

Staff Participation and Quality Teaching and Research in Private Universities in Uganda

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between staff participation and quality teaching and research in private Universities in Uganda. The study was triggered by the persistent criticisms about the low quality of university graduates and the poor research output from the private universities. The study was approached from the positivist research paradigm and a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design was specifically used to conduct the study. Data were collected from four private chartered universities and the respondents included 181 lecturers, 23 heads of department, 5 Deans, 3 quality assurance officers, 3 Directors of research, 3 senior staff from National council for higher education (NCHE) and 39 student leaders. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and content analysis were used to analyze the data collected. Study findings revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between staff participation and quality teaching ($r = 0.457$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$) and, staff participation and quality of research ($r = 0.562$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$). Thus, it was concluded that the level of staff participation in planning, implementation of the planned activities, and decision making, partly corresponds to improved quality teaching and research, other factors notwithstanding. Therefore, the researchers recommended that in order to enhance quality, the private universities and the NCHE need to develop comprehensive policies that can be based upon to enhance staff participation in planning and decision making on activities that directly enhance the quality of teaching and research.

Keywords: staff participation, quality teaching and research, private universities

1. Introduction

Many countries the world over have endorsed privatization as a policy to guide their educational systems in view of its inherent benefits (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2014). Privatization has led to the proliferation of private service providers in all sub sectors including the higher education sector and more especially the establishment of Private universities (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2014). The increase in the number of private universities has led to the commercialization of higher education and the introduction of market-oriented courses and programs and this has created a challenge of maintaining the quality of education (Ochwa –Echel 2016; OECD, 2007; Mamdani, 2007). There is evidence that most of these universities are not well managed in terms of involving staff in the activities that would improve the quality of education provision (Kasozi, 2009; Kasozi, 2003; Nakajubi, 2016; NCHE, 2016).

The study was anchored on the Total Quality Management (TQM) by Deming (1986). The TQM theory focuses on continuous improvement, increased involvement of employees in activities of the organization, long-range thinking and team-based problem solving as some of the ways of improving quality (Deming, 1986). The theory emphasizes involving employees and empowering them in ways that give them a real voice in decision making especially in improvement of work processes directly under their control. TQM fosters a climate that supports and encourages team work and provides a more satisfying, motivating and meaningful work for employees. Therefore involving staff encourages continuous improvement of all aspects of the organization and it is a way of promoting quality teaching and research.

The study concentrated on two main concepts: staff participation and quality teaching and research. According to Karemire (2013), staff participation is a process of employee involvement designed to provide employees with the opportunity to influence and where appropriate take part in decision making on matters which affect them. Surkino and siengthai (2015) add that staff participation is a practice in which the organization ensures individual involvement of employees at all levels whether major or minor for the completion of a set goal. According to Pozo (2006), there are many principal components determining the successfulness of teaching-learning process, one of them is giving the teacher a chance to participate in decision making. Other studies however show lack of consistent and conclusive evidence about the impact of participative decision making on teaching performance in higher education (Surkino & siengthai 2015; Irawanto 2015; Miller, 1996). Ideally in a university setting, management and academic leaders in departments and faculties should involve academic staff in the management of higher education in various ways such as policy and decision making, planning and organizing academic programs. Staff participation in this study was conceptualized as involvement of the academic staff in planning, implementation and decision making in academic activities.

