

# The Supervisory Role of Head Teachers' and the Delivery of Primary Education in the Rural Districts of Uganda

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**Abstract:** *This study assessed the head teachers' supervisory role in the delivery of Universal primary education (UPE) in the rural districts of Uganda. It focused on Busoga region in Uganda. The specific objectives of the study were; (i) to establish the influence of head teacher's communication on the delivery of UPE; (ii) to determine the effect of supervision of teachers on the delivery of UPE; (iii) to establish the relationship between the learning environment created by the head teacher and the delivery of education. A sample of 120 respondents from the district of Iganga, Mayuge, Luuka and Bugiri were contacted, out of whom 97 returned filled questionnaires. In order to realize the above objectives, Pearson product moment matrix was performed before the regression analysis and results revealed that there is a positive and significant influence of; head teacher's communication on the delivery of UPE [ $\beta = .861, t = 16.531, p = <0.0001$ ]; and (2) supervision of teachers on the delivery of UPE ( $\beta = .898, t = 19.937, p = <0.0001$ ). The findings also revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the learning environment created by the head teacher and the delivery of UPE in the above rural districts ( $r = .943^{**}, p < 0.0001$ ). It was concluded that there is need to ensure that head teachers are not only retrained in their supervisory roles but also prepared to internalize the mission and objectives of UPE so as to effectively monitor and improve the standards of education in the area.*

**Keywords:** Universal Primary Education, Supervision, learning environment, Head teachers, Education

## 1. Introduction

Despite the widespread common knowledge that UPE management and supervision is increasingly still wanting, few empirical studies have been carried out to ascertain this phenomenon especially in the poorly performing districts of densely populated districts like those in the Busoga region. Therefore, given the increasing reported failure rates which continuously indicate that some districts in the region have schools which did not even get a single first grade, this study was designed to investigate the supervisory role of head teachers in the delivery of UPE in the region.

Universal Primary Education's goal is for all children to attain a full cycle of quality primary education. Head teachers as school leaders are entrusted with ensuring this happens. However, many reports, formal and informal show a high level of school dropouts. For example, at the international level the UN Millennium project monitoring report of 2006 points out that many countries have tremendously increased access but are facing a challenge in ability to keep children in school. At the local level, the FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationists) study in 2006 revealed significant dropouts particularly in rural schools, in addition, more girls dropped out of school than boys did.

Head teachers are the leaders by position in the school who are responsible to devise strategies and approaches to

achieve the goal of UPE. School heads are delegated authority by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) as executive heads and they further delegate roles to others

including deputy heads, class teachers, subject heads, and departmental heads (Coleman, 1994) to ensure school effectiveness.

According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (1999), the main objectives of Universal Primary Education are;

- To ensure that pupils become literate (equally ICT - literate) and numerate by the time they leave primary schools.
- To inculcate sound values and attitudes to make pupils become responsible citizens
- to pass on the heritage of the past and prepare the child to meet the demands of tomorrow's society.
- to coordinate programmes and activities relating to the improvement of Quality in education
- to collect, analyze, produce and disseminate data on the progress of pupils
- to establish linkages with and embed the school within the community
- to provide the facilities and resources to enable every child to enter and remain in school until the primary cycle of education is complete
- to make education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities;
- to ensure that education is affordable by the majority of Ugandans and to reduce poverty by equipping every individual with basic skills

Despite the above objectives, the performance in Universal Primary Education Schools in Uganda is still poor as evidenced by the irregular class attendance, high drop-out

rates, teacher absenteeism and the parents who do not value education (Ssemujju, 2009).

