

**The management of academic programmes in emerging
universities of Uganda: a case study of the islamic univesity in
Uganda**

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Abstract

In this study, an attempt was made to establish how the management of the academic programmes in emerging Universities of Uganda particularly the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) Mbale is done. Specifically, the study sought to establish how planning, organization, direction and coordination of academic programmes were done at IUIU. The primary data were collected using structured questionnaires. Secondary data were obtained from academic reports and other evaluation reports from IUIU. A case study design was conducted and a total sample of 324 respondents including students, lecturers and University administrators were consulted. Data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used in presentation of findings. Research findings indicate that there is proper planning of academic programmes at the Islamic University of Uganda evidenced by the activities performed by both students and lecturers like attending lectures, tutorials, and students doing course works, tests and exams as scheduled. Despite the majority view that academic programmes at Islamic University are adequately organized, students expressed the need to create more departments for reasons like improving efficiency, reducing overcrowding, integrating other courses and supplementing course units.

While students were motivated to improve performance through retaining the best performers as part of staff, lecturers are not adequately motivated in terms of remuneration. Collaboration between departments was also indicated through exchange of staff, instructional materials, conducting joint research, sharing course units, seminars and discussions. Finally, the study recommends involving all stakeholders (students, parents, government and the community) in the planning of its academic programmes, increasing the resource base and need to increase incentives to staff to motivate them among others.

Key words: academic programmes- emerging universities- management

1.0 Introduction

In Uganda, the higher education sector changed from the mid-1980s onward. Demand for university education sky-rocketed; more universities were established. The study and work conditions for students and lecturers deteriorated respectively. For that matter, a study on the management of academic programmes in emerging Universities of Uganda particularly the Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU) was conducted. In this chapter, background, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, purpose, scope and significance of the study are given.

1.1 Background to the study

Management deals with setting up an environment in which individuals, working together, efficiently accomplish aims (Liu, 1997). The academic programmes in a University enable teaching and learning. In this study, they help one qualify for an academic qualification. The emerging Universities meet challenges of: inadequate infrastructure, inadequate manpower, inadequate funds and equipment for proper management of their programmes. The University tasks of teaching, research and community service faced difficulties in emerging universities. The Islamic University in Uganda was started to provide higher education without adding to government costs and management (Saint, 1992).

The University's vision is: "To be a centre of excellence providing appropriate training necessary for producing an all-round individual capable of meeting the challenges of life across time and space". The mission of the University is: "To produce well cultured believing graduates of sound character, equipped with useful skills and knowledge and are able to participate positively in

the development of their countries” (Academic Registrar’s Report IUIU, 2004). It is against this background that this study examined the management of the academic programmes at University.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many Private Universities established in Uganda suffer constraints like limited space, manpower, teaching and learning materials, infrastructure and finance (The Academic Registrars’ Report, IUIU 2004). Moreover, these problems are compounded by more academic programmes being introduced. Some of these Universities depend on students’ fees, which is unreliable and partly financed by donors who are equally unreliable thus affecting the quality of academic programmes.

The Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) is also grappling with problems as cited arising from poor management of university activities. These challenges affect the quality of graduates (Saint, 1992). There is little information regarding the effect of management on academic programmes at this University. Therefore, this study examines whether the academic programmes meet high quality academic standards internationally.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish how the management of the academic programmes at the Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU) was done.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The following specific objectives guided this study:

- (1) To establish how planning of academic programmes is done at Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU).

- (2) To establish how organization of academic programmes is done at Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU).
- (3) To establish how directing academic programmes is done at the Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU).
- (4) To establish how coordination of academic programmes is done at the Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU).

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- (1) How is planning of academic programmes done at Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU)?
- (2) How is organization of academic programmes done at Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU)?
- (3) How is directing of academic programmes done at the Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU)?
- (4) How is coordination of academic programmes done at the Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU)?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is significant to other Universities because it lends knowledge on the management of their academic programmes and provides solutions to problems faced by universities in that regard.

It provides information to the Ministry of Education and Sports particularly the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE).

The study is of importance to policy makers, academicians, donor agencies and nongovernmental organizations who are supporting education in Uganda.

Finally, it will assist the academic staff and students to design effective teaching and assessment strategies in university management.

