

Administrative Behaviour and Institutional Efficiency in Selected Universities in Central Uganda

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Abstract

Technical competences of administrators are certainly necessary, albeit they may not be sufficient for efficiency in educational institutions. The administrator's behaviour is also vital for achieving efficiency thus educational institutions have prepared their numerous and capable specialists and professionals with the necessary skills for efficient and effective higher education administration. This study therefore was conceptualized to shed light to this contention. The association between administrative behaviour and institutional efficiency was empirically investigated employing the ex-post facto, descriptive correlation research designs. One hundred ninety five administrators from two higher education institutions were selected through purposive and systematic random sampling. Standardized and contextualized questionnaires tested for reliability and validity were used as research instruments. Quantitative data analyses were done using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The findings of the study indicated that the variables of administrative behaviour and institutional efficiency were significantly correlated. Within the context of this finding, administrators of the universities understudy should endeavour to enrich their administrative skills through leadership, management and administrative courses to cope with the managerial challenges hovering the higher education system. Effective administrators must conduct themselves appropriately and must be accountable for their actions and expectations. The ability to deal effectively with other people and accomplish work through others would always be a fundamental ingredient in the administrative process.

Keywords: Administrative behaviour, institutional efficiency

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1. Introduction

The challenges brought about by change during the last and present decade have removed traditional constraints, enabling administrators to focus on their organization's overall corporate strategies. This is especially true where relatively complex problems are undertaken by management groups, such as those found in university administration settings. Technical competences of administrators are certainly necessary, however, they may not be sufficient for efficiency in educational organizations. In this aspect, the theories of administration, organizational development and the behavioural disciplines have provided qualitative patterns and knowledge, including, ethics, transparency, accountability, doing public good, social responsibility, institutional moral development and environmental awareness and protection (Laxmikanth, 2006).

There has been little discussion about administrative behaviour in universities. Much of the discourse has been on leadership styles, teacher behaviour, discretionary work effort, and

delegations of work processes (Mumbe 1995, Shah 2009, Okumu 2006, R. Morris 2009). Furthermore, there is a shortage of research that links administrative behaviour and institution's efficiency in Uganda. The existing one like that of Tibarimbasa (2010) was limited in the sense that its focus were on the factors that affected the management of private universities but not

public universities. The literatures that indicate the role of administrative behaviour in augmenting institution's efficiency (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1987; Zucker, 1987; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996; Tibarimbasa, 2010), remains inconclusive on whether the relationship is mutual, or exclusive. A commendable higher education system whether public or private, requires efficiency. In view of this angle and the escalating challenges prevalent in universities' institutional efficiency, the construct on administrative behaviour was empirically determined in this study as a factor affecting institutional efficiency. From the perspective of this research, administrative staff as stakeholders can influence the operations of their universities as far as efficiency is concerned.

This study conceptualized *administrative behaviour* to refer to observable conduct or action that the key workers with authority in universities such as the faculty deans, heads of department, deputy vice chancellors, vice chancellors, among others, manifest within university's environs, to the effect that this behaviour affects the operations of their institutions. The empirical referents for administrative behaviour in this study are leadership, decision making, control and communication. While institutional efficiency as used in this study meant the capacity of a university to be able to produce the greatest output at the least cost with its constructs namely: research, teaching, and community service.

In this study then, the aspects of administrative behaviour and institutional efficiency are determined in terms of extent and level respectively and hypothesized as not significantly correlated.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.2 *Administrative Behaviour*

Behaviour is an action, which changes with time. Three types of behaviour exist: thinking, feeling and doing. Behaviour may be positive or negative and effective or ineffective. Effective behaviour produces the requisite results (Shah 2009). It is a response, which an individual shows to his/her environment at different times. Behaviour can be regarded as any action of an organism that changes its relationship to its environment. Behaviour provides outputs from the organism to the environment (Cancio & Johnson, 2007).

