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Original Article

Investigating the Precursors of Instructional Delivery Competence among Kyambogo University Teaching Staff

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ABSTRACT

Instructional delivery is one of the critical measures of productivity of an academic teaching staff. Universities need to invest in developing the teaching capacities of their academic workforce to deliver effective teaching and learning processes to the students. This study investigated the influence of pedagogical competencies (PC) on instructional delivery among the teaching staff at Kyambogo University (KyU). The study sample was 51 teaching staff members from the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts, who comprised the Heads of Department and the lecturers. Using random and purposive sampling, they were chosen for sampling. Survey questionnaires and interview guides were used to get data later analysed in frequencies and percentages. The qualitative data analysis was done, and the findings revealed that pedagogical competencies influence the quality of lecture delivery. Based on this evidence, it was concluded that pedagogical competencies influence instructional delivery. Although most of the results were encouraging and showed notable improvements in how lessons were delivered, some shortcomings were also noted. It was recommended that the management of KyU designs and implements continuous professional development programs to improve the pedagogical skills of the teaching staff. Similar research will be carried out at faculties within KyU other than the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Arts.

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INTRODUCTION

University education has three mandates: teaching, research, and community engagement. However, there has been a tendency to prioritise research outputs at the expense of the teaching function as a key performance indicator in higher education (Henderson & Phillips, 2022; Shin & Jung, 2022; Kobayashi et al., 2017), yet the latter is also equally important. While many universities have apparent research policies since they directly affect the promotion criteria, this is not the teaching. This partly explains the upsurge of research on teacher quality focused on competencies that foster student learning (Saunders, 2022; Visser & van der Vaart, 2020).

Competence, a highly contested concept in scholarship on teachers and teacher education (Tatto, 2020; Mayer, 2022; Libman & Zuzovsky, 2006), is conceived as a set of practical skills informed by behavioural psychology (Hagger & McIntyre, 2020; Koster & Dengerink, 2022). Teacher competence was, as such, based on observable events in the teachers' performance, and teacher preparation consequently focused on student teachers' learning of competencies such as classroom management and teaching methods (Huizen et al., 2005; Pantić et al., 2011). This "behaviourist, competence-based perspective on teaching and teacher education, however, has been problematised for "deskilling" and de-professionalising teaching by reducing teachers to "technicians" (Pantic, 2011, p.50).

Additionally, the perspective "overlooks other important aspects of teacher expertise, knowledge and understanding, values and moral sensibilities, and professional identity" (Pantic, 2011 p.51; Kunter *et al.*, 2013; Ní Ríordáin *et al*., 2019). Therefore, as Tigelaar et al. (2004) articulately explain, teacher competence is an integrated set of personal characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for effective performance in various teaching contexts. Following this, we conceptualise teacher competence as including knowledge and understanding, values and moral issues, beliefs and identity, and behavioural skills (Yeh, 2009; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005) that may need to be nurtured through formalised training.

Teacher competence is dominantly perceived as the most significant factor in instructional delivery competencies in higher education (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2020; Ginns & Barrie, 2020). It has been established using several measures (Cohen et al., 2010; Danielson, 2011; 2007). In 2003 for example, the U.S. Department of Education defined "highly qualified" as teachers with bachelor's degrees, certification, and a major in their courses (Caughlan & Jiang, 2014).

However, there is a growing departure from this perspective, with studies demonstrating that teacher competence, as confined to those measures, weakens teacher instructional delivery competencies (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2019; Hattie, 2019). Indeed, as Caughlan and Jiang (2014) affirm, such 'input measures' are currently being replaced or supplemented by 'output measures' of teacher quality, such as performance assessments. There has been a shift in measuring teacher competence from the qualifications to how a teacher performs in the classroom (Kane & Staiger, 2019; Rivkin & Schiman, 2019).

Effective teaching and high-quality graduates require a combination of content and pedagogical knowledge from a university teacher (European University Association, 2022; Khan, 2020). Unfortunately, university teacher recruitment focuses more on educational qualifications than pedagogical knowledge. Gojak and Miles (2020) emphasised the importance of pedagogical knowledge in instructional delivery by suggesting that training programs to prepare university teachers should be planned for and conducted to equip them with the necessary pedagogical competencies since securing a teaching job at a university in many countries does not require the applicant to demonstrate teaching competency.

