

## SUPERVISION OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN UGANDA

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This study sought to determine the attitude of university teaching personnel and the problems being faced in the implementation of effective supervision of instruction. The present study involved 72 selected university lecturers in Uganda who responded to a questionnaire to measure their attitude and responses on classroom supervision. The result showed that supervision of instruction is done regularly and faculty had positive attitude toward it. However, it was shown that those who are conducting supervision of instruction need further training in the area of clinical supervision of instruction. The faculty members strongly agree that supervision of instruction should be attached to some form of remuneration. It is recommended that effective process of supervision of instruction be implemented by deans and heads of department.

**Keywords:** Supervision, instruction, private universities

### Introduction

Uganda's population has grown from 4.9 million people in 1949 to 33 million by 2012. This population growth is not matched with the available resources and so this has led to the government to prioritize her funding thereby reducing funding of higher education and increasing the funding of primary education sector and secondary sector, under the universal primary education (UPE) and universal secondary education (USE) respectively.

The government of Uganda put in place a policy of liberalization in all sectors, thereby inviting the private sector in the running of schools and tertiary institutions. Massive growth of higher education institutions from below 50 to hundreds today, has led to growing pressure from students to access some kind of post-secondary education, an issue which is seen as a "social mobility phenomenon". This has produced highly diversified systems, in terms of institutional nature, academic programs and financial mechanisms, resources and personal and public expectations (Ward, Penny, & Read, 2006).

The significant emergence of private institutions, primary, secondary and tertiary, which has changed the outlook of education, has been due to the liberalization policy of government which has favored a market free economy model in education thereby attracting both foreign and indigenous investors in the higher education sector.

There has been a growing concern by the students, parents and government officials about the type

of courses offered by tertiary institutions, their (courses) relevancy to the available market and the future development of the national economy. For example, many graduates have been seen on the streets without any jobs because of having no jobs in ministries, which are the main government employment destinations and more-over parastatals have been privatized.

Recently, there was a concern towards a more global competitive and highly technologically oriented economy thereby putting up a policy of emphasizing science in schools. This has seen secondary school teachers and tertiary and university lectures who teach science and science related fields getting more salary compared to their counterparts who teach arts subjects. This move has led to heated debates both in parliament and among the civil society activists as to whether this is a better option towards national integration and development.

There is therefore a grave concern for the equity, quality and efficiency of the higher education systems. Also there is a concern about the quality education offered in our tertiary institutions especially the private universities, with insufficiency of learning and teaching resources, the increasing cost of programs, the monetary implications to the owners of the institutions, the little payments given to the lecturers of those universities, the unequal accessibility conditions, the high rates of academic failures and attrition and the long periods some courses take the students to complete the programs due to some problems, thereby requiring endurance.

In the United States of America, politicians,



business leaders, and educators have been pressing major change in education since the mid 1980's. School reforms had focused on the "basics" in the mid 1970's and early 1980's but by the end of President Reagan's first term, researchers and reformers had begun to argue for more intellectual ambitious instruction. They argued for better academic performance, stiffer state and national standards and even stiffer state and perhaps national tests. This has been echoed in Cohen and Hill (2000) report on mathematics reform in California.

Looking at the University as an industry and students as our consumers, the courses we offer at the university become the products of the university and therefore should be of high quality. This then renders the university a supervisor of its own product having a research and sales (publicity) unit for maintenance of high quality products.

In Uganda, the government set up an independent body, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 7 of 2001. The objects of this Act are to establish and develop a system governing institutions of higher education, in order to set standards, qualifications for the same or similar courses offered by different institutions of higher education and, to widen the accessibility of high quality standard institutions to students wishing to pursue higher education courses.

Under the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act 7 (2001), the NCHE has the mandate under article 5 section (g), "to monitor, evaluate and regulate institutions of Higher Education", and section (l) of the same article, "to certify that an institution of Higher Education has adequate and accessible physical structures and staff for the courses to be offered by it". All these indicate that the supervision to oversee the standards is external or is initiated by external agents.

To achieve this, among others, the Council is to design, develop and coordinate standards of instructions in the same courses offered by different institutions. If emphasis is on the same courses being offered at different institutions, what then happens to those other courses not offered to others but are found in some universities?

