

Financial Resource Mobilization Projects and its Relationship to Academic Staff Commitment in Uganda Martyrs University, Uganda

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate financial resource mobilization projects and its relationship to academic staff commitment at Uganda Martyrs University. This was owing to the phenomenon that Financial Resource Mobilization Projects are very crucial for the success of all University institutions; and if properly managed, such practices are apt to ensuring the commitment of the staff towards realizing the goals and objectives of the institution. The literature review focused mainly on financial resource practices; and how these related with academic staff commitment in different empirical and theoretical context. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design involving both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. A total of 113 academic staff, randomly and purposively selected, participated in the study that was guided by one objective and one hypothesis. The study hypothesis was tested using Pearson Correlation Moment Coefficient Index ($r = 0.312$, $p = 0.005 < 0.05$). The findings (of the study) revealed a positive significant relationship between financial mobilization practices on the commitment of academic staff in Uganda Martyrs University. Recommended was that both private and public Universities, the University Council, Senate, relevant Deans, Heads of Departments, and other stakeholders, should involve academic staff in specific financial mobilization practices like putting up agricultural farms, engineering projects, Research and Consultancy firms, as well as mobilizing finances and grants from donors, governments and various non-governmental organizations.

Key words: Academic Staff Commitment, Financial Resource Mobilization.

Introduction

All over the world, higher education is currently at the crossroads. Significant changes (Kosmützky & Putty, 2016; Amaral, Tavares, Cardoso & Sin, 2015; Kosmützky, 2015; Parker, 2011; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Enders & Jongbloed, 2007), both qualitative and quantitative, are challenging and changing institutions of higher education and the role played by these institutions in their economies and larger societies. Among the most salient quantitative changes are; the development of ICT, the phenomenon of globalization and internationalization, emergence of knowledge-based societies and knowledge-based market-friendly economic policies, and the concern for sustainable and ecologically friendly economic development (Sanyal & Johnstone, 2011; Bleiklie, Jürgen, Lepori & Musselin, 2011). According to Sanyal & Johnstone (2011), the massive quantitative expansion of higher education poses an even more visible and daunting finance challenges. Yet issues of finances are very crucial for the success of

all university institutions (Government of Uganda, 2008). Without finances everything comes to a stand still in an institution of government or otherwise. However, the latter has been a realistic phenomenon in most universities in the world; an aspect attributed to the government-reduced funding of higher education (Reiff, 2014; Bernasconi, 2011; Bleiklie et al, 2011; Kasozi, 2009; Enders & Jongbloed, 2007; Mamdan, 2007). To this effect, majority university officials in the world have lamented that “every source of revenue coming into the state has decreased” (Geiger, 2015). This is corroborated by Reiff (2014) who affirms that for years now education, and especially higher education, has been under attack.

Conversely, the phenomenon of government invisible hand in financing universities does not only affect government aided universities but also private owned universities because, according to Enders & Jongbloed (2007), private universities that work on a non-profit basis have frequently benefited from direct and indirect means of government financing. But before blaming African continental governments on this issue, many factors have been raised and pointed out as to why African universities have been unable to financially sustain their activities among which include: the major transformation of the relationship between universities and society, global economic downturn, trend in enrolment, donor aid and behaviors (Omona, 2012; Enders & Jongbloed, 2007). As a result, many alternatives have been suggested by Sub-Saharan African Universities to mobilize and enhance their sources of funding through projects. The foregoing is not limited to fees paid by students and families, commercial cross-border education and courses for adults, commercial e-learning, external research funding from private sector and non-profit sector, or direct ties with business (licensing and patenting, partnership to develop new research and products). All play a role in this development (Enders & Jongbloed, 2007), though other alternatives like fees payments have been met with resistance. This kind of resource projects have made US Universities and other famous universities in the world (Harvard, Oxford, Al-Azhar and Cambridge) to be recognized for their excellence in all aspects of academic research and graduate education; having resorted to substantial increases in student tuition among other financial project sources.

