
Part-Time Teachers And Inconsistence In Academic Performance In Secondary Schools In Kakoba Division

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to establish the influence of part time teachers towards inconsistent students' academic performance and it was conducted in selected secondary schools in Kakoba division, Mbarara City. The study intended to identify the influence part-time teaching staff towards secondary school students' academic performance, other factors that lead to inconsistence in secondary school students' academic performance and possible strategies for consistent secondary school students' academic performance. The researcher used a sample size of 80 respondents was used and these included head teachers, teachers and students. The researcher used both questionnaire and interview guide to collect the required information and the information obtained was arranged following pertinent study objectives. Whereby it was found out that part-time staff increases risks of poor academic assurance, the rising numbers of part-time teachers has negative impact learning of students, part-time teachers are less effective than tenured staff in the areas critical to students' engagement, preparation and planning of academic programs is extremely difficult with part-time teachers. Several factors were said to lead to inconsistence in students' academic performance and these included; parental education, family socioeconomic status, teachers teaching experience, availability of instructional materials and teacher-student ratio. The findings indicate that appointment of active student advisers can ensure consistent students' academic performance, tracking students' attendance can help ensure consistency in students' academic performance, enhancing English and communication skills among students, discussion groups, increased participation of students in class work can help in ensuring consistent students' academic performance among secondary school students. The findings of the study showed that the research questions produced the right information which has made the study a relevant one. In a nut shell, the researcher concludes that inconsistence secondary school students' academic performance is a result of so many factors not only part-time teaching. Basing on the study findings, the researcher recommended that in secondary schools of Kakoba division, Mbarara City there should be recruitment of more trained counselors to act as mentors to help students know the importance of the education such that they can excel in their academics, teachers should always engage students in active participation in class work as this will help them develop confidence that will in turn lead to consistent academic performance.

1.2 Background of the Study

World over, the unbundling of traditional academic practices, as evidenced in the separation of teaching and research, is a phenomenon that describes as tendencies to the deconstruction of the academic profession (Marginson, 2000). Increasing casualisation of the academic workforce is one outcome, as greater numbers of part-time staff are being hired for teaching-only roles (ibid). In recent decades, there has been greater growth in numbers of full-time

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administrative and support staff categories than there has been in the full-time academic staff category, despite increases in student numbers (May et al., 2011). While many other sectors of the workforce are also experiencing increasing casualisation, the literature suggests that academia is different. For example, Gilbert (2013), drawing on the work of Juror, states that casualisation of the academic workplace, estimated at around 40%, is higher than in many other areas of work. Furthermore, the education sector could be distinguished from the majority of these other low paid, low skilled sectors in that academic staffs are relatively highly qualified.

May et al., (2011) suggest that percentages of part-time academic staff vary from as little as 2% in France to around 60% in Japan. In the UK context, Pearson (2002), referencing the Bett Report of 1999, states that in some universities up to 38% of academic staff are paid by the hour. Bryson & Blackwell (2006) estimate that over half the academic staff employed in the UK are on temporary contracts. Locke (2014), also referring to the UK context, reports that nearly 34% of academics worked part-time and nearly 36% were on fixed-term contracts in 2012-13. Of those academics on full-time contracts, 25% were fixed term. Among part-time academics, this proportion rises to nearly 56%. Cervini (2013), writing about the Australian situation states that ‘according to federal government data, the number of casual academics has more than doubled since 1996. Hamilton et al. (2013) state that approximately half of Australian higher teaching is now performed by sessional (i.e. part-time).

In Africa, charting the expansion of part-time teaching in higher education is problematic (Gilbert, 2013). The dearth of statistics and data about the part-time staff cohort is a constant theme throughout the African literature (ibid). In many higher education institutions there is no central recording of the numbers of part-time academic staff employed. The hiring and recording of part-time staff is often managed on a department by department basis, with each department operating within its own set of rules. In some circumstances, there may be no official records of part-time staff.

In East Africa, Uganda in particular the education authorities compile information on a quarterly basis on the numbers of academic staff who undertake core teaching activities in publicly-funded institutions, broken down between full-time and part-time staff. However, they do not use a specific definition for what constitutes part-time, leaving it up to individual institutions. In other words, there is no information available on the numbers of part-time teachers in the private sector (Ann, 2015).

