

Curriculum Leadership Styles Utilized By Lecturers In Higher Education Institutions: A Case Of Makerere University In Uganda

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Abstract.

Background: *Appropriate curriculum leadership styles in universities are the drivers for economic growth and transformation of society. This is directly influenced by lecturers who are responsible for curriculum leadership practices, who determine what, why, and how students should learn and what is taught, to whom, and by whom. This paper is aimed at exploring the curriculum leadership styles lecturers use to enhance appropriate teaching and research in universities during the post pandemic era.*

Material and method: *The study employed a case study design where several instrumental bound cases are examined. We utilized multiple data collection methods to understand the curriculum leadership styles lecturers use at Makerere University. We also chose the qualitative-focused enquiry for this study because this approach allows the comparison of different stakeholders' perspectives drawn primarily from a qualitative approach. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews from forty-one purposefully selected lecturers and administrators from nine colleges and a school of law.*

Results: *Findings revealed that participatory/democratic and transactional curriculum leadership styles are the most salient curriculum leadership styles being used by lecturers in all the colleges at Makerere University.*

Conclusion: *This research study revealed a number of key ideas and these included; (1) Lecturers are commonly using participatory and transactional curriculum leadership styles to enhance learning, teaching and research in this post-pandemic era. (2) Students have been encouraged to participate in all the academic events of their respective colleges.*

Keywords: *Curriculum leaders, Curriculum leadership, Curriculum leadership styles, social constructivist ontological paradigm, Universities, Uganda.*

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I. Introduction

Lecturers in universities have a critical role to meticulously play in fulfilling university's mandate (Asiyai, 2015; Usman, 2014). This research was very vital to provide an understanding on the kind of curriculum leadership styles lecturers use in universities since higher education institutions (HEIs) are mandated to develop and implement teaching and learning policies to guide curriculum development, implementation, and review (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012; Mugimu et al., 2013). Indeed, curriculum leadership is already known for its contribution towards effective teaching and research (Shan & Chen, 2022). However, many HEIs have no clear guidelines for orientating lecturers and administrators on appropriate and effective curriculum leadership styles to use (Mayhew et al., 2016). This is likely to affect their performance in teaching, research and community engagement. It is important to explore curriculum leadership styles so as to give an insight crucial for the proper learning of universities (Jamali et al., 2022). Thus, lack of knowledge on appropriate and effective curriculum leadership styles may compromise the capacity of lecturers and administrators to effectively manage their teaching, research and community engagements (McCaffery, 2018). Yet, the efficient management of teaching, research and community engagement is key in HEIs an aspect that has been undermined for many years (Fitzgerald et al., 2020; Sandmann & Kliewer, 2022). Furthermore, it is not known whether lecturers and administrators are adequately prepared to teach and engage with students, undertake research, and engage with communities in terms of drawing on acceptable curriculum leadership styles. As such, gaps do exist in understanding what curriculum leadership styles lecturers and administrators use in Makerere University. Yet, curriculum leadership styles contribute directly to the effective management and achievement of HEIs' core functions. UNESCO (2014) as cited in (Masino & Niño-Zarazúa, 2016) indicates that there is a decline in how

teaching, research and community engagement is being handled in HEIs in developing countries. This may have implications on the low student completion rates, poor academic performance, graduates with inadequate skills and competences (Mayhew et al., 2016). This implies that graduates cannot find jobs that may undermine public confidence in higher education as employers report dissatisfaction with graduates' skills and competencies (Crossman & Clarke, 2010). This may also lead to inadequately prepared graduates (low skills and attitudes) who are unable to compete in the job market. Thus, HEIs may fall short of their major purpose of building sustainable economic development which developing countries such as Uganda that are in desperate need of (Adyanga et al., 2022).

