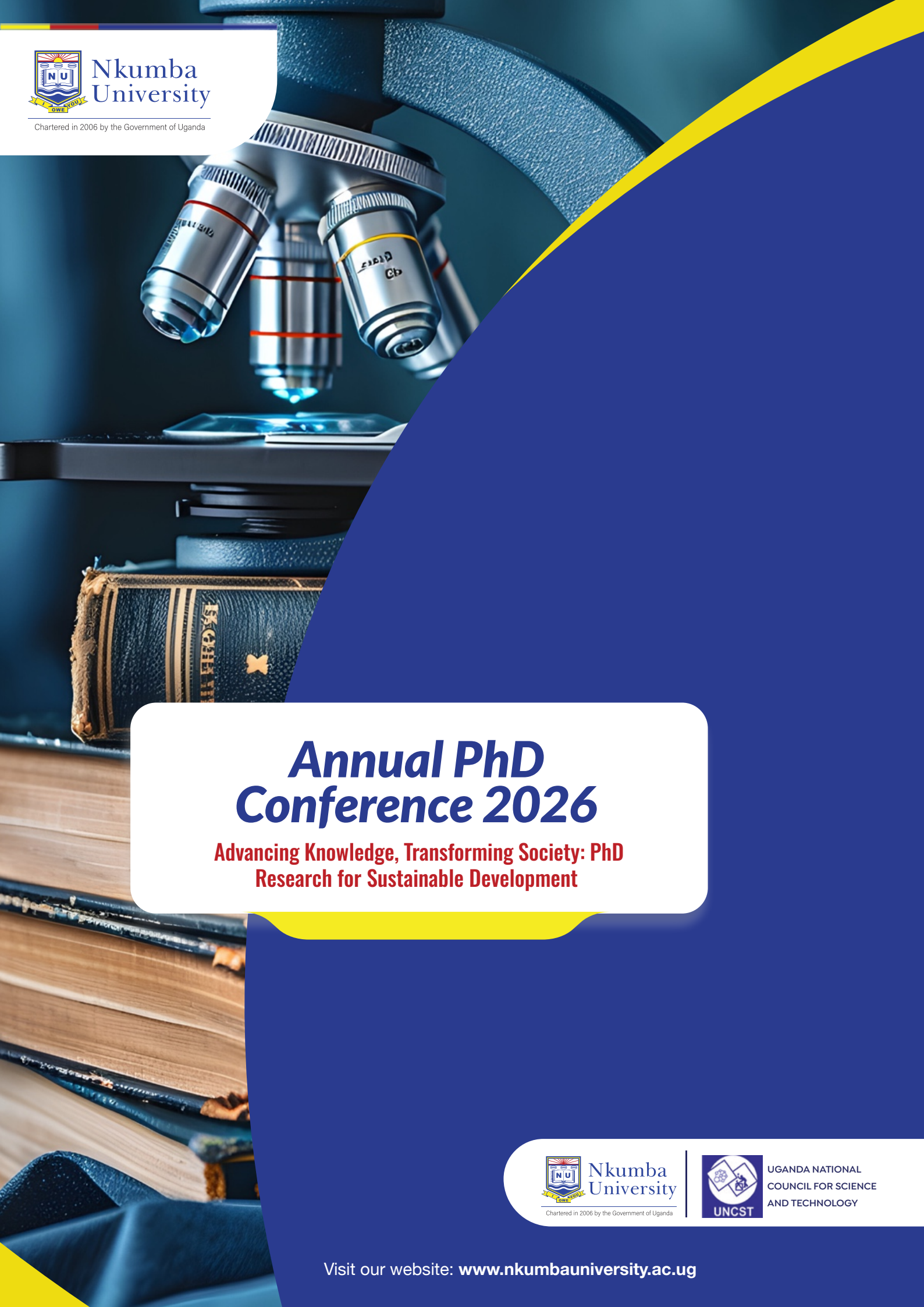
Nkumba University

Chartered in 2006 by the Government of Uganda



Annual PhD Conference 2026

Advancing Knowledge, Transforming Society: PhD Research for Sustainable Development

Nkumba University

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UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

UNCST

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ANNUAL PhD CONFRENCE PROGRAM			
TIME	**ACTIVITY**	**IN-CHARGE**	**DESIGNATION**
8:00 AM	Arrival & Registration	Secretariat	NIRC
8:30	Remarks by the Chairperson of the Conference	Assoc. Prof. Solomon Muchwa Asiimwe	Director DPRS
8:35	Remarks by Nkumba Vice Chancellor	Prof. Jude Lubega	Vice Chancellor-Nkumba University
8:40	Keynote Address by the Guest of Honor	Dr. James Kisaale	Executive Secretary of the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST)

LEVEL III			
SESSION ONE			
TIME	**TOPIC**	**PRESENTER(S)**	**SESSION CHAIR**
09:00	Influence of Instructional Resources on the Quality of Secondary Education at Ordinary Level in Elgon Zone, Eastern Uganda.	Jackson MATSANGA	**Prof. F. E Bakabulinde**
09:15	Development of, and Proposing Test of Validity, Reliability, and Independence of the Constructs in, an Instrument for Studying Completion of Doctoral Studies Trough the Lens of Self-Determination Theory of	Mariascovia KENGAIGA	
09:30	Beyond the Ivory Tower: Research Activities and Community Engagement Outcomes in Selected Universities in Central Uganda	Steven SEBBALE	
09:45	Strengthening onternal communication and Stakeholder participation in higher education: An analysis of Makerere University	Peter MWANJE	
	Q&A		
10:10	Legitimacy in University Affiliation Relationships: Perceptions of Tutors and Managers in Early Childhood Education Teacher Training Institutions Affiliated with Makerere University	Monica MUDONDO KAWONGOLO	**Prof. F. E Bakabulinde**
10:25	Customer Relationship Management and Firm Profitability in Hotels in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, Uganda	Christopher SEBULIBA	
10:40	**Q&A**		
	WORKING BREAK TEA		
	SESSION TWO		
	TOPIC	**PRESENTER(S)**	**SESSION CHAIR**
10:55	Political Decentralization and Local Service Delivery in South Sudan: Empirical Evidence from Three Counties in Western Equatoria State.	Moudie Anthony Zingari Negumba (Online)	**Prof. Solomon Muchwa Asiimwe**
11:10	An interrogation of the precursor effect of logistics management practices on perceived financial performance among managers in cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda	Eric OKELLO	
11:25	Social Support And Psychological Well-Being Among Elderly Catholic Nuns In Mbarara Archdiocese, Uganda	Rosette KYOGABIRWE	
11:40	Flexible Work Arrangements and Employee Engagement of Academic Staff at Private Universities in Central Uganda	Barbara Lynn AMANYA	
	Q &A		

12:10	Financial Accountability and Budgetary Control in Uganda's Parliamentary Commission	Justine KALEMBE	Dr. Hilda Mpiriwe
12:25	Male Allyship in Advancing the Career Development of Female Academics at Makerere University	Prossy NAKAGGWA	
12:40	Goodhue and Thompson's (1995) Task–Technology Fit Model: Development, Validation, and Constructs' Evaluation of an Instrument for Measuring the Performance Impact of Management Information Systems in Makerere University	OPEREMO Vincent & BAKKABULINDI Fredrick E. K	
12:55	Community Self-help Project and Enhancement of Socio-economic Well-being: Evidence from Rwanda	Dominique NZABANDORA	
01:45	LUNCH BREAK		
02:30	Effectiveness of Makerere University E-learning Environment: A Quantitative Study Based on DeLone and McLean's (2003) Information Systems Success Model.	Patrick WAISWA	Dr. Simon Peter ONGONDIA
02:45	Examing the Influence of School Management Functions and Academic Performance of Students in Government Aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District Uganda	Robert Pius OKELLO	
02:55	Entrepreneurship Education and Training and Access to Finance among the Youth in Central Equatoria State, South Sudan	James LORO WANI	
03:15	Work Environment and Economic Security Outcomes Among Pineapple Value Chain Communities in Selected Districts of Central Uganda	Hilary MUHEEZANGANGO	
03:30	The Contribution of Financial Reward System on Job Satisfaction of Non-commissioned Officers in the South Sudan People's Defence Force	Aciec Benjamin Garang	Dr. Florence NAKAMANYA
03:45	Financial Reporting Quality and Financial Performance of Private Secondary Schools in Kagadi District, Western Uganda	Stephen DUSENGIMANA	
04:15	Q & A		
BACK TO THE MAIN PRENARY			

BREAK OUT- PhD LIBRARY / SESSION ONE			
TIME	**TOPIC**	**PRESENTER(S)**	**SESSION CHAIR**
09:00	Graduate Students' Lived Experiences with Mental Health Services at Makerere University: A phenomenlogical Inquiry	Rebecca NAMAKULA	**Dr. Anne ABAHO**
09:15	Skilled Birth Attendance and Health-Related Quality of Life among Young Mothers 10-24 years in Eastern Uganda	Joan NAKKAZI	
09:30	Performance of Agricultural Producer Cooperatives and Economic Development Sustainability of Rural Farmers in Burundi: A Case of Ngozi Province	Simeon NYANDWI	
09:45	Balancing Tradition and Modernity of Agriculture Practices; Small Holder Farmer Perspectives on Fertiler Adoption and Improved Crop Varieties in the Teso Sub-region, Uganda	Vivien AKULLO	
	Q & A		
10:10	Popular culture and trend adoption in contemporary Ugandan textiles: A case of selected textile industries in Kampala and Mukono Districts.	Muturi KIMANI	
10:25	The Role of Revitalized Community Empowerment Practices in Enhancing Local Ownership of Tourism Enterprises Alleviating Poverty in the Kinigi Sector, Rwanda	Sammie CHOMBO WALE	
10:40	Q & A		

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Vice Chancellor, Nkumba University

PROF. JUDE T LUBEGA

Fellow researchers, scholars, PhD candidates, partners, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to welcome you to the Annual PhD Conference 2026, held in partnership with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), under the theme: "Advancing Knowledge, Transforming Society: PhD Research for Sustainable Development."

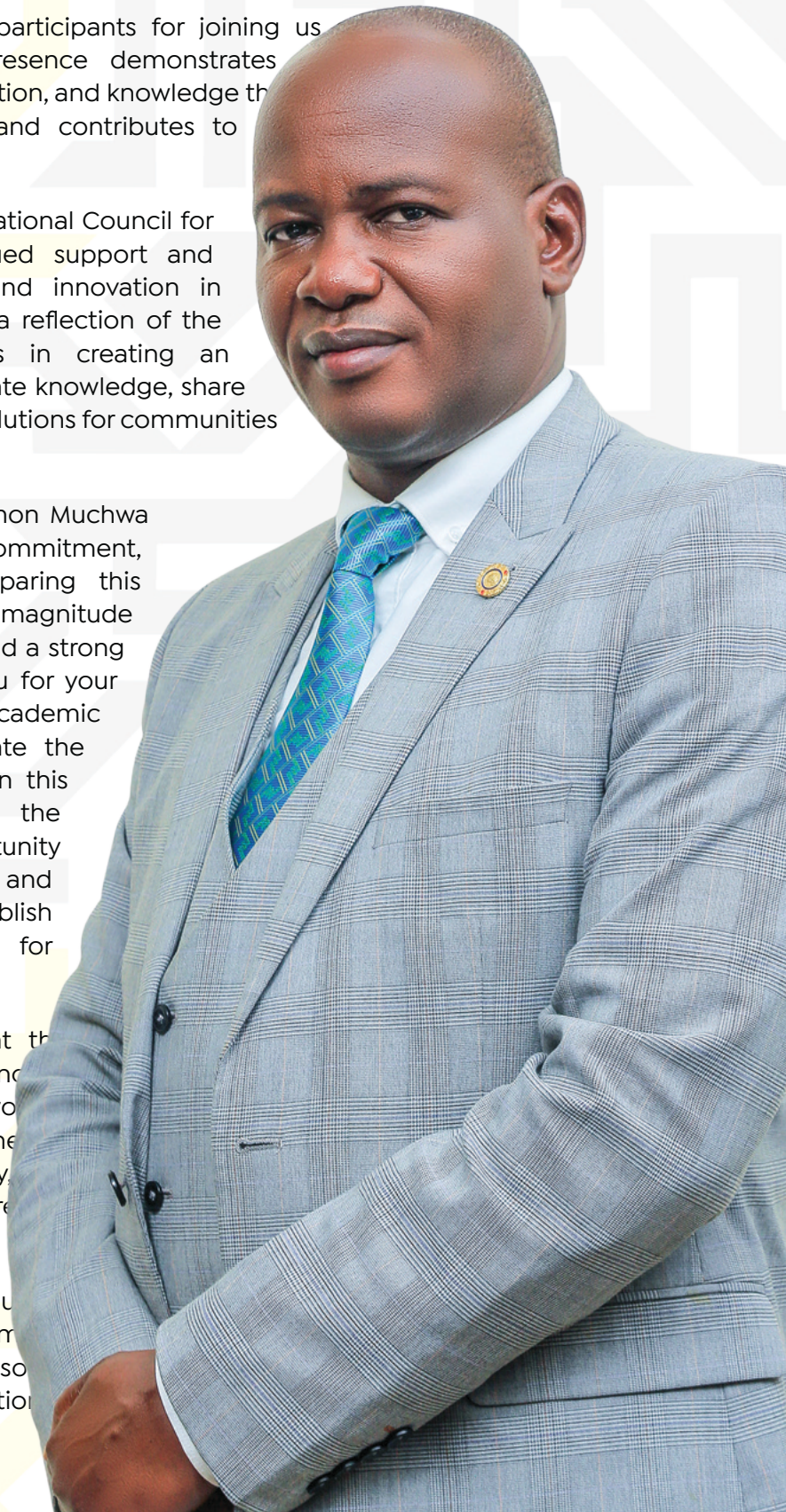
I extend my sincere appreciation to all participants for joining us important academic gathering. Your presence demonstrates commitment to advancing research, innovation, and knowledge th responds to the needs of our society and contributes to sustainable development.

