

Educational leadership practices and institutional management of academic and student affairs in teacher training institutions in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

This study examined educational leadership practices and their role in the institutional management of academic and student affairs in teacher training institutions in Uganda using a qualitative phenomenological approach. The study targeted Principals of Teacher Training Institutions, Academic Registrars/Lecturers, and Coordinating Centre Tutors, from whom participants were purposively selected. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analysed thematically using narrative presentation. Findings reveal that effective management of academic and student affairs depends on participatory and transformational leadership practices that integrate strategic planning, supervision, mentorship, and coordinated support systems, but these practices are constrained by inadequate resources, weak staff commitment, policy overlaps, student indiscipline, and communication gaps. The study recommends strengthening instructional supervision, enhancing leadership and staff capacity through continuous professional development, improving resource allocation, institutionalizing participatory decision-making structures, and harmonizing partnerships and policy implementation frameworks to enhance academic quality, student welfare, and institutional accountability. The study contributes empirical insights to educational leadership, planning, and administration in resource-constrained teacher training contexts and informs policy and practice for institutional improvement in Uganda.

Keywords: Academic affairs, educational leadership, institutional management, student affairs, teacher training institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Teacher training institutions in Uganda play a central role in preparing professional teachers who contribute effectively to national development by producing competent educators required for quality education delivery (Sengendo and Eduan, 2024). The management of academic and student affairs within these institutions is therefore critical in ensuring that teacher trainees receive high-quality training, appropriate mentorship, and adequate support throughout their learning journey a function increasingly linked to leadership practices that foster clear curriculum coordination, instructional supervision, and student support systems (Tiguryera, Mugizi and Ssettumba, 2024).

Educational leaders such as principals, academic

registrars, deans, and coordinating centre tutors (CCTs) are key actors in this process because they oversee curriculum implementation, supervision of teaching, coordination of academic programmes, and management of student welfare, roles that significantly influence institutional outcomes and organizational commitment in educational settings (Sariakin et al., 2025). Their leadership practices affect not only academic performance but also discipline, student engagement, and institutional development by promoting supportive learning environments, participatory decision-making, and motivational climates aligned with broader educational goals.

Despite the significance of these roles, many teacher training institutions in Uganda continue to face numerous

management challenges that affect their ability to fulfill their core functions (Arinaitwe and Ngobi, 2025). These challenges include limited instructional resources, inadequate funding, staff shortages, and occasional low commitment levels among some educators, undermining institutional effectiveness and the implementation of critical programmes (Arinaitwe and Ngobi, 2025; Mugenyi, Wandera Otyola and Aciro Can, 2025). Additionally, institutions struggle with student-related issues such as indiscipline, insufficient counselling services, and limited accommodation, further complicating the management of student affairs in resource-constrained settings. Policy demands, particularly following recent teacher education reforms embedded in the National Teacher Policy and curriculum alignment efforts, introduce new responsibilities that institutions are often not adequately equipped to address (Mugenyi et al., 2025; Arinaitwe and Ngobi, 2025).

Understanding the lived experiences of educational leaders becomes essential for identifying gaps and improving leadership practices in teacher training institutions to achieve quality training and responsive student support systems. Historically, teacher education systems have evolved globally, shaped by political, social, and educational imperatives. In the United States, teacher preparation expanded from early colonial apprenticeship models to formal university-based programs with structured curricula and professional credentialing, reflecting broader debates about quality and accountability in teacher education (Swanson and Schwieter, 2019). Similarly, in Europe and the United Kingdom, teacher education moved toward university-linked professional degrees emphasizing pedagogy, research, and school-based practice, supported by networks such as the European Teacher Education Network that promote collaboration and professional development (Townsend, 2014; European Teacher Education Network, 1988). In Asia, institutions like Singapore's National Institute of Education exemplify institutionalized teacher training with career-long professional development pathways for teachers and school leaders (National Institute of Education, Singapore, nd).