Quality teaching according to Hénard, and Roseveare, (2012) is the use of pedagogical techniques to attain learning outcomes. Quality teaching involves effective design of curriculum and course content, use of a variety of learning contexts (including guided independent study, project-based learning, collaborative learning, experimentation, etc.) soliciting and using feedback, effective assessment of learning outcomes, well-adapted learning environments and student support services (OECD, 2012). NCHE defines quality teaching as the process of transmitting knowledge basing on the prescribed pedagogical techniques, in a conducive environment that will help learners acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them be productive in the working environment (NCHE, 2013; NCHE 2014). Quality research according to Tibenderana, (2013) is the creative work undertaken by a university on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of human kind, culture, and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications. Quality teaching was conceptualized basing on the OECD and NCHE indicators; as the process of transmitting knowledge to students through adequate course content coverage, teacher preparedness, use of modern teaching methods, use of students feedback, assessment of learning outcomes, student support services and the provision of a conducive learning environment and quality research as the percentage of the university budget devoted to research and publications, support to research by policy committees, funds earned from research projects by both the institution and its staff, the support the universities gives to its staff to promote research and staff research outputs that include staff publications, citations, supervision of students in research, staff paper presentation in internal and local conferences, research groups and Research grants (NCHE 2010).

1.1. Statement of the problem

There is a growing chorus of criticism about the quality of teaching and research in Uganda's private universities. The teaching in these universities concentrate more on theory and thereby creating a mismatch between training received and practical skills required by employers (Tibenderana, 2013; Bagarukayo, 2012; Hénard, and Roseveare, 2012). Reports also indicate some lecturers interact with students only half of the expected contact hours, or are not regular in class. Hyuya (2017) observes that the academic standards, academic infrastructure, physical infrastructure and conducive teaching and learning environments in many of the private universities have been for quite some time, at their rock-bottom. The quality and quantity of research in these universities is also not satisfactory as well and yet, one of the major functions of universities is to create new knowledge and preserve it for the next generation (Mahmood, 2011; New Vision 2011; NCHE 2011a; NCHE 2016; Hyuha 2017). Institutions have continued to allocate less than 1% of their funds to the research function and sometimes the funds are never utilized at all since NCHE hardly receives any reports on the research projects on going in most of these universities. The international ranking of private universities is equally poor with the best private university ranked in position 81,248 by Webo Metrix (2017) on the world ranking. The quantity of peer reviewed publications from private universities is very low as well compared to public universities and in most cases the research activities engaged in are largely defined by supervision of students' dissertations with relatively little interest to resolve major social or scientific issues going on (Tibenderana 2013; Byaramureeba 2016).

The profit oriented approach of running these private universities appears to have compromised the participatory and inclusive management approach. There seems to be very little level of staff participation in the activities that could have improved quality teaching and research in these universities and if this is left unattended to, the private universities will miss out on effectively contributing towards realizing the university mission of teaching and research.

1.1.2 Study Objectives

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between staff participation and quality teaching and research in private universities. The study specifically investigated the relationship between academic staffs' involvement in planning, implementation and decision making and quality teaching and research in private universities in Uganda.

2. Literature Review

Findings of several studies have revealed the significant contribution of staff participation to the enhancement of quality education in higher institutions of learning (Suhaemi & Aedi, 2015; Sukirno & Singethai 2015; Abang, Chiun & Maw 2009; Karemire 2013; Pozo 2006; Douglas, Douglas & Barnes, 2006). Although these studies do not specifically address the quality of teaching and research in Uganda, they have made a great contribution towards the recognition and relevance of staff participation in University activities. Thoyib, (2008) cited by Suhaemi and Aedi, (2015) emphasizes that regardless of the policies in place aimed at improving education quality, the participation of the key stakeholders is a very critical factor if the planned activities are to be successfully accomplished. The authors argue that in the university setting, the participation of the lecturers in planning the academic activities is paramount because it is the lecturers who determine the quality of education. In congruence with this argument, Tibenderana (2013) and Karemire, (2013) emphasize the importance of

involving lecturers at the planning stage to ensure ownership of whatever is planned and compliance at the implementation stage. The studies revealed that lecturers tended to show enthusiasm, devotion, ingenuity and high morale when they participated in planning activities they intended to implement. Relatedly, Abdulai and Shafiwu (2014) assert that in institutions where the planning process is collaborative, there is ownership and sustainability of plans and these eventually reflect on the quality of the outputs. Benoliel and Somech (2010) point out critical areas of staff participation that include among others; work planning and goal setting, discussions between an employee and his/her supervisor, with the supervisor having the final approval among others. Armstrong, (2009) argues as well that staff involvement in planning makes a significant contribution in terms of creating an effective performance management system that requires the involvement of the concerned stakeholders among other things. Draft, Kendrick & Vershinina (2010) agree with the views of the above authors but further emphasizes that involvement of the staff in planning and decision making can improve not only their performance but it also brings job satisfaction and helps employees improve their skills.

