 50% of their domestically enrolled students.

An analysis of the major host countries of international students from SADC countries shows that the majority of them are hosted in only a few countries of the world. According to the 2007 statistics as given in Table 3, around 90 percent of the 85,853 SADC students that studied abroad in 2007 were hosted in only six countries of the world namely South Africa, UK, USA, France, Portugal and Australia. 1 in every 2 that studied abroad stayed in the region to study in South Africa. A frequency analysis of the top five destinations for students from each of the SADC countries showed that South Africa, UK and USA were among the top five destinations for students from 13 countries of the 15 member countries of SADC followed by Australia at 10. Although France and Portugal were in the top hosting countries for SADC students in general, only 5 countries of the 15, namely, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles, had France in the top five destinations for its students. Portugal was in the top five of only two countries, namely, Angola and Mozambique. A detailed analysis of the statistics given by UNESCO (2009) showed that 96% of all SADC students that studied in France were from three countries Madagascar, Mauritius and DRC. Historical and linguistic links can help explain the popularity of France and Portugal as study destinations for students from the SADC countries identified.

Table 4 shows how SADC is doing as an exporter of education services. According to UNESCO (2009) the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa hosted a total of 73,095 international students in 2007 representing 2.6% of the world's total international students which was at 2,800,470. Of these 83% (60,552), were hosted by South Africa alone while Madagascar was the only other SADC country with comparatively more international students at 1,080. Other SADC countries that indicated hosting some international students between 2005 and 2007 include Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Lesotho. The majority of the students hosted by SADC countries come from fellow African countries with SADC students making up 71.5% of all international students hosted by South Africa in 2007.

The Association of Africa Universities (2004) noted that developed countries of the world are behind the push for

Table 3. Top destinations for SADC mobile students 2007.

Top host country	Frequency	Total HOSTED	% Hosted
South Africa	13	43,272	50
UK	13	9,602	11
USA	13	7,118	8
France	5	6,431	7
Portugal	2	5,800	7
Australia	10	4,714	5
Total		76,937	88

Source of data: UNESCO (2009).

Table 4. Hosting of international students by SADC countries 2007.

Country	Total hosted	Total hosted from Africa
South Africa	60,552	51,717
Madagascar	1,080	1,066
Botswana	654 ²	-
Namibia	189 ⁻¹	153
Swaziland	122 ⁻¹	114
Lesotho	53 ⁻¹	53

Notes: +n/-n: data refers to the year n years after/before the reference year

Sources of data: UNESCO-UIS (2009)

promotion of international trade in education through promotion of trade liberalisation. They further noted that these powerful countries are using institutions such as the World Bank to push African countries to liberalise their educational services markets. Table 5 provides an analysis of the local supply and demand conditions of the major developed countries as well as their levels of involvement in international education using student mobility measures.

The results show that each of the countries enrolls over a million students in its tertiary institutions. The gross enrolment ratios (GER) also show that these countries are way above the global average (24) in their capacity to enrol students in tertiary level age group. All of them have GER values more than double the global average with Australia and USA having GER values of more than three times the global average. As noted before, the whole of sub-Saharan Africa hosted a total of 73,095 international students in 2007. The findings according to Table 5 show that each of the developed countries hosted more than the number of international students hosted by the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa in 2007. The figures actually show that the total for each country except Japan was more than double the total hosted by the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa. Further analysis of the results in Table 5 shows that more than half (55%) of all the international students

Table 5. Tertiary indicators - developed countries.

Country	Total tertiary enrolment 2007 (000)	Mobile student hosted 1999	Mobile student hosted 2007	% Change in hosting	% World share 2007	Outward mobility ratio 2007	GER 2007
Australia	1,084	117,485	211,526	80	7.6	1	75
France	2,180	130,952	246,612	88	8.8	2.5	56
Japan	4,033	56,552	125,877	123	4.5	1.2	58
UK	2,363	232,540	351,470	51	12.6	1.1	59
USA	17,759	451,935	595,874	32	21.3	0.3	82

Notes: +n/-n: data refers to the year n years after/before the reference year
Sources of data: UNESCO-UIS (2009), UNESCO (2009).

in the world were hosted by five developed countries of Australia, France, Japan, UK and USA. These countries together hosted a total of 1,531,359 international students in 2007. The USA is by far the biggest individual host country of international students in the world, hosting 21.3% of all international students in the world.

