PRACTICES OF MANAGING STUDENTS' SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN MAKERERE UNIVERSITY (UGANDA)

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PRACTICES OF MANAGING STUDENTS' SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN MAKERERE UNIVERSITY (UGANDA)

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Abstract

Purpose: Prompted by persistent complaints from different stakeholders in regard to the problem of managing diversity of student socio-economic status in Makerere University, the study set out to examine the factors that enable or disable the students from Low Socio-Economic Status (LSES) backgrounds from achieving their educational goals at Makerere University (Uganda).

Methodology: The study drew on social justice literature to stimulate debate on why and how such LSES students can be supported to achieve their educational goals. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design, which was approached from a mixed research paradigm where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from 410 Makerere University students. Using closed-ended questionnaires and focused interview guides

Findings: The study discovered that management practices like financial and material resources mobilization for the underprivileged were absent. It was therefore concluded that practices on socio-economic diversity reflected absence of recognitive and distributive equity.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study's major contribution lies in the provision of knowledge on up-to-date policies and practices of managing student SES diversity to enable students of a LSES background to achieve their educational goals.

Key words: *University management, socio-economic status (SES), supportive practices, and educational goals.*
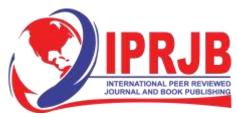
1.0 INTRODUCTION

One's Socio-Economic Status (SES) background is a key factor in one's entire life. It does not only affect one's physical and emotional growth, but also one's educational achievements (APA, 2018). Yet research available studies on university students' academic achievement largely focuses on the problem of pedagogy (ACU, 2017; Devlin et al., 2017), leaving the critical issue of students' SES unattended to. For example, what university management practices are in place to enable students of different socio-economic backgrounds to realize their educational goals? The current study was thought handy in addressing such concerns.

Historically, studies relating to socio-economic status started in the USA by Coleman (1966) who later discovered that equality of opportunity, which was traditionally taken to mean equality of school's resources such as the number and quality of text books. This would bridge racial imbalance in educational achievement. It is however, identified that apart from reading materials, students are faced with other challenges where they need to be supported in order to thrive in their educational journey (Gale, 2009). Longitudinal studies for 75 years concerning SES by Jensen (2009) affirm that most teachers have traditionally succeeded in reaching students who come from middle and upper income homes. However, they ignored the students from LSES who normally struggle with studies due to lack of finances and school enablers. Practical study of LSES by Bexley et al. (2013) found out that high school dropout rate among 16-24 old was highest in LSES families (11.6%) as compared to high income families (2.8%) (APA, 2015) (United States of America National Center for Education Statistics (2014). Studies by Wiggins (2012), OECD (2018) point out that the link between a child's SES and school achievement is a reality. Its identified that poorer families, are less likely to support their children in terms of schooling related enablers; habits, vocabulary, thinking and experience Wiggins, (2012). These therefore determine the child's socio-psychological environment in school. Okioga (2013) carried out a study in Kisii University in Kenya (East Africa) suggested the need for special consideration of students from low income backgrounds to enable them get prepared for adult life. Nshemerirwe (2016) carried out a study about socio-economic status of students but it related on selection of students to university entry in Uganda. These studies left a conceptual and contextual gap relating to practices of managing diversity of socio-economic status and achievement of educational goals in Makerere University. We intended to fill this gap through this study.