In developed countries, significant efforts have been made to improve on the teaching, research and community engagement in HEIs by establishing academic staff support schemes (Allen, 2003; Crato, 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022; Pramana et al., 2021; Schleicher, 2012). However, there remains the limited understanding of the academic staff support schemes available and the kind of curriculum leadership styles being utilized by lecturers and administrators to enhance students' learning aspects (Borrego & Henderson, 2014; Dahal et al., 2022; Ma, 2020; Sleeter & Carmona, 2017). Evidence show that curriculum leadership styles promote the accomplishment of academic goals in universities (Baptiste, 2019; Gómez Gajardo & Rios Carmenado, 2014; Huang, 2015; Ng'ethe, 2014; Torlak & Kuzey, 2019). It is for this reason that the present study explored the curriculum leadership styles being utilized by lecturers at Makerere University.

II. Material And Methods

Research paradigm and study population: This study utilized an interpretivist research paradigm in which the research questions are grounded in an epistemological position with assumptions that data tells us something about curriculum leader's involvement and orientation towards the world following a case study research design. The study population, consisted of forty-one (41) participants from School of Law, CHS, COCIS, CEDAT, CAES, CONAS, CEES, COBAMS, CHUSS and COVAB all of which were lecturers and professors. In addition, academic and administrative Staff in this study included College Principals, Deans, Heads of Department, and Course Coordinators.

The population of academic staff as per colleges at Makerere University drawn from the available information from the Directorate of Human Resources, Makerere University is provided in Table 1.1:

Table 1.1
Distribution of academic staff in colleges

College	Academic staff Population	Proposed interview sample	Actual interviewed Sample size	Sampling strategy
CEDAT	157	08	03	Purposive
CONAS	91	10	07	Purposive
COBAMS	120	05	03	Snow ball
CAES	96	07	04	Snow ball
CEES	116	15	08	Purposive
CHUSS	287	06	06	Purposive
School of Law	95	03	02	Snow ball
COVABS	94	05	03	Purposive
COCIS	177	04	02	Snow ball
CHS	315	04	03	Snow ball
TOTAL	1391	67	41	

Source: Makerere University Annual Report (2018)

Study Design: This study has followed a case study research design to explore the curriculum leadership styles lecturers use at Makerere university. According to Yin (2003) a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) you want to know about the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. For this study we chose to apply the case study approach for data collection because it keeps data manageable (Kekeya, 2021) and the case study design was appropriate in these circumstances since the study was conducted as a representative (Yin, 2009).

Study sample: The study employed 41 participants. The criteria for selecting the participants was based on; age, academic qualification, experience and residency in the case of Makerere University (Schreier, 2018). These are the factors that guided us to determine the sample size in a qualitative study.

In addition, participants were accessed on appointment which enabled them to conveniently be interviewed. The snow ball sampling techniques was also used to complement purposeful sampling as an attempt to get rich information about the curriculum leadership styles lecturers use at Makerere University.

Research methods: Data were collected using semi-structured interviews from forty-one purposefully selected lecturers and administrators from nine colleges and a School of Law, hence, we used both primary and secondary data collection methods. The secondary data collection method consisted of analyzing various types of documents including Visitation committee reports, Departmental Reports and staff meeting minutes, Human Resource Manual, quality assurance manuals, books, newspaper articles, academic journal articles, Curriculum Review Minutes and institutional reports (Dalglish et al., 2020; Love, 2013). We chose this method as it is an important research tool and allows for triangulation of information. We also utilized interpretive methods for data collection, due to the fact that qualitative research methods are of greater value especially on enabling the understanding of phenomena in their own right as it utilizes the exploratory research questions and uses particular strategies to enhance the credibility of the design by discovering new things.

Thematic Analysis: Researchers ensured that the data analysis accurately represented the voices of participants and during the analysis pseudo names were used to safeguard participants' confidentiality (Lahman et al., 2023).