In a special way, I commend the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology for its continued support and partnership in strengthening research and innovation in Uganda. Our collaboration with UNCST is a reflection of the importance of institutional partnerships in creating an environment where researchers can generate knowledge, share ideas, and translate research findings into solutions for communities and industries.

I also commend Associate Professor Solomon Muchwa and the entire organizing team for the commitment, dedication, and effort invested in preparing this conference. Organizing a conference of this magnitude requires teamwork, candid coordination, and a strong belief in the value of research. I thank you for your contribution towards making this academic engagement possible. I equally appreciate the universities and institutions participating in this conference. Your engagement enriches the academic discourse and provides an opportunity for researchers from different disciplines and institutions to learn from one another, establish collaborations and identify opportunities for joint research.

At Nkumba University, we recognize that th complex challenges facing our society canno addressed by one institution or discipline wo in isolation. Academic partnerships are the essential in strengthening research capacity, expertise, mobilising resources and incre impact of research.

Through meaningful partnerships between u industry and other stakeholders, we can m publications and classrooms into practical so strengthen institutions and contribute to natio



This conference should therefore be viewed not only as a platform for presenting research, but also as a space for building lasting academic and research partnerships.

The theme of this conference is particularly relevant at a time when technology is rapidly transforming almost every aspect of society. Universities must remain at the forefront of understanding these changes and preparing society to benefit from them responsibly.

There is an urgent need for more research into technological advancement, particularly how emerging technologies can be adapted to address local challenges in areas such as health, agriculture, education, business, governance, and environmental sustainability.

We must also deepen research into eLearning and digital transformation in higher education. The evolution of digital learning has demonstrated the potential of technology to expand access to education, enhance flexibility and support lifelong learning. However, questions of digital inclusion, quality assurance, connectivity, digital skills, cybersecurity, learner engagement and the effectiveness of online and blended learning require continued scholarly attention.

Equally important is the growing influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is already reshaping teaching, learning, research, employment and the wider economy. Higher education institutions must therefore invest in research that examines both the opportunities and challenges presented by AI. We need evidence-based approaches to responsible AI adoption, academic integrity, research ethics, data protection, skills development and the future of work.

As universities, we must not simply be consumers of technological innovations. We must become producers of knowledge, innovators and critical thinkers who shape how these technologies are developed and applied to serve humanity.

I would like to emphasize one important aspect of this conference: the journey of research should not end with presentation.

The research papers and findings presented here should, where appropriate, progress towards publication in credible, peer-reviewed academic journals. Publication is a critical component of building the body of knowledge because it allows research findings to reach a wider academic and professional community, invites scholarly scrutiny, supports further research and creates a lasting record of new knowledge.

I therefore encourage our PhD researchers and scholars to take the necessary steps to refine their conference papers, respond to scholarly feedback and pursue publication. A conference presentation creates an opportunity for dialogue; a well-published research paper creates a lasting contribution to knowledge.

We must strive to build a culture in which research moves from question to investigation, to presentation, to publication, and ultimately to impact.

As we deliberate during this conference, let us remain focused on research that is rigorous, innovative, ethical and relevant to the challenges facing our communities and the world.

I am confident that the discussions, presentations and collaborations arising from this conference will contribute significantly to advancing knowledge and transforming society.

Once again, I thank the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology for its continued partnership, Associate Professor Solomon Muchwa and the organizing committee for their tireless efforts, and all participating universities, scholars, researchers and PhD candidates for being part of this important academic engagement.

I wish you fruitful deliberations, meaningful scholarly exchanges, and the establishment of partnerships that will continue long after this conference.

Thank you, and welcome to Nkumba University.

Prof. Jude Lubega

Vice Chancellor

Nkumba University

Guest of Honor

James Kisaale (PhD)

The Chancellor,

The Vice Chancellors present,

Distinguished Professors and Researchers,

Our Development Partners,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is both a pleasure and a privilege to join you at this year's Annual PhD Conference. Allow me to begin by congratulating the organisers for bringing together one of the most important communities in Uganda's development journey the community of researchers.



I have attended many conferences over the years, but there is something unique about a gathering of doctoral researchers. Here, we are not merely discussing ideas. We are discussing the future of our country.

The theme before us—"Advancing Knowledge, Transforming Society: PhD Research for Sustainable Development"—captures one of the greatest truths of human progress. Every civilisation that has advanced has done so because it invested in knowledge. Every nation that has escaped poverty has done so because it discovered, created, adapted and applied new knowledge.

No country has ever innovated its way to prosperity without investing in research. Knowledge has always been humanity's greatest renewable resource. When our ancestors discovered agriculture, societies changed. When scientists discovered electricity, economies changed. When researchers developed vaccines, millions of lives were saved. More recently, advances in artificial intelligence, biotechnology and renewable energy are once again reshaping the world—not because they emerged by chance, but because someone devoted years to asking difficult questions and pursuing answers through research.

That is exactly what doctoral education represents.

A PhD is much more than the highest academic qualification. It is society's investment in individuals who have been trained to ask questions that no one has answered before. It is an investment in people who create knowledge rather than merely consume it.

Every doctoral thesis represents an opportunity to solve a problem that has challenged society for years. Every successful defence represents another person equipped to change lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Uganda today stands at a very important point in its development journey.

Our aspirations under Vision 2040 and the Fourth National Development Plan are ambitious. We seek to transform Uganda into a modern, industrialised and knowledge-based economy. We seek to create jobs for our growing population, strengthen healthcare, modernise agriculture, accelerate industrialisation, embrace digital transformation and improve the quality of life for every Ugandan.

These aspirations cannot be achieved through infrastructure alone. They cannot be achieved through policy alone. Neither can they be achieved through financial investment alone. They will only be achieved if we invest in people who generate solutions.

That is where universities become indispensable.

Universities are not simply institutions that confer degrees. They are the engines of national transformation. Within their laboratories, libraries, innovation hubs and field stations lies the capacity to solve Uganda's most pressing challenges.

This is precisely why the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology places research at the centre of national development.

UNCST was established to coordinate, regulate and promote science, technology and innovation in Uganda. While many know us for research regulation and ethical oversight, our mandate extends much further. We are responsible for strengthening the entire research ecosystem—from developing national STI policies and coordinating research systems to promoting knowledge translation and supporting evidence-informed decision-making.

Increasingly, our responsibility is not simply to ensure that research is conducted ethically. It is to ensure that research matters.

Research should not end on a library shelf. Research should improve lives.

This conviction has shaped much of the work we have undertaken over the past few years. Through national surveys on research and development, innovation, scientific infrastructure and research capacity, UNCST has sought to understand where Uganda stands and where it needs to go.

What the evidence tells us is encouraging.

Uganda's research ecosystem is steadily growing. Universities are producing more master's and doctoral graduates than ever before. Research institutions continue to expand. International collaborations are increasing. Scientific infrastructure, although still inadequate, continues to improve. More importantly, there is growing recognition across government that science, technology and innovation are indispensable to economic transformation.

One recent national study undertaken by UNCST examined the participation of female doctorate holders in Uganda's research ecosystem. The findings tell a remarkable story.

The study identified 642 female doctorate holders who obtained their qualifications from 331 universities across 38 countries. Nearly 95 percent are employed, and the overwhelming majority are working in positions aligned with their doctoral qualifications. Many are leading research programmes, shaping national policy, teaching future generations and contributing directly to Uganda's development in agriculture, health, education, engineering and governance.

These findings remind us that investment in advanced education produces measurable national returns.

Yet the same evidence also reminds us that talent alone is not enough.

Many of these researchers continue to face inadequate funding, limited research infrastructure, insufficient opportunities for commercialisation and barriers that reduce their full contribution to national development.

The lesson is clear.

Producing PhDs is only half the journey. Creating

an environment in which they can thrive is equally important.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is changing rapidly. Artificial intelligence is transforming industries. Climate change is demanding new agricultural systems. Emerging diseases continue to test our public health systems. Digital economies are replacing traditional models of production.

The jobs our children will hold ten years from now may not even exist today. In such a world, countries that merely consume knowledge will always remain behind those that produce it.

Uganda must therefore become not only a consumer of global knowledge but also a producer of knowledge that addresses African realities. This places a special responsibility upon every doctoral candidate gathered here today. Your research should not simply satisfy academic curiosity. It should answer questions that matter to farmers struggling with declining yields.

It should improve health services for mothers and children. It should strengthen governance. It should create technologies that industries can adopt. It should influence policies that improve lives. It should contribute to sustainable development.

The future of doctoral education will not be measured solely by the number of theses we produce.

It will increasingly be measured by the problems we solve.

This also calls upon universities to rethink doctoral training. The challenges confronting society do not respect disciplinary boundaries. Food security requires agronomists, engineers, economists and climate scientists working together. Public health demands collaboration between clinicians, data scientists, behavioural scientists and social researchers. Sustainable cities require architects, environmental scientists, economists and policy experts.

The next generation of doctoral research must therefore become more interdisciplinary, more collaborative and more closely connected to communities, government and industry.

At UNCST, we remain committed to creating an enabling environment for such research. We will continue strengthening research governance, improving national research statistics, promoting Open Science, supporting technology transfer and commercialisation, and building partnerships that ensure research moves from laboratories into society.

Our ambition is simple but profound: that every research project funded, every thesis defended and every innovation developed should contribute in some way to Uganda's national transformation.

As I conclude, allow me to leave you with one thought.

When future generations look back at our time, they will not ask how many conferences we organised. They will not ask how many papers we published.

They will ask whether our knowledge changed the lives of ordinary people. That is the true purpose of research.It is not simply to discover what is unknown.

It is to transform what is possible. I therefore encourage every doctoral researcher here today to pursue excellence with purpose, to conduct research with integrity, and to ensure that your work leaves a lasting legacy for Uganda and beyond.

Together, let us advance knowledge. Together, let us transform society. Together, let us build a sustainable future through research.

I thank you for your kind attention.

For God and My Country.

James Kisaale (PhD)

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Director Postgraduate Studies & Research

ASSOC. PROF. SOLOMON MUCHWA ASIIMWE

The Vice Chancellor,

The Academic Registrar,

Deans, Directors, and Heads of Departments,

Our Keynote Speaker and Panelists,

Our Esteemed PhD Candidates and Supervisors,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is my distinct honour and privilege, on behalf of the School of Postgraduate Studies and Research at Nkumba University, to welcome you all to our Annual PhD Conference.

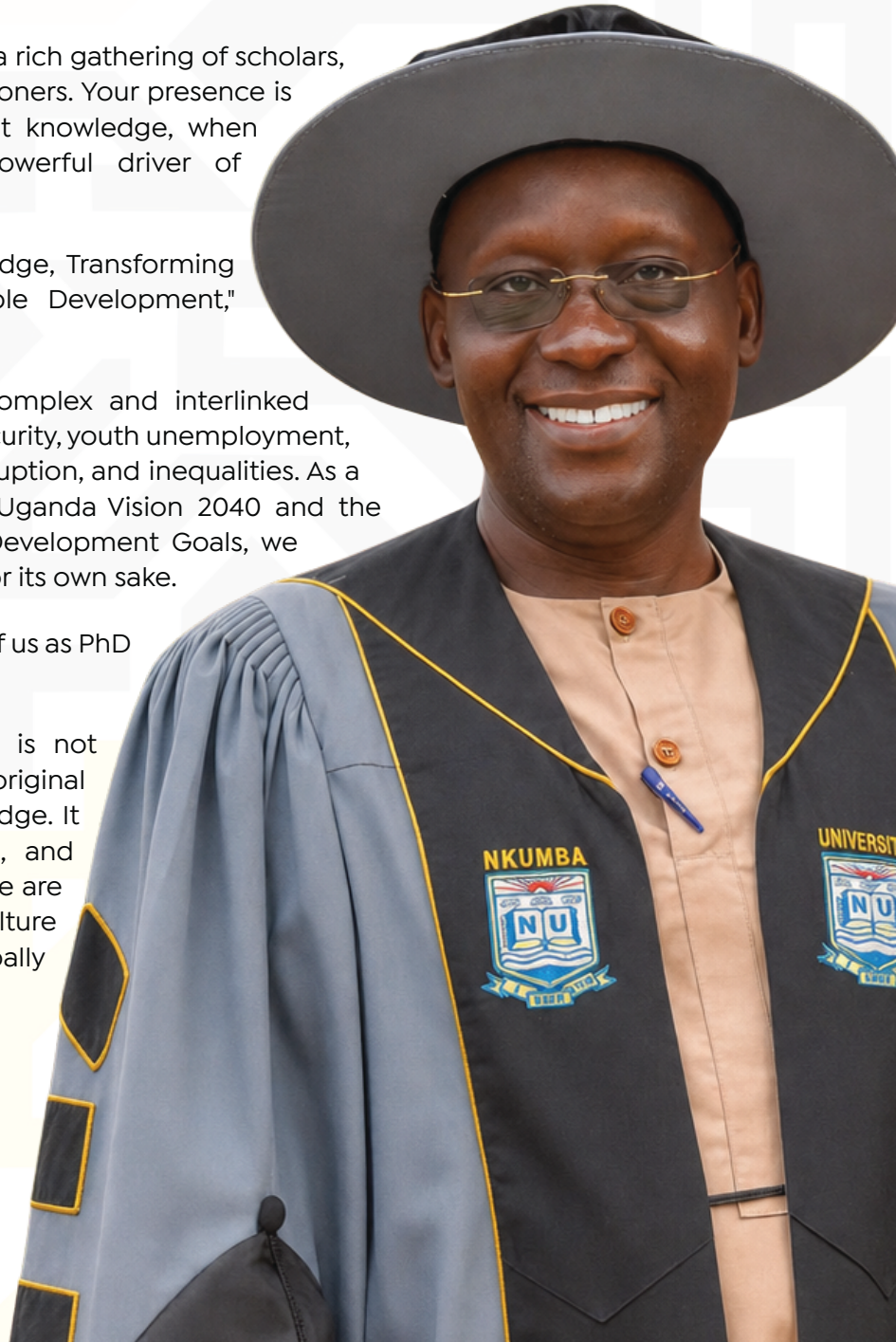
I am particularly delighted to see such a rich gathering of scholars, researchers, policy makers, and practitioners. Your presence is a testament to our shared belief that knowledge, when rigorously pursued, is the most powerful driver of transformation.