Staff participation according to Nsubuga, (2004) should go further than involvement in the planning to include proper implementation of the planned activities. Implementation according to Owolabi and Makinde (2012), is the process that turns strategies and plans into actions in order to enable an organization realize its strategic objectives and goals. According to Draft et al, (2010), implementation involves identification of those responsible for doing the work as well as giving them responsibilities with corresponding authority. Uvah, (2005) however noted that implementation is the hardest practice to effect since it requires the implementers to be alert to every event and any opportunity for action that is clearly better than that in the original plan and then adjust the plan accordingly to fit emerging circumstances. The implication of this is that managers of the universities should design proper strategies that would enable staff participate effectively in the implementation of the planned activities (Babafemi, 2015; Mutie & Irungu, 2014). The authors observe that most organizations are more concerned with the formulation of the plans and not how to implement them and yet, a plan without effective and measurable implementation is no plan at all. A study carried out by Owolabi, and Makinde, (2012) on the Effects of Strategic Planning on Corporate Performance in University Education of Babcock concluded that effective involvement of employees in planning and implementation have a positive contribution to the financial performance of organizations. Therefore no matter how super a plan is, it has to be well implemented to achieve the desired result.

Staff participation in the Decision-making process is equally important in ensuring quality in universities since it enhances initiatives, corporation and team spirit among the staff. Several studies (Abdulai & Shafiwu 2014; Sukrino & Siengthai, 2015; Owino, Ogachi & Olel, 2011; Muindi, 2011; Kok, Lebusa & Joubert 2014), have revealed a significant positive relationship between employee participation in decision making and their zeal to implement plans. Sukrino and Siengthai (2015) for example established that lecturers who participate in decisions that affect them readily implement programs that they have helped to design. Sukrino and Siengthai (2015) established that teachers tended to show enthusiasm, devotion, ingenuity and high morale when they participate in decision-making processes. Similarly, Abdulai and Shafiwu (2014) established that when employees participate in decision making in the various forms, decision implementation becomes easy, a good working environment is created, commitment and satisfaction on decisions taken increases, and also employees morale increase since the employees feel recognized and as part of the team in the organization. In the end, direct consequence of all this is improved productivity. Muindi (2011) likewise established that participation in decision making increased harmony among staff in the school, improved staff morale and creates a sense of ownership. Owino Ogachi and Olel, (2011) observed that low level of participation in decision making was one cause of reduced employee work performance with regard to efficiency and effectiveness. The study however focused more on governance issues than teaching and research. However some other studies have shown lack of consistent and conclusive evidence about the impact of participative decision making on teaching performance in higher education (Sukirno & Singethai 2015; Miller, 1996). Therefore it does not necessarily mean that improved staff participation automatically translates into improved performance. Although all these studies emphasise the importance of staff participation, no such a study has been carried out in private universities in Uganda.

3. Methodology

A cross sectional survey design was used to conduct the study. The study targeted lecturers in the eight chartered private universities in Uganda. The sample comprised of 356 lecturers randomly selected from four universities using disproportionate stratified random sampling technique that enabled representation based on the foundation status. The selected universities included two faith based universities and two private for profit universities. Deans, Heads of department, directors of research and quality assurance officers, and senior officers from NCHE were purposively selected as key informants. Student leaders were also selected as key informants using convenient sampling.