The training of teachers for higher education has long been taken for granted until recently, despite the importance of pedagogical skills (UNESCO, 2018). Scholarship on teacher competence dominates elementary and secondary school contexts (Caughlan & Jiang, 2014; Kunter et al., 2013) at the expense of higher education. These studies have provided insights on teacher competencies to inform both teaching and teacher education from a teacher

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and teacher-educator perspective. Additionally, the studies have overlooked teacher competence in higher institutions of learning, where most teachers have not undergone teacher education and continue to teach within these institutions. It should be noted that teacher quality is measured in terms of how a teacher performs in the classroom rather than just their qualifications (Hanushek, 2019).

This implies that the teacher's competence is measured mainly by the capacity in instructional delivery practices. Consequently, there remains a paucity of research on student perspectives on teacher competence, particularly within higher education in Africa and Uganda. This study plugs this gap in the literature by illuminating student perspectives regarding teacher competencies and instructional delivery practices at Kyambogo University, one of the higher education institutions in Uganda. The study is significant in informing the professional development training of teachers at higher learning institutions to enhance their pedagogical competencies in ways that consider instructional delivery competencies as a critical determinant of their performance.

Pedagogical competencies and instructional delivery

Teachers' knowledge is tied to their experiences and the contexts they teach. This knowledge encompasses their understanding of the subject matter and beliefs about their teaching practices (da Costa, 2020). Teachers can make the content understandable for their students if they have the necessary pedagogical competencies (König, 2019). The teaching staff at universities utilise an integrated set of concepts and knowledge that draws from subject matter expertise and pedagogical knowledge for quality teaching (Patfield et al., 2022).

Silander and Stigmar (2021) investigated the relationship between theory and practice of disciplinary content in four Swedish universities. The results showed that university teachers used more practical and hands-on knowledge of pedagogical courses. Their findings revealed that many instructors relied on their teaching methods, which lacked lesson plans, clear objectives, and effective time management, sometimes resulting in overlapping content (Janifer, 2021).

Context of the Study

Uganda, located in East Africa, is a developing country with a population of about 50 million (World Bank, 2023) and an agriculture-based economy (UBOS, 2022). The Ministry of Education and Sports is responsible for training, licensing schools and regulating the curriculum (Government of Uganda, 2019). The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), the higher education regulator, is mandated to guide the Ministry of Education in establishing public and private institutions of higher learning and ensuring quality and relevant education delivery. The 2018 National Teacher Policy "conforms to the intergovernmental Paris recommendation adopted in 1966 by UNESCO and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) regarding the status of teachers" (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2018). This outs the quality of the instructor at the centre of learning. Despite that, as noted earlier, recruitment at Higher education institutions centres on the nature of degrees at the expense of pedagogical training. Kyambogo is not an exceptional (2014 Kyambogo Human Resources Manual as amended, 2022, P.39). This study focuses on Kyambogo University (KyU) in Uganda, a public university recognised by NCHE.

Kyambogo University was established in 2003 by the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act as one of the Public Universities in Uganda. The University, located on Kyambogo Hill in Kampala district, is a merger of the former Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK), Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo (UPK) and the Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE). KyU academic programs are focused on vocationalising and universalising education at all levels (Mugulusi, 2013). With a total enrolment of 32,724, Kyambogo University has six faculties, six schools, one Institute of Open and Distance Learning, and the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training.

This study on lecturer instructional delivery competencies was conducted at Kyambogo University at the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Education in 2021.

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These faculties are among the oldest in the university and have the highest student enrolment. The faculties offer postgraduate and undergraduate humanities and social sciences programs accredited by the NCHE. The academic programs are tailor-made to equip students with relevant knowledge, skills, and values to match the rapidly changing, highly competitive, and globalised modern world. The staff profile at these faculties ranges from professors to teaching assistants who are well-qualified in their subject areas, though not necessarily trained in pedagogy (Ludigo et al., 2024). At Kyambogo, like most teaching staff at Ugandan universities, the staff lacks knowledge of higher education teaching theory. This is either because their previous education achievements have not involved teacher training or because there has not been any continuing on-the-job pedagogical training for those with any teaching background (NCHE, 2020). More so, no structured experience or targeted preparation is given to skilled teaching staff in teaching theory and methodology within a higher education context. While some universities, such as Islamic University in Uganda and Bishop Stuart University, have developed a programme named Higher Education Pedagogy, this is not true at Kyambogo University. At Kyambogo, those with teacher training are mainly for teaching at the lower levels, like secondary or primary schools. The few with higher education pedagogy had a chance to study abroad, where they were required to undergo higher education training as a prerequisite to teaching.