This study being qualitative and interpretive in nature, the focus was on how the participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon such as curriculum leadership styles by analyzing their understanding and experiences upon this theme. Therefore, to have a clear analysis of the data, all recorded interviews were listened to several times immediately after every interview. All the recorded interviews were then transcribed by the researchers. During the data analysis process, efforts were also made to break down the data, looked for key words and checked for common themes and patterns that emerged from the data. These represented the experiences and perceptions of curriculum leadership styles which were related directly to the research questions. The researcher noted the experiences and perceptions to understand and connect the data together. At the end the processes of verification and of drawing conclusions followed.

III. Results

This section reports findings about curriculum leadership styles being utilized by lecturers in the post pandemic era at Makerere University in Uganda. The number of participants in this study, were as follows in Table 1.2 that provides a summary of participants' profiles.

Summary of participants' profile:

College	Department/School	Participants 's Code	Highest Academic Qualification	Specialization	Working Experience
CONAS	Department of Chemistry	LCNS-A	PhD	CHMA	10-20 years
		LCNS-B	PhD	CHMB	8-15 years
		LCNS-C	PhD	CHM C	12-16 years
	Department of Mathematics	LCNS-D	PhD	BIZ D	10-17 years
		LCNS-E	PhD	BIZ E	18-25 years
		LCNS -F	Masters	BIZ F	15-17 years
CEDAT	Department of Technology	LCEAT-J	PhD	BIZ G	20-40 years
		LCEAT-M	PhD	BIZ	23-33 years
		LCEAT-K	PhD	BIZ	10-15 years
CAES	Department of Agriculture	LCAES-N	PhD	PES	7-10 years
		LCAES-O	Masters	PES	28-34 years
		LCAES-P	Masters	PES	10-19 years
		LCAES-Q	Masters	PES	14-16 years
CHS	Department of Human Nutrition	LCHS-S	Masters	DOC	13-15 years
		LCHS-V	PhD	DOC	10-18 years
COVAB	Veterinary Science	LCVB-W	PhD	BUS	13-17 years
		LCVB-X	PhD	BUS	9-18 years
		LCVB-Y	PhD	BUS	16-18 years
COCIS	Computer Science	LCCIS-Z	Masters	CUP	4-12 years
		LCCIS-A1	PhD	CUP	5-17 years
CHUSS	Department of political science	LCHU-B1	Masters	CUD	20-24 years
		LCHU-C1	PhD	CUD	13-15 years
		LCHU-D1	PhD	PL	36-40 years
	Department of History	LCHU-E1	PhD	PL	7-11 years
		LCHU-F1	PhD	PL	11-13 years
		LCHU-G1	PhD	PL	20-22 years
COBAMS	Business Education	LCBM-H1	PhD	BAM	14-16 years
		LCBM-I1	PhD	BAM	14-15 years

			LCBM-J1	Masters	BAM	7-18 years
SCHOOL OF LAW	Criminal Science and Justice		LSL-K1	PhD	LAB	10-15 years
			LSL-L1	PhD	LAB	17-19 years
CEES	School of Education		LEES-OO1	PhD	Edu 1	13-15 years
			LEES-O1	PhD	Edu2	16-18 years
			LEES-P1	PhD	Edu 3	11-17 years
			LEES-Q1	PhD	Phil 4 of	12-16 years
			LEES-R1	Masters	Bi5	15-18 years
			LEES-S1	Masters	LiD	19-24 years
			LEES-T1	PhD	HuM	12-18years
			LEES-U1	PhD	Ps6	12-17 years
			LEES-V1	PhD	F0U	11-16 years
			LEES-W1	PhD	FOT	20-27 years

The findings reveal the most salient curriculum leadership styles lecturers use at Makerere University and these curriculum leadership styles are well streamlined as per departments, faculties and colleges as reflected in the following citations:

Sub-Theme #1: Curriculum leadership styles at play.

In our interface with the participants, we realized various curriculum leadership styles lecturers use at Makerere university. Indeed, majority of the participants expressed that they view curriculum leadership styles as enablers of their ability to translate teaching into a productive entity. In this theme, several curriculum leadership styles were identified as existent in their colleges and departments. These are reflected in the following quotations.