This year's theme, "Advancing Knowledge, Transforming Society: PhD Research for Sustainable Development," could not be more timely and relevant.

We live in a world confronted by complex and interlinked challenges - climate change, food insecurity, youth unemployment, public health vulnerabilities, digital disruption, and inequalities. As a University, and as a nation pursuing Uganda Vision 2040 and the global Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals, we cannot afford to produce knowledge for its own sake.

Our theme makes two clear demands of us as PhD scholars:

First, to Advance Knowledge. A PhD is not merely an academic exercise. It is an original contribution to the frontiers of knowledge. It demands rigour, integrity, innovation, and critical inquiry. At Nkumba University, we are committed to nurturing a research culture that is ethical, relevant, and globally competitive.



Second, to Transform Society. The true test of our PhDs is not how well they are shelved in the library, but

how well they solve real problems in our communities. How does your research improve the life of a farmer in Mpigi? How does it strengthen a small business in Entebbe? How does it improve learning in our schools, justice in our courts, and health in our hospitals? That is the transformation we speak of - research that moves from the thesis to society.

Sustainable development reminds us that this transformation must be balanced. It must meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It must be economically viable, socially inclusive, and environmentally responsible.

To our PhD candidates present today: This conference is your intellectual home. It is a platform to present your work, to receive constructive critique, to network, and to be inspired. Do not fear to be challenged - that is how knowledge is refined. Use this opportunity to sharpen your arguments and to broaden your perspective beyond your discipline.

To our supervisors and mentors: Thank you for your tireless dedication in guiding these emerging scholars. Your role in upholding quality and integrity is the bedrock of our postgraduate programme.

As the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies and Research, we reaffirm our commitment to:

1. Strengthening our research supervision and mentorship systems,

2. Enhancing research dissemination through publications and conferences like this one,

3. And fostering partnerships that translate research into policy and practice.

On that note, I officially welcome you to this conference. I look forward to two days of robust debate, insightful presentations, and collaborative learning.

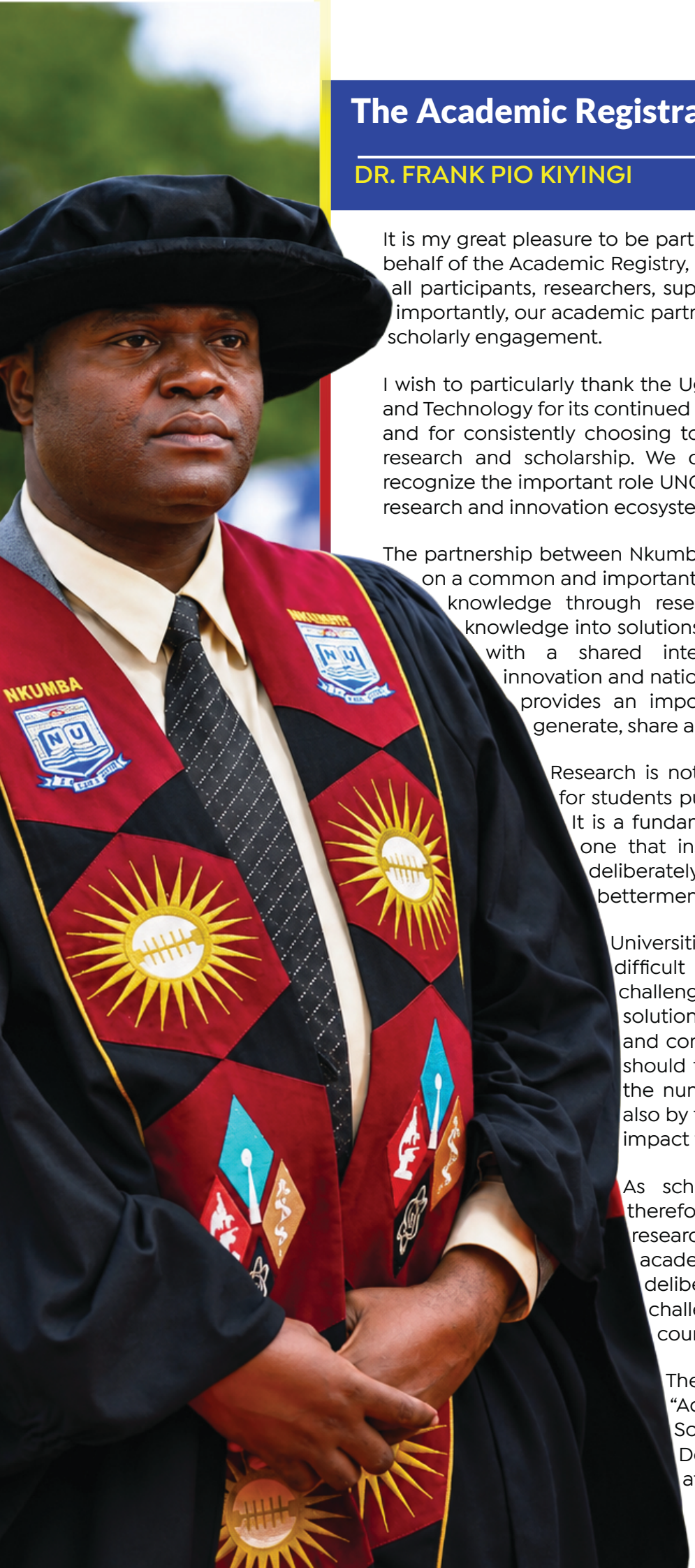
I thank you for your attention, and I wish you a very fruitful conference.

For God and My Country.

Prof. Solomon Muchwa Asiimwe

Director, School of Postgraduate Studies & Research

Nkumba University



The Academic Registrar, Nkumba University

DR. FRANK PIO KIYINGI

It is my great pleasure to be part of this Annual PhD Conference. On behalf of the Academic Registry, I extend my sincere appreciation to all participants, researchers, supervisors, academic staff, and, most importantly, our academic partners for being part of this important scholarly engagement.

I wish to particularly thank the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology for its continued partnership with Nkumba University and for consistently choosing to collaborate with us in advancing research and scholarship. We deeply value this relationship and recognize the important role UNCST plays in strengthening Uganda's research and innovation ecosystem.

The partnership between Nkumba University and UNCST is founded on a common and important commitment: the advancement of knowledge through research and the translation of that knowledge into solutions that benefit society. As institutions with a shared interest in strengthening research, innovation and national development, our collaboration provides an important platform for researchers to generate, share and apply knowledge.

Research is not simply an academic requirement for students pursuing postgraduate qualifications. It is a fundamental mandate of universities and one that institutions of higher learning must deliberately and intentionally pursue for the betterment of society.

Universities have a responsibility to ask difficult questions, investigate emerging challenges, generate evidence and propose solutions that can influence policy, industry and communities. The value of a university should therefore not only be measured by the number of graduates it produces, but also by the knowledge it generates and the impact that knowledge creates.

As scholars and researchers, we must therefore cultivate a culture in which research is not undertaken merely to fulfil academic requirements, but as a deliberate contribution to solving real challenges facing our communities, our country and the world.

The theme of this year's conference, "Advancing Knowledge, Transforming Society: PhD Research for Sustainable Development," could not have come at a more appropriate time. The

world is undergoing rapid transformation driven by technological advancement, artificial intelligence, climate change, digitalization, demographic changes, and evolving economic and social realities. These developments present both opportunities and challenges that require evidence-based responses.

PhD research provides an important avenue through which these complex issues can be investigated deeply and systematically. Our researchers must therefore seek to generate knowledge that not only expands academic literature but also contributes to sustainable solutions.

Advancing knowledge means going beyond what is already known. It requires researchers to challenge assumptions, identify knowledge gaps, generate new evidence, and develop innovative approaches to existing and emerging problems.

Transforming society, on the other hand, requires us to ensure that the knowledge we generate has relevance beyond academic circles. Research should inform policy, improve practice, stimulate innovation, support industry and ultimately contribute to better lives.

This is particularly important in areas such as technology, artificial intelligence, eLearning and digital transformation in higher education. These areas are rapidly changing the way we learn, work and interact, and they require continuous research to ensure that their adoption is relevant, ethical, inclusive and beneficial to society.

To our PhD candidates, this conference carries particular significance. For many of you, this may be the final research conference before you complete your doctoral journey and graduate. It is therefore a combination of years of intellectual investment and an opportunity to reflect on the contribution your research can make beyond the university.

I encourage you not to regard graduation as the end of your research journey. The award of a PhD should mark the beginning of an even greater responsibility to contribute to the body of knowledge.

Continue researching. Continue asking questions. Continue publishing. Continue collaborating with other scholars and institutions. Most importantly, continue using your expertise to address the challenges confronting society.The knowledge and skills acquired during your doctoral journey should position you not only as holders of academic qualifications, but as researchers, innovators, thought leaders, and problem-solvers capable of making meaningful contributions to society.

I also encourage participants to use this conference to establish networks and academic partnerships that can extend beyond this gathering. Research thrives through collaboration, constructive criticism, and the exchange of ideas. Let us therefore create connections that lead to joint research, publications, innovations and sustainable solutions.

I commend everyone who has worked to make this conference possible and wish all participants fruitful discussions, constructive academic engagements and meaningful research collaborations.

May this conference inspire us to advance knowledge, transform society, and make research a lasting instrument for sustainable development.

I Owe You

Dr. Frank Pio Kiyingi

Academic Registrar, Nkumba University

TOPIC

The Contribution Of Financial Reward System On Job Satisfaction Of Non-Commissioned Officers In The South Sudan People's Defence Force

Keywords: Financial reward; Job satisfaction; Non-commissioned officers; Military HR; South Sudan; Supervision; Total rewards.

AUTHOR

Aciec Benjamin Garang Kuot

PhD Candidate, Nkumba University, Uganda



ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper examines the contribution of the financial reward system to job satisfactionamong non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in the South Sudan People's Defence Force (SSPDF). The studyquantifies the share of variation in overall job satisfaction explained by financial rewardperceptions and situates pay within a broader set of job satisfiers (supervision, social ties, recognition).

Design/methodology/approach: A convergent mixed-methods design was used.Quantitativedata derive from a structured survey administered at SSPDF GHQ (N = 166). Analyses includeddescriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation and both simple and multiple linearregressions. Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions and semi-structuredinterviews (n ≈ 20) and thematically coded to contextualise quantitative findings.

Findings:Bivariate analysis shows a positive, statistically significant correlation between military rewardmanagement and job satisfaction ($r = .358$, $p < .01$). A simple linear regression indicates themilitary reward system accounts for approximately 12–13% of variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 \approx .128$; $F(1,164) = 24.164$; $p < .01$). In the multiple regression model, satisfaction with pay is asubstantive predictor (standardized $\beta \approx .339$, $p < .001$) alongside supervisory quality and socialcohesion measures. Qualitative narratives explain mechanisms: pay reduces household strain(instrumental effect) but its motivational value is conditioned by timeliness, perceived fairness and supervisory behaviour (procedural and relational moderators).

Practical implications: Financialrewards are necessary but not sufficient. Policy should prioritise timely and transparent paymentsystems, integrate pay with family-centred facilitation, and strengthen supervisory development andlow-cost recognition mechanisms to magnify the effect of pay on job satisfaction.

Originality/value: The study contributes empirical evidence from a fragile-state military thatquantifies the modest yet meaningful contribution of financial reward systems to NCO jobsatisfaction and demonstrates the importance of complementary administrative and relational reforms.

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is a key human-resource outcome linked to retention, performance and organizational climate. While civilian organisations dominate the empirical literature, military organisations havedistinct features, hierarchical command, irregular deployments, separation from families and exposure to conflict, that shape job experiences and the meaning of pay and rewards (Locke, 1976; Newstrom,2015; Alvinius, Johansson & Larsson, 2017). For non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in the SSPDF, the financial reward system (base pay, allowances, increments) intersects with facilitation-in-kind, supervision, and social ties to form a complex package affecting satisfaction. This manuscript computes and explains the contribution of the financial reward system to overall job satisfactionamong SSPDF NCOs, drawing on survey data (N = 166) and qualitative interviews. The paper addresses: (a) conceptualisation of job satisfaction in military settings; (b) empirical descriptionof NCOs' job satisfiers; (c) statistical estimation of the contribution of financial rewards tosatisfaction; (d) qualitative mechanisms; (e) discussion and policy implications.