1.7 Scope

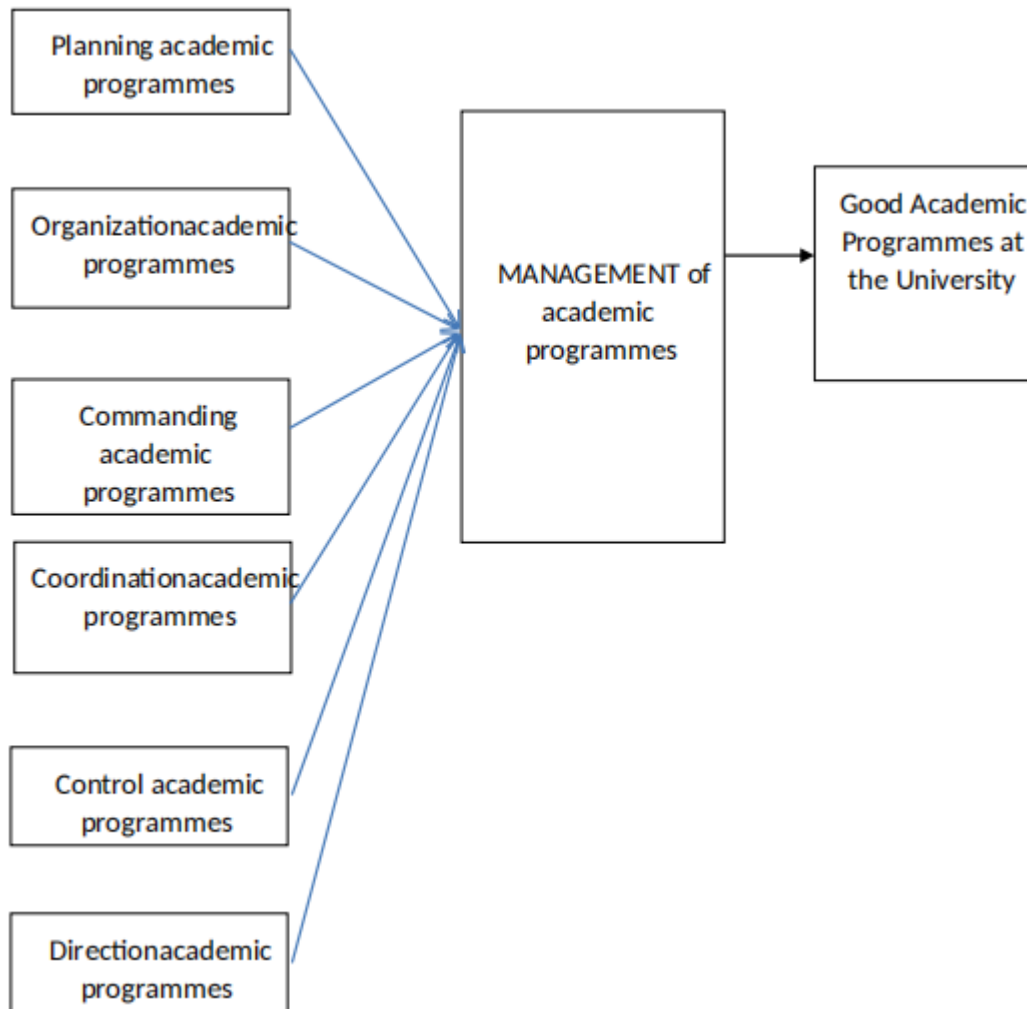
This study dealt with the management of academic programmes in emerging Universities in Uganda particularly how the academic programmes are managed at the Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU). The Academic Registrar, Deans of Faculties, Heads of Department, Lecturers and students were consulted. The study was limited to graduate and undergraduate programmes.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Occasionally, some participants expressed fear of victimization if they offered information against the expectations of the administrators. The researcher received little attention from key informants in spite of his reassurances of confidentiality. The interviewees' reports varied, complicating comparison of findings. In addition, some respondents swayed from the topic because of the open-ended questions. The researcher overcame these by re- focusing the respondents to the study. Additionally, it was hard collecting data from Arabic language students who knew little English so never filled questionnaires and required translators.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework indicates that functions of management if well done, lead to high quality academic programmes at the University.



