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## **School Practice Supervision and Performance of Student Teachers in Higher Institutions of Learning in Uganda: Empirical Evidence from Kyambogo University and Ndejje University**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the impact of school practice supervision on performance of student teachers in higher institutions of learning in Uganda. Purposive and random samplings were used to select respondents from the two universities. Data was collected using interviews, closed and open-ended questionnaires from a sample of 103 respondents, and 76 respondents returned their well filled questionnaires giving a response rate of 73.8%. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS Ver. 20 while qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. The result showed a significant positive relationship between school practice supervision and student teacher performance ( $r=0.518$ ,  $p<0.000$ ) in higher institution of learning in Uganda. It also showed that school practice supervision improves student teachers' subject competence; enhance their confidence in teaching and learning of new teaching techniques. It therefore concludes that although school practice is an integral part of the teacher education programs in both Kyambogo and Ndejje Universities, the practice is bedevilled with many challenges ranging from poor facilitation of both students and supervisors, lack of respect for both student teachers by lecturers and vice versa.

**Keywords:** School Practice, Supervision, Student Teachers, Higher Institutions of Learning, Uganda

### **Manuscript History**

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The quality of Education is a major concern of all educational goals. Supervision of classroom instruction and continuous support to teachers are some of the most effective ways to improve and sustain the quality of instruction, (Naz, Awan, & Nasreen, 2009). Teacher education is a critical factor in the achievement of Education for All (EFA) (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2011). The Uganda education system comprises of Pre-Primary, Primary, Lower Secondary, Upper Secondary, Teacher Instructor, Tertiary and University Levels. In addition, Non-Formal Education (NFE) is also another component of the education system in Uganda, (Komakech, 2017; Ministry of Education and Sports, 2011).

In Uganda, the Education sector is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). The ministry also formulates, issues, implements, monitors and supervises educational policies and guidelines in the country through the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). The DES monitors and supervises the implementation of all educational activities in the country, while the NCHE is responsible for registering all institutions of Higher Education in the country; and ensure the minimum standards for courses and programs of study and equating of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded by different public and private institutions of higher education. However, despite the existence of the two bodies responsible for regulating, and monitoring quality of education in Uganda, the performance of teachers graduating from institutions of higher learning is still poor (Okurut, Nakabugo, Ssebbunga, Ngobi, Maani, Gumisiriza, & Bbosa, 2008). Okurut et al, (2008) observed that, the academic and professional training student teachers obtain from the training institutions such as colleges and universities may be sufficient to equip the graduates with necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge to be effective in their classrooms. The District Inspectors of Schools (DIS) and District Education Officers (DEO) are not adequately facilitated to carry out supervision and monitoring of teachers in the field. Moreover, students joining teacher education programs may not measure up with the training demands of the courses, (Okurut et al, 2008; MoES: Education Management Information System, 2014; Komakech, 2017).

Supervision plays key role in quality assurance and service delivery of education offered in the educational institutions in Uganda. According to Beach & Reinhartz (2000) supervision is a strategy in which professional support is provided to improve instruction. Therefore, supervision signifies a common vision of what teaching and learning can and should be (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2004; Beach & Reinhartz (2000), hence it should be developed collaboratively by competent supervisors, teachers, and other members of the school community. Stephen (2014) defined supervision as a distinct professional activity in which education and training aimed at developing science-informed practice are facilitated through a collaborative interpersonal process. It involves observation, the facilitation of supervisee self-assessment, evaluation, feedback and the acquisition of knowledge, and skills by instruction, modeling and mutual problem solving. In addition, by building on the recognition of the strengths and talents of the supervisee, supervision encourages self-efficacy. Akitunde (2007) noted that supervision is an act of overseeing activity/people or watches over a particular task being carried out correctly by other people. With reference to school system, supervision/inspection is defined as all efforts of designated school officials towards providing leadership to teachers, other educational workers and students in the improvement of instruction.

Sergiovanni & Starratt, (2002) underlined the potential of supervision of instruction in improving classroom practices and providing teachers with opportunities for professional growth and improvement. Supervisors are critical in providing technical support to teachers.

According to Sullivan & Glanz (2005) and Sergiovanni & Starratt (2002) supervision of instruction is a co-operative undertaking where supervisors and teachers participate in dialogue aimed at improving instruction and student learning. Supervisors therefore need to provide advice, encouragement, and support to teachers (UNESCO, 2007a).

The process by which most student teachers are supervised and evaluated is inefficient, ineffective, and is poorly used (Marshall, 2005). Henry & Beasley (1982) in Thobega (2008) recognize the importance of supervision of student teachers during student teaching as this may be the only form of individualized instruction the student teachers may experience during their training. Thobega (2008) adds that this provides opportunity for the student teacher and supervisor to engage in one-on-one instruction. This is beneficial to both the student teachers and their supervisors as they learn from one another.