THE CONCEPT OF JOB SATISFACTION IN MILITARY CONTEXTS

Job satisfaction is commonly defined as the pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting fromthe appraisal of one's job experiences (Locke, 1976). It is inherently multidimensional, encompassing intrinsic facets (achievement, recognition), extrinsic facets (pay, promotionopportunities), and contextual or social facets (supervision quality, peer relations). In militarycontexts, distinctive stressors, frequent separations, operational risk, rigid commandstructures, mean that extrinsic rewards (pay) and facilitation (housing, medical access) often carryheightened weight because they directly affect family welfare and survival (Makhathini & Van Dyk,2018; Alvinius et al., 2017). Thus, measuring job satisfaction among NCOs necessitates capturing payperceptions, supervision, social cohesion and family-centred supports.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section expands the literature review with recent empirical and policy-relevant work onmilitary compensation, psychological contract and total-rewards approaches in defence and public-sector settings. The aim is to situate the SSPDF findings within up-to-date scholarship and reviews.

Recent large-scale policy reviews and studies in high-income defence contexts have renewed attentionto military compensation and benefits. The Fourteenth Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation(QRMC-14, 2025) and related RAND analyses (Asch et al., 2025) examine how compensation benchmarksand benefit structures affect recruitment, retention and family wellbeing. These reports emphasisethat pay competitiveness must be considered alongside total benefits, including housing, healthcoverage and family supports, when assessing the adequacy of military reward systems. Such macro-level reviews underscore that compensation reforms are a system-level problem involving payrollintegrity, budgetary protection and program design.

Empirical research in diverse military settings continues to show that while pay influences jobsatisfaction, the magnitude and pathways vary. For example, Dagher et al. (2024) analysed motivationand job satisfaction in the Lebanese Armed Forces and found that intrinsic and extrinsic factorsinteract in complex ways; pay mattered, but organisational climate and leadership quality wereequally important. Kioulepoglou et al. (2024) compared job satisfaction across military and aviationprofessionals during the COVID-19 era and highlighted context-specific stressors that modified howpay and recognition influenced satisfaction. These studies support the SSPDF finding that pay isnecessary but not sufficient.

Psychological contract research in military and public-sector contexts has expanded recently, withstudies linking contract breach to turnover intentions and safety compliance (Kraak et al., 2022)and exploring the role of passion and job identity in contract dynamics (Löffert, 2023). Sui et al.(2023) documented relationships between psychological contract measures and mental and physicalhealth, indicating that contract fulfilment has broader wellbeing implications. These works suggestthat financial and non-financial obligations jointly shape perceptions of reciprocity and trust inhierarchical organisations like the military.Total-rewards and HR practice research emphasises integrated packages of cash and non-cash benefits.

WorldatWork inventories (2022) and World Bank guidance for fragile states (2019) recommend pairingpay reforms with on-site health services, hazard pay, and family-focused benefits. Recent appliedresearch (RAND, 2025) examines how benefit design and payroll efficiency affect the realisation ofcompensation promises. Such literature supports the recommendation that SSPDF reforms should combinepayroll timeliness with clearer entitlement rules and family support mechanisms.

Comparative studies in low- and middle-income settings also speak to the SSPDF case. Willis-Shattucket al. (2008) reviewed health worker motivation in developing countries and showed that non-monetaryincentives can substantially affect retention where pay is constrained. Kisang (2021) synthesized evidence on African military welfare, showing that in-kind provisioning and welfare visibilityinfluence morale. Recent scoping reviews of military culture (Heward et al., 2024) reiterate thecentrality of organisational supports and leadership in shaping job attitudes.

Taken together, these recent studies and policy reviews reinforce the thesis that financial rewardsmatter but operate within an administrative and relational system. This expanded literaturecontextualises the SSPDF findings and motivates policy proposals that integrate pay, facilitation-in-kind and leadership development.

METHODOLOGY

A convergent mixed-methods design combined cross-sectional survey analysis (N = 166) and qualitativeinterviews (≈20). Quantitative procedures included Pearson correlations and linear regression(simple and multiple). Scales demonstrated acceptable psychometrics (Cronbach's alpha ≈ .94; KMO ≈.862). Diagnostic checks for multicollinearity (VIF < 3) and homoscedasticity were performed.

RESULTS

Descriptive results and regression analyses are presented below.

Table 1: Regression summary (Financial reward system → Job satisfaction)

Statistic	Value	Test	F / t	p-value	N
Pearson r	0.358	Correlation	—	< .01	166
Regression R^2	0.128	Linear regression	F(1,164)=24.164	< .01	166
Unstd. B (Reward)	0.351	Coefficient	t = 4.916	< .001	166

Multiple regression selected coefficients (see full appendix for full model):

Predictor	Unstd. B	Std. Error	Std. β	p-value
I am happy in my job as a soldier	.101	.021	.246	< .001
I receive excellent supervision	.058	.024	.151	.018
Good supervision satisfies me	.097	.036	.212	.008
I am satisfied with the pay I get	.138	.039	.339	< .001
I have been able to make friends	.235	.049	.363	< .001
I am committed to my job	.013	.035	.025	.722

DISCUSSION

The analysis indicates that financial rewards explain a modest but meaningful share of variation injob satisfaction among SSPDF NCOs. Pay satisfaction emerges as a substantive predictor inmultivariate models but operates alongside supervisory quality and social cohesion. Administrativetimeliness and procedural justice moderate pay's effect. Policy implications stress protectingpayroll integrity, integrating pay into a total-rewards policy, and strengthening leadershippractices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Ensure timely and transparent payroll processes: audit, publish payment calendars, and automatereconciliation.
ii. Integrate pay into a total-rewards policy with clear, rank-based entitlements andgrievance mechanisms.
iii. Invest in supervisory development (communication, EI, delegation).
iv. Pilotrecognition and emergency assistance programmes with M&E.
v. Commission longitudinal research toassess causal effects.

LIMITATIONS & CONCLUSION

Limitations include cross-sectional design and GHQ-focused sampling. Despite these limits, the studyprovides actionable insights: financial rewards matter, but their effect is maximised when payments are timely, allocations transparent, and supervisory and social supports strengthened. Reform packages should therefore combine administrative fixes with human-centric leadership development.

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APPENDIX A: SELECT SURVEY ITEMS

Job satisfaction items (5-point Likert): Overall I am satisfied with my job; I am satisfied with the pay I get; I receive excellent supervision; I have been able to make friends; I am committed to my job.

Financial reward items (5-point Likert): Salaries and allowances are paid on time; Promotions and increments are handled transparently; Adequate family/medical allowances are provided; Recent increments met expectations.

TOPIC

Flexible Work Arrangements And Employee Engagement Of Academic Staff At Private Universities In Central Uganda

Keywords: Flexible work arrangements, employee engagement, academic staff, private universities, Uganda, telework, work-life balance.

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Abstract

This study examined the association between flexible work arrangements and employee engagement among academic staff at private universities in Central Uganda. Using a cross-sectional mixed methods research design guided by a pragmatic paradigm, at five private universities, a sample of 150 academic staff was selected by simple random sampling techniques and these responded through questionnaires. In addition, 15 members of top management were purposively selected for key informant interviews based on their responsibility. Findings revealed that employees with access to flexible work arrangements reported significantly higher engagement ($M = 6.04$, $SD = 0.54$) than those without ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.00$), with ANOVA results confirming the difference ($F(1, 148) = 28.77$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that flexible work arrangements are strongly associated with increased employee motivation and commitment. Qualitative findings presented the significance of remote work, part time employment and compressed workweeks, decreasing stress and improving psychological well-being. The study concluded that solidifying flexible work arrangements is key for promoting employee engagement by strengthening vigor, dedication and absorption into work.

Introduction

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) are recognized globally & nationally as important mechanisms for promoting employee engagement & well-being (ILO, 2022). The UNDP 2024 reports SDGs 3and 8, advocate supportive work environments where effective FWAs enhance employee engagement (EE).In today's dynamic and competitive higher education landscape, employee engagement has emerged as a critical factor influencing institutional performance, staff retention, and the overall quality of academic delivery(Gede & Huluka, 2024). Academic staff, in particular, face increasing demands to balance teaching, research, administrative duties, and personal responsibilities(Yawe, 2022; Colclasure et al., 2021). As such, flexible work arrangements such as adjustable working hours, remote work options, and task-based scheduling have gained prominence as strategic human resource practices that can enhance employee well-being, motivation, and engagement(Metselaar et al., 2023).

Study Objective, Research Questionand Hypothesis

Objective

To determine the association between flexible work arrangements and employee engagement among academic staff at private universities in Central Uganda.

Research Question

What is the association between flexible work arrangements and employee engagement of academic staff at private universities in Central Uganda?

Hypothesis

Flexible work arrangements have no association with employee engagement among academic staff in private universities in Uganda academic staff at private universities in Central Uganda?

Literature Review

Flexible Working Arrangements (FWAs) refer to changeable work schedules that include a core period during which all employees have to be accessible, and a planned schedule requested in advance by the organization (Venkateshwaran & Suganya, 2021). According to Metselaar et al., 2023, the FWAs era, sometimes referred to as telework era, has been characterized by the expansion of work-hour flexibility and the delocalization of the workplace over the previous decade, thus supporting employees in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Similarly, in a study by Heiden et al., 2021, flextime and other FWAs that attempted to give employees more control positively affected their health. In agreement, Shirmohammadi et al.,(2022) states that individuals who believed their employers offer flexible work hours expressed greater job satisfaction and engagement. In agreement, Kirby et al., 2022 similarly observed that flexible and autonomous work styles increased employee productivity and engagement and supported a healthy balance between work and personal life.

Conversely, rigorous and inflexible routines negatively impacted individuals, their families, and their quality of life(Venkateshwaran & Suganya, 2021). In agreement, Shirmohammadi et al., (2022), asserts that fixed term working arrangements harmed employees' well-being, causing burnout, occupational injuries, mental health issues, and increased sick days.

Flexible work arrangements in academic institutions were found to reduce stress and enhance employees' mental health in private universities(Heiden et al., 2021). However, not all private universities have the capacity to offer their employees flexible work schedules, or general organizational support because of continuous underfunding and understaffing (Yawe, 2022; Khateeb, 2021).

Although previousstudieshave focused on public universities and remote work in other areas like the health sector(Kaggwa et al., 2022), there has been a growing demand for flexible work arrangements that address the responsibilities of private university academic staff who find themselves juggling many jobs at different universities, all requiring the same routine on facilitating classrooms, assessing students, supervising internship and research, participating in community engagement and pressure to publish for career growth (Yawe, 2022), in addition to the family responsibilities that may require a significant amount of the same time, thus, a spill over on both work and family life (Bolt & Homer, 2024).

This study thus sought to address a context-specific research gap on flexible work arrangements and the association with employee engagement attributes of vigor, dedication and absorption into work among academic staff at private Universities in central Uganda.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional mixed methods research design guided by a pragmatic paradigm, integrating Quantitative and Qualitative approaches. A sample of 150 academic staff was selected using simple random sampling techniques to ensure proportional representation across the participating universities. In addition, 15 members of top management were purposively selected for key informant interviews based on their responsibility. Academic staff constituted the quantitative component of the study because they were directly affected by the Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) implemented within their institutions. Members of top management, including university administratorsparticipated in the qualitative component to provide institutional perspectives on the design, implementation, and effectiveness of the FWAs.

Primary data were collected using structured self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. The questionnaire measured FWAs and employee engagement using validated multi-item Likert scales. The interview guide explored participants' lived experiences regarding flexible work arrangements that influenced employee engagement.

The quantitative instrument was subjected to validity and reliability testing before data collection. Content validity was established through expert review, while internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, with all study constructs exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Qualitative trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation, member checking, and the use of verbatim participant quotations to support thematic interpretations.

Quantitative data were analyzed using STATA Version 18. Descriptive statistics summarized respondents' demographic characteristics and study variables. Qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically through coding, categorization, and identification of emerging themes. The qualitative findings were integrated with the quantitative results during interpretation to provide a richer understanding of the study findings.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Clarke International University Research Ethics Committee (CIU-REC) and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) before data collection commenced. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the participating universities. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process.

Findings of the Study

Findings revealed that employees whose institutions offered flexible work policies reported a higher mean engagement score ($M = 6.04$, $SD = 0.54$) compared to those without such policies ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.00$). The difference is statistically significant, as indicated by the ANOVA results ($F(1, 148) = 28.77$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that flexible work arrangements are positively associated with higher levels of employee engagement, highlighting the potential value of such policies in promoting a more motivated and committed workforce. Employees with access to flexible work policies scored, on average, 0.78 points higher on the engagement scale than those without, controlling for other factors (coefficient = 0.7826, $p < 0.001$). Findings support 16.3% of the variation in engagement scores ($R^2 = 0.1628$), indicating a moderate effect size. The relationship is both statistically and practically significant, reinforcing the ANOVA findings and suggesting that flexible work arrangements play a meaningful role in fostering employee engagement.