## 2. Literature Review

According to UNESCO (2006) head teachers have a role of providing teacher supervision and guidance in a view of improving their performance. It is observed in the report that globally, more than a hundred million children still don't have any access to schooling, mostly in poor countries. This lack of basic education means that young people have fewer choices and opportunities and is also making it harder for countries in the developing in the world to tackle poverty and disease. Twenty years ago, eight out of 10 children in the world went to primary school. Today its nine out of 10, but getting to 100% will be a big challenge. According to the Global Monitoring Report, Primary schooling for every child had only been achieved in 50 countries to date. A further 57 countries are currently experiencing a number of difficulties which are preventing them from meeting the goal. But providing universal primary education remains a great challenge and a great opportunity (Global Monitoring Report, 2005)

According to the Teachers Service Commission (2012), head teachers and deputy head teacher have duties and responsibilities at a school level. These duties include; planning the learning process; administrative matters and maintain standard procedures in the school; The head teacher is to be punctual in executing the Ministry's safety policy in the school by giving the pupils information and guidance activities on topics as safety on the roads, security and health; The head teacher will maintain the standard procedures of teaching, including guiding teachers in building a syllabus; executing new programs; and follow-up of pupil's achievements; The head teacher will maintain the standard procedures of the educational work, including a civilian-social education; decorating the school for feasts and festivals; and handling connections with other institutions; The head teacher will visit in classes, study teachers' reports and follow-up on pupils' progress; The head teacher will consult the school's staff in the implementation of educational programs in the school, and shares them with construction, execution and responsibility matters; The head teacher and the vice head teacher will divide among themselves the roles with the approval of the inspection.

Apart from supervision head teachers provide professional support for teachers'. According to Fullan (1992) some of the ways of providing professional support include: provision of teaching learning resources, creation of a conducive learning environment, provision of information and opportunities for professional development( up gradating, discussion groups, seminars and induction programmes).

## 3. Methodology

A sample of 120 district councilors and opinion leaders from from the districts of mayuge (30), Iganga (30), Bugiri (30), and Luuka (30) were approached with questionnaires to seek their opinion on the head teachers' supervisory role and the

delivery UPE in their areas. Out of this figure, only 97 returned filled questionnaires. A five point Likert Scale was used for rating the items of the opinion survey ranging from (5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree).

The reliability was analyzed using the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) test to ascertain the internal consistency of the study variables. The average Cronbach alpha was computed to be 0.956. This implies that the instrument was reliable for use.

Data generated was edited and analyzed using the SPSS software program version 20. The study first used descriptive approach and thereafter applied correlation and regression analyses to establish the relationship between head teachers' supervisory role and the delivery of UPE in the rural areas of Uganda.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics on head teacher's communication to delivery UPE

Before conducting the correlation and regression analyses, descriptive statistics was first analyzed. Table 1 shows that most of the respondents agreed that head teachers should have the UPE policy (87.7%) and understand it (88.6%). The results also reveal that 89.7% agreed that head teachers should disseminate information on UPE to both teachers and parents regularly and 94.8% of the respondents agreed that sessions to explain the UPE policy and objectives should be done in school. Finally, 94.8% of the respondents agreed that head teachers should effectively implement all UPE activities in the school.

**Table 1:** Head teachers' communication and the delivery of UPE

Response	S.A & A	N	D & S.D
	%	%	%
1. Head teachers have got the UPE policy	87.7	9.3	1.0
2. Head teacher understand the UPE policy	88.6	5.2	6.2
3. Head teacher disseminates information on UPE to teachers and parents regularly	89.7	3.1	7.2
4. Sessions to explain the UPE policy and objectives have been organized in school	94.8	2.1	3.1
5. Head teachers always implement UPE policies	94.8	2.1	3.1

SA; Strongly Agree; A: Agree; N: Neutral; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree

### Testing the relationship between head teacher's communication and delivery of UPE

In order to test the hypothesis that there is a significant and positive relationship between head teacher's communication and delivery UPE, a correlation matrix was analyzed to test the relationship. As indicated in table 2, there is a significant and positive relationship between head teacher's communication and the delivery of UPE ( $r = .861$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). This implies that the more the teacher communicates UPE objectives to the teachers and parents, the more effectiveness in the delivery of UPE.