Except for those with an educational background that is also for teaching in secondary or primary schools, most lecturers at Kyambogo University do not possess the pedagogical skills to prepare them for lecture planning, preparation, and delivery. Indeed, the bulk of the teaching staff currently employed by Kyambogo University, like any other Ugandan University, have not undergone any form of pedagogical skills training, nor is it part of their orientation into teaching. Thus, in their trajectory as academic staff, they move up the promotions line to become full professors with inadequate higher education teaching skills training.

Therefore, teaching staff join the university teaching staff without expertise in delivery and associated activities such as assessing and grading students, managing increasingly large classes, and applying innovative Information Communication Technology (ICT) practices to their teaching (Ssempebwa, 2019). The most immediate threat to self-esteem comes from the discrepancy between the assumption that such staff knows how to teach and the discovery that he does not (Bennun, 2013). A study by Kiggundu and Okello (2022) reveals that 75% of Ugandan university lecturers reported feeling inadequate or unsure about their teaching abilities despite being subject matter experts (with first-class degrees and PhDs).

In the process, many accidental pedagogical skills acquisitions may either go right or wrong. The University's quality assurance structures do not effectively check their practice quality on how they teach. This consequently compromises the quality of education given to the students and the quality of graduates produced by such untrained teaching systems and pedagogical philosophies. This is because "Quality Assurance Mechanisms are observed if the curriculum is implemented by qualified teaching staff" (BaikoAjuba *et al.*, 2024, p.46).

Like other Ugandan universities, Kyambogo University lacks structured pedagogical programs for staff development in student assessment, curriculum innovation, teaching and learning styles, communication skills, and understanding the dynamics of teaching and learning in higher education contexts (Mugabi, 2019). Consequently, the university's teaching is hugely teacher-centred. The teacher is the sage who fills empty jars with knowledge and is not a facilitator of learning. Students are not actively engaged in teaching and learning; they are assumed to be passive recipients of knowledge (Ludigo et al., 2024). Teaching staff are only responsible for choosing and organising content, interpreting and applying the concepts, and evaluating student learning, while students' efforts are focused on recording the information (Lotulung et al., 2018).

Such a teaching philosophy hampers students' critical skills, such as independence, problem-

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solving, research skills, critical thinking, and student responsibility for learning. Students take in knowledge but fail to transfer it to real-life contexts because knowledge passed on does not facilitate practical knowledge and skill acquisition. As has indeed been asserted, discrepancies between competencies acquired in education and those required in real life have become more pronounced (Kasozi, 2017).

In Uganda, there is a concern that higher education institutions face challenges in producing graduates with relevant skills for the labour market (National Council for Higher Education. (2018). This public panic is due to the inadequate training university teaching staff receive to pass on quality, impactful education (Ssempala et al., 2022). Improving pedagogical skills directly benefits the students since students are the centre of the educational enterprise, and their cognitive and affective learning experiences should guide all decisions about what is done and how (Lotulung et al. 2018). This study investigates the instructional delivery competencies of the teaching staff to identify areas for improvement and enhance student learning outcomes.

Statement of the problem

The recruitment of teaching staff at institutions of higher learning prioritises teacher competence as a critical attribute (Kyambogo University, 2019; NCHE, 2018) to quality instructional delivery. Lecturers are appointed based on their specialisation in a specific subject area rather than their competence to effect quality instructional delivery. This implies that teaching at a university is done by staff not professionally trained (International Association of Universities, 2020). However, several lecturers at Kyambogo University were appointed without considering their status of prior training in teacher education, thus leaving it to merely content mastery. Even those with some education-related background possess training for primary or secondary schools (Wieman, 2019) and not for higher education institutions like Kyambogo University. Worse still, at the moment, KyU has no specialised program to provide higher education teaching training for lecturers (Kyambogo University, 2019). This then warrants an investigation into the status of the lecturers' instructional delivery competencies. Therefore, the study investigates the instructional delivery competencies of the teaching staff and identifies areas for improvement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers applied qualitative and quantitative approaches to describe and quantify the findings. The quantitative approach helped the researchers quantify the number of respondents whose responses supported or denied the importance of pedagogical training competencies. Further, a qualitative approach was used to collect data describing current training needs.