At the regional level, post-colonial expansions and reforms in Africa led to the consolidation of small teacher training centres into larger institutions, integrating in-service and pre-service training to meet rising demand for qualified teachers (Kajubi, 1971; Ssentamu, 2014). East African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda developed university-linked teacher education programs to strengthen professional standards and leadership capacity in teacher training colleges (Kajubi, 1971). In Uganda, teacher education began under missionary and colonial authorities and expanded rapidly after independence to address teacher shortages, implement Universal Primary Education, and elevate training standards through degree-level programmes and teacher education policy reforms, placing greater managerial responsibilities on educational leaders in teacher training institutions (Uganda Ministry of

Education and Sports; UNESCO East African History of Education). These historical shifts have shaped the lived experiences of educational leaders, who must coordinate curriculum, guide institutional development, and manage academic and student affairs within complex and evolving policy and resource environments.

The study focuses on two main constructs: academic affairs management and student affairs management. Academic affairs management refers to coordinated processes governing curriculum planning, instructional supervision, assessment coordination, and quality assurance, ensuring coherent, relevant academic programmes aligned with professional and institutional goals. Curriculum planning involves designing and organizing course content and learning outcomes to meet competency-based standards. Instructional supervision supports and evaluates teaching practices to enhance learning quality. Assessment coordination organizes and standardizes evaluations to reliably measure trainee performance, while quality assurance mechanisms monitor and improve these processes to uphold institutional effectiveness (Tiguryera, Mugizi and Ssetumba, 2024; Wang, 2024; Sugiar, Sukirman and Sanusi, 2025).

Student affairs management encompasses services and systems supporting students' non-academic development, including welfare services, guidance and counselling, discipline management, co-curricular activities, and general support structures. Guidance and counselling help students navigate academic pressures, personal challenges, and career choices, contributing to retention and persistence (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, Guidance & Counselling, 2025). Co-curricular activities and discipline management foster leadership, teamwork, ethical behaviour, and community engagement, reinforcing social and personal development (Student Affairs and Higher Education Success, 2025). Effective leadership in teacher training institutions requires balancing academic and student affairs to provide enabling environments that support both learning and personal development (Student Affairs and Higher Education Success, 2025; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2021).

Teacher training institutions in Uganda operate within a multifaceted environment shaped by national education policies, financial constraints, evolving curriculum requirements, and societal expectations. While the Ministry of Education and Sports provides regulatory frameworks and supervision, many institutions face practical limitations such as inadequate infrastructure, high student enrolment, limited teaching materials, and insufficient professional development opportunities for staff. These conditions demand innovation, adaptability, and strategic decision-making from educational leaders to maintain quality in both academic programmes and student support services. Examining the experiences of these leaders provides insights into how they navigate institutional challenges to foster effective teaching, learning, and holistic student development.

Statement of the problem

Teacher training institutions in Uganda are expected to function as centres of excellence, delivering quality curricula, providing robust student support systems, and demonstrating professional leadership. Despite these expectations, many institutions face persistent challenges, including inadequate resources, limited infrastructure, funding shortfalls, high administrative workloads, inconsistent policy implementation, staff shortages, and student-related issues such as indiscipline and insufficient counselling services. While previous research has documented these challenges, there is limited empirical understanding of how educational leaders navigate these constraints in their day-to-day management of academic and student affairs. Specifically, little is known about their strategies, decision-making processes, and adaptive leadership practices in response to the pressures of curriculum delivery, student support, and institutional governance.

This gap limits evidence-based guidance for policy and professional development interventions aimed at strengthening leadership capacity in teacher training institutions. By exploring the lived experiences of educational leaders, this study provides insights into how they manage complex academic and student affairs in challenging institutional contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational leadership practices in teacher training institutions

Educational leadership practices have gained increased scholarly attention due to their influence on institutional effectiveness, teaching quality, and student outcomes. Recent studies emphasize that leadership in teacher training institutions requires a blend of transformational, instructional, and participatory approaches to respond effectively to complex academic and student-related demands (Leithwood et al., 2020; Bush, 2021). Transformational leadership, in particular, has been associated with enhanced staff motivation, professional commitment, and innovation in curriculum implementation.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, leadership practices in teacher education institutions are increasingly shaped by contextual constraints such as limited resources, policy reforms, and growing enrolments. Mugume (2024) found that leaders who adopt participatory and mentoring-oriented leadership practices improve tutor collaboration and professional growth in Ugandan teacher colleges. Similarly, Oketch and Nyeko (2023) reported that transformational leadership practices significantly enhance staff morale and institutional goal alignment in teacher education institutions.