### **Organizational Structures of Universities (Academics and Infrastructure Development and Maintenance)**

#### **Public Universities**

Under Article 34 section 1, 2 and 3 of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act No 7 (2001), there is a provision for an Academic Registrar for each Public University appointed by the University Council, on recommendation of the appointments board, on such terms and conditions as the University Council may determine. Section 3 of the same article stipulates that the Academic Registrar shall assist the first Deputy Vice-Chancellor in the administration and organization of all academic matters including admission, undergraduate studies, post graduate studies, examinations, research and publication. There is clear evidence that learning is being targeted.

Under the same Act, Article 44, 45 and 46 clearly mention the University Senate, its composition, functions and powers and procedure of the Senate. For purposes of emphasis, Article 45 Section 1, states "subject to the provisions of this Act, the Senate shall be responsible for the organization, control and direction of the academic matters of the University and as such the Senate shall be in charge of the teaching, research and general standards of education and research and their assessment in the University.

The same article under section 3 empowers the Senate to deprive any person of a degree, diploma, certificate or other award of a public University if after due inquiry it is established that the award was obtained through fraud or dishonorable or scandalous conduct. However, the custodianship of the Institutions' property, facilities and academic inventories are not mentioned with emphasis.

#### **Private Universities**

The Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act No 7 (2001), Part XVII clearly stipulates the guidelines on the establishment of a Private University. However, the academic structure in the Private University is loose. The Act states that "A private University shall have a supreme academic body, whose composition, functions and powers shall be specified in its Charter". This suggests that such Charter may be amorphous, can vary from Private University to Private University and from Public University to Private University. This in itself is a source of discrepancy. There is no mention of which organs in the University should oversee the infrastructure development and maintenance. This makes private universities to have a loose structure as far as supervision of instruction or general running of the universi-

ty. It appears that each private university has the option of choosing its own framework of operation.

### Statement of the Problem

Under the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act 7 (2001), the NCHE has the mandate under article 5 section (g), “to monitor, evaluate and regulate institutions of Higher Education”, and section (l) of the same article, “to certify that an institution of Higher Education has adequate and accessible physical structures and staff for the courses to be offered by it”. All these indicate that the supervision to oversee the standards is external or is initiated by external agents.

To achieve this, among others, the Council is to design, develop and coordinate standards of instructions in the same courses offered by different institutions. If emphasis is on the same courses being offered at different institutions, what then happens to those other courses not offered to others but are found in some universities? Secondly, supervision of classroom instruction is one of the vehicles to professional development of lecturers in universities since joining universities to lecture, there is no formal training. Then how do lecturers who have joined lectureship gain proficiency if they do not undergo classroom instruction supervision?

### General Objective of the Study

The overall objective is to ascertain whether lecturers at private universities undergo classroom supervision as they deliver their lectures.

### Specific objectives of the Study

The specific objectives are:

1. To find out the status of classroom supervision of instruction in private universities
2. To establish lecturers' views on supervision of classroom instruction
3. To determine whether there are innovations in supervision of classroom instruction
4. To document the necessary steps to be taken for the future.

### Research Questions

This research was informed by the following research questions:

1. What is the status of classroom supervision of instruction in Private Universities in Uganda?
2. What is historical trend of classroom supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda?
3. What is the status of support and management services of classroom supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda?
4. What are the problems faced in the implementation of classroom supervision at the Private Universities in Uganda?
5. What are the operational conditions affecting classroom supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda?
6. What are the aspired innovations in terms of classroom supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda?

### Methods and Procedures

This study employed survey research design. Research information about a large number of people was obtained by gathering data from a few of them. Kothari (1985) describes survey design as concerned with hypotheses formulation and testing relationships of non-manipulated variables.

Descriptive method was utilized to describe how classroom supervision was being done in private universities in Uganda. Seventy two (72) lecturers in selected private universities in Uganda participated to assess how classroom supervision is being done. A questionnaire was prepared with a reliability coefficient of .655. Lecturers were chosen randomly and anonymity and confidentiality were observed. The researcher carefully explained the study to the respondents. Interpretation of computed mean is as follows:

1.00 – 1.49 – Strongly Disagree

1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree

2.50 – 3.49 – Undecided/Not Sure

3.50 – 4.49 – Agree

4.50 – 5.00 – Strongly Agree

### Results and Discussion

#### Research Question 1: What is the status of classroom supervision of instruction in Private Universities in Uganda?

A majority (mean=3.24) were undecided whether supervision of instruction was understood. This means that supervision of classroom instruction



has not been heard of and therefore, is not done.