Sample size

The participants used for this study were 51 from the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, 43 of whom were teaching staff and 8 of whom were heads of department. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for the sample size determination approach, a sample size of 51 respondents was selected from the total population of 88 full-time teaching staff.

Table 1: The sample population is distributed among different categories or groups.

Category	Target population	Sample size	Sampling Techniques
Teaching staff	65	43	Purposive sampling
Heads of department	13	08	Purposive
Total	**88**	**51**	

Source: Revised from Morgan and Krejcie's work (1970) table.

The researchers employed purposive sampling to select participants in the study, which involves selecting individuals based on specific criteria, as shown in Table 1 above. Individuals were selected purposively from the teaching staff and heads of departments that constituted the population. According to CEPI (2024), this sampling technique is employed to gather critical information from this

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particular group. The teaching staff and their heads of department were selected because the researchers assumed they would give detailed information on the status of instructional delivery.

Instrumentation

Data collection methods and tools included a questionnaire and interview guide.

Questionnaires

The study adopted a questionnaire that was aligned with the purpose of this study. The close-ended questionnaire was structured on a 5-point Likert scale: strongly disagree (SD) = 1; disagree (D) = 2; not sure (NS) = 3; agree (A) = 4; strongly agree (SA) = 5. The questionnaire was self-administered with the help of two research assistants per faculty. The questionnaire was filled out in approximately 25 to 30 minutes. This helped to get quantitative data for the study. A closed-ended questionnaire was preferred because it allowed large amounts of information to be quickly collected from the teaching staff. The above tool helped collect information from the 51 teaching staff; heads of departments are included. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions that prompted the teaching staff to provide information about their own opinions about the research problem. While collecting data, 65 questionnaires were distributed to the teaching staff. Only 51 (78.4%) questionnaires out of the 65 were completed appropriately and valid for analysis.

Interview guide

To gather information from the heads of departments at the two faculties, the researchers utilised one-on-one interviews as the data collection method. The interview guide helped the researchers solicit qualitative data from purposively selected eight (08) heads of department. Recent studies indicate that heads of department (HoDs) play a crucial role in understanding and enhancing their staff's pedagogical competencies and instructional delivery (McGhee & Stark, 2021; McBrayer et al., 2020). Therefore, during this study, the heads of the departments' being well-informed about their staff played a crucial role in providing interview data. This instrument was used since it was appropriate for seeking in-depth information from respondents through probing and prompting. The interview guide was prepared in line with the study purpose but comprehensive in a manner which could bring out deeper insights by allowing flexibility and open-mindedness with the heads of department. The interviews typically lasted 30 to 40 minutes, and follow-up sessions were conducted to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability were considered to ensure data quality control, and the accuracy and efficiency of the research tools were primarily dependent on them. The study aimed to attain a validity index and a reliability coefficient of at least 0.7 or 70%. These are generally accepted in research (Pallant, 2020).

Validity of instruments

Some experts from Kyambogo University were used to determine the validity of the study instruments by rating the significance of every element in the tool. Items in the instrument were also rated on a scale of 1 to 5. Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not Sure (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). The study guaranteed external validity by focusing on population validity, which included all the study population's crucial characteristics, such as gender, teaching experience, and age in the final sample. Regarding the validity of qualitative instruments, the study ensured credibility by asking similar questions at different intervals. Additionally, the credibility of the data was further confirmed through in-depth interviews. Together, these measures contributed to a high level of data dependability.