Recent studies also highlight the role of instructional leadership in strengthening teaching and learning processes. Tiguryera, Mugizi and Ssettumba (2024)

observed that leaders who actively supervise instruction, review lesson plans, and coordinate assessments contribute to improved curriculum coherence and academic standards in Ugandan teacher training institutions. Instructional leadership enables leaders to remain connected to classroom realities, thereby fostering accountability and pedagogical improvement.

Despite these insights, much of the existing literature focuses on leadership outcomes rather than leadership processes. There is limited qualitative evidence explaining how educational leaders experience, interpret, and adapt leadership practices in managing academic and student affairs simultaneously. Additionally, few studies focus specifically on teacher training institutions in Northern Uganda, creating a contextual gap that this study addresses through a phenomenological approach.

Management of academic affairs in teacher training institutions

Academic affairs management is central to the mandate of teacher training institutions, encompassing curriculum planning, instructional supervision, assessment coordination, and quality assurance. Recent literature emphasizes that effective academic management ensures alignment between curriculum objectives, teaching practices, and assessment standards (Nsubuga and Lubega, 2021; Tiguryera et al., 2024). Strong leadership is required to coordinate these processes and maintain academic integrity.

Studies in East Africa indicate that curriculum implementation in teacher training institutions is often challenged by inadequate instructional materials, high student-teacher ratios, and limited professional development opportunities (Okello and Kyeyune, 2022). Leaders are therefore required to engage in continuous monitoring, staff support, and adaptive planning to ensure curriculum coverage and instructional quality.

Instructional supervision has been identified as a key strategy for enhancing teaching effectiveness. Leithwood et al. (2020) argue that supervision that combines monitoring with coaching and feedback leads to sustained instructional improvement. In Uganda, Nsubuga and Lubega (2021) found that supportive supervision positively influences tutor performance and adherence to curriculum standards in teacher education institutions.

However, recent studies largely employ quantitative survey designs that prioritize measurable outcomes such as examination performance. There is a notable lack of qualitative research capturing leaders' lived experiences in managing academic affairs under resource constraints, particularly in teacher training institutions. This methodological gap limits understanding of the practical realities and decision making processes involved in academic management, which the current study seeks to address.

Management of student affairs in teacher training institutions

Student affairs management plays a critical role in supporting learners' academic success, well-being, and holistic development. Recent literature emphasizes that effective student support services, including welfare provision, guidance and counselling, discipline management, and co-curricular activities, contribute to improved retention and engagement (Oketch et al., 2021; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2021).

In teacher training institutions, student affairs management is particularly important because trainees are future role models whose professional values and conduct are shaped during training. Onyango and Ayot (2020) argue that leadership practices that promote supportive and inclusive student environments enhance discipline, ethical behaviour, and academic persistence.

Recent Ugandan studies highlight persistent challenges in student affairs management, including inadequate accommodation, limited counselling services, and rising cases of student indiscipline (Ochieng et al., 2022; Mugenyi et al., 2025). These challenges place additional demands on educational leaders, who must balance institutional regulations with student-centred approaches.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of student affairs, existing studies often focus on universities rather than teacher training institutions. Moreover, student affairs are frequently examined independently of academic affairs, overlooking their interdependence. This conceptual gap underscores the need for studies that explore how leaders integrate academic and student affairs management, particularly within teacher training institutions operating in resource-limited contexts.

Leadership challenges and adaptive strategies in teacher training institutions

Educational leaders in teacher training institutions operate within challenging environments characterized by limited funding, staff shortages, policy overlaps, and increasing enrolments. Recent studies in Uganda indicate that these constraints significantly affect leaders' ability to implement academic programs and provide adequate student support services (Arinaitwe and Ngobi, 2025; Mugenyi et al., 2025).

Bush (2021) emphasizes that leadership effectiveness in such contexts depends on adaptability, innovation, and stakeholder collaboration. Leaders are required to prioritize competing demands, mobilize limited resources, and negotiate with external actors, including government agencies and community stakeholders. Adaptive leadership practices enable institutions to sustain functionality despite systemic constraints. Recent empirical studies suggest that participatory and transformational leadership approaches help mitigate

some of these challenges. Oketch and Nyeko (2023) found that involving staff in decision-making improves commitment and accountability, while Mugume (2024) reported that mentoring and coaching practices enhance staff resilience and professional growth.