1.3 Problem Statement

According to Lefoe et al., (2013) education has undergone enormous change in this period. The changing nature of within education sector has led to an increasingly diverse and differentiated range of academic staff, an increasing proportion of whom are employed on a part-time basis. This part-time teaching has become an essential part of the way education is delivered in Ugandan secondary schools.

Despite, the increasing part-time teaching in Ugandan, it has been debated that academic performance within secondary schools has not been consistent, yet the academic performance in Uganda should be consistent to match

with the education sector reforms and changes (Kavuma, 2010). Therefore, the researcher investigated the influence of part-time teachers on inconsistent academic performance in secondary schools in Kakoba division Mbarara City.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of part time teachers towards inconsistent students' academic performance.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

- 1.5.1 To find out the influence part-time teaching staff towards secondary school students' academic performance.
- 1.5.2 To find out other factors that lead to inconsistency in secondary school students' academic performance.
- 1.5.3 To suggest possible strategies for consistent secondary school students' academic performance.

1.6 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

- 1.6.1 What is the influence part-time teaching staff towards secondary school students' academic performance?
- 1.6.2 What are other factors that lead to inconsistency in secondary school students' academic performance?
- 1.6.3 What can be done to ensure consistent secondary school students' academic performance?

Section Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the literature related to the topic under study or what other scholars have said about the topic. The secondary information which was got from online journals, newspapers and text books was used in this chapter.

2.2 Part-time Teaching and Students' academic Performance

By far the most cited concern centers on the implications for the quality of the student learning experience. A quote from Percy et al., (2008) sums up the student perspective succinctly: Students want a seamless education. They do not want to know that their tutor or lecturer is sessional or permanent. They want high quality teaching and high quality subjects.

The principal question is whether institutions can continue to offer high quality teaching if numbers of part-time teachers continue to rise. Some of the research into the impact of rising numbers of part-time teaching staff on the quality of the student learning experience is alarming (Percy et al., 2008). A number of studies have linked poor support and management of part-time academic staff with risks to quality academic assurance (ibid). There is also a growing body of literature emerging from the USA and Australia that suggests a relationship between the rising numbers of part-time academic staff in higher education and negative impacts on both student learning and student retention in institutions of learning. For example, Rhoades (2013) lists a number of studies that offer ample

empirical evidence for the link between key aspects of the working conditions of part-time staff and compromised student outcomes.

Umbach (2007) conducted a large survey of academic staff across 130 institutions in the US and found that part-time academic staff were less effective than tenured staff in all the areas critical to student engagement. In particular, they spent less time preparing, less time with students and had lower expectations.

May et al., (2011), point to findings that suggest a relationship between higher reliance on part-time staff and both higher student drop-out rates and lower graduation rates. Quoting from the work of Ehrenberg (in the US context), they write that this was possibly due to the insecure nature of the employment of teaching staff. They go on to say that: many of these staff worked across multiple campuses to make a living and had no time for meeting with students or keeping up to date with curriculum and discipline developments (ibid).

Gilbert, (2013), notes that the preparation and planning of academic programs is extremely difficult in a climate of uncertainty around the availability of academic staff. There may be no guarantees that current part-time teaching staff, with experience on school and knowledge of students and the department will be re-hired. This is particularly problematic in programs that run over multiple years where there is a need for continuous co-ordination, collaboration and communication between all programs staff at all levels in order to ensure a meaningful, coherent, properly integrated, logically sequenced, phased and aligned studying.

2.3 Other Factors that lead to Inconsistence in Students' academic Performance

Unfortunately, defining and measuring the quality of education is not a simple issue and the complexity of this process increases due to the changing values of quality attributes associated with the different stakeholders' viewpoint (Blevins, 2009; cited in Lane et al., (2015). The Department of Education (2002), is taking into consideration the basic concepts and philosophies of learning vis-à-vis the need for the truly preparing its students for the complex and global world of work. About the factors that affect the learning and the performance. These factors may be termed as student factors, family factors, school factors and teacher factors (Crosno et al., 2004; cited in Lane et al., 2015).

Parental education and family socioeconomic status level have positive correlations with the students' quality of achievement (Jeynes, 2002; cited by Lane et al., 2015). Home environment which affects the academic performance of students is another factor. Educated parents can provide such an environment that suits best for academic success of their children. The academic performance of students greatly depends upon the parental involvement in their academic activities to attain the higher level of academic success (Barnard, 2004; cited in Lane et al., 2015). According to Krashen (2005) cited in Lane et al., (2015), students whose parents are educated score higher on standardized tests than those whose parents were not educated. Educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding the school work, activities and the information being taught at school.