Participant LCHU-B1 revealed that: *“Teaching is participatory and student centered, and in this regard, the participant confirmed that in his department they mainly use participatory and transactional curriculum leadership styles. It is in this spirit that the participant revealed that he mainly used participatory learning and this curriculum leadership style has attracted many students into his department for many years”.*

What comes out of these responses is that all participants have been involved fully in the utilization of all the different curriculum leadership styles. Participant Ivan categorically said that universities are hosts of culture and art, they therefore shape the entire schooling and education systems at all levels. He appreciated the kind of curriculum leadership styles they use in his department due to the fact that the style they use, has positively impacted on the students’ academic success in the post pandemic era.

Participant LCN-A *“I personally love teaching and, in my department teaching is student-centered. In some other departments, lecturers’ move for teaching and tutorials has died. For instance, administrators are not the ones to tell the lecturer the curriculum leadership style to use, instead the curriculum leadership style may vary from lecturer to lecturer but I have also seen students with a negative attitude to learning and I have always counseled them. As well, coordination of undergraduate programs is tiresome, hence participatory curriculum leadership style/approach has been embraced more commonly in my department. In addition, not all students opt for dissertation in my department. Similarly, every student participates in community engagement followed by academic supervisors and much emphasis is put on the relevancy of internship. Students write reports and such reports help to enrich curriculum reviews for the department”.*

In this regard, most university teachers utilize curriculum leadership styles differently, for instance some course leaders use democratic curriculum leadership style, others use the coaching style in that it focuses on clear communication, goal-setting and employee motivation and each faculty handles their students with particular curriculum leadership styles.

For example, participant LCHU-D1 who is a senior lecturer in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences emphasized that:

“Transformation, participatory and transactional curriculum leadership styles are popularly used by lecturers in their department. Transformation curriculum leadership style is a darling, all other styles work well and at times no standard style is embraced. I embrace lecturing, discussions, take home projects and one on one”.

In addition, Participant LCHU-E1 added that: *10% of my students submit their names only implying a practice of laissez faire curriculum leadership style at play and to some other departments, lecturers use charismatic leadership style which is focused on getting results by influencing the team through charismatic communication and they were using only the delivery through face-to-face teaching and now integrating online learning has raised many queries on the quality of education and planning for teaching, learning and research has become so difficult in HEIs.*

The participants also revealed that some lecturers in their departments believed in students’ group work outside class as the best curriculum leadership style. Discussions are key and this is also backed with sharing

course outlines with students. As such, as students write their coursework, they engage into participatory curriculum leadership style, which may also emerge into the transformation curriculum leadership style.

For instance, LEES-P1 noted that: *“Participatory, laissez faire, transactional and transformation curriculum leadership styles are key for proper teaching, learning and research for any university. Secondly the mentioned curriculum leadership styles are simultaneously used in our department to prepare our students into well-grounded citizens”*. They also participate fully in how to design projects and workshops for themselves and are were known for our good leaders on the job market. It is also evident that the majority of participants from all the departments confirmed that participatory, democratic, transactional, laissez faire and transformational curriculum leadership styles are popularly used in almost all colleges at Makerere University. As voiced in the quality assurance manual that teaching and learning must be well organized to meet the needs of the students in the 21st century.

A dominant view was that the learner-centered methods of delivery were shown by most of the participants as a common method of delivery. Lecturers make students take decisions on their own learning through seeing and doing. Similarly, when we asked the lecturers to elaborate how they conduct their teaching, some other participants LEES-V1 and LCAES-S also concurred that: *“As an individual, I confirm the use of participatory, laissez faire and transactional curriculum leadership styles) interchangeably throughout my lectures”*. *It is good for my students, because they fully participate and look for solutions on their own. In most cases my students feel comfortable and look for solutions with pride. In this sense, they are prepared to work throughout and easily face new challenges with ease.*

Sub-Theme #2: Curriculum leadership styles promote obedience, skills, competences and innovativeness.