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the regression results, results reject the null hypothesis that flexible work arrangements have no association with employee engagement among academic staff in private universities in Uganda. The analysis shows a statistically significant positive relationship, with a coefficient of 0.7826 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that employees with access to flexible work policies report significantly higher engagement levels. The 95% confidence interval (0.4943 to 1.0708) does not include zero, further confirming the effect. Therefore, results were consistent with previous studies and the spillover theory, thus contributing to the belief that flexible work arrangements are significantly associated with increased employee engagement among academic staff at private universities in central Uganda.

Conclusion

The study concluded that although flexible work arrangements (FWAs) were recognized but only partially implemented, FWAs are still significantly associated with employee engagement among academic staff in private universities in Central Uganda. Across the five universities, administrators acknowledged that flexibility was permitted for academic staff in adjusting lecture schedules, research, or administrative tasks. However, rigidity persisted in roles requiring fixed student contact or continuous presence on campus. This meant that while some staff benefited from flexible arrangements, others remained constrained by traditional performance expectations based on physical presence. Such limitations significantly affected the depth of employee engagement, despite staff demonstrating commitment where flexibility was applied.

The findings confirm that academic staff with access to flexible work arrangements demonstrate higher levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption than those without such arrangements. These findings support the Spillover Theory by demonstrating that supportive and flexible work environments positively influence employees' work attitudes and engagement. Therefore, the study confirms that promoting flexible work arrangements is essential for strengthening employee engagement within Uganda's private higher education sector.

Recommendations

Adoption of formal Work-Life Integration policies associated with labor laws and institutional strategy: Embrace flexible work options, including hybrid models, and evaluate performance by results rather than physical desk-presence to promote autonomy, vigor, dedication, accountability, and stronger engagement.

Link Academic Workload to Realistic Expectations: Adjust academic schedules and workloads to allow staff to benefit from flexibility without compromising teaching loads, research, or service responsibilities.

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TOPIC

Professional Development Of Core Science Teachers And Academic Performance Of Ordinary Level Secondary Students In Core Science Subjects In Selected Secondary Schools In Central Uganda

Keywords: Teacher Professional Development (TPD), Formal Practices for TPD, Informal Practices for TPD, TPD Models, SPEAD Model, Academic Performance

AUTHOR

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Introduction

This study investigated the effects of the professional development of core science subject teachers (Physics, Chemistry, and Biology) on the academic performance of Ordinary Level students in selected schools across Central Uganda. While initial tertiary teacher training equips educators with foundational skills, building a high-quality workforce requires ongoing, career-long professional development supported by dedicated school resources. Despite past initiatives such as the Secondary Science and Mathematics Teachers (SESEMAT) program introduced in 2005 to improve teaching skills and overcome persistent failures in national examinations, challenges remain in effectively sustaining quality science education due to inadequate ongoing training, resource limitations, and implementation gaps. It is therefore noted that by examining specific teacher and student experiences within this context, this research aims to provide insights into effective strategies for enhancing science teaching and improving student achievement in core science subjects.

Study Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

To examine the effect of formal teacher professional development on the academic performance of 'O' Level students in core 'O' Level science subjects in selected secondary schools in Central Uganda.

To examine the effect of informal teacher professional development on the academic performance of 'O' Level students in core 'O' Level science subjects in selected secondary schools in Central Uganda.

To analyse the effectiveness of the different models of teacher professional development available to 'O' Level teachers of core science subjects in selected secondary schools in Central Uganda.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods design guided by both social constructivist and post-positivist paradigms to capture the complexity of teacher professional development and its influence on

students' academic performance. A survey design was used to collect quantitative data, complemented by qualitative insights through interviews and document reviews. The study was conducted in 49 Universal Secondary Education (USE) schools across Central Uganda, with a target population of 23,229 and a sample size of 1,060 respondents. Respondents included Board of Governors members, headteachers, teachers, District Education Officers (DEOs), District Inspectors of Schools (DISs), parents, and students. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) for demographic characteristics, Pearson's correlation coefficient to establish relationships between key variables, and multiple regression analysis to determine the effect and contribution of professional development on student performance. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis using MaxQDA software, where transcribed responses and documentary sources were coded, categorized, and interpreted in line with the study objectives.

Key Study Findings

The study revealed high levels of engagement across various professional development dimensions, with science teachers demonstrating strong self-awareness of their instructional abilities (M = 4.74, SD = 0.520), active engagement in self-reflection (M = 4.82, SD = 0.434), and extensive participation in formal collaborations (M = 4.61, SD = 0.593), networking events (M = 4.28, SD = 0.928), and structured induction (M = 4.71, SD = 0.628). Bivariate correlation analyses indicated statistically significant, positive, yet weak relationships with student academic performance for both formal professional development (r = 0.188, p = 0.006) and the

application of different professional development models (r = 0.184, p = 0.007), whereas informal professional development yielded a weak, statistically non-significant correlation (r = 0.132, p = 0.054). Descriptive results for student performance reflected moderate to high academic self-efficacy, particularly in understanding core concepts (M = 4.14, SD = 1.103) and goal clarity (M = 4.67, SD = 0.713), alongside steady termly assessment pass rates (M = 3.63, SD = 1.176). However, multiple regression analysis demonstrated that the combined model (formal, informal, and different models) was statistically significant overall (F(3,209) = 2.985, p = 0.032) but explained only 4.1% of the total variance in student academic performance ($R2$ = 0.041, Adjusted $R2$ = 0.027), with none of the individual predictors achieving independent statistical significance (p > 0.05). Qualitative insights synthesized from key informants further clarified that while teacher training enhances pedagogical confidence, active learning techniques, and subject knowledge, its ultimate influence on student academic achievement is heavily constrained by structural challenges such as resource limitations, rigid scheduling, lack of sustained follow-up, and regional implementation disparities.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that conventional formal and informal teacher professional development (TPD) practices currently exert a statistically significant, yet relatively weak, influence on Ordinary Level students' academic performance in core science subjects across Universal Secondary Education (USE) schools in Central Uganda. Although formal workshops, in-service courses, and informal peer interactions are associated with positive teaching behaviors, existing interventions remain largely fragmented, inadequately contextualized, episodic, and unevenly accessible to science teachers. Consequently, traditional TPD approaches fail to fully translate into significant student achievement, as performance outcomes are heavily constrained by broader systemic issues, including persistent resource shortages, inadequate practical laboratory equipment, low teacher motivation, and varying student learning environments.

In evaluating TPD delivery models, the study highlights that while traditional cascade, site-based, and self-directed approaches suffer from implementation bottlenecks and information dilution, context-

sensitive frameworks yield far superior results. Specifically, the piloted Sustainable Professional Equitable Accessible Development (SPEAD) model demonstrated a substantial

improvement in learner academic performance—accounting for a 37% to 39% increase in test results in Mukono and Jinja districts respectively. Overall, the findings demonstrate that while professional development is essential for building teacher capacity, maximizing its effect on student academic performance requires moving away from ad-hoc workshops toward structured, equitable, and sustained job-embedded models like SPEAD that directly address local classroom realities.

Conclusion

All in all, the study emphasizes that while conventional teacher professional development (TPD) practices offer modest benefits, they are insufficient on their own to drive substantial improvements in Ordinary Level science performance across Universal Secondary Education (USE) schools in Central Uganda due to systemic resource constraints and implementation gaps. Ultimately, transforming student academic outcomes requires shifting away from fragmented, ad-hoc workshops toward sustained, equitable, and context-sensitive models like the SPEAD framework, which integrate continuous job-embedded training with the necessary laboratory infrastructure, teacher support, and administrative reinforcement to address classroom realities effectively.

Key Recommendations

The study recommends that to improve science education outcomes across Central Uganda, policymakers and the Ministry of Education must institutionalize continuous, job-embedded professional development, such as the SPEAD model, into the legal school calendar while providing the necessary funding, equitable access, and supportive infrastructure. Scholars and academicians should build collaborative research partnerships with schools and policymakers to evaluate both formal and informal training approaches, sharing evidence-based strategies to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Concurrently, teachers are encouraged to engage in self-reflection, peer collaboration, and continuous learning, while parents should actively advocate for teacher development and maintain open dialogue with school administration to support sustained educational growth.

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TOPIC

Influence of Instructional Resources on The Quality of Secondary Education at Ordinary Level in Elgon Zone, Eastern Uganda:

Keywords: Instructional resources; Curriculum implementation; Quality of secondary education; Secondary education.

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Extended Abstract

Quality education remains one of the principal aspirations of education systems worldwide because it determines the knowledge, competencies, skills, values, and attitudes acquired by learners for sustainable national development. The realization of quality education depends on several interrelated factors, among which instructional resources play a central role. These resources facilitate effective curriculum implementation by providing opportunities for practical learning, learner participation, critical thinking, creativity, and knowledge construction. Under Uganda's New Curriculum, instructional resources have become even more important because learner-centred pedagogy requires adequate textbooks, science laboratories, ICT facilities, libraries, charts, projectors, models, and other teaching-learning materials.

Despite continuous government investment in secondary education through Universal Secondary Education (USE) and curriculum reforms, many schools in Uganda continue to experience a problem of shortages and poor utilisation of instructional resources. These shortages have negatively affected effective curriculum implementation, learner participation, practical learning, and academic achievement. Rural schools, particularly those in Eastern Uganda, remain disproportionately affected by inadequate textbooks, poorly equipped science laboratories, limited ICT infrastructure, insufficient libraries, and unequal distribution of educational materials. Consequently, disparities in learner performance continue to exist despite national efforts to improve educational quality.

Although several scholars have investigated factors influencing learner performance, relatively few studies have specifically examined the contribution of instructional resources to the quality of secondary education within the context of Uganda's Curriculum. Existing studies often focus generally on school inputs without establishing the empirical influence of instructional resources on educational quality. This study therefore sought to bridge this knowledge gap by investigating the influence of instructional resources on the quality of secondary education at Ordinary Level in Elgon Zone, Eastern Uganda.

The study was guided by Constructivist Learning Theory, Thorndike's Connectionism Theory, and the Eagle Logic Theory (Matsanga, 2026). Constructivism argues that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with instructional materials and meaningful learning experiences. Thorndike's

Connectionism emphasizes repeated practice using appropriate learning materials to strengthen learning, while the Eagle Logic Theory posits that preparedness and readiness are indispensable prerequisites for successful curriculum implementation. Together, these theories demonstrate that instructional resources are essential facilitators of effective teaching, meaningful learning, and quality educational outcomes.

Introduction

The Quality of secondary education is fundamental to national development because it equips learners with the knowledge, skills, competencies, and values required for lifelong learning, employment, and responsible citizenship. The attainment of quality education depends on effective curriculum implementation, which is influenced by several interrelated factors, including teacher competence, learner characteristics, instructional resources, learner assessment, and school leadership. Among these factors, instructional resources play a pivotal role in facilitating meaningful teaching and learning by supporting learner-centred pedagogies, enhancing classroom interaction, and promoting critical thinking and practical skills. The introduction of the New Curriculum in Uganda has further increased the demand for adequate and appropriate instructional resources such as textbooks, science laboratories, libraries, computers, projectors, instructional charts, and other teaching-learning materials. However, many secondary schools, particularly in rural areas, continue to experience a problem of shortages, poorutilisation and inequitable distribution of these resources, thereby constraining effective curriculum implementation and compromising educational quality. Although previous studies have acknowledged the importance of instructional resources in improving learner achievement, limited empirical evidence exists regarding their influence on the quality of secondary education at Ordinary Level in Elgon Zone, Eastern Uganda. This study therefore examined the influence of instructional resources on the quality of secondary education in the region, with the aim of generating empirical evidence to inform educational policy, resource allocation, and school improvement strategies.

Study Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the influence of instructional resources on the quality of secondary education at Ordinary Level in Eastern Uganda.
2. To identify and analyse the key instructional resources influencing the quality of secondary education at Ordinary Level in Uganda.

Methodology

The study adopted a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods research design, allowing quantitative and qualitative data to be collected simultaneously and integrated during interpretation. This design enhanced the credibility and validity of the findings through methodological triangulation.

The study was conducted in selected government and private secondary schools offering Ordinary Level education in Elgon Zone, Eastern Uganda. Respondents included headteachers, teachers, Ordinary Level learners, District Education Officials, officials from the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), Boards of Governors (BOGs), and Parents–Teachers Associations (PTAs).

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed. Stratified and simple random sampling was used to select teachers and learners, while purposive sampling was used for education administrators and key informants. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussions and observation checklists.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression to establish the relationship between instructional resources and educational quality. Qualitative data were analysed thematically and integrated with quantitative findings. Statistical significance was determined at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). Reliability of the instruments was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, while content validity was established through expert review. Ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and institutional permission were strictly observed throughout the study.

Key Study Findings

The findings revealed that instructional resources significantly influence the quality of secondary education at Ordinary Level. Teachers reported an overall mean score of 3.35, while learners reported a mean score of 3.38, indicating that respondents generally agreed that instructional resources contribute positively to curriculum implementation and learner achievement.

Regression analysis demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships between instructional resources and educational quality across all respondent categories. Among headteachers, instructional resources explained approximately 50.4% of the variation in educational quality ($R^2 = 0.504$; $p = 0.027$). Teachers reported an even stronger relationship ($R^2 = 0.796$; $p = 0.029$), while learners' responses revealed a substantial positive association ($R^2 = 0.672$; $\beta = 0.82$; $p = 0.021$). These findings confirm that improvements in instructional resources significantly enhance curriculum implementation and educational outcomes.