Various methods of data collection were used that included; survey, interview and document review

methods. Three instruments of data collection were used, and these included; the questionnaire, interview guide and document review guide. The questionnaire had four sections; A, B, C and D. Section A, had 5 items on the respondents background characteristics; section B, 9 items that sought the lecturers' opinions on staff participation; section C, comprised of 11 items that sought the lecturers opinion on the quality of teaching in the private universities; section D, was composed of 14 questions on quality of research. The items in section A were measured at nominal level while items under sections B, C and D were measured using the 5-point likert scale. The questionnaire was preferred because the lectures in the sampled universities are many, widely scattered, and able to read and write. The instrument was found to be quick and cheap to apply. The interview method was used to tap opinions of the deans, heads of department, directors of research and quality assurance officers, and senior officers from NCHE. This method enabled probing of the key informants to get a deeper understanding of quality of teaching and research in relation to staff participation in private universities, and validation of information collected from lecturers using the survey method. The document review method was used to establish adherence to set standards and guidelines for quality teaching and research. The document review guide compromised of 8 items covering information about time tabling, content in the course outlines to see if it was in line with the approved curriculum by NCHE, students' notes and whether these matched what was in the course outlines, staff performance monitoring tools and policy guidelines on teaching and research.

Overall, the instruments used were pre-tested before they were administered. The results of the descriptive analysis were presented in tables indicating frequencies and percentages. Correlation analysis was used to establish the strength and direction of the relationship between staff participation and quality teaching and research. The tests of significance were performed at the probability level of $p < 0.05$. Data collected using the structured interview guide, and document review guide was deductively analyzed basing on pre-determined variables from the conceptual framework of the study.

4. Results

4.1 Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in the table below

Table 1. Summary of Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	Below 25years	2	1.1
	25 to below 45 years	151	83.5
	Above 45 years	28	15.5
Highest level of education	Bachelors	15	8.3
	Master's Degree	140	29.3
	PhD	24	13.3
	Missing	2	1.1
Sex	Male	111	61.3
	Female	70	38.7
Length of service	less than 2 years	28	15.5
	2 to less than 8 years	140	87.4
	More than 8 years	12	6.6
	Missing	1	0.6
Employment status	Full time	171	94.5
	Part time	10	5.5

Source: Primary data

Results in Table 1 show that 83.5% of the respondents are between the age 25-45 years suggesting majority of the lectures in private universities are in their prime years and are hence expected to be strong and ambitious and should be able to contribute positively to quality teaching and research. However on the issue of qualifications, only a few (13.3 %) had PhDs, which is a pre-requisite qualification to be a lecture at university. Results further showed that there were more male lecturers (61.3%). This suggests a gender disparity in employment of lectures in private universities. On the issue of tenure of service, only 6.6% had worked for their universities for more than 8 years. The lack of stability of lecturers may negatively impact on the quality of teaching and research. Results also suggest that the teaching in private universities is done mainly by full time staff.

4.2 Descriptive Results on Staff Participation

The study sought the views of respondents on of staff participation in planning, implementation of the planned activities and decision making in private universities. A summary of their responses is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the management practice of staff Participation in the university academic activities

Staff Participation	Agree	Non-committal	Disagree
I always participate in the development of the annual work plan for my department	76(41.9%)	4(2.3%)	101(55.8%)
I am always involved in the preparation of teaching time tables	65(35.9%)	3(1.6%)	113(62.4%)
I always participate in the preparation of the budget for my department	102(56.4%)	8(4.4%)	70(38.7%)
I always complete the departmental planned activities within the set timelines	128(70.7%)	5(2.8%)	48(26.5%)
I am involved in setting departmental targets for teaching every semester	81(44.7%)	9 (4.9%)	91(50.3%)
I am involved in setting plans for staff engagement in research activities	72(39.8%)	12(6.6%)	97(53.6%)
I am always involved in carrying out research for my department	61 (33.7%)	3(1.7%)	116(64.1%)
I am always involved in the review of the course outlines.	78(43.1%)	3(1.7%)	100(55.3%)
Suggestions I make to improve on the planned activities are always put into consideration	34(18.8%)	19(10.5%)	128(70.7%)