Conceptually, SES is defined in terms of different amounts of capital namely; economic capital, social capital and cultural capital of individuals among the different economic classes (Dillion, 2014). It is also defined in terms of a family's combined index of income, education and occupation, prestige and the number of family related adults and dependent child in the household (Rank, 2000). In this study, SES was based on economic capital that is measured by money, property ownership and investments. This is because, money is used as a medium of exchange to pay for the desired goods and services including education. SES is categorised into three major strata to describe where a family or an individual may fall. These Low socioeconomic status (LSES), Middle Socioeconomic Status (MSES) and High socio economic (HSES). Low socioeconomic status is associated with households with little income or wealth to
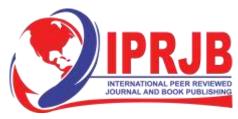
buffer against the negative impact of an adverse health shock among adult household members and other related needs (Leonard et al., 2016). MSES is viewed as a component of three categories of possession namely; cash, economic resources especially income wealth, freedom from poverty, credentials; educational achievements and qualifications, occupational status and culture; which entails attitudes, mindset, behaviour and self-definitions (Clegg et al., 2009). Contrary, HSES is associated with high levels of education such as masters and PhD degrees which are said to cause better economic and psychological outcomes such as more income, more control and greater social support and networking. (APA, 2018). This study focused on SES background because it ascertains the access to home safe-living, academic resources required to stimulate student's learning, financial resources and other school enabler resources that help the students to thrive in the university (Bexley et al., 2013).

It is viewed that psychological support is organised for students who struggle with many problems during their time at the university to help them achieve their academic goals (Mitchell, 2018). Supportive practices go beyond financial aid to the SES students, and without which, admitting them to university adds no value (Tinto, 2015). A supportive practice concerns the strategies that promote educational equality (Burkle: 2019). Morally, supportive practices aim at addressing the discrepancies that LSES students face on their education journey as they strive to accomplish educational goals (Mann, 2014; OCED, 2008; Trust. 2018). Support helps to remove the limiting barriers towards achievement of educational goals. Moreover, it is observed that attracting students without supporting them to complete their programme and getting a good class degree is futile (Gale, 2009; Tinto; 2015).

Simon Fraser University (SFU) (2015) defines educational goals as statements that describe the competences and attributes that students should possess after completion of their education studies which operate within the domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Pearson (2016) defines educational goals as building good study habits, cooperation, and expertise in the field, social emotional processing, moral uprightness, good citizenship, critical thinking, self-assessment and regulatory learning behaviours. By this study, educational goals are defined as moral uprightness, positive thinking, resilience, responsive citizenship, passing university examinations, and completion of studies in the set timeframe.

Theoretically, this study was based on the Moral-ethical Perspective Theory specifically social justice postulated by Rawls (1971). This theory assumes that humans are inherently communicative, capable of reasoning and possess a desire to understand others and the world around them. Rawls bases this assumption on the principles of social justice namely; equality and equity (Nelson et al., 2012). While equality means assigning basic needs and resources to all people in the same way, equity means taking into account, the differences of individuals and responding to the needs of the least disadvantaged which is achieved through the Distributive Principle (i.e. Principle of Difference). Rawls contends that socio-economic inequalities are contained through compensating benefits for everyone especially the least advantaged.

He observes that at birth each individual is allotted fairness. However, inescapable differences such as environment, genes, gender, and material inheritances soon take over. Rawls reasons that we are varied by nature and by fortune and that through social evaluations, we have the responsibility to rectify inescapable differences through supportive actions. These actions could
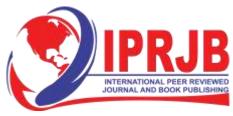
be practically visible through resource mobilisation and distribution (Feagin, 2004; Gale, 2000). He contends that although there are set principles, the world is viewed as holding different opinions, rights and values because of human diversity. He therefore calls upon considerations for such diversity especially to the least disadvantaged. These considerations are meant to be reflected in human practices so that order and harmony are created in society, which to him are the greatest goals for humanity. He observes that practices, which do not reflect equity, should be revisited to remove the barriers that limit some section of members in society from getting an equal opportunity to success. In this study, we focus on equity as the moral principle practice that would be drawn upon by the managers as they handle the students' diversity of SES in Makerere University so that each of them can achieve their educational goals. This theory has a weakness as it is difficult to have practices in place that favour each individual or groups of individuals. However, to us it holds water to this study because it puts into account the support of the LSES students. If adopted, Makerere would maintain equality and promote equity rather than the only existing equality. The reason is, only equality practices are limiting LSES students from thriving through the educational journey. Equity will promote the practices that enable students of LSES among other categories to accomplish their educational goals.