Administrative behaviors in a higher institution of learning greatly affects the way employees perform and this also influences the way they perceive the entire university situation. Staff motivation, which comprises of the strongest point in a human resource situation analysis according to Schermerhorn (1999) accounts for the level, direction and persistence of effort expended at work. Organizational management is a behavior which is directed towards organizational goals, products or services; procedures, which involve integrated policies, processes and practices by rewarding employees in accordance with their contribution and skill in order to enhance their motivation (Mullins, 2005).

Effective administrative behaviour is a success factor. If accurate and impartial administrative behaviour is adopted by the universities, very significant part of highly qualified persons and skilled personality of any society can be produced by putting the resources and implementing the educational plans in the right direction (Dusenbery, 2009). Theoretical formulations in administrative behavioural science (qualitative studies) integrated concepts and propositions drawn from psychology, sociology, political science, and economics, provide an interdisciplinary framework that later would influence the behaviour of members of organizations (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1991).

In this study, administrative behaviour were in terms of *decision-making* (mapping the likely consequences of decisions, working out the importance of individual factors, and choosing the best course of action to take); *communication* (sharing of ideas, facts, opinions, information and understanding); *leadership* (influence a group of people towards the achievement of organisation's goals); *control* (evaluating the performance and applying corrective measures so that the performance takes place according to plans).

2.2 Institutional Efficiency

Efficiency can be applied to the field of education in the same way in which economists analyze the relationships between inputs and outputs (Duyar, McNeal, & Kara, 2006). Although becoming competitive to survive may not be their main motivation, public education institutions are also expected to be productive to minimize costs and maximize the utilization of resources to meet increased and diversified needs, as well as to become accountable to the public for the expenditure of resources. In this sense educational efficiency can be defined as the efficient production of educational outcomes (Rolle, 2004).

Nwankwo (1981) defines efficiency in terms of the optimal relation between inputs and outputs in an enterprise. An activity is being performed efficiently if a given quantity of outputs is obtained with a minimum of inputs or, alternatively, if a given quantity of inputs yields maximum outputs (Nwankwo, 1981). There are two concepts of efficiency in an overall context: (a) internal efficiency and (b) external efficiency. An internally efficient educational system is one which turns out graduates without wasting any student-year or without dropouts and repeaters (Nwankwo, 1981) whereas in external efficiency, the educational system analyzes the effect education has on social behaviour, economy and human development.

2.3 Administrative Behaviour and Institutional Efficiency in Higher Education

A relevant educational administrative behaviour is evaluated in terms of how its performance affects the improvement of human development and the quality of life in education and society (Scott, 1981; Owens, 1987). Such an evaluation is made possible only by means of an organizational and administrative theory conceived on the basis of real experience. Theoretical formulation is feasible only if it is supported by a participatory attitude of scholars and practitioners of educational management. The more participative and democratic the administrative process, the greater its chances of being relevant to individuals and groups, and the greater it's potential for explaining and furthering the quality of human life in school and in society (Weick, 1976). It is important to point out the relevance of the individuals and groups who participate in the educational system and in the community as a whole.

As environments change, institutions must also, and administrative behaviours introduce new practices that may help organizations succeed in changing environments (Lamal et al., 2000). The adoption of behaviours of administrators in implementing the fad strengthen the myth that rationality is important and that what administrators do has influence on the entire organization's efficiency. "Belief in the myth encourages administrators to initiate and persist in potentially effective behaviour, even if the probabilities of success are low" (Birnbbaum, 2000).

The adoption of a particular behaviour often changes long-established institutional structures and processes in positive ways. Administrators who adopt particular behaviours may have been reinforced in the past for bringing about change (doing something) irrespective of the details of such change. Their behaviour may be superstitious, in that fad adoption in the past may have been reinforced by contiguous, but not contingent, consequences. Administrators may also observe that those in other institutions who have adopted a fad have been reinforced for doing so and this observed contingency serve as a discriminative stimulus for adoption of the behaviour. Administrators must work together in the context of changing their behaviours and contingencies (Alexander, 2000; Burbules & Callister, 2000). The demands for increased accountability and

efficiency can be expected to continue. Burbules and Callister (2000) argue that this is a development with which college and university administrators must be proactively involved; if they are not, others will control the development.