There is public outcry about the high failure rates of their students in both internal and external examinations in Ngeria (Udebunu (2015)). This has no doubt cast a vote of no confidence on the education sector. There are many factors that contribute to this status quo. Some of the factors may be linked to the teacher quality, their training and school practice supervision. Komakech (2017) noted very small difference between trained and untrained teachers in terms of preparation for teaching and classroom practice in Uganda. He further observed that, whereas private schools employ more untrained teachers compared to public schools, their performance is far better than the public schools in Uganda. Oyedeji, (2012) in (Udebunu, 2015) asserts that the standard of education and performance of student teachers can be improved if supervision of student teachers is properly done by university supervisors during training. Therefore, it is important to note that prior to the present study, no information was found on the influence of school practice supervision on performance among student teachers in teaching in higher institutions of learning in Uganda, there was also no information on the challenges faced by school practice supervision and student teachers in higher institutions of learning in Uganda, and relationships between school practice supervision and student teachers performance hence the justification of the study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Performance of the novice teachers graduating from Ugandan Universities has been declining over the years (Otaala, Maani & Bakaira, 2013). Recently the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) report similarly observed that many teachers in Uganda, lack competencies to teach effectively and assess learners, including setting and marking tests. The report further noted that many teachers have inadequate content and lack ability to interpret concepts (Uganda National Examinations Board, 2015, in Komakech, 2015). Universities and teacher education institutions have a stake in and contribute to the current poor quality of teachers in our schools today that has engendered an outcry in the public (Otaala, Maani & Bakaira, 2013).

Despite the heavy investment in teacher training programs by universities and teacher education institutions, the quality of teacher graduates is still wanting (Otaala, Maani & Bakaira, 2013; UNEB, 2015 in Komakech, 2015). While there are many factors that affect teacher performance, it is suspected that student training is one of the major ones. The question therefore is: how effective are the training and mentoring programs of the institutions of higher learning in Uganda? Were the teachers properly supervised and mentored during their training? This study seeks to assess the relationship between school practice supervision and performance of student teachers in higher institutions of learning in Uganda. Findings of this study will inform policy makers in terms of resource mobilization

and allocation to facilitate the school supervision programs in various districts and schools. This will in turn result in improved quality of education. Education quality controllers, such as Directorate of Education Standards (DES) will use the results of this study to enhance support supervision of teachers, improve and maintain of the quality of education in the country.

Specifically, this study has three objectives; (i) establish the relationship between school practice supervision and student teachers' performance in teaching in higher institutions of learning in Uganda; (ii) examine the influence of school practice supervision on student teachers in teaching in higher institutions of learning in Uganda; (iii) explore the challenges faced by higher institutions of learning in the supervision of student teachers during school practice.

## **Literature Review**

### **School Practice Supervision and Student Teachers' Performance**

Glickman, et al (2004) proposed that supervisors should help supervisees, realize their potentials and usefulness. The supervisor must observe the teacher's work, ask questions about why the teacher used certain teaching methods and provide information on the best teaching practices, hence enabling the teacher to improve. Therefore, supervision offers both teachers and their supervisors the opportunity to work together to improve student learning (Komakech, 2017; Aseltine, Faryniarz & Rigazio-Digilio, 2006). It is in this context that we sought to find out whether school practice supervision improves student teachers' performance in teaching in Uganda. According to Okumbe (2007) school practice supervision improves a student teacher's classroom practice and academic performance. It also provides for professional growth and development of the teacher (Figueroa, 2004). Okumbe (2007) identifies two strands of supervision as: general supervision and instructional supervision. General supervision encompasses activities that take place mainly outside the classroom, while instructional supervision entails those activities taking place inside of the classroom in order to improve teaching and learning making it more result oriented for the learners (Abu, Akinloye, & Olaoye, 2014).

Figueroa (2004) viewed supervision as a formative process that focuses upon professional development and the improvement of instruction. It is characterized by a collegial, helping relationship between administrators or teachers and the teachers in a climate of trust and mutual understanding. Figueroa (2004) further stated that supervision of instruction involves motivating the teacher to explore new instructional strategies. The teacher must be made aware of the educational goals and standards to be implemented. Hunsaker & Hunsaker (2009) assert that observer/supervisor provides due feedback and appropriate resources for the teacher to utilize. Therefore, effective supervision should result in growth and learning by the teacher and the student. By implication, supervision guides curriculum content and instructional materials selection that will facilitate both students and teachers' academic growth and development. This study therefore, examined how supervision improves the quality of teaching and learning in higher institution of learning among student teachers' in Uganda.

The relationship between school practice supervision and student teacher academic and professional performance has received much attention in supervision literature. Apart from enhancing the professional functioning of counselors, supervisors have an ethical and legal responsibility to monitor the quality of care they provide to the supervisees (Syracus, 2013).

In school settings principals and head teachers have rules and regulations that guide them in monitoring the quality and quantity of teaching and learning in their institutions. Effective supervisory relationship enables the principal to constantly monitor and receive feedback about student's performance. This requires the principals and head teachers to demonstrate effective leadership as teachers are more likely perform their roles based on how they view the school principal as a leader, and how they perceive and relate to the school environment, (Okorie, 1995 in Udebunu, 2015).

This study establishes the relationship between school practice supervision and student teachers' professional performance. According to Eya & Chukwu (2012) effective supervision of student teachers during school practice is one way in which quality assurance can be guaranteed. University supervisors should establish a rapport with their student teachers. This helps to establish a facilitative environment in which the supervisees develop confidence, trust, love and dedication to duty. To achieve this, a school practice supervisor should be adequately trained in administration or have administrative experience. This study therefore examines the relationship between the supervisor's skills and student teachers performance.