**Table 2:** Correlation matrix between head teachers' supervisory role and the delivery of Universal primary education (UPE)

	Communication	Supervision of teachers	Child friendly environment	Delivery of UPE
Communication	-			
Supervision of teachers	.965**	-		
Child friendly environment	.833**	.864**	-	
Delivery of UPE	.861**	.898**	.943**	-

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

#### 4.2 Descriptive statistics on supervision of teachers to deliver UPE

As indicated in table 3, 75.3% of the respondents agreed that head teacher should always appraises teachers' performance, 87.7% agreed that the supervision of teachers should effectively be carried out. In addition, 88.6% of the respondents agreed that poor performing teachers should be reprimanded. The results also indicate that 75.3% of the respondents agreed that the head teacher should ensure that teachers attend regularly and on time for duty and majority of the respondents (90.7%) agreed that the head teacher should make sure that teachers complete syllabus in time. Results further show that 62.9% of the respondents agreed that the head teacher should also make sure that every teacher has an official time table and adheres to it and also ensure that teachers prepare monthly schemes and weekly plans (66%).

**Table 3:** Head teachers' Supervision of Teachers in UPE Schools

Response	S.A & A	N	D & S.D
Head teacher ensures that;	%	%	%
1. Teachers' performance is regularly appraised	75.3	5.2	19.6
2. Supervision of teachers is effectively carried out	87.7	3.1	9.3
3. Poor performing teachers are reprimanded	88.6	5.2	6.2
4. Teachers are always punctual	75.3	8.2	16.5
5. Head teacher makes sure teachers complete syllabus in time	90.7	7.2	2.1
6. Every teacher has an official time table and adheres to it	62.9	10.3	26.8
7. Teachers prepare monthly schemes, and weekly plans	66.0	11.3	22.7

SA; Strongly Agree; A: Agree; N: Neutral; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree

#### Testing the relationship between supervision of teachers and the delivery of UPE

A correlation matrix was analyzed to test the hypothesis that there is a significant and positive relationship between supervision of teachers by the head teacher and the delivery of UPE. As indicated in table 2, the results show that there is a significant and positive relationship between the two variables ( $r = .898, p < 0.0001$ ). Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

#### 4.3 Descriptive statistics on learning environment created by the head teacher and the delivery of UPE

Before analyzing the above relationship, descriptive statistics was first employed as indicated in table 4. The results reveal that 76.3% of the respondents agreed that a good relationship must exist between the school and the surrounding community. Also, 86.6% of the respondents agreed that the school should provide meals to pupils. The results also reveal that 87.6% of the respondents agreed that the head teacher and teachers should be friendly to pupils, 89.7% agreed that the school should have play grounds for pupils, 60.9% agreed there should be free communication between pupils and teachers; and a very low figure (56.7%) agreed that pupils should be provided with entertainment such as music, dance and drama. Additionally, 60.8% of the respondents agreed that teachers should deliver lessons to pupils effectively and 86.6% agreed that pupils should behave properly at school. Conclusively, 69.1% of the respondents agreed that parents bring children basing on the leadership of the school.

**Table 4:** The Head teacher's role in the creation of child friendly environment

Response	S.A & A	N	D & S.D
	%	%	%
1. Good relationship exists between the school and community	76.3	12.4	11.3
2. Parents bring children because school leadership is good	69.1	17.5	13.4
3. Pupils like this school because the head teacher and other teachers are friendly	87.6	5.2	7.3
4. The school has play grounds for pupils	89.7	6.2	4.1
5. Meals are provided to pupils	86.6	8.2	5.1
6. Pupils are provided with entertainment such as films, Music, dance and drama	56.7	22.7	20.6
7. Pupils freely communicate to teachers	60.9	17.5	21.6
8. Pupils behave properly	86.6	8.2	5.2
9. Teachers deliver lessons to pupils effectively	60.8	19.6	19.6

SA; Strongly Agree; A: Agree; N: Neutral; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree

#### Testing the relationship between head teacher's role in the creation of child friendly environment and the delivery of UPE

In order to test the hypothesis that head teachers' creation of child friendly environment influenced the implementation of UPE objectives, a correlation matrix was generated. As indicated in table 2, the results reveal a significant and positive correlation between head teachers' creation of child friendly environment and the implementation of UPE objectives ( $r = .943**, p < 0.0001$ ). In line with the descriptive statistics above, it is confirmed here that the creation of child friendly environment has a significant correlation with the implementation of UPE objectives.