However, there remains limited qualitative evidence documenting how leaders experience and respond to these challenges in their day-to-day management of academic and student affairs. Most studies identify challenges without exploring coping mechanisms and adaptive strategies from leaders' perspectives. This empirical gap justifies the current phenomenological study, which seeks to generate context-specific insights to inform leadership practice and policy in teacher training institutions in Uganda.

From the reviewed literature, the following gaps emerge: Limited qualitative and phenomenological studies on leadership experiences. Underrepresentation of teacher training institutions, particularly in Northern Uganda. Insufficient integration of academic and student affairs in leadership research. Limited documentation of adaptive leadership strategies in resource-constrained teacher education contexts.

The present study addresses these gaps by exploring the lived experiences of educational leaders managing academic and student affairs in teacher training institutions in Uganda.

METHODOLOGY

This section provides a clear rationale for the methodological choices made to explore the lived experiences of educational leaders in managing academic and student affairs in teacher training institutions in Uganda. By using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study sought to gain in-depth insights into the perceptions, practices, and challenges of Principals, Academic Registrars, and Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs).

Research philosophy

The study adopted an interpretivist research philosophy, which assumes that reality is socially constructed and context-dependent (Creswell, 2021). Interpretivism is particularly suitable for exploring leadership experiences because it allows for understanding how individuals interpret and make meaning of their roles within their institutional contexts. Educational leaders operate in dynamic environments with unique challenges and responsibilities, and their perspectives provide crucial insights into how academic and student affairs are managed. By focusing on participants' subjective experiences, the study aimed to uncover beliefs, practices, and meanings that are otherwise difficult to quantify, thereby offering a nuanced understanding of leadership in teacher training colleges.

Research approach

A qualitative approach was employed to gain rich, descriptive insights into the experiences of educational leaders, allowing the study to capture the meanings, perspectives, and interpretations that participants assign to their leadership roles in managing academic and student affairs (Nugent, Carroll and Lodge, 2023). Qualitative inquiry is particularly suitable for phenomenological studies because it emphasizes the exploration of lived experiences from participants' perspectives. This approach allowed the collection of detailed narratives capturing the complexities, challenges, and coping strategies involved in managing academic and student affairs. By focusing on depth rather than breadth, the study explored the subtleties of leadership, including interactions with staff and students, planning of academic programmes, and addressing institutional challenges.

Research design

The study used a phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of educational leaders in teacher training institutions (Patton, 2015). Phenomenology focuses on understanding how individuals perceive and experience a phenomenon, providing a framework to capture the essence of participants' experiences. This design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to gather detailed narratives about participants' responsibilities, leadership practices, challenges, and strategies in both academic and student affairs management. By centering the study on lived experiences, the phenomenological approach provided a deep understanding of how leaders interpret their roles and the meanings they attach to their everyday activities.

Study population, sample size, and sampling techniques

The study population comprised educational leaders working in teacher training institutions in Northern Uganda, including Principals of Teacher Training Institutions (PTs/NTC Heads), Academic Registrars/Lecturers (ARLs), and Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs). These leaders are directly responsible for curriculum implementation, instructional supervision, student welfare, and institutional management, making them best positioned to provide rich insights into the management of academic and student affairs (Ssentamu, 2019; Ministry of Education and Sports [MoES], 2022).

In Northern Uganda, there are approximately 12 public Primary Teachers Colleges (PTCs) and 4 licensed private PTCs, along with 5 National Teachers Colleges (NTCs) that offer pre-service teacher education (MoES, 2022; Ugandafact.com, 2023). Each institution has one

principal and at least one academic registrar or senior academic coordinator. Additionally, there are around 120 Coordinating Centres with 115 CCTs deployed in the region to supervise teacher training and coordinate outreach activities (UNESCO, 2022). Therefore, the target population for this study was estimated at approximately 262 educational leaders in Northern Uganda (PTs = 16, ARLs = 16, CCTs = 230).

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who have direct responsibility for academic and student affairs management, ensuring that the data collected reflects firsthand leadership experiences (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). The sample size was set at 45 participants, comprising 10 Principals, 15 Academic Registrars, and 20 Coordinating Centre Tutors. This represents approximately 17% of the target population, which is above the commonly cited 10% minimum threshold for studies with populations exceeding 100 participants (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The sample size was also informed by the principle of data saturation in qualitative research, where interviews continue until no new themes emerge (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2020). This ensures that the study captures comprehensive, credible, and rich data on the experiences of educational leaders in managing academic and student affairs.