Furthermore, a look at international trade figures for some of the major hosting countries enables one understand the massive earnings potential of this trade to the exporters. For example, according to the British Council (2007), based on the 2003 - 2004 international student figures, export of educational services in the UK were estimated at 28 billion Pounds. IIE (2008) noted that in the 2007/2008 academic year, foreign students and their families contributes a net of US\$15.5 billion to the US economy. In 2007 export of education services in Australia was valued at A\$12.5 billion (IDP, 2008). Export of educational services was Australia's the top service export in 2007 and the third largest export earner for the country after iron ore and coal.

DISCUSSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The results of the analysis show that countries in the SADC region are failing to supply adequate education spaces at tertiary level as can be inferred from the low gross enrolment ratios. The high levels of growth in enrolment witnessed between 1999 and 2007 however show that demand for these services is high. This means that there is a lot of potential to continue increasing the participation levels of students in the region at tertiary level if supply capacity would be improved. The lack of capacity to provide the services and the high demand for the services in the region can also be supported by the high outward mobility ratios witnessed in most of the countries in the region. Increased international trade in education thus potentially offers increased opportunities for students from the region to pursue higher education studies.

South Africa is the biggest single major host country for

students from the SADC region, hosting 50% of all international students from the region according to the 2007 statistics. This can be attributable among other things to two factors namely the SADC protocol on education and the fact that the country has the largest tertiary level education capacity of all the 15 members countries as reflected by both the total tertiary enrolments and gross enrolment ratio. Under the SADC protocol on education students from SADC countries studying in another SADC country are treated as home students for the purposes of tuition and accommodation. This means that the international students from the region enjoy the low subsidised fees paid by local students making studying within the region cheaper unless one has a scholarship to go study out of the region. The question one would however ask is, for how long will South Africa be able to bear the burden of educating SADC students. Considering that students from the region are not contributing much in earnings to the individual universities and the country at large, the current scenario is clearly not sustainable in the long run. South Africa will soon find itself in the same situation that most traditional exporters of education found themselves prompting the need for policy shift to commercial interests and revenue generation in particular for purpose of financing the needed growth in the sector to keep up with demand. Trade liberalisation moves have the potential to quicken this shift as all international students will have to be treated equally resulting most likely in all being charged full fees.

For South Africa as a country, moves towards adoption of full fee payment for international students including those from the SADC region will likely have a significant impact on its international students' population. The lower fees charged to SADC students is undoubtedly one of the major reasons for the popularity of the country among students from the region. Charging full fees will mean loss of this advantage. This of course will depend on the general levels of fees charged especially in comparison with the other major exporters of higher education services in the world. In any case, moves to charge full fees will result in the country having to compete on a more

equal footing with the major exporting countries most of whom are from the developed world. Issues of high education service quality will thus feature more prominently in determining success or failure to maintain and attract more international students into the country. There is thus currently a need for the country to look at efforts aimed at diversifying its market base to include more students from other regions of the world. In turn, revenue generated through more full fee paying students can help finance programs aimed at ensuring high service quality provision.

Much as international trade in education offers potential increased higher education access opportunities for most students from the SADC member countries, moves to open up any market to international competition need to consider seriously among other factors how ready the local suppliers are to face increased international competition. The results of the analysis show that the balance of power is definitely in favour of the developed countries. They have high capacity to supply most of their students with tertiary education as reflected in high total tertiary enrolment figures, very high gross enrolment ratios as well as very low outward mobility ratios. These countries are also able to host a lot of international students. Bearing in mind the huge monetary benefits some of them are deriving from international students, it is not surprising that their hosting of international students is on the increase. SADC countries need to understand the implications of opening up the domestic market to increased international trade forces mostly for the purpose of ensuring that moves taken in that direction are aimed at enhancing domestic educational goals other than destroying them.