Geiger (2015) advances that students’ fees strengthen a university in the area of revenue collection, thus perfecting the university budgets. Yet, on the contrary, in Africa and Uganda in particular, despite the introduction of private sponsorship to improve university activities especially around the core functions of universities, the said core functions have continuously remained low. This can be evident, for example, by the type of graduates produced by universities in Uganda (Ezati et al., 2014, Otaala et al., 2013b, Otaala et al, 2013a, Mamdani, 2007); an aspect that might be linked to the low commitment of academic staff (Government of Uganda, 2008). Based on the findings of the Visitation Committee Report on Public Universities (2007), The Government of Uganda (2008) noted with concern that many staff in both public and private universities in Uganda needed to improve their professional commitment to basic obligations such as regular attendance, punctuality, meeting deadlines, doing full day work, and accomplishing assignments, among others. Noted was that the former are anticipated to lead to the production of good university graduates, and failure to do so could lead to several undesirable outcomes such as producing graduate who are not innovative, creative, and unemployable. It is therefore appropriate to isolate the reasons that are associated with low commitment of academic staff in Ugandan Universities.

Several theories castigate low professional staff job commitment (Kiiza & Picho, 2015; Mugizi, Bakkabulindi & Bisaso, 2015; Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Wright, Moynihan & Pandey, 2012; Brunetto, Shacklock & Farr-Wharton, 2012; Eslami & Gharakhani, 2012; Colquitt, Lepine & Wesson, 2011; Suki & Suki, 2011; Bellou, 2010; Chen, Chen & Chen, 2010; Guchait & Cho, 2010; Perry, Hondeghe & Wise, 2010). This study anticipated that financial resource mobilization projects may explain the low professional staff job commitment. Accordingly, the researchers rationalised that Uganda Martyrs University, being one of the universities in Uganda, can hardly be an exemption from the problem of low professional staff job commitment. Hence, this study on the role of financial resource mobilization projects on the professional staff job commitment among the academic staff at Uganda Martyrs University.

Objective of the study

The study was guided by a sole objective, namely:

To find out the relationship between financial resource mobilization projects and academic staff commitment at Uganda Martyrs University.

Hypothesis

The study hypothesises that:

Financial resource mobilization projects are positively related to academic staff commitment.

Review of Related Literature

The two major sources of higher education funding in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have been government and households (Kasozi, 2003; Omona, 2012). The two major sources of funding provides funds in form of subvention, grant in aid, endowments, fees charged by the institution to students, vouchers, donations and legacies accruing to the institution for the special purpose, among others (Pachuaschvili, 2015; Geiger & Heller, 2011; Kasozi, 2003).

According to Omona (2012), the difficult to raise public revenue owing to microeconomic and growth instability, high debt ratios, weak tax administration, and large informal sector among African governments made the sources of funding higher education to shift more on the household and families, leaving the government to play a supervisory and subsidized role. This means that student payments represent the major source of income for both public and private universities (Pachuaschvili, 2015). In SSA, this is attributed to the fact that many SSA countries have a relatively weak public resource collection capacity, which in turn affects resource allocation for education (Omona, 2012), higher education inclusive.

In addition, many theories are cited in regard to the invisible hand of government in funding higher education. These include the economic theory, which argues that higher education is both a public and a private good. The implication hereby is that costs and expenses of higher education need to be shared between the government and the individual; thus, the government playing a subsidiary role. This factor and others consequently make Sub Saharan African (SSA)

countries reluctant in financing of higher. Higher education is certainly not a pure public good because it allows private benefits as well as a collective return on investment (Enders & Jongbloed, 2007). According to the same source, examples of outputs that are closer to public goods include an informed citizenry, better public health, better parenting, lower crime, and wider political and community participation. Outputs that are closer to the private good include, for example, credentials leading to high-paying jobs and marketable technologies. All of these goods are likely to lie somewhere between public and private goods, or have elements of both; implying that provision of higher education should be between the government and private individuals.