Contextually, a study on the background of Makerere University revealed that students from relatively high income group and relatively more educated families, dominated the intake in the 1970s and 1980s much as education was fully funded by government (Sicherman, 2008). Some parents could also take their children to study abroad (Mayanja, 2001). However, these were families which could afford such alternatives. Later when the need to widen success came on board in the late 1980s, it was declared that any student who scored the minimum requirement for university entry could secure an admission to Makerere University (Sicherman, 2008). Besides, Makerere succumbed to the government view embracing the World Bank's "then held conviction that higher education was more of a private than a public good" (Baligidde, 2019).

By this outlook, Makerere embraced the liberalisation policy which was spelt out in the government white paper (Government of Uganda, 1992). By this fact, Makerere ventured into opening doors to privately sponsored students alongside the government sponsored students from all social classes across the country. However, the scheme started with only 5% private students. This percentage targeted parents who used to send their children abroad for higher education. In the first round, the University admitted two thousand students in the country on government sponsorship. The second round admission for private students was for those who scored the minimum entry requirement of two principal passes. The fees charged were also lower to make university education affordable for more students and also enable them accomplish their academic studies (Mayanja, 2001). Initially, most students who joined Makerere University were from high income families, the practice of liberalization of education attracted students on board from all classes of society; high socio-economic status, middle socio-economic status, and LSES (Natifu, 2010). All these joined university to benefit from the policy of liberalization.

Observing the students' various struggles, in 2016 the government of Uganda introduced the practice of enabling more students by granting loans to privately sponsored science subjects students (Baligidde. 2019), who could not afford self-sponsorship at the university. This was because higher, education is no longer considered as a luxury (Nshemereirwe, 2016). However, this scheme ignored the plight of students of humanities some of whom find a challenge in

raising their university dues (Wagubi, 2019). What is happening now is that students from LSES backgrounds find a big challenge in accomplishing their educational goals to the extent that over 1000 fail their examinations when there is fees increment by the university (Makerere University Quality Assurance, 2019). This study observed that 70.9% families struggled to meet financial needs, 25% expressed the uncertainty of completing their education, 58.6% faced accommodation challenges, 34.2% affected by lack of access to appropriate meals and 35.5% were constrained by reading materials. Meaning that liberalisation has not been matched with the modalities that enable all students specifically those from LSES to accomplish their academic goals. It is hoped that the existing management practices can be revisited to address the plight of LSES students to enable them accomplish their educational goals.

Problem statement

Makerere University positively responded to the call for liberalisation of higher education in Uganda in order to widen access (Government of Uganda, 1992), by admitting students of diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, the management practices that accommodate students' diversity of SES are expected to be in place to enable all students including LSES to accomplish their educational goals. However, such management practices seem to be missing in the university.

This observation is based on the various reports on the practice of fees increment and unfair mode of payments that limit some students from accomplishing their academic goals due to their SES (Kafeero, 2019; Kasozi, 2016; Natifu; 2010, Sessanga; 2004; Wagubi; 2019; Directorate of Quality Assurance Muk, 2019). These reports indicate poor management of students' diversity of SES in Makerere University. This pauses a challenge on how students of LSES backgrounds cope up with the practices of fees increment alongside their personal effects in order to accomplish their educational goals. This prompted a scholarly inquiry into the existing practices of managing students of SES in Makerere University with focus on obligation for support and types of the practices that should be extended to the LSES students to enable them accomplish their educational goals.
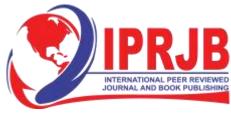
1.1.2 Objectives

i) To examine obligation by the university management to extend supportive practices to LSES students.
ii) To investigate the supportive management practices that need to be extended to the LSES students.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Practices of managing students of diverse socio-economic status

2.1.1 Moral obligation to support LSES students

It is argued that opening doors for all to access education without support is useless resources are mobilised for LSSE students to enable them get prepared for adult life (Gale; 2009; Tinto; 2008). It is partly for this reason that Makerere University may devise supportive practices that can enable students from LSES backgrounds so that they can achieve their educational goals and that they can become useful citizens and give back to society (Hurtado et al, 2012; Warger &
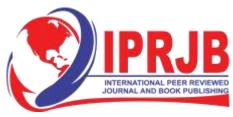
Dobin; 2009).SES of the parents affects so much the achievement of educational goals of their children (Devlin & Mckay, 2016). It is observed that students whose parents are of LSES often lack school enabling requirements (UOW, 2019).