#### Analyzing the overall effect of head teachers' supervisory role in the delivery of Universal primary education (UPE) in the rural areas of Uganda

As indicated in the table 2 above and consistently with the earlier findings, the head teacher's mode of communication has a significant influence on the implementation of UPE

objectives in rural areas in Uganda ( $\beta = .861, t = 16.531, p = <.0001$ ). This was measured by items that required the extent to which the head teacher disseminates information on UPE to teachers and parents regularly, conducts sessions to explain the UPE policy and objectives among others. In addition, head teacher's supervision of teachers was also found to have significant influence on the delivery of UPE ( $\beta = .898, t = 19.937, p = <.0001$ ) which was measured by head teacher's appraisal, reprimanding of poor performing teachers, effective supervision among others. Lastly, creating a child friendly environment was found to be very significant ( $\beta = .943, t = 27.491, p = <.0001$ ) with emphasis on provision of entertainment, meals, effective delivery of lessons among others.

**Table 5:** Regression results of the three (3) variables against the delivery of UPE as a dependent variable

	Variable	Predicted sign	$\beta$	t-value	p-value
1.	Communication	+	.861	16.531	0.0001
2.	Teacher supervision	+	.898	19.937	0.0001
3.	Friendly environment	+	.943	27.491	0.0001

## 5. Discussion

The study here demonstrates that the supervisory role of head teachers is key to the delivery of Universal Primary Education (UPE) not only in Uganda but elsewhere as well. According to Wango & Mungai (2007), the head teacher bears the ultimate responsibility for the performance, proficiency and effectiveness of all school programmes. The same observation has been echoed by Khan et al (2014) that the head teacher's supervision plays a vital role through planning and developing not only the counselling programmes but in the psychological and social needs of the pupils. Therefore, a school head is a planner and a manager of the educational process of the child. Without a head teacher who is professional and effective, the school leadership function remains shaky with no firm foundation. It is illustrated here that a good head teacher must have proper communication with both the teacher, pupils and the external members of the school community. They are challenged to prepare annual reports of schools, ensure that meetings and prepared and maintained, circulate information to relevant authorities e.g. DEOs, the school management committee and the parents teachers association, they should ensure that the staff meetings are held regularly and minutes or book files are available. In terms of curriculum management, they are supposed to prepare school timetables, ensure that guidance counselling services are provided and help teachers develop continuous assessment. Similarly, they are supposed to ensure that teachers prepare schemes of work and check lesson plans of the teachers.

However, to do all these professional tasks, they must be well motivated. According to Makinde (1984), lack of physical resources and poor remuneration of teachers has contributed to their de-motivation towards their work. The research here has also indicated that there is need to supervise the school facilities and maintain a safe and healthy environment. This involves the inspection of the

physical facilities and ensuring that these facilities are effectively used for school and community activities.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this article documents the increasing challenges in managing UPE in Uganda. There is need to ensure that head teachers are retrained in their supervisory roles so that they can understand the mission and objectives of UPE so as to effectively monitor and evaluate its performance. School effectiveness and the ultimate delivery of education cannot be realized if the leadership function is not performed well. Therefore, there is urgent for not only identifying the training needs of the school head teachers but also for allocating enough resources to ensure that qualified teachers/staff are recruited and prepared in their supervisory roles so that they can keep staff attendance registers, maintain personal files for each pupil, maintain an updated enrolment list and prepare pupils' progress or report cards as per regulations so that UPE is delivered and results realized in the Busoga region and beyond.

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