Source: Primary Data 2017

Results in Table 2 suggest that less than 50% of the lecturers in private universities participated in; developing departmental annual work plans, preparing time tables, setting annual teaching targets and review of course outlines. Results further indicate that only 39.8% of the respondents were engaged in setting plans for staff engagement in research activities and only 43.1% were involved in conducting research for the department. However, the respondents indicated that they actively participate in the implementation of the planned teaching and research activities of their departments. The results in the table also show that views of only 18.8 % of the lecturers were taken into consideration. This means that the views of a great portion of the lecturers on how to improve on the academic activities in most of the universities were not taken seriously by the university managers. The implication in such a situation is lack of full commitment to the implementation of the decisions made by management since there is lack of ownership of such decisions by the lecturers.

Information from the interviews with the Deans explained the low participation of lecturers in preparing departmental work plans. According to the deans, preparation of work plans was the duty of the heads of department who receive instructions from the Deans. One of the Deans had this to say;

The concept of centralized planning is practiced in this University. Plans are generated from the top basing on the strategic plan. These plans are then passed on to the grassroots for implementation. Work plans are prepared by the Heads of department supervised by the Deans. The role of the lecturers is to ensure that all their activities fit in the plans availed to them.

There was however some level of participation in the budgeting process but this was more prominent in the faith-based Universities and much less in the private-for-profit universities.

One of the Deans in the private-for-profit Universities explained the low involvement of the lecturers thus:

The budgeting function in the planning process of our University is more of a top- down activity. Operational funds are dictated by higher authority, departments have no votes. The planning unit is responsible for the preparation of budgets and these budgets are later passed on to the department to utilize. Limited sources of funds are one major challenge we face. It is therefore useless to involve staff in setting realistic budgets because in the end they will not be implemented.

However, the respondents indicated that they actively participate in the implementation of the planned teaching and research activities of their departments probably because of the internal policies and controls as explained by the Deans and Quality assurance officers which are coercive in nature. The results in the table also show low participation of lecturers in decision making and even when they made suggestions on how to improve on the plans made by management, their suggestions were rarely put into consideration. The implication in such a situation is lack of full commitment to the implementation of the decisions made by management since there is lack of ownership of such decisions by the lecturers.

In conclusion, results show minimal participation of the lecturers in planning activities for teaching and research and more participation in the implementation processes and less active involvement in decision making.

4.3 Descriptive results on Quality Teaching

The study sought views of lecturers on quality of teaching in private universities in Uganda, and below in Table 3 are descriptive results.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on lecturers views on quality teaching

Teaching	Agree	Non-committal	Disagree
My department has adequate teaching and learning materials	74(40.9%)	5(2.8%)	102(56.4%)
The teaching and learning materials are easily availed	72(39.8%)	8(4.4%)	101(55.8%)
My department has put in place initiatives to improve teaching	109(60.2%)	5 (2.8 %)	65(35.9%)
The department has special programs for weak students	53(29.3%)	20 (11%)	108(59.7%)
My department provides students with knowledge of education paths and placement/internship opportunities	132(72.9%)	19(5.5 %)	37(20.5%)
My department makes effort to follow up students to know what they are doing in their internship	166(91.8%)	7(3.9%)	8(4.5%)
The teaching and learning environment is conducive	70(38.6%)	4 (2.2%)	107(59.1%)
I find the use of learner based methods of teaching more friendly	53(29.3%)	9(5%)	117(64.6%)
I give feedback on students' assignments promptly.	171(94.5%)	6(3.3%)	2 (1.1%)
Assessment of students are planned as an integral part of teaching	167(92.2%)	3(1.7%)	11(6.1%)
Course outlines I use are consistent with the approved curriculum	154(85.1%)	9(5%)	18(10%)