School practice supervisors are responsible for improving and maintaining teaching and learning standards of student teachers in school (Silsil, 2008). It is the responsibility of the university supervisor to guide the student teachers as they perform their duties Instructional supervision is important because it guides student teachers' on effective lesson planning and preparation of schemes of work and related classroom practices including record keeping and assessment. These activities contribute to better performance of student teachers which in turn results in improved students' performance in examinations (Silsil, 2008). This requires good leadership and supervision skills. The school/university administrators or lecturers should plan, develop and supervise effective strategies for the university. Subsequently, the responsibility of school practice supervisors is very challenging and should be differentiated from administrative duties and management tasks. Based on the discussion above the study presents the hypothesis that:

*There is a significant positive relationship between school practice supervision and student teachers' performance in higher institutions of learning in Uganda (H<sub>1</sub>).*

### **The Challenges Faced in the Supervision of Student Teachers**

Obiweluozor, Momoh, & Ogbonnaya (2013) identified shortage of inspectors/ supervisors as the major challenge faced by institutions of learning in the supervision of student teachers in Nigeria. They observe that, the number of supervisors and inspectors from the Ministry of Education is inadequate to carry out effective supervision of student teachers and schools in the country. Ogunu (2005) also expressed concern about the many unprofessional practices being carried out schools today that may have negative effect impact on our children. It is against this background that we sought to find out whether or not there are sufficient numbers of student teachers' supervisors in Uganda's universities and institutions of higher learning. Merga (2007) highlighted the absence of a specific budget for supervision and support as another critical challenge that affects the quality of supervision. Inadequate budget impedes effective running of supervisory activities, including, in-service training programs for teachers and experience sharing with other schools. Enaigbe (2009) emphasized the importance of adequate instructional materials in enhancing effective supervision. Enagbe (2009) identified supervision guides and manuals as some of the materials having big impact on supervisor's work. These tools can enhance the objectivity of supervisory process, and inform schools and teachers of the issues the supervisors focus on. This enhances the

transparency of the process (UNESCO (2007b)). This study therefore, establishes whether or not higher institutions of learning in Uganda are experiencing budgetary constraints.

Most supervisors are not given the necessary training or orientation about the new position they are overseeing to equip them with the skills of supervision of instruction. They venture into instructional supervision without fully understanding how it is done (Obiweluzor, et al., 2013). Similarly, Glickman, et al., (2004) and Holland (2004) stressed the need for supervisors to have working knowledge and skills of supervision in order for them to provide teachers with the necessary assistance, guidance, and support for improved classroom practices. This study establishes whether the supervisors in higher institutions in Uganda have the required skills and knowledge in the supervision of school practice. Lilian (2007) noted that, unless teachers perceive supervision as a process of promoting professional growth and student learning, the supervisory exercise will not have the desired effect. Onasanya (2011) categorized other challenges supervisors of instruction encounter in Nigeria. For example, unprofessional attitude toward and diminished interest in work by teachers, poor perception of the teaching profession by the public, low status of teachers as seen in the public eye, continuous changes in educational policies, political instability and lack of reliable evaluation system in Nigeria as the greatest challenges encountered by school inspectors and supervisors.

Researchers therefore, want to find out whether supervisor's attitude is a challenge among supervisors in the higher institutions of learning in Uganda. Furthermore, Akintunde, (2007) echoes that laxity of school administrators is another challenge to school supervision. Similarly, Oberleitner & Abowd, (2007) doubts whether school administrators really know what is expected of them and their limitations in administration of schools. This is inconsistent with Ogunu's (2005) findings that indicted that supervisors are engaged in routine administrative burden and therefore hardly find time to visit classrooms and observe how the teachers are teaching. De Grauwe, (2001) also contends that supervisors tend to focus on administration rather than pedagogy, because they have much power over administrative decisions. This research examines the administration situation in Uganda.

### **Methodology**

Descriptive research design was used to verify the research hypothesis. In descriptive research, the researcher describes the characteristics of an event or item being studied so as to provide a factual and systematic description as accurately as possible (Amin, 2005). Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to support the descriptive approach. The study was conducted in two universities located in the central region of Uganda. The universities are: Kyambogo University and Ndejje University. Kyambogo University is a public university while Ndejje University is private. The Universities were chosen for study because they have some of the renowned teacher education programs in the country. If there is any dissatisfaction or satisfaction with the quality of teacher graduates, the training institutions are among the first to be blamed or praised for teacher quality and ultimately the quality of education in the country.

This study sampled one hundred three (103) respondents from a population of one hundred forty (140) in the two universities. The researchers were interested in only four categories of respondents that is Faculty Deans (02), Heads of Department (02), School Practice Supervisors (15), and second/ third year students who were on their final school practice doing Bachelor of Teacher Education (20), Diploma in Education Primary (10), Diploma in Education Secondary (25), Diploma in Technical Teacher Education (10) and Bachelor of

Education (56) from the two universities. Therefore, since the sample is representative enough the result of the study can be applicable to any university in Uganda accredited by National Council for Higher Education. Purposive sampling was used to select the Faculty Deans and Head of Departments while simple random sampling was adopted in selecting School Practice Supervisors and second/ third year students on their final school practice from the two universities.

Interviews and questionnaires with both closed and open-ended items were designed and used to illuminate the various aspects of school practice supervision, student teachers' performance and challenges faced by higher institutions of learning in the supervision of student teachers during school practice in Uganda. Qualitative data obtained through interviews and open-ended questionnaire items were coded, categorized and analysed thematically in accordance with the study objectives while quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) Version 20.

### **Results and Discussion**

The analysis of data presented was based on information the respondents provided during the study in the two universities. Out of the 103 questionnaires administered 76 questionnaires returned. This represented a response rate of 73.8%. This response rate was considered excellent and representative. It conforms to Mugenda & Mugenda's (2003) response rate of 50% as adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% as good and a response rate of 70% and above as excellent. The researchers consequently considered the 76 returned questionnaires for data analysis.