The mean (2.96) was also undecided on the item; classroom supervision of instruction is done regularly. This confirms the first statement about understanding of classroom instruction. Also on the issue of classroom supervision of instruction is done by both the administrators and peers, they were undecided (mean=2.93). On the item, we have had seminars on classroom supervision, they were undecided (mean=2.58)

However, majority (mean=3.60) agreed that supervision of instruction was accepted and that

(mean=4.00) supervision was for professional growth. This is in line with Veloo (2013), who assert that supervision helps teachers improve the teaching and learning. This is also in line with the dictionary definition of instructional supervision as “ all efforts of designated school officials towards providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in improvement of instruction; involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, selection and revision of educational objectives, material of instruction and methods of teaching and the evaluation of instruction”.

Table 1

*Status of Classroom Observation in the Private Universities in Uganda*

	Mean	Interpretation
1. Classroom supervision of instruction at the university is understood.	3.24	Undecided
2. Classroom supervision of instruction is done regularly.	2.96	Undecided
3. Classroom Supervision of instruction is well accepted by the faculty.	3.60	Agree
4. Classroom Supervision of instruction is done by both the administrators and peers.	2.93	Undecided
5. Classroom Supervision of instruction is not done at all.	2.20	Disagree
6. We have had seminars on classroom supervision.	2.58	Undecided
7. Supervision of classroom instruction is for professional growth	4.00	Agree

**Research Question 2: What is historical trend of classroom supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda?**

Table 2

*Historical Trend of Classroom Supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda*

	Mean	Interpretation
1. Classroom supervision of instruction has been on since the beginning of the University.	3.80	Agree
2. Classroom supervision of instruction was embraced by all as a good practice.	3.30	Undecided
3. Classroom Supervision of instruction was at one time rejected by the staff.	2.23	Disagree
4. Classroom Supervision of instruction has never been understood and therefore not done.	2.33	Disagree
5. Classroom Supervision of instruction has been done by external agency.	2.21	Disagree



This area of concern was to establish whether the concept of supervision of instruction is in the vocabulary of the concerned universities. A majority agreed (mean=3.80) that supervision of instruction has been on since the beginning of the university but were also undecided (mean=3.30) on whether classroom supervision of instruction was embraced by all as a good practice. This may be because some members of staff might see supervision as demeaning someone

who is already qualified to teach at university. And on the items; classroom supervision of instruction was at one time rejected by the staff (mean=2.23); this was to establish whether staff had rejected the idea of supervision but it turned out that this had not happened. Classroom Supervision of instruction has never been understood and therefore not done (mean=2.33); Classroom Supervision of instruction has been done by external agency (mean=2.21), they disagreed.

**Research Question 3: What is the status of support and management services of classroom supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda?**

Table 3

*Support and Management Services Available for Classroom Supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda*

	Mean	Interpretation
1. Classroom Supervision of instruction is embedded in our University By-laws.	3.43	Undecided
2. We usually discuss our classroom observations with peers.	3.27	Undecided
3. Administrators encourages faculty to use classroom observations for improvement.	3.33	Undecided
4. There are sufficient facilities and equipment for classroom instruction.	2.43	Disagree
5. Guidelines for supervision of classroom instruction among faculty are in place.	2.45	Disagree

This question aimed at finding out whether there were mechanisms in place that encouraged staff and faculty to carry out supervision of instruction by the experienced members of staff on their junior counterparts.

Many were not sure (mean=3.43) whether classroom supervision of instruction is embedded in the university by-laws which may clearly show that if at all the by-laws were there then it might mean that the staff have never seen it or they have never been sensitized about it. And they disagreed (mean=2.45) on whether guidelines for supervision of instruction among faculty were in place. They also disagreed on the issue of whether there were sufficient facilities and equipment for classroom instruction (mean=2.43). This clearly indicates that the universities have not taken trouble to put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure that supervision of instruction is carried on.

there were few facilities for use in teaching and others (mean=2.53) disagreed on whether administration does not encourage classroom supervision. However there was disagreement (mean=2.45) on whether they had not been given training in supervision of instruction. The main aim of this was to find out whether staff at these universities experienced some problems with supervision, whether administration would not encourage supervision and whether the staff had been trained in the supervision of instruction. It is apparent that the issue of classroom instruction of supervision has a number of challenges ranging from administrative to facilitation on training.