If not supported they will never realise the educational goals. Contrary, Students from high socio-economic backgrounds are well exposed to school requirements like scholastic materials, which among other things aid their academic achievement (University of Minnesota, 2007). Low income and little education are strong predictors of a range of physical and mental health problems due to environmental conditions. We think that management practices need to consider the LSES of students in universities as this may help to them not to suffer from isolation inadequate funding, and exposure to poor health, poor nutrition, and experience stress as earlier observed by (Agasisti, Soncin, & Valenti, 2016; Jensen, 2009). It has been identified that the poorer the family, the less likely the child is ready in terms of schooling related enablers; habits, vocabulary, thinking and experience. These therefore determine the child's socio-psychological environment and influence their educational achievement (Wiggins, 2012).

It's assessed that managing students' diversity widens participation and success in higher education but which is achieved through supportive practices (Gale, 2009; Moxley, 2001). These entail effective integration, engagement and retention which enables accomplishment of the students' educational goals (Devlin, et al. 2012; Gale, 2009). Researchers further point out that to mark success in education, it is better to recognize the valuable and unique contribution that students from LSES backgrounds bring to higher education. These contributions entail; knowledge in class, online discussions, growth of the institution among others (Devlin, Smith & McKay, 2017). We observe that this necessitates an approach that supports such students to achieve their educational goals.

It has been discovered that prospective students from LSES backgrounds are at the high risk of accruing student loan debt burdens that exceed the national average as compared to their counterparts from HSES. However, institutional conditions contribute more to SES differences in learning rates than family characteristics do (Houle, 2014). Nevertheless, the success rate of low-income students in science, technology, and engineering and mathematics disciplines is much lower than that of students who don't come from underrepresented backgrounds (Doerschuk, et al., 2016). This was corroborated by the observations by OECD (2016) who used data results from PISA (2015) to conclude that while many disadvantaged students succeed at school, SES status is associated with significant differences in performance in most countries. HSES students tend to outscore their LSES counterparts by large margins. Although the relationship varies from strong to moderate, across the participating countries, the relationship exist. However, such studies have not been carried in Makerere University. Unfortunately, a LSES class of students face barriers in their educational journey which make some of them to underperform academically; suggesting that in some circumstances remedial work is inevitable (Howard, 2015; Rogers, 2016). Social justice theory observes that society should not disadvantage others on the basis of the family to which one was born (Feagin, 2004; Rawls, 1971).

Educationists contend that after admitting students, there is need for special attention that considers characteristics of students from LSES backgrounds. This consideration enables them

get prepared for adult life (Hurtado et al; 2012; Okioga; 2013) It is partly for this reason that education institutions devise practices of supporting students from LSES backgrounds so that they can achieve their educational goals so that they can become useful citizens.

Moreover, it is viewed that the practices need to consider social historical events, the ecosystem of the local community, or external context shared by individuals which together can shape the institutional practices context (Hurtado et al; 2012). They point out that achieving higher education's role´ is basically to advance both individuals and social mobility or greater social equity (Calty & Skewes-cox; 2012; Dillion, 2014).Meaning that the practices of supporting LSES are based on the view that the role of education is to bridge social inequality. We observe that only supportive practices can bury out disadvantaged students in their academic journey. In addition, those students experience various challenges which include; financial pressure, cost of study materials, travel to the university, and living expenses. It is upon this basis that such students need a visible hand that can enable the accomplishment of their educational goals.