### **Gender of the Respondents**

**Table 1: Showing the Gender of the Respondents**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	43	56.6
Female	33	43.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100.0</b>

43 (56.6%) of respondents were male while 33 (43.4%) were female. This shows that some universities in Uganda are not doing well in addressing the gender gap in education sector. It may also be due to inadequate empowerment of women by government since they were previously marginalized societal groups. With this in mind, women are needed in teaching because they prefer coordination more than their male counterparts.

### **The Ages of the Respondents**

The study sought to establish ages of the respondents.

**Table 2: Showing the Ages of the Respondents**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Below 25	46	60.5
Between 26-35	17	22.4
Between 36-45	05	6.6
Above 46	08	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of the respondents 46 (60.5%) were aged below 25 years, 17(22.4%) were aged between 26-35 years, 05 (6.6%) were aged between 36-45 years and 08 (10.5%) were aged above 46 years. This implies that education department is dominated by the youths who are

more likely to be more technologically advanced and inquisitive than the older staff and are able to shift from task to task. However, these youthful staff may not add much value to the learners because they may not have acquired adequate pedagogical experiences after graduation. Hence, they may have low impact on the students' academics performance. Conversely, the older staffs (older than 46 years) have extensive experience in teaching and would have greater impact on the student's performance. Nevertheless, this group is more likely to be inclined to routine work since they have been in the game for a long time and may be unenthusiastic in exploring new technology as compared to the youthful staff.

**Relationship between School Practice Supervision and Student Teachers Performance**

This study sought to establish the relationship between school practice supervision and student teachers' performance in higher institutions of learning in Uganda. The results are summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3: Correlations**

		School Practice Supervision	Student Teacher Performance
School Practice Supervision	Pearson Correlation	1	<b>.518**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<b>.000</b>
	N	76	76
Student Teacher Performance	Pearson Correlation	.518**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	76	76

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

The correlation analysis results in Table 3, show that there is a positive significant relationship between school practice supervision and student teacher performance ( $r=.518, p<0.000$ ) in higher institutions of learning in Uganda. This supports hypothesis 1 which states that “*there is a significant positive relationship between ppractice supervision and student teachers' performance in higher institutions of learning in Uganda*”. This implies that improvement in school practice supervision could lead to a significant improvement of student teacher performance.

A regression analysis was conducted to establish the cause and effect relationship between the two variables using SPSS Ver. 20. The results are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.518 <sup>a</sup>	.268	.258	.84900	.268	27.113	1	74	.000

a. **Predictors:** (Constant), School Practice Supervision

The results in Table 4 indicate good positive relationship between the variables. The Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value (0.258) indicates how much dependent variable (student teacher performance) can be explained by independent variable (school practice supervision). In this regard, school practice supervision accounts for 25.8% variance in student teacher performance which is very large while the remaining 74.2% variation is caused by other factors such as school environment, regular class attendance, quality of learners, teacher motivation toward work, emotional intelligence of the teacher, teaching experience and education qualification among



others.

Analysis of Variance was similarly performed to test whether Model 1 was significantly better at predicting student teacher performance in higher institution of learning in Uganda. The results are summarized in Table 5. The calculated F value= 27.113 is significant at 0.000 and this reflects that the equation is statistically significant.

**Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA<sup>a</sup>)**

	Model 1	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.543	1	19.543	27.113	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	53.339	74	.721		
	Total	72.882	75			

a. **Dependent Variable:** Student Teacher Performance

b. **Predictors: (Constant), School Practice Supervision**

The results in Table 6 show that the standardized Beta coefficient is more than 0.05 and tends towards the absolute value of +1 (positive correlation). This means that as school practice supervision increases, so does student teacher performance. This shows that school practice supervision influences student teacher performance in Ugandan institutions of higher learning. The alternative hypothesis is therefore upheld. The influence of school practice supervision on student teacher performance was further examined as presented below.

**Table 6: Coefficients**

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
		1	(Constant)	1.828			.421	
1	School Practice Supervision	.548	.105	<b>.518</b>	5.207	.000	.338	.757

a. **Dependent Variable:** Student Teacher Performance

### The Influence of School Practice Supervision on Student Teachers in Uganda

The respondents were asked to identify the major areas of influence of school practice supervision on student teachers in higher institutions of learning in Uganda. All the responses provided were analysed and presented in Table 7 with majority agreeing that school practice supervision improves student teachers' subject competence, builds confidence in teaching and trainees learn new teaching techniques.

**Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Influence of School Practice Supervision on Student Teachers (N=76)**

<b>Key Areas of Influence of School Practice Supervision on Student Teachers</b>	<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Improves on Teachers' Subject Competence	80.3%	1 <sup>st</sup>
Student Teachers' Build Confidence in Teaching	69.7%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Trainees Learn New Teaching Techniques	60.5%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Student Teachers Learn their weak areas	48.7%	4 <sup>th</sup>
Student Teachers' are Mentored Professionally	46.0%	5 <sup>th</sup>
Trainees gain Teaching Experience	38.1%	6 <sup>th</sup>
Improves on Students' Teachers Relationships	36.8%	7 <sup>th</sup>

The results show that school practice supervision greatly improves student teachers' subject competence. This was supported by 61 (80.3%) of the respondents. This implies that the exercise has positive impact on the teaching and content delivery of the student teachers since they are guided by their supervisors. This finding confirms Silsil's (2008) work that recognized the critical role and responsibility school practice supervisor(s) play in improving and maintaining the teaching and learning standards of student teachers in the school. In addition to improving their subject competence; student teachers also learn their weak areas. This is consistent with the study conducted by Aseltine et al., (2006) and Silsil's (2008) which showed that supervision of learning provides teachers and their supervisors opportunity to work together to improve student learning. In this regard, there is a need for student teacher(s) first to develop skills and understanding themselves before they can provide support to others. This requires the student teachers to maintain high personal and professional standards and integrity as they execute their duties and responsibilities.