Leadership as an administrative function means influencing people so that they will contribute to an institution's goals. It has to do predominantly with the interpersonal aspect of managing. Most important problems to managers arise from people, their desires and attitudes, their behaviour as individuals and in groups. Hence, effective administrators need to be effective leaders (Olum, 2004). Administration at work in educational institutions is thus a dynamic

process where a small group is not only responsible for the organization's tasks, but also actively seeks the collaboration and commitment of the entire institution in achieving the organisation's goals in a particular context (Campbell, 2009). Administrators' behaviour in that context pursues effective performance in higher institutions of learning, because it does not only examine tasks to be accomplished and who executes them, but also seeks to include greater reinforcement characteristics like recognition, conditions of service, morale building, coercion and remuneration (Balunywa, 2000). The interpreters of the behavioural school, such as Simon (1945) and their followers view the organization as a partially-open, organic, and natural system, in which administrative mediation is concerned with the functional integration of its component elements in view of the concept of efficiency. In the case of education, administrative effectiveness is essentially concerned with achieving educational objectives. It is closely linked to the pedagogical aspects of schools, universities, and educational systems.

Laxmikanth et al., (2006) stressed the role of higher education in fostering economy-wide growth. Moreover, as noted by Ladd et al. (2002), measuring effectiveness is intrinsically difficult as it is closely tied to what the public or the policy makers think what the *mission* of the institutions should be. For example, a school might serve a disadvantaged community and regard itself as increasing social mobility by reducing inequality and improving children's prospects of employment. Alternatively, schools might be seen as better serving the community by obtaining high educational outcomes (usually measured by test scores) which also favours children by fostering future income growth. Education also has an indirect effect on productivity and employment through the quality of institutions that may be considered a component of social capital and well-being of individuals and societies (de la Fuente and Ciccone, 2002).

3. Methods and Techniques

The ex-post facto and descriptive correlation designs were utilized to retrieve data based on recall by the respondents and to establish the relationship between the extent of administrative behaviour and level of institutional efficiency respectively. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient and factor analysis indicated that the research tools (questionnaires) were reliable and valid and were administered to 195 respondents (administrators) selected through purposive and systematic random sampling. The respondents selected were both male and female; a blend of nationalities (Ugandans, Pakistanis, Nigerians and Rwandese); mostly Catholics and other religious sectors such as Seventh Day Adventists, Hinduism, Islam, Protestants and Born Again; majority were heads of departments and others were senior administrators and faculty deans; most of these administrators had served their respective universities from 3-5 years; and most attained masters degrees while some of them were PhDs, at the rank of either Professor or Associate Professor. The quantitative data were elicited from two selected institutions of higher learning in Central Uganda, one public (Makerere University/MAK) and one private (Kampala International University/KIU). Data processing and analysis utilized the mode measure of central tendency and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient on the bases that the study had discrete data scaled into these ratings and response modes: strongly agree (4); agree (3); disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1).

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Extent of Administrative Behaviour

Table 1: Extent of administrative behaviour (N=108)

Makerere University			Kampala International University		
Constructs	Mode	SD	Constructs	Mode	SD
Communication	3.00	.40087	Control	3.00	.44286
Decision-making	3.00	.26971	Communication	3.00	.29416
Leadership	2.93	.26000	Leadership	2.93	.25120
Control	2.60	.29447	Decision-making	2.88	.21448

Conspicuously, Table 1 projects the aspects of communication and decision-making with higher ratings than leadership and control from the end of Makerere University. Bahls (2014) contends that a “most important aspect of shared governance is developing systems of open communication where faculty members, board members, and administrators work to align and implement strategic priorities.” Lunenburg (2010) on the other hand, contests that decision-making is not only an administrative process but also rational and a people process that affects the school’s performance and the stakeholders’ welfare (students, teachers, parents, community). The rationality of decision making works under certainty related to alternatives, choice and implementation (Towler 2010).