Source: Primary Data 2017

Results in Table 3 indicate that private universities did not have adequate teaching and learning materials and even the few they had were not easy to access. These results suggest that the required teaching and learning materials are not enough to support the lecturers to deliver the required learning content. Results however, indicate that departments had to a good extent put in place initiatives to improve teaching. Furthermore, results in the table suggest that there was effort made by departments to provide students with knowledge of education paths and internship opportunities, and following up students to know what they were doing in their internship. Results in the table also show that the teaching and learning environment was largely (59.1%) not conducive. The results further suggest that learner based approaches of delivery were hardly being employed in private universities. However, majority of the respondents (over 85%) indicated that; assessment of students was planned as an integral part of the teaching process and that they promptly gave feedback on students' assignments. Results also suggest that course outlines were consistent with the approved curriculum.

Information from interview with quality assurance officers revealed that the inadequate teaching materials were a big inconvenience to both the lecturers and the students. One quality assurance officers had this to say;

Lack of equipment and sometimes even teaching space compels some lecturers to teach outside the scheduled timetables. This is a quality issue because it compromises the students' attendance and in most cases such lecturers don't teach up to the required contact hours. It also leads to disgruntlement since students look at it as being cheated and intimidated.

In regard to the initiatives to help weak students, information from quality assurance officers revealed that lack of time, the pressure of completing the syllabi, inadequate teaching space were key contributors to failure of these initiatives. The quality assurance officer from one of the Faith-Based Universities which was most affected explained:

Lecturers here rarely interact with students outside the class time because of lack of space for such interactions. We do not even have a staff room where the lecturers can sit to prepare for their classes or even meet students for guidance. This has made most of our lecturers behave like part timers. They come teach and go away. This does not only affect the students, it also affects the lecturers because they are unable to bond and work as a team.

Despite responses of lectures indicating that they followed up students on internships, interviews with the student leaders revealed that internship visits from their lecturers were very few and in most cases very brief. Students' leaders especially from the Faith Based Universities claimed they were not followed up at all and in most cases the lecturers simply assessed their internship performance basing on the students field reports.

During the study, it was observed that the learning environment was fairly conducive in all the University except one University. In one of the universities, the environment was so poor that one wondered how learning took place. The University lacked classrooms and teaching was done from the tents mounted in the compounds. Student leaders complained about the state of such classrooms. Students were affected by all different weather patterns. During the rainy season, it was difficult for them to study because sometimes rain would blow into the tents, during sunny days the tents were too hot, hence affecting concentration. The University was located between businesses that were noisy.

Interviews with the heads of departments showed that the lecturer method was always discouraged because it does not assist the students to be critical thinkers, but it was the most commonly used because it helped the lecturers complete the planned work on time.

Contrary to the lecturers responses, Interviews with the students revealed that giving assignment and getting feedback from the lecturers were the most two frustrating events in their academic journeys. Students explained

that although assignments were given promptly, even when nothing has been taught, feedback was delayed almost up to the end of the semester. This delayed consultations and correction of any errors. The interviews with heads of department confirmed that indeed most of the lecturers delayed giving feedback on the assignment.

4.4 Descriptive Results of Quality Research

The study sought opinions of lectures on quality of research in private universities in Uganda and below in Table 4 are the descriptive results.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics the lecturers views on quality research.