The study further established that schools possessing adequate textbooks, libraries, science laboratories, lesson plans, instructional charts, projectors, computers, and ICT facilities consistently achieved higher levels of learner participation, improved classroom interaction, enhanced teacher effectiveness, and better learner achievement.

Qualitative findings corroborated the quantitative evidence. Teachers emphasized that instructional resources simplify lesson delivery, facilitate practical teaching, and improve learner engagement. School administrators noted that adequate instructional resources increase curriculum coverage and enhance instructional supervision. Learners equally appreciated the role of textbooks, laboratories, and ICT facilities in improving understanding of difficult concepts and promoting independent learning.

However, respondents identified several persistent challenges affecting instructional resource utilization. These included shortages of textbooks, inadequate science laboratory equipment, insufficient computers, poor internet connectivity, and restrictions on borrowing library books, limited instructional charts, and unequal distribution of educational resources between rural and urban schools. Teachers further indicated that inadequate resources often compel them to rely on photocopied notes or mobile phones during classroom instruction, thereby limiting learner-centred teaching approaches.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that instructional resources remain indispensable determinants of curriculum implementation and educational quality under Uganda's New Curriculum. Schools with adequate and effectively utilized instructional resources consistently provide better learning experiences and produce superior educational outcomes than poorly resourced institutions.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and Sports should substantially increase investment in instructional resources, particularly textbooks, ICT facilities, science laboratories, libraries, and modern teaching technologies. Equitable distribution of instructional materials should be prioritized to reduce disparities among schools.

School administrators should strengthen resource management systems to ensure effective utilization and equitable access to instructional materials by both teachers and learners. Continuous professional development programmes should be organized to equip teachers with skills for selecting, improvising, integrating, and effectively utilizing instructional resources during curriculum implementation.

The National Curriculum Development Centre should continue reviewing and approving quality instructional materials that align with Uganda's New Curriculum. Government should also strengthen digital infrastructure by expanding internet connectivity and computer access in secondary schools to support technology-enhanced learning. Furthermore, science laboratories should be adequately equipped with modern apparatus and chemicals to facilitate practical learning. These interventions will collectively strengthen curriculum implementation and significantly improve the quality of secondary education in Uganda.

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TOPIC

Social Support And Psychological Well-Being Among Elderly Catholic Nuns In Mbarara Archdiocese, Uganda

Keywords: Social support, psychological well-being, elderly nuns, aging, social connectedness, Catholic religious communities, Uganda

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Abstract:

This study examined the effect of social support on psychological well-being among elderly Catholic nuns in the Mbarara Archdiocese, Uganda. Using a convergent mixed-methods design, data were collected from 213 elderly nuns through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. The findings revealed moderate levels of social support ($M = 3.316$, $SD = 0.568$) and high levels of psychological well-being ($M = 3.710$, $SD = 0.558$). Correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between social support and psychological well-being ($r = 0.573$, $p < .001$), while regression analysis indicated that social support significantly predicted psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.562$, $p < .001$). Qualitative findings highlighted the importance of companionship, emotional support, community participation, and interpersonal relationships in reducing loneliness and enhancing well-being. The study concludes that strengthening social support systems is essential for promoting psychological well-being and healthy aging among elderly Catholic nuns.

Introduction

Population aging has emerged as a major social and public health concern globally. The World Health Organization (2023) reports that many older adults experience loneliness and social isolation, conditions associated with depression, anxiety, and reduced quality of life. Social support has therefore become a critical determinant of psychological well-being, particularly among older persons facing declining physical health, reduced social participation, and increased dependence on others.

Psychological well-being refers to an individual's ability to experience positive relationships, autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose in life, and emotional fulfillment (Ryff& Keyes, 1995). Research demonstrates that older adults with strong social support networks are more likely to maintain emotional resilience, life satisfaction, and positive mental health outcomes than those experiencing social isolation (Ryan & Willits, 2007; Golden et al., 2009).

Within Catholic religious communities, communal living, shared spirituality, and mutual caregiving are expected to provide social and emotional support for aging members. However, evidence suggests

that elderly nuns remain vulnerable to loneliness, emotional distress, and social exclusion despite living within community settings (Brandthill et al., 2001; Mugayehwenkyi, 2004). Factors such as declining health, retirement from active ministry, limited participation in decision-making, and dependence on caregivers may weaken social connectedness and negatively affect psychological well-being.

In Uganda, traditional support systems for older people have been weakened by social and economic changes, exposing many elderly persons to neglect and isolation (MGLSD, 2020; UBOS, 2024). Although religious institutions continue to provide important support services, little empirical evidence exists regarding the influence of social support on psychological well-being among elderly Catholic nuns. This study therefore examined the effect of social support on psychological well-being among elderly Catholic nuns in the Mbarara Archdiocese.

Study Objectives and Research Question

Objective

- To assess the effect of social support on psychological well-being among elderly Catholic nuns in the Mbarara Archdiocese.

Research Question

- What is the effect of social support on psychological well-being among elderly Catholic nuns in the Mbarara Archdiocese?

Literature Review

Social support encompasses emotional, instrumental, informational, and companionship assistance provided through interpersonal relationships (Ryan & Willits, 2007). Existing literature consistently demonstrates that social support contributes significantly to psychological well-being among older adults by enhancing self-esteem, reducing loneliness, and promoting emotional stability (Cacioppo&Hawkley, 2003; Menec, 2003).

Activity Theory further suggests that continued participation in social and community activities contributes to successful aging and life satisfaction (Havighurst, 1961). Studies have shown that socially connected older adults report higher levels of happiness, resilience, and overall well-being than socially isolated individuals (Hall & Havens, 2002; Pettigrew, 2007).

Within religious communities, communal life is expected to provide supportive relationships and a sense of belonging. Nevertheless, studies among aging religious sisters indicate that communal living alone does not always guarantee psychological well-being. Significant proportions of elderly nuns report loneliness, unmet emotional needs, and reduced social participation despite institutional support systems (Brandthill et al., 2001; SLECN, 2023).

Most previous studies have focused on general elderly populations rather than elderly Catholic nuns whose experiences are shaped by unique religious and institutional contexts. The scarcity of context-specific evidence from Uganda created a knowledge gap that this study sought to address.

Methodology

The study adopted a convergent mixed-methods design guided by the pragmatist paradigm. The design enabled simultaneous collection and integration of quantitative and qualitative data to generate a comprehensive understanding of social support and psychological well-being among elderly nuns.

The quantitative phase employed a cross-sectional survey. The study population consisted of 635 elderly Catholic nuns aged 60 years and above living in the dioceses of Mbarara, Kabale, Kasese, Fort

Portal, and Hoima. A sample of 246 respondents was selected proportionately, while 213 valid responses were analyzed.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires measuring social support and psychological well-being dimensions. Psychological well-being was assessed using constructs adapted from Ryff's multidimensional model, including autonomy, positive relationships, and self-acceptance.

Qualitative data were obtained through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and observation checklists involving elderly nuns, caregivers, counselors, and religious leaders. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and linear regression analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

Instrument validity was established using the Content Validity Index (CVI), while reliability was assessed through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and respect for participants' dignity.

Findings of the Study

The findings revealed that elderly Catholic nuns experience moderate levels of social support ($M = 3.316$, $SD = 0.568$), particularly in relation to financial assistance, participation in community activities, transportation services, and support during illness. Assistance during sickness emerged as the strongest aspect of social support ($M = 3.737$), reflecting the caring nature of religious communities. However, qualitative findings indicated that social support systems were largely reactive rather than proactive, with limited structured programmes specifically designed for elderly engagement. Participants expressed a desire for greater companionship, regular social interaction, and intentional follow-up to address feelings of loneliness and social isolation. These findings suggest that while basic support is available, there remains a need for more structured and sustainable social support interventions for elderly nuns.

The study further found that elderly nuns reported high levels of psychological well-being ($M = 3.710$, $SD = 0.558$), characterized by strong autonomy, positive relationships, self-acceptance, and a sense of purpose. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between social support and psychological well-being ($r = 0.573$, $p < .001$), while regression analysis showed that social support significantly predicted psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.562$, $p < .001$), explaining 32.8% of the variance in psychological well-being ($R^2 = .328$). These findings demonstrate that social support is a significant determinant of emotional and psychological health among elderly nuns. Consistent with previous studies and Activity Theory, the results suggest that meaningful social engagement, companionship, and supportive relationships contribute significantly to successful ageing, emotional resilience, and overall life satisfaction among older adults (Golden et al., 2009; Taylor & Carr, 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study concludes that social support is a significant predictor of psychological well-being among elderly Catholic nuns in the Mbarara Archdiocese. Although respondents generally reported high levels of psychological well-being and moderate levels of social support, important gaps remain in structured social programmes, companionship initiatives, and psychosocial interventions. Emotional support, social connectedness, and meaningful participation were found to be critical protective factors against loneliness and psychological distress. The findings affirm that aging with dignity and emotional well-being requires intentional efforts to strengthen social relationships within religious communities.

Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, should strengthen social protection programmes and provide dedicated support for elderly Catholic nuns who lack family caregivers and formal pension schemes.

2. Government agencies should strengthen partnerships with religious institutions by recognizing faith-based organizations as key stakeholders in elderly care and supporting coordinated social support services for older persons.

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TOPIC

Political Decentralization And Local Service Delivery In South Sudan: Empirical Evidence From Three Counties In Western Equatoria State

Keywords: Western Equatoria State, Political decentralization, post conflict, selected Counties and Empirical evidence

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Introduction

Political decentralization is viewed as a governance approach that may bring decision-making closer to citizens, strengthen local accountability, promote participation, and improve the responsiveness of public institutions. By transferring certain political powers and responsibilities from central to subnational authorities, decentralization could enable local governments to better identify community priorities and address needs that might receive limited attention from central institutions. In fragile and post-conflict settings, such arrangements may also support institutional reconstruction, enhance state legitimacy, encourage more inclusive governance, and potentially rebuild public trust in government.

In South Sudan, however, the implementation of decentralization has occurred amid persistent political instability, recurrent conflict, limited institutional capacity, resource constraints, population displacement, and uneven local governance. Western Equatoria State offers a relevant context for examining these complexities. Although Tambura, Yambio, and Mundri Counties operate within the same national decentralization framework, their experiences of governance and service delivery may differ due to variations in security conditions, institutional capacity, resource availability, administrative effectiveness, political dynamics, and citizen engagement. These factors could influence the extent to which devolved political authority translates into tangible improvements in services.

Despite the importance attached to decentralization in South Sudan's governance arrangements, empirical evidence on its influence on service delivery at the county level remains relatively limited. Existing scholarship has tended to emphasize national and state-level structures, with less attention to local governments in fragile contexts. This study therefore examines the influenceof political decentralization and service delivery in three counties of Western Equatoria State, while recognizing that its effects may depend on the broader institutional, financial, administrative, and security environment.

Study Objectives

The study sought to examine the influence of political decentralization on service delivery in Tambura, Yambio, and Mundri Counties of Western Equatoria State. Specifically, it examined whether devolved political authority, local decision-making autonomy, citizen participation, and political accountability were associated with improvements in public service delivery.

The study was guided by the broader assumption that effective political decentralization should enable local governments to identify community priorities, make decisions that are responsive to local circumstances, strengthen accountability, and improve access to public services. At the same time, the study recognized that these expected outcomes may be moderated by institutional capacity, financial resources, administrative competence, leadership, security conditions, and the extent to which citizens are meaningfully engaged in local governance.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive and correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to assess existing decentralization practices and respondents' perceptions of local governance and service delivery, while the correlational component examined the relationship between political decentralization and service delivery across the selected counties.

The descriptive and correlational research design was appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to first describe existing political decentralization practices and service delivery conditions and then examine the relationship between the two variables in Tambura, Yambio, and Mundri Counties. Unlike experimental designs, which require manipulation and controlled conditions that were impractical in a fragile, post-conflict setting, this design allowed the study to investigate real-world governance experiences without interfering with existing institutions. It was therefore suitable for identifying patterns, differences, and associations while providing empirical evidence on how political decentralization influences service delivery.

The study population comprised 260 respondents drawn from county government officials, local administrators, members of county legislative councils, community leaders, civil society representatives, and other stakeholders involved in local governance's service delivery. A sample of 158 respondents was selected across Tambura, Yambio, and Mundri Counties using an appropriate sampling procedure intended to provide representation from the study areas.

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). The questionnaires captured respondents' demographic characteristics and perceptions of political decentralization and service delivery, while KIIs provided in-depth insights from local government officials, community leaders, civil society representatives, and other key stakeholders. FGDs further explored community experiences, views, and perceptions of local governance and service delivery, allowing the study to capture perspectives that may not have emerged through quantitative methods alone. The research instruments were assessed for validity and reliability before data collection. Ethical principles, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and responsible use of information, were observed throughout the study.

The collected data were coded and analyzed using statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' perceptions. Inferential analysis, particularly regression analysis, was subsequently employed to assess the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the relationship between political decentralization and service delivery in the three counties.

Findings

The findings indicate that the influence of political decentralization on service delivery varied substantially across the three study counties. This variation suggests that decentralization may not generate uniform outcomes when implemented in different local governance contexts.

In Tambura, political decentralization did not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship with service delivery (B = 0.022, p = 0.698). This result suggests that the formal presence of decentralized political structures has not, by itself, translated into measurable improvements in public service provision. The finding may be partly explained by the county's challenging operating environment, including insecurity, displacement, institutional fragility, limited financial resources, shortages of qualified personnel, and weak administrative systems. These conditions appear to constrain the capacity of local institutions to exercise devolved authority effectively. The result therefore suggests that political decentralization may have limited practical effects where local governance institutions lack the capacity and stability required to implement their responsibilities.

