The Relationship Between Class Attendance and The Effectiveness of the Learning Process at Kyambogo University in Uganda

*Katumba Faisal

Faculty of Education, Department of Education Administration & Management, Uganda

*Email: katumbafaizal@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between class attenance and the effectiveness of the learning process at Kyambogo University. The ideal policy gazette by the National Council for Higher Education (2013) encourages universities and other tertiary institutions to implement continuous assessment strategies during the teaching-learning process. The study was conducted at Kyambogo University in Uganda, which boasts almost 1000 lecturers across its six faculties, of Education, Science, Arts, Social Sciences, Engineering, Special Needs education and Rehabilitation, and vocational studies. The data was collected using a questionnaire tool developed by the researcher. The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics, of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The link between the independent and dependent variables was examined using simple regression analysis. It was concluded that continuous assessment influences students' attendance in class and has a statistically significant impact on the effectiveness of the learning process. The study therefore recommended that higher education institutions pay maximum attention to the administration of class attendance as a measure to ensure effectiveness of the learning process at Kyambogo University**.**

Key Words: Class attendance, Effectiveness of the Learning Process, Kyambogo University

Introduction

The students' learning process is often determined by the environments we inhabit as well as the relationships we make. It's punctuated with signals from the five human senses. Nkonge (2019), observed that the human students' learning process in Africa evolved through the try and error creation of rudimentary tools out of wood, stones, and fire because the prehistoric man was unaware of how to employ fire and metals productively. Later man learnt how to use fire for cooking, melting the metals, from which he made simple mechanical and agricultural tools, hence learning occurred through imitating one who had mastered a particular skill. Kyauta et al. (2018), complements that learning is a fundamental aspect of human behaviour that occurs from birth until death. In a similar vein, learning is probably facilitated by continual interactions between the student and the tutor (Lecturer), the practice organization, and the educational setting (Abera et al. 2017).

In confronting the need to assess students' learning outcomes, Outcomes assessment in higher education was started in United States of America in the early 1980. Relatedly, Banta, *et al*. (2016), defines it as a procedure for presenting reliable evidence of the materials, implementation efforts, and results made with the intention of enhancing the efficacy of instruction, academic programs, and service expansion in higher educational institutions. Bryan and Clegg (2019) argued that, assessment

in UK higher education operationalized its methodology into real-world by use of authentic practices that improve students' learning in institutions of higher learning. He stated four characteristics; the feedback – rich learning environment, the student – tutor dialogue feedback, rich interactions that enable students to identify their strength/weaknesses and engaging students as active participants in learning activities/feedbacks.

Kasozi (2017) reports that, the Ugandan government mandated the National Council for Higher Education in 2001 to establish, manage, supervise, and direct institutions of higher learning in the creation and delivery of quality education. This was during a period of significant change in the academic world with local and global forces having an impact on higher education in general and universities in particular due to their role as centres of knowledge production. Kasozi (2003) looks at higher education as education beyond primary and secondary school levels of teaching and learning. Learners at this stage are required to apply their intellect, acquired knowledge, and acquired abilities to provide unique answers to the pressing societal issues. This explains why Kajubi (1989), identified the major functions of higher education as; production of high-level manpower, publication of the knowledge attained, public service to the community and preservation of the knowledge. As the higher education sector grows very rapidly in Uganda, a lot of challenges have occurred as regards how the continuous assessment is done to perfect the students' learning process in higher institutions of learning.

The three theories of learning identified by James (2006) are behaviorist, cognitive constructivist, and social constructivist. Albert Bandura's (1977) social learning theory emphasizes the value of observing, modelling, and imitating other people's behaviours, attitudes, and emotional responses serves as the foundation for this study. It also takes into account how environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human cognition and behavior.

The behaviorist learning theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning are supported by Albert Bandura (1977). In contrast, he adds two crucial ideas: Behaviour is acquired from the environment through the process of observational learning, while mediating processes occur between stimuli and responses. Deaton (2015) notes carefully that after Albert Bandura's research, social contact and the human experience have changed since the advent of social media. As a result, educationalists have a unique chance to apply the ideas of Bandura's Social Learning Theory to improve students' engagement and learning in a social media setting. This will help to increase students' attention, memory, and motivation, which will help them learn more.

Maslow (1954) discovered that learners are motivated by the basic needs in life and in a situation where the basic needs are satisfied, learning takes place. It is incumbent upon all education managers to provide the first four basic needs: survival, safety, belonging, and esteem, before individuals become effective learners. This will encourage the students to attend their lectures regularly.

