

Ph.D. Public Defence

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Title : Factors affecting the management of examinations in public universities in Uganda

Abstract

The study on the factors affecting the management of examinations in public universities in Uganda was about the planning, organization, coordination and controlling processes of examinations. The objectives of the study were to examine the roles played by internal examiners and administrators in the management of examinations; to assess the effectiveness of external examining and the appropriateness of the examinations policies in the management of examinations, guided by an integration of the system – human factor – contingency theoretical orientations.

A cross sectional research methodological design was used to collect data from four of the five public universities in Uganda; namely, Makerere University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Kyambogo University and Gulu University in which a total of 528 internal examiners and administrators participated in the study. Documents about examinations policy, rules regulations and procedures were reviewed; eight top managers were interviewed; and direct observations conducted during semester one of 2007/2008 was done in the data collection process. Descriptive statistical approach and a non parametric chi square data analysis were used to arrive at the findings.

It was found out that the internal examiners play significant roles in planning and organizing processes of managing examinations. The activities in these processes were found to be consecutively (systematically) programmed. The activities in the processes comprise: setting, marking, administering of coursework and examinations, moderating of questions, approving of results and grading of candidates.

It was further found that administrators play coordinating and controlling roles in the management of examinations. Their roles immensely check on the abuse of policy, rules, regulations and procedures in the management of examinations.

It was also found out that the system of external examining in public universities is an effective way of ensuring both the internal quality and external validation of examinations. It checks on the quality of teaching and examining as well and spots check on the abuses that may emanate from the functional deficiencies of the internal examiners.

It was however found that, the current examinations' policy was not appropriately implemented, leaving very big gaps for manipulations and abuses. There are fears of

legal retribution among the internal examiners and administrators in public universities in Uganda as a result. Examinations malpractices and the demands for monetary reward for every examinations related activity in the university are still major vices in public. These remain challenging situation for public universities. It is therefore recommended that:

1. National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) should have a nominal roll for all internal examiners and administrators in public universities. Public universities should provide the details on the qualification, experience, competencies of their internal examiners and administrators on a regular basis to NCHE.

2. Public universities should review obsolete examinations policy to meet the ever changing demands of the stakeholders; and

3. top management in public universities should provide support services for the efficient and effective delivery of services in general and for the management of examinations in particular. All in all, an effective design model for Continuous Improvement in the Management of Examinations (CIME) should be adopted in public universities in Uganda. CIME should be adopted in all the activities of public universities in Uganda namely: admissions, examinations, teaching and research, and community service.