The second influence of school practice supervision on student teachers is that it enables them to build self-confidence in teaching. This was supported by 53 (69.7%) of the respondents who claimed they were able to demonstrate knowledge of content and pedagogy. In addition, they demonstrated knowledge of students, selected appropriate instructional goals, designed coherent instruction, and assessed student learning effectively. One student emphasized during the interview that;

*“The exercise is very interesting it has enabled me to learn that; all students, irrespective of age, sex, family background, socio-economic status, can develop positive mathematical identities and become powerful mathematical learners.”*

This finding supports Kruskamp, (2003) who posited that clinical supervision aims at helping teachers adjust their current methods of instruction in ways that make sense to them. Therefore, teachers who really care about their students usually work hard to develop trusting classroom communities, ensure their classrooms are focused. Caring teachers also have high expectations of what their students can achieve. In such a context, students are trained to think, reason and communicate effectively. The third influence of school practice supervision on student teachers is that it enables them learn new teaching techniques. This was revealed by 46 (60.5%) of the respondents. This means that student teachers learn how to communicate effectively. Furthermore, they are able to use questioning and discussion techniques effectively to engage students in the learning process and provide feedback to students. They also can demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness. Moreover, based on the interviews, one student offering Diploma in Education, Secondary from Kyambogo University says,

*“I have learnt new techniques in teaching. In my school, teachers assign each student to be ‘Teacher for the day.’ The role of the Teacher for the day is to give student(s) opportunities teach each other and moderated by the subject teacher. The practice builds confidence to both the student and the teacher on the understanding of the concept.”*

However, some students are usually reluctant to take up the challenge of being a teacher of the day, arguing that they are not yet teachers. The benefit of this practice is that it encourages students to prepare for the lesson before class. This in the long run makes the class become a dynamic environment in which students practice and elaborate what they have already studied. Additionally, student teachers acquire skills in group analysis, brainstorming, innovation and creativity.

The data further, indicate that 38 (48.7%) of the respondents agreed that school practice supervision enables student teachers learn their weak areas as another area of influence. Although there are many issues in education that require constant attention and continued planning throughout the entire school year, student teachers, identified a number of areas in which they encountered challenges. These included: class management, assessment and evaluation of student progress, motivation of students, planning for the diverse needs of students, communicating with parents, obtaining and using resources effectively, planning and organizing instruction, and knowing one’s responsibilities as a member of the profession. Aseltine, et al., (2006), viewed supervision for learning as a process that provides teachers and their supervisors the opportunity to collaborate in improving student learning. This observation is consistent with the findings of the present study.

Mentoring is a nurturing process in which a more skilled person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional development. In Table 7, 35 (46.0%) of the respondents agreed that student teachers are mentored professionally. Student teachers had opportunity to observe effective teaching models. Otaala, et al., (2013) advised that supervisors should help the supervisees realize their possibilities and usefulness. The supervisor must observe the teacher at work, ask the teacher questions about why the teacher used certain teaching methods and provide information on the best teaching practices. When asked to explain whether and when mentorship is done at their institutions, student teachers claimed that mentoring is usually done after the mentors have understood their student teachers’ needs and challenges including their roles and responsibilities and the areas known to provide challenges to novice teachers.

The findings of this study show that 29 (38.1%) of the respondents agreed that school practice supervision enabled trainees gain teaching experience. They were engaged in planning and preparation of lessons and instructional materials, organizing and managing classroom environment and instruction itself. As part of their evaluation and certification, all the respondents do school practice at the end of the academic years. It is a requirement that a student teacher must have done a minimum of twelve weeks of supervised school practice before graduating and getting a teaching certificate. The period the student teacher spends on school practice is sufficient for one to acquire the teaching experience which will add on the working experience that most employers seek from applicants. In support of this assertion, one student teacher from Ndejje University quipped:

*“I have developed skills for teaching and thinking, administration and management as well as knowledge of self, students, community and pedagogy.”*

Finally, the findings revealed that school practice supervision also improves students’

teachers' relationships as suggested by 28 (36.8%) of the respondents. Student teachers felt that they were supported and embraced by a professional learning community. This enabled them match with a mentor who supported and provided them with constructive feedback. They were able to engage in meaningful professional reflective dialogue. This approach strengthens the relationship between the student teachers and classroom teachers, university supervisors through regular professional conversations and effective communication. This result is consistent with Okorie, (1995) in Udebunu, (2015) whose study found that supervisory relationship enables the principal to constantly monitor and receive feedback regarding student's performance.

**The Challenges faced by University Supervisors in the Supervision of Student Teachers during School Practice in Uganda**

The data presented in Table 8 were analyzed based on the percentages of the responses of the major challenges faced by higher institutions of learning in the supervision of student teachers on school practice in Uganda. It was found that there were differences between the challenges faced by the school practice supervisors and those faced by student teachers during school practice. These differences are summarized in Table 8.

**Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Challenges faced by School Practice Supervisors (N=76)**

<b>Responses on New Challenges faced by School Practice Supervisors in Uganda Universities</b>	<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Long Distances	90.8%	1 <sup>st</sup>
Inadequate Supervision Budget Allocation	77.6%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Bad Roads and Weather	73.6%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Poor Preparations of Student Teachers	69.7%	4 <sup>th</sup>
Delayed Release of Supervision funds and facilitation	59.2%	5 <sup>th</sup>
Poor Allocations of Supervisors to Students	47.4%	6 <sup>th</sup>
Tiresome and Time Consuming	35.5%	7 <sup>th</sup>

The greatest challenge faced by university supervisors is long distance during the exercise. This was confirmed by 69 (90.8%) of the respondents during the study. They (supervisors) argued that they spend much of their time travelling instead of conferencing with student teachers. Consequently, they hardly have enough time to effectively conference with and support students. The study also found that some supervisors do not reach some schools because of their remoteness and inaccessibility. They often end up calling students to the nearby accessible schools. In this regard, one student from Kyambogo University lamented:

*“The supervisors always say the transport given was allocated up to point W but not point Y and if you want to be supervised move to school X or find me in Guest house K. The respondent added that this practice must be discouraged because it puts the name of the Institution into disrepute.”*

The study also revealed inadequate supervision budget allocation as indicated by 59 (77.6%) of the respondents. It was found that school practice supervisors are not fully facilitated in terms; supervision tools, accommodation and meals, transport and air time allowances among others. According to one school practice supervisor from Kyambogo University, he says,

*“The University gives peanut to the supervisors and some student teachers also give wrong address for their schools and make the supervisor(s) to travel to wrong places*

*and spent the little money given before reaching where the student teacher is. At worst, the cost of transport, accommodations and meals keep on rising as opposed to the budget.”*

Kyambogo University supervisors in this study claimed that they are not given enough transport to and from the schools of school practice. A Lecturer from the University lamented that;

*“... you see, the university gives us very little allowances .... Less than what government stipulates”.*

When probed to reveal the government rate for a person of his status and qualification, he emphasized that;

*“... these people are cheating us. Sometimes they give us 75,000 shillings and yet Government rate per-diem for Senior Lecturers is UGX. 125,000; UGX 120,000 for Lecturers and UGX. 100,000 for Assistant Lectures. So my daughter, you can calculate the difference. It's less than half of what government stipulates. Besides they cut on the days we're supposed to be out there supervising. So we can't do much. Our hands are tied.”*

This finding supports Merga, (2007) study, which revealed that, insufficient or lack of funds curtails or impedes supervisory activities and sharing of experiences and best practices including in-service training programs for teachers. The results of this study therefore confirm that supervisors are not given enough transport and facilitation. In addition, by the time the supervisor reaches the student teacher(s)' school s/he is already frustrated and may not effectively attend to the student. Instead, some could be tempted to ask for money from students as if s/he was not facilitated by the University. This situation compromises the quality of supervision since some supervisors could attach marks to the amount of money offered by the student teacher

Bad roads and weather was also found to be one of the challenges affecting school practice supervision as agreed by 56 (73.6%) of the respondents. Many supervisors raised concerns about the nature of the roads and described many roads as being muddy, dusty, full of potholes, narrow with have poor drainage and impassable. Some schools are remotely located making their access very difficult, particularly in up country. At worst even getting transport to these schools is very difficult because many vehicles have time schedule. If one misses their schedule one has to postpone the journey or jump on a truck if there is any. These challenges were particularly highlighted in the Karamoja, Sebei, North Eastern, Kole, Oyam, Kisoro regions. This affects the supervisor's time schedule, health, and exposes them to other risks.

Poor preparations of student teachers were another challenge identified in this study. This was shared by 53 (69.7%) of the respondents. This finding concurs with Obiweluzor, et al., (2013) who assert that many supervisors in Nigeria tend to dabble into instructional supervision without understanding how to do it. Because they are not sure of the supervisory process, themselves, they rarely prepare their students for the tasks expected of them during school practice at the university. This is evidenced by poor content delivery and lack of self-confidence by the student teachers. This portrays bad image of the university to the public. Another challenge faced by school practice supervisors is delayed release of supervision funds as suggested by 45 (59.2%) of the respondents. This practice affects the supervision scheduled in that instead of supervising students twice (2) or more the supervisor(s) may end up seeing the student(s) once. Consequently, the students may not receive adequate guidance and assistance for improvement. These findings partly relate to Onasanya (2011) who asserts

that poor and unprofessional teacher attitude to work, diminished teacher interest in their work, negative public perception and low status of the teaching profession, as some of the main challenges inspectors and supervisors encounter.

The study also noted poor allocation of supervisors to students as suggested by 36 (47.4%) of the respondents. The experience and skills of the school practice supervisor impact the student teachers' performance. In this study it was discovered that some students were unhappy with the school practice supervisor's skills. For instance, a supervisor with Arts specialization is given to supervise science students. When a student asked for professional assistance about how to handle certain concepts in science, the supervisor could not give relevant and informed advice. In most cases, the supervisor asks the student to go and research yet the student has failed to get the solution. This has made students question and challenge the skills of their supervisors. Asked why this is done, one student from Ndejje University emphasized that,

*“The administration looks at only the qualification of the supervisor not the subject competence. They urged that teaching is teaching and the work of supervisor is to see whether you are relating theory and practice not solving your Mathematical problems.”*

This is consistent with Glickman, et al., (2004) study recognizes the need for supervisors to have some working knowledge and skills so as to provide the necessary guidance, and support to teachers for improved classroom practices. School practice supervision is tiresome and time consuming as suggested by 27 (35.5%) of the respondents who participated in the study. This is because the supervisor spends most of his time travelling, guiding students, assessing student teachers' performance in class, meeting the school administrator(s) among others.