Research	Agree	Non-committal	Disagree
There is a departmental policy for staff engagement in research	126(69.6%)	24(13.3%)	31(17.1%)
Policy guidelines for conducting research are relevant	47(26%)	20(11.1%)	113(62.4%)
The budget for research activities in my department is adequate	27(15%)	20(11.1%)	134(74.0%)
My department facilitates academic staff to attend international conferences	45(24.9%)	22(12.2%)	114(63%)
I have presented papers at international conferences	24 (13.3%)	14(7.7%)	143(79%)
Staff are facilitated with funding to carry out research work	69(38.1%)	15(8.3%)	97(53.6%)
My department facilitates staff to do research in terms of reduced teaching load	11(6.1%)	10(5.5%)	160(88.4%)
Collaborating with colleagues to do research makes it easy	165(91.1%)	5(2.8%)	10(11%)
Research groups in my department are very active	43(23.8%)	10 (5.5%)	160(88.4%)
I regularly publish articles in internationally peer reviewed journals.	55(30.3%)	13(7.1%)	113(62.4%)
I always publish articles in peer reviewed local journals.	65(35.9%)	6 (3.3%)	110(60.7%)
My department receives research grants from the researches done by the staff.	15(8.3%)	6(3.3%)	160(88.4%)
My published work is usually cited by other researchers.	41(22.1%)	32(17.7%)	108(59.7%)
I always assist students to complete their research projects in time	123(67.9%)	17(9.4%)	41(22.7%)
My department usually organizes research dissemination workshops	57(31.5%)	11(6.1%)	113(62.4%)

Source; Primary data

Results in Table 4 indicate that private universities have a policy on staff engagement in research, however majority of the lecturers (62.4%) find the policy guidelines irrelevant. Results also suggest that the budget for research is not adequate enough to facilitate lectures to travel and present papers at international conferences. Probably the inadequate research budget accounts for the very few (31.5%) research dissemination workshops. Results further show that very few lectures (38.1%) are facilitated for research activities. Results also demonstrate that universities are more interested in teaching rather than research. Only 6.1% of the lecturers indicated that departments facilitated lecturers in conducting research by reducing teaching load. However results in the table indicate that lecturers collaborate with each other to do research. Despite this collaboration, only 30.3 % regularly published in internationally reviewed journals and 35.9% in local journals. Majority of the respondents indicated that they were involved in supervising students' research.

Information from document reviews revealed that only two of the Universities had comprehensive policies on research clearly stating the goals and objectives of research in their universities, funding, strategic partnerships and collaborations, implementation and dissemination strategies among others. One University only had guidelines on how research was to be conducted and supervision of student and did not present any policies in relation to research in their University. In regard to research budgets, interview with the Director of Research, Development and Documentation at NCHE revealed that most of the Universities especially the private do not reveal the funding allocated for research activities in their universities. This is what she had to say:

Although NCHE has advised the Universities to allocate funds for research activities, most of them have failed to do so. NCHE has discovered that institutions have continued to allocate less than 1% of their funds to the research function. This amount is so meagre to support any substantial research for any institution. Even the little funding that is allocated to the research is sometimes never utilized all since we never get any reports on the research projects on going in most of these Universities especially the private ones.

Information from interviews with the heads of department revealed that private Universities survive on student numbers, and therefore their priority is to ensure that teaching is properly done. "Those lecturers who wish to concentrate on research can do so but not at the expense of their teaching."

Information from interview with the directors of research explained why publications remain low. One director had this to say;

Very few staff members have managed to publish their work due to the rigorous requirements of the various journals. After going through the rigor of trying to publish and one's article is rejected, the rest who were in the pipeline get discouraged. Besides the rewards that are associated with research work are so discouraging. Those who try to publish in less rigorous journals are asked to pay a fee before their work is published which most lecturers have termed as unfair to their academic contribution.

4.5 Verification of Hypotheses

To establish the relationship between staff participation and quality of teaching and research in private universities, a correlation analysis was conducted to test the following null hypotheses;

- i. There is no relationship between staff participation and quality of teaching in private universities in Uganda
- ii. There is no relationship between staff participation and quality of research in private universities in Uganda

Correlation analysis results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Correlation analysis results on staff participation and quality teaching

Staff participation	Pearson Correlation	1	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	181	181
Quality teaching	Pearson Correlation	.457**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	181	181

Source Primary Data

Results in Table 5 indicate a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.457$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$) between staff participation and quality teaching. These results suggest that improved staff participation corresponds to improved quality teaching. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

Furthermore, correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between staff participation and quality of research in private universities and below in table 6 are the correlation analysis results.