Teachers' teaching experience also contributes to pupils' performance. It is also a fact that older teachers are said to be more dedicated and devoted to the service. By virtue of their length of time and stay in the teaching service, they

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acquire more experiences. Another contributor variable is the school related factors that could give great influence in the academic performance of pupils like the books and school's facilities. School setting and improvement was further clarified when Taylor (2012); cited in Lane et al., (2015), postulated that the school in the twenty first century will need to continue to focus on a dual mission: providing classroom and school environment that address the development needs of all students and providing a "hub" for additional support services needed to ensure that high-risk students get on track academically toward a successful future. Public schools often experience lack of books, classrooms, and chairs which is one of the reasons; it is difficult to promote more learning. The national allocation given to education yearly is increasing; however, it appears insufficient or perhaps just mismanaged.

2.4 Strategies for Ensuing Consistent Students' academic Performance

Appointment of Active Student Advisers, Mentors or Proctors: The institution can appoint one faculty member for every 10-15 students entering in the first year. This Faculty Adviser/ Mentor/Proctor establishes a close relationship with each student, orients them to college practices, follows their progress regularly and guides them throughout the four-year course. First-year students are important because the transition from school to college and/or from home to hostel is often uncomfortable. However, contrary to the belief that only first years require counseling and mentoring, students in all four years need this as different problems develop at different times? While the Faculty Adviser (FA) gives academic as well as personal advice, s/he is not necessarily able to address all problems but plays a role in guiding the student, putting the student in touch with the appropriate assistance, and so on. For example, if a student faces financial difficulties, the FA could help him/her seek a loan from the college administration; if someone has adjustment problems, the help of a Counselor may be sought. The relationship is more informal than formal, allowing students to ask for help when they need it and share their problems without fear.

Diagnosing and Tracking Student Performance and Attendance: Some colleges start with an initial diagnostic test, supplementing their knowledge of the marks with which students enter the college (Class XII and common entrance test results). Properly devised tests provide information about areas or specific topics in which a particular student is weak, and therefore what additional coaching s/he requires. These colleges also gave information about which topics need to be emphasized by the subject teacher for the student group more widely. It is helpful to carry out such tests particularly before teaching subjects begin each semester. The performance of weak students is reviewed by the teacher during the semester, and efforts made to strengthen teaching, and/or provide extra teaching as needed. Reviewing student attendance in connection with performance, and advising students about attending classes, making up classes missed, and getting additional help is also useful (Equity Action Plan, 2016).

Enhancing English and Communication and Presentation Skills: A college can set up an English language lab where students can listen to tapes and use workbooks to improve their English, particularly spoken English in which they are weakest (Equity Action Plan, 2016). Alternatively, holding regular English tutorials which cover both technical and everyday English, and offer the potential of a tutor explaining inadequately understood concepts, can be helpful. Such tutorials can also help students to gain confidence, for example, by asking questions. Another way of

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improving English language skills as well as communication and presentation skills is by ensuring that students have opportunities right from the first year to develop and make presentations in the classroom.

SECTION THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods that were used in the study. It covered the research design, area of the study, study population, sample size and sample selection, sampling techniques, data sources, data collection methods, data collection tools, research procedure, data presentation, interpretation and analysis as well as study limitations.

3.2 Research Design

The study was cross-sectional in nature and both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used; and these methods described the characteristics of the research variables. The study used cross section survey because it was carried out once across the selected respondents thus it investigated the opinions and ideas of a cross section of people thus helped the researcher to capture wide information for the study.

3.3 Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Kakoba division whereby two secondary schools were selected. The mentioned area was used because it had several secondary schools compared to other divisions within Mbarara City and this enabled the researcher to generalize the findings to a larger population.

3.4 Study Population

Koul (1997) defines population as any collection of specified group of human beings. The study will include the school administrators (head teachers), teachers and students. The researcher contacted such kind of population because students' academic performance in a school was essentially determined by the three named above though there might be other stakeholders involved like parents and the government.

3.5 Sampling Technique

In order to obtain unbiased data, the study applied both simple random sampling and purposive sampling. These two were used so as to get the required information for the study from key informants. The researcher randomly selected the teachers and students from two schools that were used for the study. The students were randomly selected from the schools sampled. Purposively, the researcher selected school administrators (head teachers).