**Table 9: Descriptive Statistics for Challenges faced by Student Teachers (N=76)**

<b>Responses on New Challenges faced by Student Teachers during School Practice in Uganda Universities</b>	<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Inadequate Money for Students' up-keep	97.4%	1 <sup>st</sup>
Inadequate Training Materials	84.2%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
High Work-load transferred from old teachers	76.3%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Little Coaching from Old teachers	61.9%	4 <sup>th</sup>
Poor Communication by Supervisors	59.2%	5 <sup>th</sup>
Limited Support from Lecturers	56.6%	6 <sup>th</sup>
Negative Attitude from Student Teachers	42.1%	7 <sup>th</sup>
Poor Motivation of Student Teachers	40.7%	8 <sup>th</sup>
Low Respect from Students to Student Teachers	21.0%	9 <sup>th</sup>

Insufficient funding for students' upkeep was highlighted as the greatest challenge faced by students during school practice. This was agreed by 74 (97.4%) respondents during the study. The study found that many student teachers feel the university should consolidate school practice fees to cater for their up-keep during the school practice. This could reduce the stress students go through in looking for money for settlement and upkeep. As a result, student teachers could report promptly to the work station without encountering huge financial difficulties. Since this is one of the first studies conducted in Uganda, the finding of this main concern is not supported by the literature reviewed. During the study 64 (84.2%) respondents indicated inadequate training materials as the second most challenge they faced during school practice. Many schools have insufficient instructional materials. This has hindered the

teaching and learning of science and mathematics in secondary schools. This finding is consistent with Komakech & Osuu (2014) empirical study on Secondary Science and Mathematics (SESEMAT) in Uganda. The researchers found that most secondary schools have non functional or no science (physics, biology and chemistry) laboratories, limited science text books, apparatus and reagents practical. UNESCO (2007b) recognizes the importance of instructional materials in the teaching and learning process.

The study also identified high work-load transferred from classroom teachers to student teachers as the third challenge faced by student teachers during school practice. This was revealed by 47 (76.3%) respondents. The high work load makes it difficult for student teachers to prepare lesson plans and scheme of work adequately. One student teacher urged that;

*“Many rural schools lack sufficient science teachers and they take the advantage of student teachers to cover up all classes which were not taught.”*

In such a situation the teacher is overwhelmed and has little time to prepare sufficiently. This finding relates to Komakech & Osuu (2014) who found that many schools lack sufficient science teachers as in the case of rural schools where one teacher handles two subjects (physics and mathematics) from S.1-S.4 hence when the school receive student teachers, some of the load are transferred to them as relieve. Ogunu (2005) described the practice as unprofessional and affect the teaching and learning.

The study also found that 47 (61.9%) of the respondents claimed that student teachers receive little coaching from their class (regular) teachers. Beach & Reinhartz (2000) assert that supervision involves working with teachers and other educators in a collegial, collaborative relationship to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. It promotes the career long development of teachers. Following this result, it is important to note that good teaching does not occur in a vacuum. Therefore, competent classroom teachers should guide the student teachers to have strong set of values, skills and knowledge which they will in turn transfer to their students. Poor communication by supervisors was cited by 45 (59.2%) of the respondents during the study. Many student teachers complained that that their supervisors do not call them prior to the day of supervision. Instead it is common for them to call only when they (supervisor) have failed to locate their school(s) to ask for direction to the school. In short, they take the students unaware.

Supervisors rarely inform student teachers of their supervision schedules. They tend to take students un aware when they just bump into the schools to supervise them. Because student teachers are take unaware, they may not be prepared. This affects their performance as they are more likely to panic on sight of the supervisor. Supervisors defended their inability to communicate to students claiming that some students do not have accurate telephone contacts on record. This is what one of the supervisors from Ndejje University attested to:

*“These students give wrong telephone number(s) and some change their planned schools without informing the faculty administration. In such a situation how do you get such student?”*

These concerns from both parties should not be taken lightly as they ultimately affect the quality of education. For instance, a supervisor may find student teacher unprepared. This may affect the student’s overall performance.

The study also found that students get limited support from lecturers. This was revealed by 43 (56.6%) of the respondents. Student teachers highlighted that, some of their lecturers do not guide them in preparing schemes of work and lesson plans. They also were concerned that

supervisors do not readily hold conferences with them prior to and after teaching their lessons and neither do they give them feedback on their performance. It should be noted that universities facilitate supervisors and yet they are not performing their roles as expected. Subsequently, student teachers learn to teach with limited guidance. The universities are therefore more likely graduate half-baked teachers. This could explain the current general public outcry about the quality of university graduates (Otaala, et al., 2013). This finding partly conforms to the study conducted by Oghuvbu (2001) which claimed that supervision of instruction involves checking and monitoring the implementation of curriculum and guiding those implementing it.