Data collection method

Data were collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to describe their experiences in their own words while enabling the researcher to probe for additional details (Creswell, 2021). This method is ideal for phenomenological studies because it encourages participants to share the complexities of their roles, including the strategies they use to manage academic and student affairs, their experiences with supervision and mentorship, and the challenges they face. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed participants to elaborate on significant experiences and provided the researcher with the opportunity to explore emerging themes in real time.

Data collection tools

An interview guide with open-ended questions was used to collect data. The guide focused on participants' background information, experiences in managing academic and student affairs, leadership practices, decision-making strategies, and challenges encountered. Participant codes (PT, ARL, CCT) were assigned to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Open-ended questions were employed in the study to allow participants to freely express their thoughts, perceptions, and experiences, thereby promoting the emergence of rich, authentic narratives (Sivo, 2025). This approach is justified because it enables participants to articulate nuanced and context-specific insights that may not

emerge through closed-ended questions, making it particularly suitable for phenomenological research. By allowing flexibility in responses, open-ended questions help capture the complexity of educational leaders' experiences in managing academic and student affairs, providing data that is both descriptive and reflective of real-world practices.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data, following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process involved transcribing audio-recorded interviews verbatim, coding the data to identify meaningful units, grouping codes into broader themes, and interpreting these themes in relation to the study objectives. Thematic analysis was chosen because it allows for systematic identification of patterns and meanings across participant narratives while retaining the richness of individual experiences. Direct quotes from participants were used to support interpretations and enhance the credibility of findings.

Ethical considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed to protect participants' rights and ensure research integrity. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured of voluntary participation with the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of participant codes (PT, ARL, CCT), and interviews were conducted in private, secure settings to ensure privacy. Data were used solely for research purposes, and findings were reported accurately and honestly (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2001). Ethical adherence ensured that participants felt safe sharing their experiences and enhanced the trustworthiness of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Experiences of educational leaders in managing academic affairs

Educational leaders reported that effective curriculum delivery requires continuous oversight, engagement with staff, and strategic problem-solving. Principals noted that frequent classroom monitoring allowed them to detect gaps in teaching early: *"Working with tutors to ensure effective curriculum implementation is demanding...monitoring classroom instruction regularly brings me closer to students"* (PT, 23/10/2025). ARLs emphasized systematic planning and timetabling as critical for ensuring that institutional goals are met.

These experiences reflect the broader challenges of educational leadership in resource-constrained contexts, where leaders must balance limited human

and material resources with the need to maintain high instructional standards. Similar studies in East Africa indicate that leadership effectiveness in teacher training institutions is closely tied to the ability to coordinate academic operations while addressing contextual limitations (Okello and Kyeyune, 2022; Nsubuga and Lubega, 2021). Leaders' proactive engagement in curriculum supervision not only supports academic quality but also signals the importance of adherence to professional standards.

Leadership in academic affairs is inherently relational, involving negotiation, mentoring, and trust-building between leaders and tutors. Transformational and instructional leadership frameworks emphasize that leaders must inspire, support, and model best practices while maintaining accountability (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2020). In the Ugandan context, where teacher training institutions often operate with high enrolments and limited resources, this relational leadership approach is crucial for sustaining teaching quality and motivating staff.

Strategies for enhancing teaching and learning

Leaders highlighted lesson observations, curriculum audits, and workshops as key strategies to enhance teaching quality. CCTs emphasized ongoing support and refresher trainings: *"I offer refresher trainings and support supervision to improve teachers' performance"* (CCT, 23/10/2025).

The emphasis on structured professional development demonstrates that leaders recognize the importance of continuous capacity building in improving teaching practices. Research indicates that teacher performance improves when supervision is coupled with coaching, feedback, and participatory learning opportunities (Leithwood et al., 2020; Nsubuga and Lubega, 2021). These strategies encourage tutors to adopt reflective practices, enhancing the overall learning environment for students.

This approach aligns with global best practices, where transformational leadership in education emphasizes intellectual stimulation and staff empowerment (Bass and Riggio, 2006). In resource-limited contexts, such as Northern Uganda, these strategies improve instructional quality and foster a sense of professional ownership among tutors, mitigating challenges associated with low motivation or inconsistent performance.