In both institutions, leadership appears to be rated lower. Towler’s (2010) view has similar contentions with that of Ejimabo that leadership accounts for the options and outcomes done in organizations and “leadership must define what the future should look like, aligns with that vision, and inspire them to make it happen despite the challenges and obstacles involved.” (2015). “Leaders must know how to lead as well as manage, otherwise, without leading as well as managing effectively, today’s organizations will face the threat of extinction” (Nelson, 2003).

The strength of Makerere University (Table 1) in terms of administrative behavior then is *communication* in terms of these specific indices: written notification to the attendees for meetings; use of official language in meetings; meetings are conducted with minutes and kept for future reference; clear and concise reports and passed on to relevant authority; meeting registration exercise carried out; listening as important in the job; written policies, procedures and guidelines circulated to staff to guide work operations; subordinates allowed to freely talk in groups about their problems and work attitudes; open to ideas from subordinates; listens and pays attention to subordinates; receptive to criticisms, suggestions and evaluation; relays points across clearly; understands communication sometimes causes problems; effectively “reads” another person and guides actions; keeps others informed of staff’s progress/actions that help staff feel comfortable.

On the other hand, *decision-making* is also another manifestation of MAK’s strong administrative behavior in view of these aspects: involves subordinates in decision-making; participates in decision-making in meetings organized by the school administration; develops solutions or course of action that pursue organizational objectives or interests; takes personal initiatives that makes the administrator stand out from the group; encourages participative and group decision-making; keeps control of choices with crucial outcome or impact; willing to compromise to reach a mutually acceptable position; analyzes situations carefully before taking decisions; evokes different viewpoints from others; uses good judgment and logic in solving problems; uses a lot of reasoning in decision-making; sets standards for precision to details for task completion; structures decisions based on intuitions; believes that some of his/her decisions make subordinates a high level job. On the other hand, leadership and control are on average reflected as administrative behaviors.

KIU on the contrary, has strong reflections of administrative behavior in terms of *control and communication* although leadership and decision making are manifested but not as highly rated as the first two constructs. On a general note, communication in higher education systems with accompanying trust encourages participation and performance of employees (Thomas, Zolin & Hartman, 2009). Just as communication is vital in management, and so with the aspect of control where the administrator sees to it that the staff performance and productivity are navigated to the accomplishment context of the organization and departments/sections.

The indices under control include: leadership authority; decisions and assessments on outcomes or subordinate performance; perspectives of subordinates on policies; philosophy implementation, hiring and appointments.

Communication is obviously a construct that is appreciable on KIU's end in the light of these indicators: written notification to the attendees for meetings; use of official language in

meetings; meetings are conducted with minutes and kept for future reference; clear and concise reports and passed on to relevant authority; meeting registration exercise carried out; listening as important in the job; written policies, procedures and guidelines circulated to staff to guide work operations; subordinates allowed to freely talk in groups about their problems and work attitudes; open to ideas from subordinates; listens and pays attention to subordinates; receptive to criticisms, suggestions and evaluation; relays points across clearly; understands communication sometimes causes problems; effectively "reads" another person and guides actions; keeps others informed of staff's progress/actions that help staff feel comfortable. Similar to MAK, the respondents from KIU also manifest an average leadership as an administrative behavior, although decision-making appears to be a strong indicator of administrative behavior for the respondents from MAK as it is on average for the respondents from KIU.