The study found out that student teachers have negative attitudes towards school practice and school practice supervision as suggested by 32 (42.1%) of the respondents. Students expressed bias against their supervisors because of the way they conduct themselves. They claimed that instead of guiding and inspiring them some supervisors look for faults from students and criticize their work. This has elicited fear, hate and antipathy of the whole exercise by student teachers. One student teacher from Ndejje University, commented:

*“... Some of these supervisors are not professional and it seems they were even failures. Instead of encouraging students, they are just scaring, not appreciative, criticizing, bringing administrative issues to students about their poor facilitation by the University and they want you to give money and if you fail you are given less marks.”*

This finding is consistent with Komakech & Osuu (2014) that supervisors present themselves as monsters who are interested in finding faults from the student teachers. Consequently, this evoked the attitude of fear and resentment of supervisors and the supervisory system per se among student teachers. Poor motivation of student teachers was reported by 31 (40.7%) respondents during the study. Many students reported that schools do not facilitate them. They struggle to provide everything they need by themselves. Some schools also do not provide accommodation, breakfast, teaching materials and lack recent textbooks. Student teachers also revealed that they receive limited support from old (regular) teachers. This type of working environment retards the performance of the student teachers. Student teachers need support and motivation to do their work effectively because *“Motivation is not separable from achievement,”* as suggested by Komakech and Osuu (2014).

Finally, 16 (21.0%) of the respondents pointed out low respect by students towards student-teachers; they looked at student teachers as unqualified teachers who cannot deliver. This situation is espoused in schools with A'-Level who tended to equate the student teachers as mere A'-Level leavers but not teachers hence students most times belief that student teachers cannot teach them or add value to what they learn.

## **Conclusion**

This study aimed at examining the impact of school practice supervision on performance of student teachers in higher institutions of learning in Uganda. The results indicate that school practice is an integral part of the teacher education programs both Kyambogo and Ndejje Universities. As a requirement for their graduation teacher registration and certification by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), student teachers must successfully complete a minimum of twelve weeks of supervised school practice. The universities conveniently spread these twelve weeks over a period of two years such that the first supervised school practice is done at the end of second year and the final one done at the end of year three (for a three year course). For a two-year course the first school practice is done at the end of year



one and the second and final one is done at the end of year two. Each school practice lasts for six weeks and student teachers are posted throughout the country. Each university sends the lecturers to do support supervision of the students.

The dominant and popular model of supervision adopted by the institutions of higher learning is clinical supervision. The data presented and analysed in this study also indicate that effective supervision of school practice improves student teachers' performance in teaching. Because supervisors and student teachers work together during support supervision and in a collegial atmosphere, student teachers develop self-confidence and are encouraged to do better in a non-threatening manner. This ultimately improves the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The data presented also show that supervision of school practice in the institutions of higher learning in Uganda is bedevilled with several challenges ranging from poor facilitation of both students and supervisors, lack of respect for both student teachers by lecturers and vice versa.

It is also observed that many of the challenges faced by the school practice supervisors are different from those faced by student teachers during school practice. While lecturers' challenges were dominated by insufficient facilitation, late release of funds and long distances they travel to supervise student teachers, student teachers on the other hand highlighted unsatisfactory guidance and advice from some supervisors with insufficient supervision skills and specialization in some content areas, inadequate instructional materials, much workload transferred to them by the class (regular) teachers, insufficient coaching (mentoring) by the regular teachers, poor communication with supervisors and poor student teacher motivation.

### **Recommendations**

In order to improve supervision of school practice in the institutions of higher learning and ultimately the quality of education in this country, the following recommendations should be adopted:

- In order to enhance student teachers' performance, students should be provided with adequate instructional materials on time. In addition, supervisors should be allocated based on their subject competence and specialization because some students get no or limited support from the class (regular) teachers.
- The School Practice Coordinators need to review the preparation of student teachers in terms of what is taught, when and how. Reviewing the learning outcomes of student teacher preparation is very important. Moreover, School Practice Coordinators should ensure adequate preparation of school practice supervisors and advocate for a certain level of experience and skills of supervision by supervisors.
- There should be adequate budgetary allocation by the institutions of higher learning to cater for the entire school practice process. The budgeting process should begin early enough to avoid late release of funds. We recognize that when funds are realised on time crush supervision can be avoided hence better outcomes can be realized as the supervisors would prepare adequately for their students.
- Posting of student teachers to the schools of school practice should be limited to easily accessible and reachable areas (zones). This limits the supervisors travelling long distances consequently the number of times student teachers are supervised and the time supervisors spend conferencing with student teachers will increase. Because supervisors have enough time they may not hurriedly conference with student teachers.
- Communication between student teachers and supervisors, students with their universities and among themselves and intra supervisor communication should be treated

as a matter of urgency. Supervisors should be provided with accurate and current student's contacts and vice versa for easy communication.

- In order to enhance student teachers' performance, students should be provided with adequate instructional materials on time. Furthermore, supervisors should be allocated based on their subject competence since some students reported obtaining no or limited support from the class teachers and supervisors.
- The institutions of higher learning should increase the amount of money they provide student teachers for their upkeep during school practice. This means there should be stakeholders meeting in order to revise the fees paid for the school practice by students.
- The number of student teachers allocated to each supervisor should be revised downward from the current over 15 to 10. Based on the distances travelled by the supervisors there is also need to scale down this number since supervisors are more likely to spend much time oscillating between schools. This in turn will improve on the performance of the school teacher since the supervisor will have adequate time to guide and support the students and share their experiences and concerns with the school administrators. Finally, we propose further investigation to be done on the impact of regular classroom teachers on student teachers' teaching performance.

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