Source: Developed by author based on management functions in classical organizational theory by Henri Fayol

1.10 Theoretical framework

This study adopted the Classical Organizational Theory particularly the works of Henri Fayol. His administrative theory focuses on the personal duties of management. He emphasized five principle roles: plan, organize, command, co-ordinate, and control (Musaazi 1982). Planning is anticipating the future and acting accordingly. Organization is developing the institution's resources. Commanding is keeping the institution's actions and processes running. Co-ordination is harmonizing the group's efforts. Finally, control means following appropriate rules and procedures. This study investigated how these roles

determine academic programmes at IUIU.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Planning the Academic Programmes in Emerging Universities

Planning is determining actions so that practical implementation of decisions may be made later (Maicibi, 2005). He defines planning as setting up a formal structural line of authority showing what to do and how to do it. Through it, work subdivisions are arranged, defined, and coordinated to achieve set objectives.

According to Ivancevich, Donnelly and Gibson (1989), planning is defining the organizations' future.

2.2 Organization of Academic Programmes in Emerging Universities

Ivancevich et al (1989) define organization as managerial actions and decisions which result in jobs and relationships among jobs. Bove'e, Thill, Burkwood and Dovel (1993) define organization as establishing, maintaining or changing a structure to accomplish the organizations' goals, to define and assign tasks and to coordinate people and resources. They further state that managers move to the organizing phase after establishing goals and developing plans.

2.3 Coordinating Academic Programmes in Emerging Universities

Coordination is the process of integrating the activities of different departments in order to pursue organizational goals effectively. It involves bringing people together to ensure relationship between different people with different jobs (Kasasa, 2003). Maicibi (2005) defines co-ordination as linking the activities of various units and departments within the organization. It involves interrelating the

various parts of the work. The Makerere University Calendar (1973/74) cites the academic registrar as in charge of coordinating all academic matters of the university.

2.4 Directing Academic Programmes in Emerging Universities

Maicibi (2005) defines directing as providing effective leadership by making right decisions. It is the task of making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instructions in order to get things done. Directing is influencing peoples' behavior through motivation, communication, group dynamics, leadership and discipline. The purpose of directing is to channel the behaviour of all personnel to accomplish the organizations' mission and objectives while simultaneously helping them accomplish their own career objectives (Ivancevich et al, 1989).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The researcher used a descriptive case study research design, in depth interviews, structured interviews, observation and documentary analysis. This was appropriate because it enabled easy collection of data from samples of predetermined variables of interest. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected by administering a questionnaire and interview guide to various respondents. The qualitative and quantitative methods enabled the researcher to develop, analyze, interpret and generalize data and information (Amin, 2004), from the sample population, against the major themes and issues under investigation.

The design allowed generation of detailed information from many sources allowing description and analysis of respondents' opinions.

3.2 Area of Study

The research was done at the Islamic University in Uganda based Mbale District.

The researcher chose this university due to his interest in trends in the management of academic programmes in an emerging University.

3.3 Population of the study

The total population of the study is 129 full-time and part time lecturers and 1956 students all based at Mbale Main Campus (Academic Registrars' Report IUIU, 2004).

3.4 Sample Size and Selection

A total sample of 324 respondents (252 students, 56 lecturers and 16 administrators) was used in data collection. The researcher employed stratified sampling technique because it took care of all sub groups in the management of academic programmes. The researcher employed purposive sampling technique, which enabled him select subjects with knowledge about the research topic, easily accessible and willing to provide information. The researcher also used simple random sampling technique which involved assigning the respondents random numbers.

The following categories of respondents were sampled:

- . Academic Registrar Islamic University in Uganda
- . 5 Deans of faculties
- . 10 Heads of Department
- . 56 Lecturers
- . 252 Students

Table 1: Total population and Sample size

Category of respondent	Total population	Sample size	Percentage of total population
Students	1965	252	12.8
Lecturers	129	56	43.4
Administrators	37	16	43.2

A total of altogether 346 respondents were targeted to give chance to all the stakeholders in the management of academic programmes to contribute to the data collected. However, due to nonresponse among the respondents only 324 were realized.