In contrast, Yambiorecorded a statistically significant positive relationship between political decentralization and service delivery (B = 0.118, p = 0.044). The finding suggests that greater political participation, local decision-making, accountability, and interaction between citizens and local leaders may contribute positively to service delivery. Yambio's comparatively stronger institutional and administrative environment may provide more favorable conditions for translating decentralized political authority into practical governance outcomes. The evidence therefore appears to support the proposition that decentralization is more likely to improve service delivery where local institutions have sufficient capacity to function and citizens can participate meaningfully in governance processes.

The strongest positive relationship was observed in Mundri, where political decentralization had a statistically significant effect on service delivery (B = 0.170, p = 0.015). This result suggests that local participation, accountability, and decentralized decision-making may have contributed to greater responsiveness of county authorities to community priorities. The relatively stronger association observed in Mundri may indicate that local governance institutions in the county are comparatively better positioned to convert political authority into service delivery outcomes. Nevertheless, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that political decentralization operates independently of other factors. Rather, effective leadership, institutional functionality, administrative capacity, and citizen engagement are likely to interact with political decentralization in shaping service delivery outcomes.

Overall, the comparative findings demonstrate that the effects of political decentralization are context dependent. While significant positive relationships were observed in Yambio and Mundri, no statistically significant relationship was identified in Tambura. The differences suggest that decentralization should be understood not simply as a constitutional or legal transfer of authority, but as a governance process whose outcomes are influenced by the institutional and socio-political environment in which it is implemented. In fragile settings, political decentralization may therefore require complementary investments in institutional capacity, fiscal resources, administrative systems, security, and accountability.

The study's principal contribution lies in providing county-level empirical evidence from a fragile and post-conflict setting. By comparing three counties operating under a broadly similar decentralization framework but experiencing different governance realities, the study demonstrates that the effectiveness of political decentralization may be mediated by institutional capacity, governance quality, security conditions, and citizen participation. The findings consequently suggest that devolving political authority alone may be insufficient to improve public services unless local governments are

equipped with the institutional and administrative capabilities necessary to exercise that authority effectively.

Recommendation

The study recommends that national and state authorities strengthen the institutional capacity of county governments through continuous professional development, technical assistance, organizational reforms, and improved administrative systems. Such measures could enhance the ability of county institutions to exercise devolved responsibilities and respond more effectively to local needs.

Fiscal support should also be strengthened. National and state governments may need to ensure that financial transfers to counties are predictable, timely, and adequate to support constitutionally assigned responsibilities. Political decentralization without corresponding financial capacity is unlikely to produce sustainable improvements in service delivery.

The study further recommends institutionalizing mechanisms for meaningful citizen participation and local accountability. Participatory planning, public consultations, community monitoring, and accessible oversight mechanisms could help strengthen the relationship between local authorities and citizens. Coordination among national, state, and county institutions should be improved, while unnecessary political interference in local administration should be minimized.

Finally, development partners should consider prioritizing integrated interventions that combine local governance reform, institutional strengthening, peacebuilding, administrative capacity development, and public sector support. In fragile and conflict-affected settings such as Western Equatoria State, these complementary interventions may create a more enabling environment in which political decentralization can contribute to more equitable, responsive, and sustainable service delivery.

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TOPIC

Work Environment And Economic Security Outcomes Among Pineapple Value Chain Communities In Selected Districts Of Central Uganda

Keywords: Work Environment, Economic Security Outcomes, Pineapple Value Chain, Smallholder Farmers, Training and Skills Development, Financial Services, Technology and Digital Tools, Market Linkages, Central Uganda

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Introduction

Agriculture remains a key driver of economic development, poverty reduction, food security, and employment, particularly in developing countries where smallholder farmers dominate production. Globally, the sector supports over 2.5 billion livelihoods and remains a major pathway for poverty reduction (FAO, 2024; World Bank, 2024). Beyond productivity and income, agriculture contributes to broader economic security outcomes, including income stability, asset accumulation, food security, education, healthcare access, and resilience to shocks. Achieving these outcomes requires not only farmers' productive capacities but also enabling conditions that allow them to access resources, develop capabilities, and transform opportunities into improved livelihoods.

In this study, work environment refers to the broader enabling conditions surrounding smallholder farmers within agricultural value chains rather than a conventional workplace setting. Drawing from Sen's Capability Approach, development outcomes depend on individuals' ability to convert available resources into meaningful opportunities and improved well-being (Sen, 1999). Accordingly, the work environment encompasses institutional, technological, financial, informational, and market conditions that shape farmers' capabilities to access resources, adopt innovations, participate in markets, and achieve sustainable economic security outcomes. This perspective aligns with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which views livelihood outcomes as emerging from the interaction of assets, capabilities, and enabling conditions (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Scoones, 1998).

In Uganda, agriculture remains central to national development, with Uganda Vision 2040 and successive National Development Plans emphasizing modernization, commercialization, agro-industrialization, and value chain development (National Planning Authority [NPA], 2013, 2020). To advance these priorities, the Government has implemented interventions such as NAADS, Operation Wealth Creation, Emyooga, and the Parish Development Model to improve farmers' access to extension services, technology, finance, markets, and infrastructure (MAAIF, 2001; Office of the Prime Minister, 2022). These initiatives demonstrate the importance of an agricultural enabling environment that strengthens farmers' capabilities and supports sustainable economic security.

Despite these efforts, smallholder farmers continue to experience structural constraints, including limited knowledge services, technology adoption challenges, financial exclusion, weak market

integration, and inadequate rural infrastructure (FAO, 2024; MAAIF, 2023). These challenges are particularly evident among pineapple value chain communities in Central Uganda, where farmers face post-harvest losses, market uncertainty, limited value addition, and restricted access to improved technologies (Akankwasa, 2019; Tröger et al., 2020). Such constraints limit farmers' ability to convert available resources into improved livelihood outcomes.

Previous studies have largely examined training, technology, finance, and market access as separate interventions influencing productivity, technology adoption, or income generation. Anderson and Feder (2007) highlight the role of extension services, Aker and Mbiti (2010) emphasize digital technologies, and Fletschner and Kenney (2014) demonstrate the importance of financial access in improving rural livelihoods. However, these studies provide limited understanding of how multiple enabling conditions collectively relate to broader economic security outcomes.

Recent scholarship suggests that sustainable livelihood improvements require integrated support systems, coordinated value chain approaches, and interconnected innovation ecosystems rather than fragmented interventions (Ruben et al., 2022; Daum et al., 2025). This perspective is consistent with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which emphasizes the combined role of multiple assets and enabling conditions in shaping livelihood outcomes (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Scoones, 1998). Evidence further shows that finance, innovation, markets, and institutional coordination collectively strengthen agrifood systems and smallholder resilience (FAO, 2025). These perspectives are reinforced by Aggarwal et al. (2026) and Wang et al. (2026), who emphasize integrated approaches in strengthening agricultural value chains.

Despite growing recognition of integrated support systems, important gaps remain. Conceptually, training, technology, finance, and market linkages have largely been examined independently rather than as interconnected dimensions of an agricultural work environment (Anderson & Feder, 2007; Aker & Mbiti, 2010; Fletschner& Kenney, 2014). Contextually, limited evidence exists on how such an integrated environment relates to pineapple value chain communities in Uganda despite persistent production and market challenges (Akankwasa, 2019; Tröger et al., 2020). Empirically, previous studies focus mainly on productivity, technology adoption, and income, with limited attention to multidimensional economic security outcomes, including livelihood stability, assets, food security, education, healthcare access, and resilience (Fletschner& Kenney, 2014; Ruben et al., 2022).

This study addresses these gaps by conceptualizing work environment as a multidimensional agricultural enabling environment comprising training and skills development, technology and digital tools, financial services, and information and market linkages, and examining its relationship with economic security outcomes among pineapple value chain communities in selected districts of Central Uganda. Drawing on the capability perspective, the study conceptualizes how farmers' surrounding conditions shape their ability to access resources, develop capabilities, and pursue improved livelihood outcomes (Sen, 1999). Through a mixed-methods approach, the study combines statistical evidence on relationships between work environment dimensions and economic security outcomes with phenomenological insights into farmers' lived experiences of how these conditions contribute to their livelihoods.

Study Objective

The study was guided by the following objective:

To assess the relationship between work environment and economic security outcomes among pineapple value chain communities in selected districts of Central Uganda.

Methodology

The study adopted a convergent mixed-methods approach integrating a cross-sectional survey design and a phenomenological inquiry. It was conducted in Luweero, Kayunga, and Mukono districts, which were purposively selected because of their prominence in pineapple production. The study population comprised pineapple farmers and other value chain stakeholders, including cooperative leaders, extension officers, traders, and local government officials.

Quantitative data were collected from 278 pineapple farmers using structured questionnaires. The quantitative component examined the relationship between work environment dimensions and economic security outcomes using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis in STATA 18. The qualitative component involved nine key informant interviews and nine focus group discussions to explore farmers' lived experiences and perceptions regarding how work environment conditions contribute to their economic security outcomes. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic content analysis.

The study was informed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, Institutional Theory, and Agricultural Innovation Systems Theory, which explain how access to resources, institutions, and innovation networks shapes livelihood outcomes.

Key Findings

Findings revealed that pineapple farmers operated within a moderately supportive work environment ($M = 3.359$, $SD = 0.960$). Access to financial services and market opportunities was relatively stronger, while access to digital technologies remained limited. Qualitative findings showed that although training, financial services, and market connections existed, they were often fragmented and unevenly distributed.

Economic security outcomes were generally high ($M = 3.737$, $SD = 0.778$), particularly regarding food security, healthcare access, educational support, and asset accumulation. However, moderate levels of price stability and financial risk mitigation indicated continued vulnerability to economic shocks.

Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between economic security outcomes and training and skills development ($r = 0.6923$, $p < .001$), technology and digital tools ($r = 0.6117$, $p < .001$), financial services ($r = 0.6377$, $p < .001$), and information and market linkages ($r = 0.7020$, $p < .001$). Multiple regression analysis showed that all work environment dimensions significantly predicted economic security outcomes. Information and market linkages had the strongest predictive contribution ($\beta = 0.303$, $p < .001$), followed by training and skills development ($\beta = 0.161$, $p < .001$), financial services ($\beta = 0.119$, $p = .002$), and technology and digital tools ($\beta = 0.076$, $p = .028$). The model explained 60.9% of the variation in economic security outcomes ($R^2 = .609$).

Qualitative findings complemented the quantitative results by demonstrating that farmers perceive training, affordable finance, reliable markets, and appropriate technologies as important conditions supporting income stability, food security, asset accumulation, healthcare access, educational opportunities, and resilience.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate a significant relationship between work environment and economic security outcomes among pineapple value chain communities in Central Uganda. Access to reliable markets, market information, and transport infrastructure was associated with improved income opportunities, reduced transaction constraints, and enhanced household welfare, consistent with Barrett (2008) and Ruben et al. (2022).

The study further established positive relationships between training and skills development, financial services, technology, and economic security outcomes. Training enhances farmers' knowledge and decision-making capacity, financial services support investment and risk management, while technology improves information access and production opportunities (Anderson & Feder, 2007; Fletschner& Kenney, 2014; Aker & Mbiti, 2010). The phenomenological findings further explain these relationships by illustrating farmers' experiences of how enabling conditions support their livelihood security.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that work environment is significantly related to economic security outcomes among pineapple value chain communities in Luweero, Kayunga, and Mukono districts. Although farmers generally reported positive economic security outcomes and moderately supportive work environments, gaps remain in access to training, digital technologies, affordable financial services, and structured market systems.

The study recommends that MAAIF, district local governments, farmer organizations, and development partners strengthen extension services, promote affordable technologies, and expand digital advisory systems. Greater coordination among extension providers, financial institutions, researchers, and market actors is needed to establish integrated support systems. Financial institutions, SACCOs, and government programmes should expand access to affordable credit, savings, financial literacy, and agricultural insurance. Strengthening market information systems, buyer–farmer linkages, collection centres, transport infrastructure, and value addition initiatives is essential for improving sustainable economic security among pineapple farming households.

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TOPIC

Skilled Birth Attendance and Health-Related Quality of Life among Young Mothers in Eastern Uganda: Evidence from a Cross-Sectional Study

Keywords: Skilled birth attendance, health-related quality of life, young mothers, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Skilled birth attendance (SBA) is a cornerstone of safe motherhood, reducing maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality through the timely prevention and management of childbirth complications. However, although its survival benefits are well established, limited evidence exists on its association with health-related quality of life (HRQoL), particularly among young mothers in low-resource settings. This study examined the association between skilled birth attendance and HRQoL among young mothers aged 10–24 years in Eastern Uganda. A community-based cross-sectional analytical study was conducted among 967 young mothers who had delivered within the previous six months in Kamuli, Pallisa, and Ngora districts. Data were collected using structured interviewer-administered questionnaires. SBA was measured using questions adapted from the USAID Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) Woman's Questionnaire and HRQoL was assessed using the WHOQOL-BREF global quality-of-life measure. Skilled birth attendance was defined as childbirth assisted by an accredited doctor, nurse, or midwife in accordance with World Health Organization recommendations. Descriptive statistics summarized participant characteristics, while chi-square tests, one-way ANOVA, and ordered logistic regression examined the association between SBA and HRQoL. Young mothers who delivered with skilled health professionals had significantly higher odds of reporting better HRQoL than those who did not (OR = 1.761, 95% CI: 1.345–2.306; z = 4.12, p< 0.001). Although the regression model was statistically significant (LR χ^2 = 17.01, p< 0.001), the pseudo-R^2 of 0.006 indicates that HRQoLwas also influenced by other individual, social, and health-system factors. These findings demonstrated that skilled birth attendance was positively associated with better health-related quality of life among young mothers, suggesting that its benefits extend beyond preventing maternal and newborn complications to supporting broader maternal well-being. Strengthening equitable access to skilled, respectful, and adolescent-responsive delivery care, alongside interventions that address broader social and health-system barriers, may improve maternal well-being and quality of life among young mothers in Eastern Uganda and similar settings among this vulnerable population.

