

The Experience of Conducting Tracer Studies – The Case of the Association of African Universities (AAU) Project

by

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Outline of Presentation

- **The AAU Tracer study Project**
- **The University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Tracer study under the AAU project**
- **Experience, Challenges and Problems faced
through the AAU project**
- **Impact of the project to UDSM policies
Subsequent UDSM Tracer studies**

Impact of the project to UDSM policies Subsequent UDSM Tracer studies

- Impact on policy:
 - Introduction of new programmes and programme reviews should be preceded by tracer studies
- Subsequent tracer studies:
 - Tracer Studies in a quest for academic improvement (conducted between 2002 and 2004)
 - Several others thereafter.

The AAU Tracer study Project

- The project for African researchers was initiated in Sept. 1996 (about 17 years ago)
- A total of 11 tracer studies from 6 African countries were funded by AAU – 4 studies for Nigeria, 2 studies each for Kenya and Ghana, 1 study each for Uganda, Malawi and Tanzania.
- AAU provided technical guidance in terms of formulating questionnaires, preparation of code books, collecting of data; analysing data using SPSS programme, generating tables and report writing.

The AAU Tracer study Project (cont)

- Technical guidance was provided by experts from Kassel University (Professors Ulrich Teichler and Harald Schomburg) through workshops (three); computer programmes; and reading materials as well as direct consultations.
- “Standard Instrument for Graduate and Employer Surveys” by Harald Schomburg
- A similar conceptual framework and a standard instrument were used.

The AAU Tracer study Project (cont)

- Each country project was based on a particular University and it focussed on graduates and their employers of a given faculty/school of that University .
- The Tanzania project it was based at the University of Dar es Salaam, and it focussed on graduates of the then Faculty of Commerce and Management.
- In the case of the University of Dar es Salaam study in addition to AAU's financial support, additional funding was obtained from Local Business Institutions.

The UDSM - Tanzania Tracer study under the AAU project

- Captured 15 and 13 B.Com (undergraduates) and MBA (graduate) cohorts, respectively.
- Characteristics of graduates surveyed were related to:-
 - type of degree programme pursued,
 - employment situation
 - personal attributes.
 - etc
- Employers were characterised in terms of:-
 - size of their work force,
 - location,
 - economic sector,
 - number of graduates employed and
 - profile of the respondent.
 - etc

The UDSM - Tanzania Tracer study under the AAU project (cont)

- Graduates were asked to assess programmes wrt:-
 - factors influencing their enrolment,
 - sources of funding their studies,
 - quality of curricula,
 - proposed change to the content of the curricula,
 - adequacy of the programmes in preparing them for self employment,
 - Self assessment
 - etc.

The UDSM - Tanzania Tracer study

under the AAU project (cont)

- Graduates were asked to assess their employment situation wrt :-
 - Employment situation after graduation
 - How they got jobs
 - On the job training
 - Job turnover rates
 - Positions held
 - Economic sectors employed in
 - Major areas of job assignments
 - Income levels
 - What they thought they should be earning
 - Employment procedures by their employers
 - Job requirements from graduates point of view
 - Extent to which abilities and attitudes were expected of them
 - etc

The UDSM - Tanzania Tracer study under the AAU project (cont)

- Employers were asked questions regarding
- Their expectations from graduations,
- Evaluation of graduates,
- Evaluation of graduates vis a vis graduates from other IHE,
- On the job training.

The UDSM - Tanzania Tracer study under the AAU project (cont)

- Several publications culminated out of the project. These include:-
 - Kaijage, E. S (2007).: ***Employment and work of African Graduates: An empirical analysis of six countries***. In Mugabushaka et alia eds: Higher education and Work in Africa: A comparative empirical study in Selected Countries: Incher – Kassel, International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel. 2007
 - Kaijage, E. S. (2001): “Knowledge and Skills of B.Com Graduates of the Faculty of Commerce and Management, University of Dar-Es-Salaam in the Job Market”. African Symposium: A journal of Education Research on Africa. Vol. 1 # 1, January 2001. (Online journal <http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/earn/bcorners.html>)
 - Kaijage, E. S: (1999) “Employment of FCM B.Com graduates: A comparative analysis between Accounting, Finance and Marketing graduates” Business Management Review
 - Kaijage, E. S: (1999) “The FCM Graduate: A tracer study of the Faculty of Commerce and Management Graduates and their employers”. Business Management Research Series No. 2. Faculty of Commerce and Management, University of Dar es Salaam. 1999

Experience, Challenges and Problems faced through the AAU project

- Facilitators of the project were very useful and they made us learn a lot from the process.
- Working as a team of researchers.
- Data analysis and generation of tables using SPSS software was quite challenging, but a very useful experience.
- The UDSM management gave me full support
- There had been previous Tracer studies at the University of Dar es Salaam conducted by the then Faculty of Engineering.
- Funding by AAU was inadequate – had to look for supplementary funding.
- Tracing graduates was very difficult – lack of a data bank
- Some employers were not as cooperative.
- Difficulty in interpreting results – some were contradictory

Impact of the project to UDSM policies

Subsequent UDSM Tracer studies

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Thank you for listening