In the context of this study, the leadership indices are in terms of: building good relationships at work; respecting social and cultural differences; resolving conflicts through negotiation and compromise; implementing disciplinary measures in a fair and consistent manner; empowering staff by delegating work; developing and enhancing staff with training programs; evaluating the productivity/effectiveness of subordinates; adjusting administrative style as the situation demands; anticipating problems and influencing a new direction; taking action without waiting for direction; taking risk to achieve a goal; starting projects on own initiative for the organization; breaking the routine and standards in order to complete task; acting with integrity in the job/work relationship.

4.2 Level of Institutional Efficiency

Table 2: Level of institutional efficiency (N=87)

Makerere University			Kampala International University		
Constructs	Mode	SD	Constructs	Mode	SD
Community service	3.00	.51635	Community service	3.10	.36261
Research	2.83	.43637	Research	2.89	.21954
Teaching	2.68	.26110	Teaching	2.80	.23259

The integral features and triad functions of higher education systems are: teaching, research and community service (TRCS). Thus in any endeavour of a university, these three core functions are orchestrated and drawn out strategically and ideally in the university's mission. To point out proofs of this context, Makerere University's mission is "to provide innovative teaching, learning, research and services responsive to National and Global needs" (Makerere

University, 2017). While KIU's mission is "to respond to societal and educational needs by designing and delivering education guided principles and values of respect for society, economy and to provide and develop a supportive research environment in which scholars at every stage of their career can flourish" (Kampala International University, 2017). The Quality Assurance Framework for Universities and the Licensing Process for Higher Education Institutions (2014) of the National Council for Higher Education of Uganda clearly stressed about the standards for quality in the arenas of teaching, research and community service. Beyond Uganda, creditable to mention with relevance to the priority thrust on community service aside from teaching and research is South Africa that drafted national goals highlighting community engagement as higher education institution's "core part" (White Paper, 2006).

Based on rank order, these constructs are from the highest to the lowest for both universities although the mode values and standard deviations are not the same: community service, research and teaching. As reflected in Table 2, it is obvious and clear that in both universities, community service is rated higher than the other constructs.

The indices rated under community service are: participating in sports activities; sponsoring scholarship programme; membership in community organization; advocating social

consciousness in the classroom for the students; encouraging staff to serve in the community as an individual or as a staff; having a community outreach unit to coordinate for extension services; facilities like charity hospital to offer free services; budgetary provisions for the community extension services; well structured year round plan for the implementation of community services.

Research efficiency are measured in terms of these aspects: engages the students in research; has a research policy to guide all students and staff researchers; partnership with research foundation/centers; very strong thesis/dissertation advisement system for students and staff; requires all staff to engage in research; with a research center/unit/institute to provide a venue for staff; requires all staff to publish in journals (local. International); laboratories are available for research purposes; ; has budgetary provisions

Teaching on the other hand are rated based on these indicators: changes in the delivery of courses taught; staffing vacancies to accommodate more experts and skilled staff; more full time lecturers than part time; recruits part time lecturers to beef up some gaps in the teaching force; advocates innovative teaching; reorganizes some departments for improvements; consolidates academic programmes for cost effectiveness; presence of student support services; cost effectiveness in the budgets for teaching-learning; creates other positions to improve academic management; with learning facilities (ex. audio-visual aids and computers); capacity building for sustainable workforce; trainings and workshops for staff development; other facilities for staff and student use; satisfaction of the students /clients in terms of semester credit hours; ratio of lecturers and class size; networks to develop staff; well structured training practicum sites; integrated library system, digital library and electronic journals; terms, conditions, benefits and privileges for lecturers; web enhancement instruction; on line student advisement; own income generating business; budgetary provisions for manpower and facilities; provisions for under enrolled courses; modes of instructional delivery; IT provisions to deliver instruction to the rural areas.