**Research Question 4: What are the problems faced in the implementation of classroom supervision at the Private Universities in Uganda?**

Many were undecided (mean= 3.43) on whether



Table 4

*Problems Faced in the Implementation of Classroom Supervision of Instruction at the University*

	Mean	Interpretation
1. Some faculty do not like to be supervised.	3.30	Undecided
2. Administration does not encourage classroom supervision.	2.53	Disagree
3. There are few facilities for use in teaching.	3.43	Undecided
4. We have not been given training in supervision of instruction	2.45	Disagree
5. I do not understand the importance/use of supervision of classroom instruction	2.30	Disagree

**Research Question 5: What are the operational conditions affecting classroom supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda?**

Table 5

*Operational Conditions of Supervision of Classroom Instruction*

	Mean	Interpretation
1. It is mandatory at our University to be supervised before one is promoted.	2.70	Undecided
2. I would enjoy being supervised by my peers than my boss.	3.97	Agree
3. I would be happy if after the supervision, I was given opportunity to revisit my next lesson by my supervisor.	4.13	Agree
4. It would be better if supervision was attached to some form of remuneration.	3.90	Agree
5. I would not mind whoever supervises me as long as it is objective and progressive.	4.17	Agree

There was overwhelming support for supervision if it was objective and progressive (mean=4.17) and that they would be happy to revisit the next lesson with the supervisor (mean=4.13). This was in line with the formative function of clinical supervision – provides a framework and process for reflective learning. It enables the practitioner to recognize strengths and weaknesses in their work, to further develop skills and knowledge to relate theory to practice in a critical way. And also the restorative function of clinical supervision – provides the practitioner with a supportive relationship, which can address the emotional responses of the

practitioner and reduce distress arising from stressful situations and relationships (Bond & Holland, cited in Freeman, 2005). Many were undecided on whether it was mandatory to be supervised before being promoted (mean=2.70). However, they agreed that they would enjoy being supervised by their peers than their bosses (mean=3.97).

**Research Question 6: What are the aspired innovations in terms of classroom supervision in the Private Universities in Uganda?**

Table 6

*Innovations of Supervision of Classroom Instruction*

	Mean	Interpretation
1. From the time I joined the University, I see innovations in supervision of classroom instruction.	3.30	Undecided
2. I have benefited a lot from being supervised in my classroom teaching.	2.79	Undecided
3. I wish I was allowed to introduce a new method of supervision I would willingly do it.	3.57	Agree
4. I find myself in a position where I can train others on classroom supervision of instruction.	3.70	Agree
5. It would be good if another way of supervision was introduced other than the current one.	3.70	Agree

There was agreement on if they were given opportunity to introduce a new method of supervision (mean=3.57) and that they were in position to train others on classroom supervision of instruction (mean=3.70). However, they were undecided on; from the time I joined the University, I see innovations in supervision of classroom instruction (mean=3.30) and. I have benefited a lot from being supervised in my classroom teaching (mean=2.79). This means that staff actually to see supervision as an innovation in their universities and were willing to train their colleagues if they had been trained earlier on.

### Conclusions

The following are the major conclusions of the study:

1. Supervision of instruction was acceptable but not understood.
2. It is not clear whether supervision of instruction is understood by all since majority were undecided.
3. University by-laws do not have supervision of instruction as a routine function.
4. Administrators were not against supervision of instruction but were not instrumental in the process.
5. Respondents were positive about the process of instruction and saw it as progressive.

### Recommendations

The following are the major recommendations of this study:

1. Classroom supervision should be done by both administrators and peers regularly. It should be embraced by all as an essential component of effective delivery of instruction.
2. Seminars must be conducted in order to emphasize the importance of classroom supervision and in order to find innovations to the current practices.
3. Facilities for classroom instruction should be provided so that there will be better result of classroom supervision.
4. Guidelines for conducting classroom supervision must be in place to enhance fairness and objectivity. Criteria for evaluation must be clearly explained and discussed with the faculty.
5. There must be post conference done by both the supervisor and the faculty so that agreement can be attained.
6. Revisiting the classroom should be done to check whether improvement has been done and suggestions were implemented.
7. Classroom supervision can be attached to some form of remuneration to create a better motivation to improve.
8. Allow some faculty especially those that have been in upgrading to train others so that they may share their knowledge and train others for more effective classroom supervision.



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