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The study mainly used two methods of data collection. That was; interview method and questionnaire survey method.

3.6.1 Interview Method

Face -to -face interviews was conducted and enabled the researcher to establish rapport with potential participants and thus gained their cooperation. These interviews yielded highest response rates in this research study. They also allowed the researcher to clarify ambiguous answers and when appropriate, looked for follow-up information.

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3.6.2 Questionnaire Survey Method

This method involved setting and printing of questions which were both open and closed ended questions for the respondents to answer at their time of convenience. This method was used to achieve all the three set objectives because it enabled the researcher to collect data about the study variables.

3.7 Data Collection Tools

The researcher used interview guide and questionnaire as tools for data collection.

3.7.1 Interview Guides

An interview guide contained a list of topics, themes, or areas that were covered in the study. This were created in advance of the interview by the researcher and were constructed in such a way so as to allow flexibility and fluidity in the areas that were covered, the way they were approached with each interviewee, and their sequence.

3.7.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was structured following the relevant study objectives and had sections with headings reflecting the study objectives. Questionnaire with both closed and open ended questions was self-administered to the respondents. The section of closed questionnaire, had questions which required the respondents to choose the answers from a set of provided responses in this case the respondents had no liberty of expressing their own judgment.

3.8 Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

The study results were recorded, sorted, edited, coded and assessed. All these were done to check for completeness, accuracy and uniformity. The data was arranged systematically according to themes and coded accordingly. The data was then tabulated to show the frequency distribution and percentages. The study results were presented in form of tables. The study results in tables were computed in percentages and frequencies for easy interpretation. All this was achieved by the use of computer package called Microsoft Office Word 2007 and Microsoft Office Excel 2007 which helped the researcher during data analysis, presentation and final writing report.

Section Four

Results

4.1 Background Information

The study assessed the background information of the respondents by looking at the gender and age of respondents as explained below;

4.1.1 Gender of the Respondents

This was assessed to identify the sex that dominated the study. The results obtained are presented in table 3.

Table 1: Showing sex of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	30	37.5

Male	50	62.5
Total	80	100

Source: Primary data, 2024

Table 3 shows that the number of male respondents was bigger than that of the female respondents. The males were 50 (62.5%) and females were 30 (37.5%). The results indicate that the study was dominated by males.

4.1.2 Age of Respondents

Assessing the age of the respondents was also important because the researcher wanted to know the age bracket with much information about the part-time teachers and consistence in academic performance of secondary school students. The study findings are presented in the table 4 below:-

Table 2: Showing age of respondents

Age bracket	Frequency	Percentage (%)
11-17	50	62.5
18-24	00	00
25-30	02	2.5
31 and above	28	35
Total	80	100

Source: Primary data, 2024

Table 4 show that most respondents were aged 11 to 17 years with 50 making up 62.5%, followed by those who were aged 30+ with 28 (35%) and only 02 (2.5%) were aged 25 to 30. Table shows none of the respondents belonging to the range of 18-24. The results imply that the study was dominated by students aged 11-17 years.

4.2 Part-Time Teaching and Students' academic Performance

Under this section, the respondents were provided with different statements showing effect of part-time teaching on students' academic performance and the respondents were asked to selected the most appropriate answer by selecting from strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and not sure. The results obtained are presented in table 5.

Table 3: Showing the effect of part-time teaching on students' academic performance

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure	Total
Part-time staff increases risks of poor quality academic assurance.	20 (25%)	40 (50%)	17 (21.3%)	03 (3.7%)	-	80 (100%)

The rising numbers of part-time teachers has negative impact on student learning.	14 (17.5%)	46 (57.5%)	20 (25%)	-	-	80 (100%)
Part-time teachers are less effective' than tenured staff in the areas critical to student engagement.	54 (67.5%)	26 (32.5%)	-	-	-	80 (100%)
Reliance on part-time staff increases students 'drop-out rates.	-	-	40 (50%)	30 (37.5%)	10 (12.5%)	80 (100%)
The preparation and planning of academic programs is extremely difficult with part-time teachers.	30 (37.5%)	34 (42.5%)	10 (12.5%)	06 (7.5%)	-	80 (100%)

Source: Primary data, 2024

From table 5 above, majority of the respondents 40 making up 50% agreed that part-time staff increases risks of poor academic assurance, followed by those that strongly agree with 20 making up 25%, 17 comprising 21.3% disagreed, 03 constituting 3.7% strongly disagreed and none of the respondents was not sure. The results indicate that part-time teaching leads to inconsistency in students' academic performance.