3.5 Data collection methods and instruments

A number of instruments were used during collection of data. Both primary and secondary data was collected and the major instruments used include:

Primary sources: Questionnaires

Questionnaires were administered to 252 respondents who consisted of students In addition 56 lecturers were interviewed using another set of questionnaires. Thus a total of 324 respondents provided information.

In-depth Interview guides

In-depth Interview guides administered to key informants. 16 key informants were interviewed including; the Academic Registrar of IUIU, faculty deans and departmental **heads**.

Observation guide

Direct observation was done and the checklist designed focusing on: University infrastructure, school environment, library facilities, and other instructional materials.

Validity of Instruments

Validity is the extent to which the instruments used measure what they are intended to measure (Amin, 2004). The instruments were developed under close supervisor guidance. After design, they were pre-tested to a tenth of the sample size.

Reliability of the Questionnaires

Reliability refers to instruments producing consistent scores when the same groups of individuals are repeatedly measured under the same conditions (Amin, 2004, p.146). Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest that reliability is “dependability” or “consistency” in qualitative research. The reliability of the questionnaire was established by conducting a pilot study of 10 respondents from IUIU and afterwards relevant changes were affected.

Using SPSS software, the reliability coefficient for the students’ questionnaire was revealed as $\text{Alpha} = 0.613$ meaning that the variables that were taken to measure the management of academic programmes were moderately correlated and therefore suitable for the purpose.

Procedure

The researcher was given an introductory letter from the School of Education Makerere University which he showed to officers who provided permission or information required in the study.

Data Analysis and Processing

After collection, data was edited, coded and entered into the computer and consequently, was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency tables, graphs and percentages. Comparison of results between the different management variables (planning, directing, organizing and coordinating) was done and cross-

tabulations were made to compare the responses. Qualitative data was edited before leaving the respondents. Coding and tabulating were done while most of the data was being collected. Qualitative data was analyzed continuously using content analysis.

4.0 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Research objective one

The first objective of the study was "*to establish how planning of academic programmes is done at IUIU*". The study reveals that majority of the students 215(85.7%) and all lecturers 56(100%) revealed that there is proper planning of academic programmes at the university. This was further supported by the Dean of Faculty of education that:

“...our courses are within the set standards and are usually approved by the University Council and the National Council for Higher Education. Our planning goes beyond by placing our students in private and government institutions for school practice.”

The findings indicated that there is proper planning of academic programmes at the university.

4.2 Research objective two

The second objective of the study aimed at “establishing how organization of academic programmes is done at Islamic University in Uganda Mbale (IUIU). In order to get data to this objective, a number of questions were put to the respondents relating to how academic programmes are organized at the University. For example, the researcher inquired from the respondents on how

they rate the level of staffing in departments.

This is backed by one of the lecturer's comment during the focus group discussion that:

“What we need is more facilities in place first ... if departments are created, how will they be facilitated if the existing programs are not adequately equipped with all the necessary facilities?”

This means that lecture rooms at Islamic university in Uganda are conducive enough for learning.

4.3 Research Objective three

This objective aimed at establishing how the direction of academic programmes is done at the University. In the first instance, respondents were asked whether there was any incentive to motivate performance in the departments. The study findings revealed that students 141(74.6%) are given incentives to motivate good performance in the department while majority of the lectures 42(92.9%) do not have incentives to motivate performance in the department.

4.4 Research objective four

This aimed at establishing how coordination of academic programmes is done at the University. This was the way students and lecturers under different faculties coordinate, nature of coordination, problems associated with collaboration across faculties and problems faced by both lecturers and students at the University. In the first instance, respondents were asked whether there is collaboration across faculties. The study findings revealed that majority 208(82.5%) of the students collaborate with each other between the faculties on the issues of academics.

Lecturers held the same views. This is through public lectures 92(38.3%), sharing course units (26.7%), sharing facilities such as computer labs 36(15.0%), seminars 24(10.0%), discussions (5.0%) and associations 12(5.0%) among others.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Drawing from the findings and discussion, the following conclusions were arrived at:

- (1) There is proper planning of academic programmes at emerging universities in Uganda.
- (2) Academic programmes at emerging universities in Uganda are adequately organized.
- (3) There is co-ordination between departments at the Islamic University in Uganda
- (4) Direction of academic programmes still faces a problem in emerging universities in Uganda.

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