2.1.2 Supportive practices for LSES students

Supportive practices for managing diversity of LSES are one of the avenues tailed towards promoting positive social transformation as well as the means of responding to opportunities and challenges in the internal and external environments of an organization (Pitts et al., 2010; Smart & Pav, 2012). It is identified that management practices for LSES in universities need to give these students reflective support for both psychological and motivational encouragement to enable them achieve educational goals especially in relation to the societal benefits to be reaped after education (Gale, 2000; Hurtado et al; 2012). By moral perspective of social justice education, as expounded by the principles of equity and equality advocates for the societal concessions of the general economic good of which is education. Whereby equity (1.e supportive practices) enables equality of all individuals (OCED, 2018). It is further observed that may be in terms of besides psychological and emotional encouragement, management supportive practices may be financial or kind assistance (Barnett, 2011).

These views present a contextual gap whereby our study took place in a different geographical region with a scanty history that considers the support of needy students in relation to accomplishing their educational goals. Studies on the practices of supporting LSES students found out that opportunities for university participation and achievement of academic goals is through distribution (i.e. Difference principle) that helps the students to obtain school enabling needs such as tuition, study materials, meals and accommodation among others (Bexley et al., 2013). These supportive practices minimize oppression and fulfills the vision of 'widening access for students of LSES to achieve their educational goals. Practices for supporting LSES students entail provision of accessible and practical resources by using students' own voices, identifying practices that can help students from diverse backgrounds to succeed in higher education (Benson et al, 2013; Moxley, 2001).

Scholars observe that mobilization and utilization of resources by public learning institutions is a gesture of a moral fair practice in nature that renders support where due (Flannery, 2020; Kersen, 2015). This view encourages that resources are mobilized and utilized to promote equity in such institutions (Crossman, 2019). This can help in meeting some education needs of the disadvantaged students (Phumbwe, 2016; Seltzer, 2014).

It is our argument that if Makerere University adopts the management practice of LSES students, such students will be buried out of the current limitations to accomplishing their educational goals.

2.1.3 Summary

From the above literature, it is apparent that various studies in the USA universities have been carried out regarding students of different socio-economic status and how these enable students to pursue their academic studies. Other studies have been carried out still in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and South African universities regarding socio-economic status of the students and how these enabled the pursuit of academic goals. Contextual gap, no particular studies have been done on the practices of managing of students' diversity of socio-economic status nor supportive practices for LSES based on the Ugandan context. This contextual gap justified the need to carry out this study. The assumption is that such practices promote equity and create equality among the diversity of students of LSES enable all students regardless of their background accomplish their educational goals.
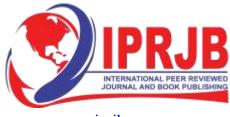
3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design that included both qualitative and quantitative techniques. It was conducted in Makerere University. The study population comprised of 410 students; as in Table 1.

Table 1: Table 1: Study Population

Representation	Parent population	Method	Sampling technique	Sample
Makerere University [MUK]	40,000	Survey	Stratified Random	400
Total	**40,000**			

Source: MUK: Office of the Academic registrar; Makerere University (2016)

The total population was 410 respondents, selected using Krejcie and Morgan (1970)'s table. Sampling techniques used were stratified random and purposive sampling. Documentary review, focus group discussions and closed-ended questionnaires were the instruments. The questionnaires were developed by the researchers themselves, basing on queries discovered in literature reviewed.

Validity and reliability were respectively realized using Content Validity Index and Cronbach Co-efficient Alpha, which were found to be appropriate at 0.86.6 and 0.81, respectively. Quantitative data (from questionnaires) was analysed using descriptive statistics. We adopted two methods of analysis namely; Likert Scale and measures of central tendency. Likert Scale is a broadly used method for scaling responses in survey studies. The intention of Likert scale was to ask the respondents to indicate how far they agreed with the existing managing practices, from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. However, to increase the reliability of the data, the researchers paralleled Likert scale data with the measures of central tendency. In applying the measure of central tendency, the researchers focused specifically on the mean to estimate the Centre of distribution of values (i.e. perceived responses) The findings from this objective, that had been collected through the focus group discussions, were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively which were further interpreted in relation to the Moral Ethical Perspective Theory

specifically, social justice. Data was analyzed using Statistical package for Social Sciences. It was presented in tabular and Textual form.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings according to the study objectives namely; obligation to support and the practices to be extended in support