As a result, various models of financing higher education have been attempted to address the gap, including in Uganda, with different levels of effectiveness and with different challenges (Omona, 2012;). This is in consonance with Whitley (2008), who observes that due to changes in the funding of higher education, a number of countries have condescended to imitate the formal structures and planning procedures of business corporations and projects. Ironically, in Uganda's case, when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government came to power in 1986, it adopted market models for the economy where universities were permitted to raise non-state funds from donors and tuition fees (Kasozi 2009; Mamdani, 2007). However, this kind of model approach is all over the world and is characterized by the increased importance of private sources of revenue, the introduction of tuition fees, a greater diversity of institutional autonomy (especially) in areas of financing and new strategies for the internal distribution of resources (Geiger, 2015; Reiff, 2014; Bleiklie, 2011; Hanafi, 2011; Kasozi, 2009; Mamdan, 2007).

Besides students' tuition, a significant body of literature (Kasozi, 2009; Rae, Gee & Moon, 2009; Okumbe, 1998) concludes that above and beyond teaching, research, and involvement in public service, academic staffs are called upon to manage projects and businesses involving raising funds for the university. This observation is congruent with the view further advanced by Rae, et al (2009) who opines that in UK, Derby University is an example of universities that have benefited from their staff's engagement in projects and business that raise money for the institution. Indeed, Bleiklie et al (2011) found that most teaching or research projects mobilize a combination of resources from different sources and rely on multiple levels and actors among whom academic staff is inclusive.

A study conducted by Bleiklie et al (2014) reveals that before higher education and research was a mixture of state- and academic self-regulation; a closed system, in which outsiders or society at large, hardly had a voice. Yet, on contrary, some authors like Whitley (2008) and Ribeiro-Soriano & Urbano (2010) noted that the shifts in university funding needed universities to open up their gates to go into commercialisation of academic research. This is in consonance with the assertion of Pachuaschvili (2015) that by introducing new strategy of financing higher education, world over, governments encouraged more market-like behavior on the part of public and private institutions. The latter made universities all over the world to embrace Clark's idea of turning the university into an 'entrepreneurial', an activity considered a desirable and an achievable goal to generate funds to fill the gap left behind by the government. Indeed, Rae, Gee & Moon (2009) espouse that the concept of the entrepreneurial university has gained currency ever since Clarke (1998) proposed five cases of European higher education institutions (HEIs) as exemplars. It is therefore indubitable that the idea has become enormously useful to academics, governments and policy makers who recognize it as a means of encouraging self-reform in ways

that make HEIs more responsive to markets, opportunities, and communities; while increasing their ability to earn additional revenues and reduce their reliance on state funding (Urbano & Guerrero, 2013).

The other crucial factor in the financing of higher education is that before 1970s, it was not a prime concern to academic institutions to bring research results to the market. However, since of late, a growing pressure has been put on universities to produce research that is valuable for industry and to establish closer linkages with the business community in order to widen the chances of establishing collaborations (Muscio, Quaglione & Vallanti, 2013). Moreover, the sober analysis of University–industry linkages (UILs) by Schiller & Brimble (2009) indicated that this type of relationship (University-Industry) plays a crucial role for universities to improve their financial position. According to the immediate-quoted coauthors, University- Industrial relationship can be achieved using the three group activities or modalities corresponding to the three broad missions of the university; hence, covering training and education-related activities, the provision of services and other consulting activities, and research-related activities. The trio do all gear towards generating finances (Jackson, 2015; Heller & Callender, 2013; Muscio et al, 2013; Schiller & Brimble, 2009).

Past studies relating financial resource mobilization projects and lecturers' job commitment include: Parker (2013), Tibarimbasa (2010), Waters (2010), and Odubuker (2007). For example, Parker (2013) carried out a study on contemporary university strategizing and found out that teaching and research are transmogrified into strategies of customized education and research that is primarily focused upon and measured in terms of fund generation. Odubuker (2007) in his study on head teachers' management training program and their competence in management of primary schools in North-West Nile discovered that improvement in mobilizing financial resources led to slight improvement in the head teachers' competencies in management. Meanwhile, Tibarimbasa (2010) had concluded that tuition fees was the major source of funding, though religious universities were also funded by religious organizations outside the country. Waters (2010), on his part, perceived that structural equation modeling provides insights for fundraisers on how they can streamline their fundraising programs to maximize the impact of their cultivation efforts.