Findings showed that some curriculum leadership styles that lecturers use in the university promoted skills and competences amongst students. In this vein, other participant (LCHU-F1 and LCHU-G1) also shared that they use the transactional and participatory curriculum leadership style especially following the teaching time tables, looking at students' marks and checking on whether students do tests and examinations. This style has promoted time management amongst the students. Transactional curriculum leadership style is commonly used in all colleges and departments at Makerere University. Indeed, some of the participants in most of the colleges, expressed that they regularly make use of transactional curriculum leadership style because it promotes time keeping and obedience amongst students in the university.

These findings imply that transactional curriculum leadership style is also vital in enhancing obedience, skills, competences and innovativeness. Thus, transactional curriculum leadership style is relevant for contemporary university education. However, some participants in this study partly condemned the use of only one curriculum leadership style and suggested the use of a variety of curriculum leadership styles so as to make students enjoy a variety of experiences.

This finding shows that the obedience can provide a platform for a good citizen. Subsequently, the use of a variety of appropriate curriculum leadership styles provides a coherence of what colleges at Makerere University offer and what is taught should be reflected in the graduands. Findings revealed that the use of democratic/participatory curriculum leadership style has evenly promoted listening skills, and students are now becoming more innovative and competent enough to handle day to day activities.

Similarly, a lecturer (LEES-T1) in the Department of Languages and Humanities shared that:

For all the course units I teach, I use participatory and laissez faire curriculum leadership style only and as the English department, we use the same curriculum leadership styles. My students are engaged in the academic activities. For instance, if you want to teach plays, students must fully participate in the plays. On participation they all learn at the same time and add in new events that may make our plays and poems richer enough to attract the more viewers, readers and listeners. In our departmental meetings, I don't recommend any other curriculum leadership style, but instead all lecturers in the department should keep updating the teaching styles and regularly attend to learning in the competence-based training.

What comes out clearly is that appropriate use of curriculum styles promote development of relevant skills and competences, and innovativeness which are drivers for economic growth and societal transformation. Therefore, proper utilization of curriculum styles in HEIs remains critical especially in developing countries such as Uganda.

Primary source Ethical Approval

The study was conducted in an ethical manner. Participants from the different colleges at Makerere University were requested to provide data freely. Prior to data collection, Researchers introduced themselves to relevant authorities at Makerere University before accessing participants. An introductory letter was obtained from the Dean, East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development of Makerere University

introducing researchers to study participants. Researchers observed all ethical values regarding confidentiality, anonymity, benefits of the research, use of recording devices, data ownership, security and safety of participants, informed consent and the participants' freedom to withdraw at any stage of the study.

IV. Conclusions And Recommendations

In conclusion, the main findings from the research study revealed a number of key ideas and these included; (1) Lecturers are commonly using participatory and transactional, transactional curriculum leadership styles to enhance learning, teaching and research in this post-pandemic era. (2) Students have been encouraged to participate in all the academic events of their respective colleges. Therefore, the issue of concern is about proper utilization of curriculum leadership styles as tools by lecturers in Ugandan HEIs today, which still require much more support from government so that curriculum leaders can strive to contribute more in the development of quality higher education especially during the post-pandemic period. Ensuring lecturer's utilization of appropriate curriculum leadership styles enhances students' acquisition of skills and competences that are on demand in the world of work. As such, graduands from HEIs are empowered to contribute directly to the economic growth and development of their nations.

Basing on the findings above, several key recommendations emerged. For instance, if lecturers are to effectively utilize different curriculum leadership styles, top university administration must plan orientations on the kind of curriculum leadership styles lecturers should use in almost all colleges at Makerere University. This may improve lecturers' skills and competences on how to engage with different curriculum leadership styles. Universities in Africa, Uganda in particular need to properly understand the usefulness of appropriate curriculum leadership styles so as to enhance competences among graduates for the labor market thus avoiding the high rate of unemployment for the years to come.