

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER COMPETENCIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE BACHELOR OF EDUCATION EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAMME OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

- B.Ed (External) was launched in 1991 to prepare students for adequate professional competence and to give students in-depth knowledge and skills.
- The degree has grown from 198 students admitted then to currently 3,348. Despite this growth, there have been fears that the programme is not as effective as it should be.
- Teacher education program in Uganda is therefore expected to prepare teachers to guide children.
- So the competencies that teachers acquire during their training should be the kind that will enable them do so.

The Problem

- The B. Ed External programme was established primarily to upgrade diploma teachers.
- Every DE programme requires strong student support systems.
- But B. Ed programme at Makerere does not seem to have strong student support systems. This impacts on acquisition of competencies.
- The study therefore intends to find out whether the B. Ed programme has ensured acquisition of sufficient teacher competencies.

Objectives & Research Qns.

Objectives

- To assess whether the B.Ed External Programme has increased the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter.
- To explore whether the B.Ed External Programme has enhanced the teachers' delivery methods and skills.
- To assess whether the B.Ed External Programme has equipped teachers with skills of managing and administering educational activities.

Research questions

- Has the B.Ed External Programme helped teachers improve on their knowledge of subject matter?
- Has the B.Ed External Programme helped enhance teachers' delivery methods?
- Does the B.Ed External Programme provide student teachers with skills in managing and administering educational activities?

Methodology

The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches

- Questionnaires
- Interview schedules
- Lesson observation
- Non-standardized competency tests
- Documentary analysis

Used purposive and cluster sampling

Study Sample

Category	Total Sample	Pilot Study Sample
Students	300	150
Tutors	50	20
Administrators	20	10
Head teachers	72	36
Ministry of Education	4	2

Validity and reliability of instruments

- The items in the instruments were informed by the problem statement and literature review.
- The draft instruments were given to peers and supervisors for comments and review.
- Ran a pilot study as way of testing for validity and reliability of the instruments.

Key pilot study findings

CONTENT

- 70% of the content covered is relevant back in schools.
- Some materials are written in DE mode.

METHODS

- Curriculum caters for teaching methods.
- Varied teaching methods have led to improved performance.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Students Participate in decision making.
- Participate in leadership positions.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- Regular face to face sessions
- Guidance and counseling services available.

Key pilot study findings...

However, teachers improvement of knowledge and skills, has not wholly been achieved because of;

- Poor methods of teaching due to inadequate training.
- Inadequate opportunities for practice
- Poor Quality and quantity of study materials,
- Lack of effective supervision and follow up.

Inadequate student support services;

- Poor management of face-to-face tutorials
- Ill equipped study centres
- Ineffective students study groups
- Inadequate ICT integration in programme activities

Key pilot study findings...

Other factors affecting acquisition of teacher competencies on the B.Ed programme

- Lack of study skills in Distance Education.
- Motivation for study
- Poor Retention of knowledge acquired.
- Poor collaborative skills and partnerships.
- Lack of personal tutors or mentors.
- Costs involved to both students and management
- Lack of a needs assessment survey.

Preliminary Conclusions

Distance Education mode if well managed and administered can provide teacher trainees with the required competencies to teach. However, whereas, the Bed programme has helped teachers acquire key teacher competencies, this is not wholly achieved because of poor management of students support services, inadequate study materials and inadequacies in the curriculum.

Implications

- There is need to revisit instruments.
- The structure and format of the questionnaire to be revisited for easy coding.
- Non standardised tests were good but getting the students to do the test was problem,
- Lesson Observation provided first hand information however, were tedious and expensive.
- Need for clarity of some terms and concepts like students support systems, tutorials etc.

**END
THANK YOU**

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