In general, the literature cited herein indicates that for any university to meet its core functions (teaching, research and community outreach), it must have a capacity to have a sound financial system which would make such a university deliver education services that should be perceived as reliable. Thus, such major indicators formed the criteria used to inspect and institute whether financial resource mobilization projects affects the professional job commitment of academic staff in Uganda Martyrs University.

Research Methodologies

The study employed a descriptive, cross-sectional survey design. It was cross-sectional where the researchers visited respondents at once during data collecting process; as Amin (2005) would recommend. The cross-sectional survey was appropriate as it is friendly in both time and cost and as the study involved a big number of respondents. The study was descriptive as it described the situation of financial resource mobilization projects in institutions of higher learning. Data collection was approached both qualitatively and quantitatively but with a bias on

quantitative approach where variables were measured using numbers. Data were collected from 164 academic staff from Uganda Martyrs University. Owing to the big population, 113 academic staff (response rate= 71%) were selected using Krejcie and Morgan (1975) table of sample size determination, cited in Amin (2005). The questionnaire was distributed to academic staffs that were selected purposively and were requested to rate themselves following a five-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

Data collected quantitatively from the closed-ended questionnaire was processed and the Statistical Package for Social Scientists was used in the analysis. The Program helped in data processing involving coding, editing and entry of quantitative responses. Further, it helped in data analysis through generation of frequency tables, means and standard deviations. The variables were correlated using Pearson’s Moment Correlation Co-Efficient Method to establish whether there was a relationship between financial resource mobilization and commitment of academic staff. On the other hand, qualitative data from interview was analyzed using thematic analysis where themes and sub themes of the key variables emerged. Thus, responses from administrative staff were descriptively and narratively analyzed and presented. These findings were then interpreted to derive meanings, inferences, and relationships between the study variables. The data are presented in the tables therein in the section below.

Findings

Background of respondents

Of the 113 respondents sampled, a little more above average (51.3%) were married, 46.3% had a teaching experience of 0-5 years, while male (62.2%) dominated the sample on the issue pertaining to academic qualification. Majority of the respondents (60.3%) had Masters’ qualifications while holders of both the first degree and PhD stood at 39.7%. Regarding Academic ranks, a good many (42.5%) of the lecturers in Uganda Martyrs University were at the rank of assistant lecturer.

This study aimed at testing the hypothesis that financial resource mobilization projects have a positive relationship with academic staff commitment at Uganda Martyrs University. Financial resource mobilization projects were operationalized into five quantitative items and two qualitative items of the interview guide. Using the five quantitative items, lecturers were requested to do their self-rating basing on a Likert scale ranging from: “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neutral”, “agree”, and “strongly agree”. Table 1 depicts results therefrom.

Table 1: Financial resource mobilization projects.

Items on financial mobilization	Scale	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. D.
I am involved in soliciting grants for the University	Strongly disagree	15	7.5		
	Disagree	28	18.8		

	Neutral	16	20.0	3.6125	1.2064
	Agree	15	35.0		
	Strongly agree	06	18.8		
I am involved in exhibitions	Strongly disagree	09	23.8		
from which funds are	Disagree	20	13.8		
generated for the University	Neutral	21	26.3	3.0375	1.2267
	Agree	19	11.3		
	Strongly agree	11	25.0		
Students in my University pay	Strongly disagree	11	13.8		
tuition on time	Disagree	17	21.3		
	Neutral	21	26.3	2.975	1.1797
	Agree	25	31.3		
	Strongly agree	06	7.5		
I contribute to research	Strongly disagree	08	10.0		
consultancy from which funds	Disagree	14	17.5		
are generated in this	Neutral	20	25.0	3.2000	1.1517
University	Agree	30	37.5		
	Strongly agree	08	10.0		
I involve in organising alumni	Strongly disagree	11	13.8		
to raise money for the	Disagree	22	27.5		
University	Neutral	19	23.8	2.900	1.2180
	Agree	20	25.0		
	Strongly agree	08	10.0		