4.1 Obligation to support LSES students:

The researchers inquired whether students could be allowed to sit for their examinations if they failed to clear their dues. This question was based on the view that those from low socio-economic backgrounds could sometimes fail to raise their fees in time due to financial hardship. This information is summarized in Table 2

Table 2 Differentiated support to individual students

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.
Valid	Strongly disagree	85	22.5	2.11	1.009
	Disagree	234	61.1		
	Undecided	18	4.7		
	Agree	45	11.7		
	Total	**383**	**100.0**		

Table 2 reveals that the majority of the respondents 319 (83.6%) disagreed on any favour of individual considerations. While 18 (4.7%) and 45 (11.7%) who were the minority agreed. This means that the existing practice is bent to handle students in a uniform way hence poor managerial practices of handling socio-economic status diversity and therefore absence of equity to the majority. This kind of arrangement disagrees with Gutterres (2019) who posited that supporting education needs of children form LES was inevitable due to low levels per capita income. The existing practices were only for equal treatment of all students regardless of the differences in their socio-economic statuses. The findings agrees with what Tibarimbasa (2010) stated, that the existing practices designed to manage students in Ugandan universities are traditional. The findings also agree with what Natifu (2010) and Wagubi (2019) who observed that the practice of upfront fees and continuous fees increment is inconsiderate of the state of students from low and middle socio-economic backgrounds. This also agrees with the report from the Quality Assurance office which stated that due to continuous fees increment more a thousand (1000) students fail exams. Therefore, LSES students are finding a road in pursuing their educational goals.

Writing university examinations is of central importance because it helps test students' knowledge, it helps students to concentrate on their studies and learn, it helps to find out the real skills, talents and knowledge of the students' achievement (Kamran, 2019). However, students who fail to meet their dues in time are denied to sit for the exams. This is summarized in Table 3

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Table 3 permission to sit for exams

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.
Valid	Strongly disagree	215	56.1	1.48	0.613
	Disagree	158	41.3		
	Undecided	3	.8		
	Agree	7	1.8		
	Total	**383**	**100.0**		

Table 3 revealed that the majority 373 (97.4%) disagreed while the minority 7 (1.8%) agreed. This implies that there is absence of equity management practices in the way students are accomplishing academic studies especially those who hail from low socio-economic backgrounds who might not be having appropriate avenues for raising their tuition. This disagrees (Burkle, 2019) who observed that it is vital to have in place the practices of helping out students from all walks of life to accomplish their education studies. All that existed was that students, regardless of their socio-economic status, must have completed the university dues in order to sit for the final exams. This practice agrees with what Natifu (2010), Ssesanga (2004) assessed that with such a practice, it is the disadvantaged students of LSES who may not be able to accomplish their academic goals. Listening and responding to the challenges of individuals is one of the practices of equity. The university managers and administrators were indifferent to students' challenges. For instance, Table 4 revealed that the majority 363 (98.7%) disagreed on the practices of being listened to during financial difficulties. The psychological environment for such students is unfavorable for them to accomplish their educational goals.
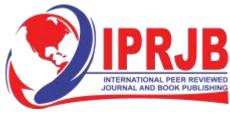
Another factor that obligates supportive practices is due to inability of LSES students' families to sponsor their university education. Therefore, equitable practices help to substitute some kind of inability LSES students since education is a social good. Responses are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 Ability of the family to sponsor university education

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.
Valid	Strongly disagree	180	46.9	2.14	1.380
	Disagree	92	24.0		
	Undecided	23	6.0		
	Agree	52	13.5		
	Strongly agree	36	9.6		
	Total	**383**	**100.0**		

Table 4 reveals that the majority 272 (70.9%) disagreed on the ability of their families to sponsor them while the minority 88 (23.1%) agreed on the full ability of their families to sponsor them through education process. This implies that much as the early data indicated that most parents are belong to the middle socio-economic status, their incomes were still very low to ably sponsor their children's higher education fully. This suggests need for equitable practices to a larger extent. The statistical value of the mean was 2.14 while its Std Dev. was 1.380 since there is closeness in the statistical values, it means that the distribution of the values is normal and therefore gives confidence to in the statistical conclusions that the data was reliable.