Table 5 also shows that a big number of respondents 46 making up 57.5% agreed that the rising numbers of part-time teachers has negative impact learning of students. Followed by those who disagreed with 20 making up 25% and 14 comprising 17.5% strongly agreed? None of the respondents strongly disagreed or was not sure. The results imply that part-time teaching affect students 'consistence in academic performance.

More so, table 5 shows that majority of the respondents 54 making up 67.5% strongly agreed that part-time teachers are less effective than tenured staff in the areas critical to students' engagement, followed by those that agreed with 26 comprising 32.5%. None of the respondents disagreed, strongly disagreed or was not sure. The results indicate that part-time teachers do not effectively engage the students in learning.

Least but not last, table 5 shows that majority of the respondents 40 making up 50% disagreed with the statement that, reliance on part-time staff increases students' dropout rates, followed by those who strongly disagreed with 30 comprising 37.5% and 10 making up 12.5% were not sure. None of the respondents strongly agreed nor agreed. The results imply that part-time teaching does not lead to increase in students 'dropout rates.

Finally, table 5 shows that most study respondents 34 making up 42.5% agreed that the preparation and planning of academic programs is extremely difficult with part-time teachers, followed by those who strongly agreed with 30 constituting 37.5%, 10 comprising 12.5% disagreed and 06 making up 7.5% strongly disagreed. None of the respondents was not sure. The results indicate that part-time teaching leads to inconsistency in students' academic performance since it makes lesson planning and preparation difficult.

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5.1 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the part-time teaching and students' academic performance, other factors leading to inconsistency in students' academic performance and strategies for ensuring consistent students' academic performance.

5.1.1 Part-Time Teaching and Students' academic Performance

The study revealed that part-time staff increases risks of poor academic assurance. In other words, part-time teaching leads to inconsistency in students' academic performance. This is backed up by Percy et al., (2008) who noted that a number of studies have linked poor support and management of part-time academic staff with risks to quality academic assurance.

As earlier asserted by (Percy et al., 2008) that some of the research into the impact of rising numbers of part-time teaching staff on the quality of the student learning experience is alarming, the current study findings indicate that the rising numbers of part-time teachers has negative impact learning of students. This means that part-time teaching affect students' consistence in academic performance.

The findings indicate that part-time teachers are less effective than tenured staff in the areas critical to students' engagement. The results indicate that part-time teachers do not effectively engage the students in learning. This is supported by Umbach (2007) who conducted a large survey of academic staff across 130 institutions in the US and found that part-time academic staff were less effective than tenured staff in all the areas critical to student engagement.

The study findings also found out that the preparation and planning of academic programs is extremely difficult with part-time teachers. In other words, part-time teaching leads to inconsistency in students' academic performance since it makes lesson planning and preparation difficult. This is supported by Gilbert, (2013) who noted that the preparation and planning of academic programs is extremely difficult in a climate of uncertainty around the availability of academic staff.

5.2 Conclusion of the Study

The findings of the study showed that the research questions produced the right information which has made the study a relevant one. From the findings of the study about "part-time teaching and inconsistency in academic performance of secondary school students", conclusion was made basing on the fact that the necessary information for each and particular research question was obtained, analyzed and interpreted. Since, the study established the effect of part-time teaching on students' academic performance, other factors leading inconsistency in students' academic performance as well as strategies to ensure consistence in students' academic performance.

In a nut shell, the researcher concludes that inconsistency secondary school students' academic performance is a result of so many factors not only part-time teaching.

5.3 Recommendations of the Study

Basing on the study findings, the researcher recommended that in secondary schools of Kakoba division, Mbarara City there should be recruitment of more trained counselors to act as mentors to help students know the importance of the education such that they can excel in their academics.

The teachers should always engage students in active participation in class work as this will help them develop confidence that will in turn lead to consistent academic performance.

The teachers should always keep track the class attendance of the students, because the study revealed that students' class attendance is directly related to the students' academic performance consistency. Students' with poor attendance should be encouraged to always attend that will in turn ensure constituent academic performance.

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