In Table 1, apart from the second statement where a significant number of the respondents (47.6) expressed negative sentiments on whether academic staff is involved in exhibition activities from which funds are generated for the University, the rest of the statements received a positive rating. In particular, according to the pattern of the responses, most of the staff asserted and agreed that they are involved in the mobilization of funds for effective operation of the University. For example at the Faculty of Architecture, academic staff asserted that they do involve themselves in designing projects (architectural building planes) for both companies and individuals in return for money. In support of the foregoing, a tangible number of the participants in the study credited their Deans and Heads of Departments for encouraging them to engage in activities that yield money for the university. Such activities included teaching of short courses, research consultancy, and writing research-project proposals, among others. This in one way helps in creating a cordial relationship and a two-way communication between the subordinates (academic staff) and their bosses (university management) in a joint effort to generating funds for the institution.

In the same vein, 53.8% of the lecturers further agreed that they were involved in soliciting grants for the University. In carrying out this activity, most of them maintained that they always had the liberty to decide on how best to do their work; and this gave them the courage to be committed and innovative in whatever task they deemed apt to bringing funds. The forgoing truism does reveal how committed the staff is at Uganda Martyrs University. Similarly, the qualitative responses indicated that academic staffs were always given chances to look around and decide on which funder to approach, at both international and local levels; thus, demonstrating the extent to which financial resource mobilization practices are actively done in Uganda Martyrs University.

Unlike what is experienced elsewhere regarding fees-payments in both private and public institution, the respondents agreed unanimously that despite being a religious founded institution, tuition payments take the lion share of the finances collected in the institution where 38.8% of the lecturers affirmed that students pay tuition on time. Presupposed therefore is that without fees-payments, it might be hard for an institution like Uganda Martyrs University to execute its core duties of teaching, research, and community outreach services. To confirm the assertion obtained through quantitative data, interview respondents had been asked to enumerate examples on how the administration effective students' payment of fees on time. One of the striking finding was got from Interviewee 2 from the Management who said thus:

...students pay tuition in time, given the strict measures of fees collection at the University; for instance, one is allowed to neither do tests nor submit course works nor access the university gate without completing paying a given percentage of money. ...

The rest of the items in Table 1 that are not discussed here, all scored "Agree"; implying that financial resource mobilization practices is given due consideration at Uganda Martyrs University.

Financial resource mobilization projects and commitment of academic staff

Having obtained the responses from the questionnaire and interview schedule, the researchers endeavoured to establish as to whether the ratings on financial resource mobilization projects

had any association with the responses on academic staff commitment. This hypothesis was tested using a Pearson Correlation Co-efficient Index and the results are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation between financial resource mobilization projects and academic staff commitment

		<i>Commitment</i>	<i>Financial resource Mobilize</i>
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	.312**
	Sig. 2 tailed		.005
	N	80	80
Financial practices	Pearson Correlation	.312**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	80	80

Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Pearson Correlation Moment Index of the aggregated index of financial resource projects on academic staff professional job commitment yielded the results in Table 2. Suggested heretofore was that financial resource mobilization projects have potential to enhance academic staff professional job commitment ($r = 0.312^{**}$, $sig = .005$); calculated at the one percent level of significant ($p < 0.01$), leading to acceptance of the research hypothesis that financial resource mobilization projects had a positive significant relation with academic staff commitment at Uganda Martyrs University. Hence, through efficient and effective mobilization of financial resources using several sources like tuition, putting up projects like consultancy, accessing donations and grants, the lecturers were sure of fair remuneration packages, consequently exhibiting high commitment; and the contrariety is true.