In trying to understanding policy implications of increased international trade through trade liberalisation, it is important to bear in mind that international trade in services unlike physical goods, can be done in a variety of ways. The World Trade Organisation categorised the modes of delivery of services across national border in four. These include consumption abroad, cross boarder delivery, movement of natural persons and commercial presence (WTO, 2004). Consumption abroad is considered to be by far the most common mode of engagement in international trade in educational services and involves the movement of full fee paying students from an importing country to an exporting country. For example, Malawian full fee paying students studying in the United Kingdom are engaged in international trade using the mode of consumption abroad. Cross border delivery involves different forms of distance learning.

University of South Africa (UNISA) is an example of an African institution that offers distance higher education services to many students in the continent and beyond. Movement of natural persons involves movement of educational personnel of the exporter to the importing country for the purposes of providing the services while commercial presence entails the establishment of a unit

of a foreign institution in the importing country. Monash South Africa is an example of commercial presence. Located in Johannesburg, South Africa, it is part of Monash University in Australia.

Increased international trade in education through all the four different modes has the potential to significantly make a difference in terms of access to tertiary education services for students from the region. All the other modes of delivery except consumption abroad have the added advantage of increasing access at reduced costs to the students, reduced foreign exchange repatriation to foreign universities for a country as well as the big problem of brain drain often associated with international study. If well managed, delivery modes that do not involve movement of students would also help improve the quality of educational services provided by local institutions through their interaction with the international providers. This however can only be achieved if measures are put in place to ensure that only reputable foreign providers are allowed to operate in the domestic markets.

SADC countries need to also bear in mind that profit motives lie behind moves by international trading countries and universities entering foreign market. As such the ability of courses to self finance becomes an important criterion. Hence, if the situation is not well managed, foreign providers can end up charging excessively high fees than can be afforded by the majority of local students. Tertiary education can thus end up being a commodity accessible only by the rich. Governments will therefore need to put in place measures to ensure that as many qualifying students as possible are able to access the services through among other measures, provision of scholarships to those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees charges. For many people in the region education, higher education in particular, offers the only means of breaking from a cycle of poverty.

The need for courses to be self financing can also result in a situation where the international providers only concentrate their offers on courses with a lot of market potential that is, business related programs. Other courses such as sciences which may be of national importance but with less market potential in terms of numbers of students enrolling may suffer. It would thus be in the interest of nations to provide public support to the provision of such courses.

SADC member countries interested in having a share in the multi-billion dollar international education market need to take measures to attract more international students especially non SADC students into their institutions of higher learning. By charging these students commercial fees, the individual institutions and countries can share in the multibillion dollar education export industry. Such monies would be helpful in financing the different projects and programmes that may not see the light of day due to lack of public financial support. Competing and succeeding on the international market will however

require that SADC countries pay particular attention to enhancing their ability to supply quality services. Developed countries have the advantages of having highly skilled staff, modern technologies and internationally well regarded qualifications. Competing with such providers will require governments' commitment to support local institutions of higher education, including ability to attract and retain skilled staff as well as investing in modern facilities including technologies.

Conclusion and Future Research

SADC countries have serious supply problems when it comes to provision of high education services to their student population. The promotion of international trade in education through trade liberalisation measures offers a lot of potential benefits for countries in the region including improved access levels and quality of services offered. However, opening up of domestic market to international providers need to be managed in such a manner as to minimise the potential risks of doing so. Special attention needs to be paid to ensure that equity issues are considered and addressed.

As there are different modes of supplying educational services to students, it is important for SADC countries to explore the non traditional modes i.e. commercial presence, movement of natural persons and cross border delivery. These modes offer additional benefits in favour of developing countries than the traditional movement abroad mode. What is also important for domestic governments to understand is the fact that provision of services by international providers need not be taken as a replacement for its public duty to provide and ensure provision of quality tertiary education services to its people. Improving on the dire supply conditions in the region need to be concerted effort of public, domestic private and international providers of educational services.

As this paper has looked at the potential benefits and risks of trade liberalisation in education services focusing mainly on countries in the SADC region, future research can focus its analysis on the situation in other parts of Africa or the world. Another area that may be of interest for further research relating to the issue of international trade in education would be the levels of involvement in international trade through other modes of delivery other than international student mobility.

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