As for reliability, some experts in the field of pedagogy at the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Educational Media (CPEM), Kyambogo University, reviewed the interview guide to ensure content validity and verify the items' relevance. These were assumed to have the necessary expertise in the validation of data collection tools (Grand-Guillaume-Paranoid et al., 2023)

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Data collection procedure

During data collection, the researchers followed an introductory letter that was presented to the Heads of Department to be granted permission to interact with them and the teaching staff as targeted respondents. In the first two weeks, the researchers began by distributing the survey instruments to the teaching staff at the departments under the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Later in the third week, a subsample of eight (8) participants for the interview schedule was strategically selected from the original fifty-one (51) teaching staff at the two facilities who had completed the survey. The criteria for selecting them was entirely being a Head of Department. This enabled the researchers to collect informed perspectives on departmental staff and instructional delivery practices.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data

Quantitative data collected in the field underwent cleaning, coding, and analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS Version 16) to facilitate data entry. Initially, the data was examined using descriptive statistics, which included measures such as frequencies and percentages. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise and characterise the participants' responses, particularly their agreement or disagreement regarding pedagogical competencies and instructional delivery.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data from the field was recorded and then coded based on themes related to the study's concepts. This was done to scrutinise the words and phrases conveying the knowledge and skills possessed by university teaching staff concerning pedagogical competencies and instructional delivery. Subsequently, the collected qualitative data from the in-depth interviews also underwent thematic analysis to sift out irrelevant data that did not pertain to pedagogical competencies and teaching staff instructional delivery.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers, aware of the significance of ethical considerations in research, endeavoured to keep the respondents' information confidential, not allowing any other person to access it. They used codes to identify respondents, keeping their identity anonymous even when coding and recording. They informed the respondents about the purpose of the research and ensured that participants voluntarily agreed. The research was cleared by the Mengo Research Ethics Committee (MH/REC/63/11-2021).

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Participants Academic Profile

Results reveal that lecturers who participated in the study were male, 32 (62%), and 19 (38%) were female. The highest number of lecturers who participated in the study were in the 40-49 years age bracket, 20 (39.4%), followed by 30-39 years, 17 (33.1%), and 50-59 years, 11 (21.8%). One lecturer was in the 20-29 age bracket 1 (2.8%), and those aged 60 and above were only 2 (29%). Most lecturers had trained in conducting teaching and learning processes 43 (83.7%), though not for higher education. 8 (16.3 %) did not have training in conducting teaching and learning at all. Most lecturers had attained master's degrees 34 (66.0%), while some had attained PhDs 14 (27.7%) and a bachelor's degree 2 (3.5%). A very insignificant proportion of lecturers 1 (2.8%) was pursuing further education (PhD candidate) (Refer to Table 2).

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Table 2. Demographical Characteristics

Variable	Category	Percentages (%)	Frequencies
Gender	Male	62	32
	Female	38	19
Age	20-29	2.8	01
	30-39	33.1	17
	40-49	39.4	20
	50-59	21.8	11
	60+	2.9	02
Training in conducting teaching and learning	Trained	83.7	43
	Not trained	16.3	08
Highest level of education	Bachelors	3.5	02
	Masters	66.0	34
	PhD	27.7	14
	PhD (Cand)	2.8	01

Table 3's first item was possessing relevant skills to develop a lecture plan. Results indicated that 38(75.8%) of respondents had the skills for lecture plan development, 05(9.5%) did not have the skills, and 8(1.5 %) were undecided. This implied that most respondents had the skills, as noted by participants.

Table 3: Pedagogical competencies of the lecturers in preparation for lesson delivery

Constructs	S. A	A	U	D	S. D
Possession of relevant skills to develop a lecture plan	18 (36.1%)	20 (39.7%)	8 (15.0%)	2 (3.5%)	3 (5.7%)
Preparation of lecture plans for all my lectures	4 (7.8%)	7 (14.2%)	26 (51.1%)	2 (23.4%)	2 (3.5%)
Preparation of notes for all the lectures	53.2 (27)	17 (33.3%)	2 (3.5%)	2 (3.5%)	3 (6.4%)
Preparation of the lesson content in line with the set objectives	30 (56.7%)	17 (34.0%)	1 (2.1%)	1 (2.8%)	2 (4.3%)
Provision of students with the course outline at the beginning of every course	39 (77.3%)	7 (13.5%)	1 (2.1%)	3 (5.7%)	1 (1.4%)
Regular preparation of learning materials for the courses	24 (46.1%)	21 (41.1%)	2 (4.3%)	3 (5.7%)	1 (2.8%)
Involvement of students in planning subsequent lessons	7 (12.8%)	18 (34.8%)	13 (25.5%)	9 (19.1%)	4 (7.8%)
I engage my learners in group teaching to communicate effectively.	21(41.8%)	18 (35.5%)	5 (10.6%)	4 (7.1%)	3 (5.0%)
I make my learners active in their groups.	18 (35.9%)	23 (44.7%)	4 (8.5%)	3 (5.7%)	3 (5.0%)
My learners can now confidently communicate with a range of people.	12 (22.7%)	29 (56.0%)	7 (14.9%)	2 (4.3%)	1 (2.1%)
My students freely communicate with me about their academic issues	22 (43.3%)	21 (40.4%)	4 (7.1%)	3 (6.4%)	1 (2.8%)
I always provide my learners with constructive feedback	23 (44.7%)	22 (42.6%)	3 (5.7%)	2 (4.3%)	1 (2.8%)
I make sure learners have strong belonging among themselves.	17 (34.0%)	24 (46.8%)	6 (11.3%)	3 (5.0%)	1 (2.8%)