4.3 Relationship between the Extent of Administrative Behaviour and Level of Institutional Efficiency

Using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, the strength of the relationship between the extent of administrative behaviour and the level of institutional efficiency is scientifically calculated and reflected in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Relationship between the Extent of Administrative Behaviour and Institutional Efficiency

Variables	Administrative Behaviour	Institutional Efficiency
Interpretation		
Administrative Behaviour	r_s 1.000 P 0.000	0.205 0.000
		Significant
Institutional Efficiency	r_s 0.205 P 0.000	1.000 0.000
		Significant

Level of Significance at 0.05 (2 tailed)

The null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the extent of administrative behaviour and the level of institutional efficiency was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The results above evidently show that the extent of administrative behaviours and the level of institutional efficiency have a positive significant correlation.

A support to the above finding: A relevant educational administrative behaviour is evaluated in terms of how its performance affects the improvement of human development and the quality of life in education and society (Scott, 1981; Owens, 1987). Harrington (1990) asserts that the

nature of the interactions among the different dimensions of the multidimensional paradigm of educational administrators can be defined operationally in terms of the relations among the corresponding criteria of the institutional efficiency. The different dimensions, and their respective administrative criteria, are not exclusive or incommensurable. Although distinguishable, they are dialectically articulated dimensions of a comprehensive paradigm of educational management. This means that, in the multidimensional model of educational administration, effectiveness includes efficiency. Responsiveness entails effectiveness and efficiency and relevance comprises responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency.

This encompassing orientation of the mediating role of educational management allows a permanent recovery of the value of each dimension of the paradigm and of its respective criterion of administrative performance, based on the ethical and academic demands of the current society. In this sense, it is important to recover the correct value of economic efficiency in the administrative decisions related to the effective achievement of educational objectives. Likewise, it is necessary to redefine the role of economic efficiency and educational effectiveness of educational management in its efforts to promote community and cultural relevance and political responsiveness in higher education (Harrington, 1990).

5. Conclusions

In particular, in terms of the *extent of administrative behaviour*, surfacing as common to both universities whether public or private in nature, is communication that is undeniably a factor of great importance in leading and managing their respective institutions among other indicators included in this study. Notably, the aspects of decision-making, control and leadership have been practiced and not ignored by the participating administrators in this study.

Evidently, efficiency in community service is also a common denominator for both universities in terms of the level of *institutional efficiency* although the findings do not disregard the importance of teaching and research efficiencies. Otherwise, based on the mission of each university (Makerere University and Kampala International University), their teaching and research directions are aligned towards being a socially responsible institution within a shared culture with the community and society at large where the graduates of the university will consequently live and serve.

This study affirms that the behaviour of administrators influences the efficiency of the institutions within the confines of this study. Therefore, this finding implies the angles of options and choice in the selection of administrators and how the teaching and research be dealt on a serious note as well as the community service efficiency to be capitalized to the merits of the teaching and research aspects.

6. Recommendations

There is need to maintain a balanced collaborative relationship between institutions and different departments which is influenced by communication. Regular communication between the different administrators and faculty is important and should be maintained. Thus, in a changing educational environment, information and communication technologies are enabling more established providers to re-think and re-engineer the nature of their communication mode. It is therefore important to develop an information technology system which is interactive that will enhance efficiency among university administrators, faculty, students and the external community.

At the selection process for administrators, assessments or inventories to determine administrative capacities and behaviour should be able to elicit good choices. Elaborate orientation, training and development, mentoring and coaching as part of professional development are suggested to ascertain the soft skills expected of an administrator and consequent effect on institutional efficiency.

The concerned universities may have to be very vigilant in linking research and teaching thus being a research-teaching intensive university should be transmitted to every member of the university in such techniques as creating a *strategic envelope* that contains the provisions of innovative teaching, quality research, publications and developments from research and community engagements as requirements for recognition and rank promotions for both academic and non academic staff. An *office for institutional intelligence* (data integration, institutional metrics and higher education analytics) may have to be seriously considered as one of the recent trends to deal with compliance on strategic standards in universities.

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