Lau (2013) expressed the relevance of dialogue in assessment for learning, between tutors and tutors, tutors and learners, learners and peers and then learners themselves, and later instructors are presented with a new knowledge base to re-consider their assessment practice. This kind of assessment occurs the students attend regularly.

The ideal policy gazette by the National Council for Higher Education (2013) encourages universities and other tertiary institutions to implement continuous assessment strategies during the teaching-learning process. The learning process starts with the environment, skills development, monitoring, feedback and evaluation among others. The university lecturers can achieve this effectively by administering regular class attendance.

The current state of affairs at Kyambogo University indicates that education lecturers have always worked to the best of their knowledge to implement the gazetted policies. Administrative measures to check on the regular students' lecture attendance are in practice. Students must sign attendance lists for every lecture attended, while their lecturers use them as evidence of having taught the allocated load hence claim for their allowances.

Kyambogo University may not be able to achieve its mission, which is to "advance and promote knowledge and development of skills in science, technology, and education, as well as in other fields having regard for quality, equity progress, and information of society," if this current state of affairs is left unchecked. Additionally, the students may become rowdier, and the general public may lose more faith in the graduates of this well-known university. Therefore, the Researcher sought to test whether there is a relationship between Class Attendance and the learning process.

Literature Review

Attendance is a major factor in determining course grades in higher institutions of learning where students are more excited with their grades from continuous assessment and learning experience. However, this is not always the case in Ugandan institutions of higher learning that while attending lectures, some students may pick up new information quickly, while others may not gain anything from them.

The specific study area was Kyambogo University found in Nakawa Division, Kampala - Uganda. The researcher selected this University because it came into existence after the merger of the former Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK), Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo (UPK) and Uganda National Institute of Special Needs Education (UNISE), in 2002 and then confirmed as Kyambogo University in 2006, hence making it a relevant sample for higher institutions of learning and the analysis of the findings of the study was specific to the study area. Kyambogo University the second largest public university in Uganda with a population of 62,884 students (20,645 on campus while 37972 are off campus) pursuing over one hundred forty-one (141) academic programmes supported and managed by thirty-five (35) academic departments under six faculties. Therefore, the findings of this study may not represent or correspond to other institutions of higher education in Uganda, because the scope of the findings of the study was limited to that University only.

A study done by Hicks (2016) aimed at assessing whether student attendance in tutorials in first year subjects in psychology was associated with academic performance, attendance is linked with improved performance. For a total of 383 students who successfully completed basic psychology courses in classes between the academic years of 2012 and 2015, the study used data from tutor-held records on attendance as well as performance on article review assignments and laboratory reports. In 13 of the 14 class relationships that were independently analysed, the hypothesis that class attendance and performance would be highly correlated was confirmed, and in the one class that was the exception, the correlation was in the anticipated direction. The study's findings revealed that even in this technologically advanced day, going to class still benefits students' learning. Though this study provides useful insights in relation to subject under investigation, it was purely qualitative in nature unlike the proposed study that will use mixed methods and this study's main flaw is that it didn't examine the influence of mediating elements like motivation, personality, and cognitive ability on the relationship between attendance and performance.

Macfarlane (2015), observed that the contemporary environment of higher education mandates that students attend required class meetings and do homework while listening to lectures. this is technically known as *presentism*. Holmes (2018) investigated the students' engagement measuring their activity within the module of virtual learning environment in the University of Northampton, UK. She discovered that virtual learning environments explores the students' engagement, pushes them into modes of deep learning in order to maintain or enhance the student experience.

Research Methodology

The nature of a study's guiding research questions or hypotheses and philosophical foundations, which determine the methodology were utilized to collect data, heavily influence the choice of research design. The descriptive non-experimental approach that served as the study's foundation was predicative correlation design. This was deemed to be a suitable research design for predicting the relationship between the contribution of class attendance and the student's learning process.

The total population of this study was 1,000 respondents covering both the full-time and part-time academic staff. The researcher made personal contact with the six faculties and collected the relevant data. The sample size was obtained by the use of Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table and some other statistical calculations (formulae) which later led to the choice of sampling technique. The study chose Kyambogo University, which boasts almost 1,000 lecturers across its six faculties, including education, science, the arts, social sciences, engineering, special needs education and rehabilitation, and vocational studies. The sample size was distributed as shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: Sample Size & Sampling Technique

S/N	Population Category	Target Population	Sample Size (By Krejcie & Morgan)	Sampling Technique
1	Lecturers (Full time and Part-timers)	1,000	278	Simple Random Sampling
	Total	**I,000**	**278**	

Source: Developed by the researcher (2022)

A survey questionnaire was used to gather the data. A survey questionnaire is a more efficient and quick way than other approaches to gauge the actions, attitudes, preferences, views, and intentions of a sizable number of participants (Creswell, 2016). The lecturers were given a questionnaire which they completed and sent it back to the main researcher.