Key: S.A =Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided; D=Disagree and SD=Strongly disagree

Regarding lecture preparation, 26 (51.1%) of the teaching staff were undecided when asked whether they prepared lecture plans for all their lectures. Only 11 (22.0 %) agreed that they did. A proportion

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of lecturers disagreed, 14 (27.1%). Therefore, most respondents prepared their lessons, as noted by respondents.

44 (86.6%) of the lecturers agreed that they prepare lecture notes for all their lecturers. This was followed by those who disagreed 5 (9.9%). Other lecturers were indifferent or undecided 2 (3.5%). This implied that the majority of the teaching staff regularly planned their teaching.

Regarding preparing the lesson in line with the set objectives, several lecturers agreed 47 (90.7%) that their lesson content always aligns with the set objectives. Other lecturers disagreed 3 (7.1%), while the rest were undecided 1(2.1%). This finding implied that most respondents prepared the lesson notes content in line with the set objectives.

Regarding the provision of students with the course outline at the beginning of every course, 46 (90.7) lecturers agreed that they do so. 4 (7.1%) lecturers disagreed, while only 1 (2.1%) was undecided. This showed that most of the teaching staff were used to providing their students with the course outline at the beginning of every course.

As for regularity in preparing learning materials for the courses, 45 (87.2%) of the lecturers agreed that they always prepare learning materials for their courses. 2 (4.3%) were undecided. 4 (8.5%) disagreed with preparing the course materials.

On the involvement of students in planning subsequent lessons, while 25 (47.6%) members of the teaching that they were involving learners in the planning of lessons, 13 (26.9%) disagreed to have done so, and 13 (25.5%) were undecided. The above responses revealed that a large number of teaching staff ignore involving students in the planning of lessons.

To probe into the possession of relevant skills and formal training, essential ingredients for the teaching staff at higher education, an interview was held with one Head of the Department in the third week of data collection after the survey tools. One head of department (HOD-01) was asked in an interview as to why some of the teaching staff were missing skills in pedagogy, and he stated:

> *(HOD-01) … At most departments in this university, when it comes to recruitment of staff, what matters most is the mastery and expertise in the subject matter rather than formal teaching training for skills. Many lecturers are appointed as experts in their field even when they have not received formal training in teaching in higher education.*

The above statement expresses how emphasis is placed on the teaching staff's subject matter expertise over teacher training. This downplays the significance of pedagogy for lecturers in higher education.

Another head of the department interviewed and shared his observations regarding the teaching staff at his department; HOD-02 stated,

> *well... Though many of our lecturers have acquired training related to teaching and learning procedures, I have found out that most of this training was aligned with secondary or primary schools, not for higher learning institutions. So, the pedagogical skills they claim to have may not directly translate to the university setting (HOD-02).*

The above comment emphasises the necessity of having a teacher training background with KyU lecturers to bridge the gap between their existing training and the teaching/learning demands at institutions of higher learning.

Another head of department (HoD3) had this to say when asked as to why some lectures do not use group teaching for lesson delivery;

> *While the group teaching method offers significant benefits for effective lecture content delivery, its adoption is stalled by the need for specific pedagogical competencies, which some of us in this department still lack. Lecturers, especially those without formal teaching qualifications, avoid it. Other than risking potential professional embarrassment, they often switch to familiar, traditional teaching approaches (HoD3).*

The above assertion underscores a critical gap in higher education, particularly at KyU, where one expects the teaching staff to possess advanced

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teaching expertise. The fact that some lecturers still lack essential pedagogical skills highlights a concern.