Managing student affairs: Welfare, discipline and engagement

Leaders described student welfare and discipline as interdependent and critical for holistic development. An ARL stated: *"Students are unique; satisfying their demands fully is very tricky"* (ARL, 20/10/2025). PTs and CCTs noted gaps in accommodation, health, and feeding, emphasizing the challenge of supporting

students with limited institutional resources.

These findings reinforce that student affairs management extends beyond administrative oversight to include socio-emotional and welfare support, aligning with Astin's (1993) student development theory. By addressing welfare needs, leaders create environments where students can engage academically, indirectly improving learning outcomes and retention. Participatory strategies in grievance management promote trust and accountability between students and staff (Ochieng et al., 2022).

Student affairs leadership requires strategic planning and responsiveness. Leaders must anticipate student needs, manage expectations, and negotiate institutional constraints. Regional research emphasizes that effective student affairs management involves balancing institutional priorities with student-centered approaches (Onyango and Ayot, 2020; Oketch et al., 2021). Leaders' proactive involvement in welfare and discipline reflects an integrated understanding of students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

Challenges in leadership and management

Leaders reported challenges such as resource constraints, policy overlaps, staff shortages, and student indiscipline. One CCT noted: *"Some students have high expectations but resources and staff are limited, which makes it difficult to respond adequately"* (CCT, 23/10/2025).

These challenges demonstrate that leadership effectiveness is influenced by systemic and environmental factors. Bush and Glover (2014) and Oketch et al. (2021) highlight that leaders in resource-constrained contexts must develop adaptive strategies, including prioritization, innovation, and stakeholder negotiation, to maintain institutional performance. Overlapping programs, political interference, and communication delays underscore the importance of strategic planning and stakeholder coordination.

Leadership practices and adaptive strategies

Leaders utilized participatory, transformational, contingency, and instructional leadership approaches. PTs emphasized participatory decision-making, ARLs applied contingency leadership in response to emergent issues, and CCTs focused on mentoring and coaching.

Effective leadership is contextually adaptive, reflecting both situational and transformational leadership principles (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Leaders' ability to tailor strategies to institutional realities such as limited resources, high enrolments, and diverse student needs enhances staff performance and student outcomes. This adaptive leadership approach is crucial in Northern Uganda, where constraints require innovation and flexibility.

Leaders' reflective practices, gained through

experience, further strengthened effectiveness. ARLs highlighted collaborative planning, while PTs emphasized student welfare, demonstrating learning from practice to improve institutional processes (Leithwood et al., 2020). Monitoring and evaluation systems, including assessment audits, lesson plan reviews, and structured reporting, maintained accountability and institutional performance (Musiime and Orodho, 2021). Leadership effectiveness emerges from both strategic oversight and experiential learning.

Integration of academic and student affairs

Participants emphasized that academic and student affairs are mutually reinforcing. A CCT explained: *"Providing support rather than punishment creates a good learning environment"* (CCT, 23/10/2025). Leaders noted that academic performance suffers when student welfare is neglected, and vice versa.

Holistic leadership, integrating academic oversight with student support, is essential. Astin's (1993) framework suggests that student engagement, welfare, and support services directly influence learning outcomes. Participatory and transformational leadership practices help bridge academic and welfare management, fostering accountability and shared ownership of outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020; Ochieng et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

Educational leaders in teacher training institutions in Northern Uganda effectively manage academic and student affairs by employing strategies aligned with the study objectives: curriculum oversight, instructional supervision, and quality assurance for academic affairs; and student welfare, discipline management, and co-curricular engagement for student affairs. Their experiences reveal that effective leadership requires strategic planning, participatory decision-making, mentorship, and adaptive problem-solving to overcome challenges such as limited resources, high student enrolments, and staff shortages. By integrating academic management with student support, leaders enhance teaching quality, promote holistic student development, and strengthen institutional accountability, demonstrating that leadership practices are central to achieving both educational and developmental objectives of teacher training institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that teacher training institutions in Northern Uganda strengthen academic supervision and curriculum management to enhance teaching and learning, improve student welfare, counseling, and co-curricular programs to support holistic student

development, promote participatory decision-making involving tutors and students to foster engagement, ownership, and accountability, and establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems while aligning policies and resources with institutional needs to optimize management of both academic and student affairs and improve overall institutional effectiveness.

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