Students who hail from LSES backgrounds. Such students fail to meet the school enablers and might drop out of university. Dropping out of the education system would be an indication of

absence of equity where there is no support for individuals who need those resources that can enable them meet their education needs to achieve their education goals. The responses are shown in Table 5

Table 5 Certainty of diversity students to complete university education

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	1.3	1.68	0.701
	Disagree	87	22.7		
	Undecided	4	1.0		
	Agree	276	72.1		
	Strongly agree	11	2.9		
	Total	**383**	**100.0**		

Table 5 reveals that the majority 287 (75%) were certain of accomplishing their university studies while 96 (25%) the minority students indicated uncertainty of completing their university studies. This implies that since there are no stipulated university equitable practices in place for such individual cases, affected students live in constant fear of the failure to achieve their educational goals. This is confirmed by mean of 1.68 and Std. Dev. of 0.701. This means that there is good distribution of the samples since there is closeness in the statistical values and indicates that and the theory being tested is in agreement with the data set. Through focus group discussions concerning certainty of accomplishment, a participant said;

> *Yes I know that this struggle is a hard one, and some of my course mates gave up because of financial issues, compulsory typing of coursework, strict deadlines, retakes and many other challenges. As for me, I know that one day I will finish like others did. So I am determined.*
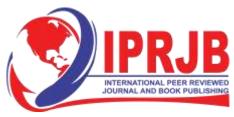
The uncertainty of some students to accomplish their academic studies is in line with Natifu (2010) who pointed out that some students are likely to drop out of the school system due to their inability to meet the university dues, this implies absence of redistributive equity.

4.2 The practices to be extended in supporting LSES

To ascertain the existence of equity management practices further, we also examined such practices at the collegial level. The first item on the questionnaire inquired whether there existed a practice of mobilizing financial resources for the financially disadvantaged students at colleges. Such finances could assist in the acquisition of school enablers especially tuition, accommodation, meals and transport among others particularly for students of low socio-economic status. This information is summarized in Table 6

Table 6: financial resources mobilization for the LSES students

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.
Valid	Strongly disagree	45	9.1	1.95	0.604
	Disagree	309	79.1		
	Undecided	25	4.4		
	Agree	2	6.8		
	Strongly agree	2	0.5		
	Total	**383**	**100.0**		

Table 6 reveals that the majority of the respondents 354 (92.4%) disagreed that the practice of financial mobilization existed while 4 (0.1%) agreed. This means that in most colleges of the university, there is absence of the practices of mobilising financial resources for the financially disadvantaged students that can enable the accomplishment of educational goals. Since the Mean is 1.95 responses are close to the Std. Dev. is 0.604, it indicates that the values of the statistical data provided are close to the Mean since the Std Dev. is small and therefore the distribution is normal. So the data set were more balanced and consistent with the theory. In the focus group discussions, one of the participants said;

> *There is no stipulated practice that when a student has a financial challenge, he/she is helped out or one can explain to the university and he/she is listened to. Such a thing may happen but it is rare especially what is clear is that when one fails to raise tuition, he/she is supposed to ask for a dead year (CEDAT)*

This confirms that the practice of financial mobilization did not exist officially at collegial level hence lack of distributive equity. This points out further that pursuit of educational goals at Makerere university was a rough ground for most students. This finding disagrees with Gale, (2009) and Tinto (2008) who argued that opening doors for all to access education without support is useless unless resources are mobilized for LSSE students to enable them sail through in order to get prepared for adult life.