Another Head of Department (HoD-04), when asked whether he deems it essential to have on-job training in pedagogy for lecturers, had this to say;

> *Essentials such as on-the-job training were once introduced at business schools. It was named the postgraduate diploma in business education. It was beneficial for potential lecturers. I have had discussions with lecturers who have gone through this training. I have found them far better at transferring knowledge than those not attending this course. I feel like attaching some of our untrained staff to those who have gone through this course (HoD-04).*

The remarks above assent to the necessity of on-the-job training for the teaching staff at KyU.

Another head of the department (HoD-5) did more probing about the lecturers' performance in traditional lecture-based methods, where students are in large numbers ranging from the twenties to hundreds. The Head of the Department (HoD-05) thus said,

> *When managing large groups of learners…, lecturers face a big challenge. You know… teaching old students requires a teacher with a unique set of qualities, including patience, accommodativeness, tolerance, and more. Without proper training, a lecturer can struggle to effectively manage and fail with large classes, automatically leading to weak student performance (HoD-05).*

The above commentary underpins the significance of training the teaching staff in higher education skills for effective large-class management. Kyambogo University has to prioritise professional development to enhance effective instructional delivery.

DISCUSSION

The study was intended to investigate the instructional delivery competencies of the teaching staff and identify areas for improvement. The bulk of the teaching showed a high degree of Competency in the delivery of instruction, revealing several important advantages. For instance, 75.8% of participants reported having relevant skills for developing a lecture plan. Additionally, 86.6% of respondents expressed success in preparing lecture notes. Furthermore, 90.7% of participants expressed the capacity to prepare lessons aligned with session objectives and provide students with the course outline at the beginning of the courses. Lastly, a significant number of lecturers, 87.2%, reported being in the position to develop learning materials for their lessons.

On the other hand, the report also pointed out some areas that needed work:

Although 47.6% of staff expressed involving students in planning subsequent lessons, 52.4% were either undecided or had difficulty incorporating students into their lesson planning. Additionally, 7.1% of respondents reported difficulty providing students with timely and helpful feedback.

This finding suggests that the lecturers' pedagogical competencies have significant potential to enhance their capacity to effectively deliver lessons by employing various strategies and techniques during the teaching and learning process. Although Kyambogo University's teaching staff is usually competent in delivering instruction, there is room for improvement, especially in student involvement in planning, on-the-job training, and providing constructive, timely feedback. Therefore, it implies that the possession of pedagogical competency by the Kyambogo University lecturers leads to an improvement in the quality of lesson delivery.

It is worth noting that while this investigation found evidence of satisfactory pedagogical competencies among most university lecturers, as observed by Olagunju and Iwintolu (2023), a notable exception always exists among those demonstrating suboptimal instructional practices. This is similar to Ludigo et al. (2024) observation that some faculty teaching staff were still struggling with critical aspects of preparing effective learning materials and involving students in planning subsequent lessons. Further, there is a need to foster confidence in communication among learners with diverse

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individuals and cultivate a strong sense of belonging among students (Chu, 2022).

Similar to Smith and Brown's (2023) findings, this study also established the existence of teaching staff who have not undergone pedagogical training. It was evident from the interview schedules that some lecturers are appointed after being experts in their field, but not necessarily on whether they received formal training in teaching at higher education. As emphasised by Qadhi and Al-Thani (2023), it is essential to have teacher-on-job training in higher education to realise teaching effectiveness, especially for experts in their fields who miss out on formal training in pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study, "Investigating the Precursors of Instructional Delivery Competence among Kyambogo University Teaching Staff," indicate that although the teaching staff at Kyambogo University showed competency in instructional delivery, several areas still require improvement, including the provision of timely and constructive feedback, on-the-job training, and student minimal participation in the planning of lectures. These results highlight how crucial pedagogical ability is to improve instruction quality. Through focused professional development and ongoing pedagogical training, Kyambogo University can close these gaps and improve the teaching staff's overall efficacy. This will eventually lead to improved educational outcomes by creating a more effective and exciting learning environment for students.

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