Discussions

The research results agreed with the study hypothesis that financial resource mobilization projects was positively related with academic staff commitment. The status quo was at par with some past studies (Parker, 2013; Tibarimbasa, 2010; Waters, 2010; Odubuker, 2007). The implication herewith is that the gesture of involving academic staff in financial mobilization projects such as consultancy activities like in research projects enables the university to fetch finances; part of which may be allocated to academic staff remuneration and allowances. This in

turn serves to raise commitment among the academic staff. The findings further render credence to one of the earlier studies such as that of Odubuker (2007) which found out that management training especially in the area of mobilizing financial resources led to slight improvement in the head teachers' competencies in management.

In view of these results, it is interesting to note that the academic staff at Uganda Martyrs University is involved in soliciting funds from which money is raised for the University. This was revealed when majority of academic staff in various department (e.g. Civil Engineering and Food Science) ascertained that they get involved in designing projects and in the manufacturing of wine, among others. The results corroborated such studies such as Okumbe (1998), Kasozi (2009), and Rae, et al. (2009) who concluded that above and beyond teaching, research and involvement in public service, academic staffs are called upon to manage projects and businesses involving raising funds for the University. This strengthened the subscription that most teaching or research projects mobilize a combination of resources from different sources and rely on multiple levels and actors among which academic staff are inclusive (Bleiklie et al, 2010).

In regard to the payment of fees, the study spelt out and thus appraises the due strictness put up by the university management to see that students pay tuition on time. The finding thus strengthens and acts as a confirmatory to earlier studies such as Mamdani (2007) and Kasozi (2009) who hold that in the case of Uganda, when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government came to power in 1986, it adopted market models for the economy where universities were permitted to raise non-state funds from tuition fees. Other researchers (Geiger, 2015; Reiff; 2014; Bleiklie, 2011; Hanafi, 2011; Kasozi, 2009; Mamdan, 2007) explicate that this kind of model approach is all over the world and is characterized by the increased importance of private sources of revenue, the introduction of tuition fees, a greater diversity of institutional autonomy (especially) in areas of financing and new strategies catapulted for the internal distribution of resources. In this way, the findings of the study further rhyme with Pachuaschvili (2015), who, while probing the dual privatization in Georgian Higher Education, surmised that student payments represent the major source of income for both public and private universities. This therefore indicates how tuition fees are the main source of revenue to both private and public Universities, all over the world.

Suffice to highlight heretofore that the philosophy behind Uganda Martyrs University is that it is a catholic founded institution. It is therefore not surprising to find out in this study that on average, the university receives huge sums of money acquired from grants, donations among other subvention accruing to the university, owing to and in consonance with the founding body. More succinct to the foregoing rationale are Pachuaschvili (2015), Omona (2012), Geiger & Heller (2011), and Kasozi (2003), as they observe that funding to higher education comes in the form of subvention, grant in aid, endowments, fees charged by the institution to students, government-subsidized jobs on college campuses, any other amounts due to or recoverable by the institution, vouchers, donations and legacies accruing to the institution for the special purpose, among others. The interview further indicated that a good number of the academic staff were not conversant as to who is the funder was and what kind of grants were received in their institution. Given the kind of responses, it was apparent that once in a while the academic staff in Uganda Martyrs University interacts with their colleagues from public universities whose operations perhaps tend to be open to the stakeholders. Nonetheless, Uganda Martyrs University

is categorized under private entities whose operations are confined at the top among which funds acquired are inclusive and thus the academic staff can hardly change such a protocol even if they (academic staff) seek to find out how other universities operate.

Conclusion

The rejection of the null hypothesis was a reasonable proof that there was a significant relationship between financial resource mobilization projects and academic staff commitment. Therefore, following the research findings and subsequent discussion, it was concluded that financial resource mobilization projects have a significant positive relationship with academic staff professional job commitment at Uganda Martyrs University; hence the implication that relevant authorities or agents, in their quest to enhance academic staff commitment, should involve academic staff in specific financial mobilization projects. This will ensure a steady and timely availability of financial resources to cater for the needs and facilitation of the lecturers, which in turn will boost their job commitment.

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