Table 7: Mobilisation of material needs for LSES

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.
Valid	Strongly disagree	39	10.2	2.10	0.667
	Disagree	343	89.5		
	Undecided	0.0	0.00		
	Agree	1.0	0.3		
	Strongly agree	00	0.00		
	Total	**383**	**100.0**		

The majority of the students 382 (99.7%) disagreed on the mobilization of material resources, 1(0.3%) agreed on the mobilization and none was undecided. The fact that the majority disagreed, it indicates absence of positive management practice helps to access material needs which implies lack of distributive equity on the side of students in this University. The Mean of 2.10 means that and Std. Dev. of 0.667 is an indication that the values of the statistical data provided are close to the Mean since the Std. Dev. is small and therefore, the values are normally distributed. And so there is no biasness in the data. But in a discussion, one Andrew said;

> *I doubt this kind of arrangement but what I know is that my college does not. May be somewhere else in another college like humanities (CoCIS).*

This implies that the practice of mobilization of material resources for students is surely absent. This still indicates lack of distributive equity. This disagrees with Crossman (2019) who viewed that resources should be mobilized and utilized to promote equity in such institutions so that LSES students are able to accomplish their academic goals.

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Table 8 Presence of office for students of diverse socio-economic status

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.
Valid	Strongly disagree	124	32.3	2.44	0.958
	Disagree	195	50.9		
	Undecided	62	16.2		
	Agree	1	.3		
	Strongly agree	1	0.3		
	Total	**383**	**100.0**		

Table 8 reveals that the majority of the respondents 320 (83.5%) disagreed that an office that handles students of different categories existed while 2 (0.6%) agreed. This points out large failure in this practice of managing the diverse students, which means that equity practices by the university is largely missing. While the minority who agreed means at some colleges, there is a kind of arrangement where students' diversity are given attention. The 2.44 Mean with the Std. Dev. of 0.958 indicate that the values of statistical data provided are close to the Mean since the Std. Dev. is small. And therefore the theory being tested is in agreement with the measurements.

Regarding the existence of an office that handles issues concerning LSES students, one participant said;

> *The fact is, there is no office of this kind found in my college or even the entire university. If it existed, it would have helped out some students who are forced to ask for dead years when they are financially stranded. Like among us here, one had to ask for a dead year during his year one due to lack of tuition. (CEDAT)*

This further implies lack of retributive equity where by much as some students are hail from all categories of SES backgrounds, they need to have an office where they can express their concerns. This contravenes with Best Value Schools (2020) who observed that an office is crucial where those who face social and financial hardships as well as problems within the students' families can be tabled.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The data analysis, interpretation and discussion concluded that the Makerere University management practices were not supportive of students' diversity. Therefore, the practices on socio-economic diversity were absent. This reflected absence of distributive (i.e. difference principle) equity. That student, regardless of their differences, was treated the same way hence no equity practices. Instead, the existing practices are those that are cushioned by the policies that were stipulated in the higher education policy (1997). The students end up being stressed. Moreover, there was absence of the policies and practices that provide for them to be listened to. The result of this on students is experiencing acute stress that caused violent behavior because students are failing to reach their academic goals. We further concluded that like any other society, if Makerere University fails to advance equity, students may become critics of what is invested in them. Accordingly, such students may fail to meet the needs of the society as deemed in the goals of higher education.
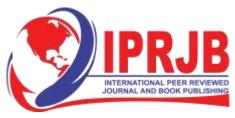
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Recommendations

We recommended that the University council should institute an equity planning and research committee for students' diversity s socio- economic status. This can be headed by administrative staff to establish the supportive practices to LSES students. This committee can devise means of raising the financial and material needs for students from LSES backgrounds. This can be done through formation of societies to be in charge of collections and equitable distribution of the same. These societies can organize fund-raising activities such car washing, charity walks and other projects as some of the avenues of raising such resources. Finally, further research should examine practices of managing the diverse staff namely; academic, administrative and support staff of Makerere University.
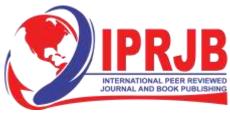
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