All the information collected carefully was kept, and recorded using the statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) version 20 was used for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe, summarise and explore relationships between variables and themes of the study.

Hypothesis Testing

To test the research hypotheses, the study used the predictive correlation analysis to determine the relationship between class attendance and the effectiveness of the students' learning process at Kyambogo University in Uganda. Pearson's correlation was selected because the study involved the prediction of correlations between the independent and dependent variables.

Table 2: Reliability Test

	Type of variable	Narrative Summary	Cronbach Alpha coefficient	Number of items
	Independent Variable (IV_1)	Students Class Attendance (The strategy of regular attendance)	**0.713**	5
1.	The learning environment	0.663	5	
2.	The skills development	0.799	5	
3.	Monitoring the students' learning process	0.870	5	
4.	Feedback during the students' learning process	0.711	5	

Findings and Discussion

Objective: To assess the extent of the relationship between the student's class attendance and the learning process at Kyambogo University in Uganda.

The least variance of the data points from the mean score was found in four (4) items with a Grand Mean score above 3.5, which was near to code 4 on the Likert scale and a low Standard Deviation of 0.98. This demonstrated that they had high expectations and were in agreement that the lecturer's involvement in such activities had an impact on the students' learning. According to the Grand Mean of 3.5, the respondents' view of how continuous evaluation affects learning was high, indicating that it has a favourable impact. Therefore, at Kyambogo University in Uganda, the influence of continuous assessment on students' attendance in class had a significant impact on the learning process.

Regression Analysis Results on Students' Class Attendance and Learning Process

H_{01}= Students' class attendance has no significant relationship with the learning process at Kyambogo University in Uganda. A simple linear regression was performed at a 95% confidence level. To test the hypothesis that students' class attendance has no significant relationship with the learning process, an F-test was done as shown in Table 3 below;

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Table 3: Analysis of Variance of Students' Class Attendance and the Learning Process

ANOVA						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.058	1	3.212	6.280	.000[b]
	Residual	145.246	169	511		
	Total	161.305	170			

b. Predictors: (Constant), Student' class attendance

The significance test for the model's ability to predict the dependent variable is shown in Table 4.6. In order to predict the criterion variable, the regression model was significant with a F (1,169) = 6.280, p 0.05. The claim that the regression model's criterion variable-class attendance is statistically well-suited to predict student learning progress was put to the test. The F-test is statistically significant at p 0.05 in light of the results. This suggests that students' attendance in class predicts the learning process, thus we reject the null hypothesis and come to the conclusion that students' class attendance has a positive, significant impact on the learning process. The correlation coefficient was calculated in order to determine the regression equation, as shown in Table 4 below.

Equation Regression Equation

To determine how well students' class attendance can predict the learning process, a regression equation was established as follows: $Y = \acute{a} + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon.$

Where Y is the learning process, X_2 is students' class attendance, β_2 is the coefficient of correlation, and ε is the residual. Table 4.21 indicates the best fit of students' class attendance. Where Y is the learning process, X_1 is students' Class attendance assignments, β_1 is the coefficient of correlation, and ε is the residual. Table 4.21 indicates the best fit of students' class attendance.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Students' Class Attendance on the Learning Process

Model Summary				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimates**
1	.558[a]	.311	.283	67.353

$$LP = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon.$$

$$LP = 144.25 + 0.558 \text{ SCA}$$

Based on the findings in Table 4.7, the R square denotes the coefficient determination, which describes the extent to which students' attendance in class may explain the learning process. The linear association between students' class attendance and learning process in this instance can account for 31% of the overall variation in learning process. However, Hair et al. (2010) advised using adjusted R square instead of standard R square because standard R square exaggerates some relationships.

Recommendations

The learning process in higher institutions of learning is significantly affected by the strategy of class attendance, the researcher therefore recommends the monitoring of attendance of activities by students to improve the learning process in higher institutions of learning.

Considering the fact that continuous assessment has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the learning process at Kyambogo University in Uganda, the researcher recommends that institutions of higher learning ought to pay maximum attention to the Students' Class Attendance as measures to ensure effectiveness of the learning process at Kyambogo University in Uganda.

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