Table 6: Correlation analysis results on staff participation and quality research

		Staff participation	Quality of research
Staff participation	Pearson Correlation	1	.562**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	181	181
Quality research	Pearson Correlation	.562**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	181	181

Source: Primary data

The correlation results in Table 6 show a significant relationship ($r = 0.562$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$) between staff participation and quality research. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, meaning that there is a significant positive relationship between staff participation and quality of research. The results suggest that improved staff participation corresponds to enhanced quality research in private universities.

5. Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between staff participation and quality teaching and research in private universities in Uganda. The focus was on staff participation in planning, implementation of the planned activities and decision making in activities relating to quality of teaching and research. Results indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between staff participation and quality of teaching, and as well staff participation and quality research. These findings are in congruence with previous studies (Abdulai & Shafiwu 2014; Sukrino & Siengthai, 2015; Owino, Ogachi & Olet, 2011; Muindi, 2011; Kok, Lebusa & Joubert, 2014) that similarly revealed a significant positive relationship between employee participation and quality of service delivery.

The findings in the current study revealed low participation of the lecturers in planning for academic activities such as preparation of teaching timetables, setting timelines for completion of tasks, budgeting, target setting, and making suggestions on strategies for improving departmental academic plans. And yet, participation of the lecturers in the planning exercise gives them an opportunity to understand the essence of the plans, reduces initial resistance to the changes that may come as the result of the plans, and creates a sense of ownership of plans made (Karemire, 2013). Despite the existence of policies aimed at improving quality of education, the involvement of lecturers critically impacts on quality teaching and quality of research in the universities. This is in agreement with Thoyib, (2008), as cited by Suhaemi and Aedi (2015) that the lecturers

play a critical role in the teaching and learning process; hence lack of involvement at the planning stage may make the plans unpopular, thereby affecting adherence to set standards and procedures (Deming, 1986). Relatedly, Owolabi and Makinde (2012) emphasise the significant contribution of involving employees in planning to effective implementation of organisational strategies and plans which leads to attainment of set organizational goals and objectives. It is imperative therefore that universities design appropriate mechanisms that would promote staff participation at the planning phase to enhance effective implementation of the planned activities (Babafemi, 2015; Mutie & Irungu, 2014). Otherwise as the case is currently in private universities lecturers' involvement in the implementation of the planned activities will remain a result of policy and coercion.

Poor participation of lecturers was observed in the research activities of the Universities as well. Results demonstrate that few lecturers participated in research and publications. Results also showed that the research groups and clusters were not very active. Publications in international peer reviewed journals were equally few and depositories of research work to NCHE was not being done by most of the universities. These findings are in congruence with the existing literature and reports (Mahmood, 2011; New Vision 2011; NCHE 2011a; NCHE 2016; Hyuha 2017). The low participation in research activities is indicative of the little contribution of private universities to generating new knowledge (NCHE, 2016). A University that does not produce its own knowledge and merely transmits what is already known is no different from a high school (NCHE, 2016; Hyuha, 2017). Knowledge production therefore is an insatiable performance indicator; it is what distinguishes a University and what defines its relevance (Lejeune, 2007, cited by Tibenderena, 2013). Universities are expected to conduct quality research that will not only increase the stock of knowledge, but as well facilitate innovations to tackling societal challenges.

6. Conclusion

The study established that staff participation significantly correlates with quality of teaching and research in private universities in Uganda. Despite the significant relationship of staff participation and quality teaching and research, the majority of academic staff in private Universities are not given the opportunity to participate in key activities such as budgeting, setting timelines, setting targets, making the teaching timetables and attending international conferences among others. It is imperative therefore for the heads of department to engage the academic staff in the planning activities, decision making for quality of teaching and research to be enhanced in Uganda's private universities. The administrators should also involve the academic staff in research projects and consider staff performance in these research projects as a major performance indicator for the annual performance appraisals.

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