INTRODUCTION

Skilled birth attendance (SBA) is a cornerstone of safe motherhood and one of the most effective interventions for preventing maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality through the timely management of childbirth complications (Campbell & Graham, 2006; WHO, 2023). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines SBA as childbirth assisted by accredited health professionalsdoctors, nurses, or midwiveswho are trained to manage normal deliveries and recognize, manage, or refer obstetric complications within an enabling health system (WHO, 2025). Accordingly, WHO recommends that every birth be attended by a skilled health professional in a facility capable of providing essential obstetric and newborn care, a strategy that Uganda has adopted through its Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) guidelines.

Beyond preventing maternal and neonatal deaths, maternal healthcare is increasingly expected to improve women's health-related quality of life (HRQoL), a multidimensional concept encompassing physical, psychological, social, and environmental well-being (WHOQOL Group, 1998; Lin et al., 2013; Boutib et al., 2022). HRQoL provides a patient-centred measure of maternal health by capturing women's perceptions of their overall well-being and childbirth experiences, complementing traditional clinical outcomes. Consequently, the WHO advocates for positive childbirth experiences characterized by respectful, person-centred, and high-quality maternity care that promotes both survival and long-term well-being (WHO, 2021).

Evidence consistently demonstrates that SBA reduces maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality through timely management of labour, emergency obstetric care, and referral (Campbell & Graham, 2006; Gabrysch & Campbell, 2009; Tura et al., 2014). However, scholars differ on the factors driving SBA utilization. Earlier studies emphasize structural barriers such as poverty, transport challenges, long distances to health facilities, and shortages of skilled health workers (Gabrysch & Campbell, 2009; Ayele et al., 2019). More recent evidence highlights the importance of respectful maternity care, arguing that dignity, privacy, effective communication, emotional support, and compassionate provider attitudes strongly influence women's decisions to seek skilled delivery services, while experiences of disrespect and abuse discourage future utilization (Bohren et al., 2015; Afulani et al., 2019). Similarly, although some studies suggest that SBA directly improves HRQoL by preventing complications and enhancing recovery, others argue that maternal well-being is also shaped by broader determinants, including antenatal and postnatal care utilization, socioeconomic status, family support, mental health, and health literacy (Boutib et al., 2022; WHO, 2021).

In Uganda, skilled birth attendance has increased substantially over the past three decades; nevertheless, utilization remains suboptimal among adolescents and young mothers because of financial constraints, transport barriers, limited decision-making autonomy, and fear of mistreatment during childbirth (UBOS & ICF, 2022; Atuyambe et al., 2009). Although extensive evidence links SBA with improved maternal survival, limited research has examined its relationship with HRQoL among young mothers in low-resource settings, particularly in rural Eastern Uganda. Addressing this evidence gap is important because improving maternal health requires promoting not only survival but also women's overall well-being. Therefore, this study examined the association between skilled birth attendance and HRQoL among young mothers aged 10–24 years in Eastern Uganda.

Research Questions and Objectives:

Research question: What is the association between skilled birth attendance and health-related quality of life among young mothers aged 10–24 years in Eastern Uganda?

Research objective: To examine the association between skilled birth attendance and health-related quality of life among young mothers aged 10–24 years in Eastern Uganda.

Methodology:

A cross-sectional analytical study was conducted among 967 young mothers in Kamuli, Pallisa, and Ngora districts. Participants were young mothers aged 10–24 years who had delivered within the previous six months. Data were collected using structured interviewer-administered questionnaires. SBA was measured using questions adapted from the USAID Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) Woman's Questionnaire and HRQoL was assessed using the WHOQOL-BREF tool on a five-category self-rated scale. Descriptive statistics summarized participant characteristics, chi-square tests and One way ANOVA explored bivariate associations, and ordered logistic regression estimated the relationship between SBA and HRQoL.

Results/Findings of the Study

Table 1: Bivariate analysis showing the association between Skilled Birth Attendance and health-related quality of life among young mothers aged 10-24years in Eastern Uganda

Health-related Quality of Life	Skilled Birth attendance		χ^2 (df) / F	p-value
	No (%)	Yes (%)		
Very Poor	13.74	10.71		
Poor	32.7	26.32		
Neither Poor nor Good	29.86	18.92	30.2747 (4)	0.000
Good	21.8	40.48		
Very Good	1.9	3.57		
Mean (SD)	2.65 (.97)	3.00 (1.11)	16.32	0.0001

Source: Field Data 2025

Table 1 shows a significant positive association between skilled birth attendance (SBA) and health-related quality of life (HRQoL) among young mothers aged 10–24 years in Eastern Uganda. Mothers who delivered with skilled birth attendants were more likely to report good or very good HRQoL (44.1% vs. 23.7%) and less likely to report poor or average HRQoL than those who delivered without skilled care. The distribution of HRQoL categories differed significantly between the two groups (χ^2 = 30.27, df = 4, p< 0.001), while the mean HRQoL score was significantly higher among SBA users (3.00 ± 1.11) than non-users (2.65 ± 0.97; F = 16.32, df = 1,965, p< 0.001). These findings indicate that skilled birth attendance is associated with better maternal well-being, extending its established role beyond reducing maternal mortality to improving overall quality of life (Campbell & Graham, 2006). The results are consistent with studies showing that women's confidence in the safety and competence of skilled providers encourages facility delivery (Gabrysch & Campbell, 2009) and that respectful, person-centred maternity care enhances women's childbirth experiences, satisfaction, and well-being (Afulani et al., 2019). Strengthening equitable access to skilled, respectful delivery care is therefore essential for improving maternal health and quality of life among young mothers in Eastern Uganda.

Predictor / Parameter	OR	SE	z	P	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Skilled Birth Attendance (Yes)	1.761	0.242	4.120	< .001	1.345	2.306
Cut 1	–	0.142	–	–	-1.914	-1.359
Cut 2	–	0.122	–	–	-0.257	0.223
Cut 3	–	0.126	–	–	0.615	1.108
Cut 4	–	0.216	–	–	3.451	4.296

Model fit: $\chi^2(1) = 17.010, p < .001$

Log likelihood: −1355.414

Pseudo R^2: .006

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval. Dashes (—) indicate not applicable for threshold parameters.

Source: Field Data 2025

The ordered logistic regression analysis showed that skilled birth attendance (SBA) was a significant predictor of health-related quality of life (HRQoL) among young mothers (z = 4.12, p< 0.001). Mothers who delivered with skilled birth attendants had 1.76 times higher odds of reporting better HRQoL than those who did not (OR = 1.761, 95% CI: 1.345–2.306). Although the overall model was statistically significant (LR χ^2 = 17.01, p< 0.001), the low pseudo-R^2 (0.006) indicates that HRQoL is also influenced by other individual, social, and health-system factors. These findings support previous evidence that skilled birth attendance improves maternal outcomes by preventing obstetric complications and promoting safer childbirth (Tura et al., 2014). They also align with Neal et al. (2018), who reported that adolescents face greater obstetric and psychosocial vulnerabilities, suggesting that professional childbirth care may improve well-being through timely clinical support and reassurance. However, the findings should be interpreted alongside evidence that respectful maternity care is equally important. Bohren et al. (2015) demonstrated that disrespect and abuse during childbirth discourage facility utilization and may diminish the potential benefits of skilled care. Consistent with the WHO (2021), the modest explanatory power of the model suggests that maternal well-being is multidimensional and is shaped not only by skilled birth attendance but also by factors such as antenatal and postnatal care utilization, household support, health literacy, and socioeconomic conditions. These findings underscore the need for integrated interventions that expand equitable access to skilled, respectful, and adolescent-responsive maternity care while addressing broader social determinants to improve health-related quality of life among young mothers.

Conclusion and recommendations

Skilled birth attendance was positively associated with better health-related quality of life among young mothers in Eastern Uganda, highlighting its contribution to maternal well-being beyond improving survival. However, maternal quality of life is influenced by broader social, psychological, and health-system factors. Therefore, efforts to improve maternal well-being should strengthen equitable access to skilled, respectful, and adolescent-responsive delivery services while addressing barriers to maternal healthcare utilization through integrated health system and community-based interventions.

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TOPIC

Individual And Group Counselling And Biopsychosocial Wellness Of Students In Selected Secondary Schools In Kampala And Wakiso Districts Of Uganda

Keywords: Individual Counselling, Group Counselling, Biopsychosocial Wellness, Secondary School Students, School Counselling Services, Student Wellbeing, Psychosocial Support, Kampala District, Wakiso District, Uganda

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INTRODUCTION

The school environment presents students with numerous academic, social, emotional, and developmental challenges that can significantly affect their overall well-being. Individual and group counselling have increasingly become important school-based interventions aimed at supporting students in managing these challenges and promoting their biopsychosocial wellness. Individual counselling provides students with personalized and confidential support to address concerns such as anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, substance abuse, family conflicts, and academic difficulties, while group counselling offers opportunities for peer support, shared learning, social interaction, and collaborative problem-solving, thereby enhancing students' social adjustment and resilience (Corey, 2016; Egan, 2014). Biopsychosocial wellness encompasses the biological, psychological, and social dimensions of well-being that collectively influence students' overall development and functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Witmer & Sweeney, 1992). Despite the availability of counselling services in many secondary schools in Uganda, students continue to experience challenges such as emotional distress, substance abuse, poor interpersonal relationships, indiscipline, and mental health difficulties. These concerns raise questions about the effectiveness of counselling services in promoting students' holistic wellness. Therefore, this study examined the relationship between individual and group counselling and the biopsychosocial wellness of students in selected secondary schools in Kampala and Wakiso Districts of Uganda.

Study Objective

The study was guided by the following objective:

To establish the relationship between individual and group counselling and the biopsychosocial wellness of students in selected secondary schools in Kampala and Wakiso Districts of Uganda

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach within a cross-sectional survey research design. The study was conducted in selected secondary schools in Kampala and Wakiso Districts of Uganda. The target population comprised 6,692 respondents, including 6,380 students, 306 teachers, and 6 school counsellors. A sample of 410 respondents was selected using both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Students were selected using simple random sampling, while teachers and counsellors were selected purposively.

Data was collected using structured questionnaires, interview guides, and focus group discussion guides. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) through descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Simple Linear Regression. Qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The study was anchored on Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as important conditions for positive psychosocial functioning and wellness.

Key Study Findings

The findings revealed that students perceived individual and group counselling services to be moderately effective ($M = 3.240$, $SD = 0.728$). Students reported receiving counselling support in areas such as emotional well-being, stress management, physical health concerns, personal development, decision-making, and career guidance. However, challenges such as stigma, inadequate counselling personnel, lack of confidentiality, limited resources, and absence of structured counselling schedules constrained effective utilization of counselling services.

The study further established that students experienced moderate to high levels of biopsychosocial wellness ($M = 3.420$, $SD = 0.643$). Intellectual and social wellness dimensions recorded the highest scores, indicating that students generally felt confident in learning, setting academic goals, and maintaining supportive social relationships. However, bio-physical and psycho-emotional wellness dimensions reflected greater vulnerability due to challenges associated with health concerns, emotional stress, social isolation, and risky behaviors.

Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between individual and group counselling and biopsychosocial wellness ($r = .615$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that students who reported higher levels of counselling engagement also tended to report higher levels of biopsychosocial wellness.

Regression analysis further demonstrated that individual and group counselling significantly predicted students' biopsychosocial wellness ($\beta = .543$, $t = 16.22$, $p < .001$). The model explained approximately 37.8% of the variation in biopsychosocial wellness (Adjusted $R^2 = .377$), suggesting that counselling services make a substantial contribution to students' biological, psychological, and social well-being.

Discussion of Findings

The findings suggest that individual and group counselling play a critical role in promoting students' holistic wellness. Individual counselling enables students to address personal concerns, develop emotional regulation skills, improve self-esteem, and strengthen coping strategies, while group counselling contributes to social wellness by fostering peer support, communication skills, empathy, cooperation, and collective problem-solving (Corey, 2016; Egan, 2014). These findings indicate that

counselling services are valuable mechanisms for supporting students' biological, psychological, and social development within the school environment.

The positive relationship between counselling and biopsychosocial wellness supports Self-Determination Theory, which posits that individuals experience optimal functioning and well-being when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Through counselling interventions, students are provided with opportunities to develop self-awareness, strengthen emotional competence, enhance decision-making skills, and build meaningful social relationships. Consequently, effective counselling services contribute to improved psychological adjustment and overall wellness among students.

The findings further indicate that counselling services positively influence students' health awareness, stress management, social adjustment, academic confidence, and future planning. This finding is consistent with previous studies that emphasize the role of counselling in promoting personal growth, resilience, and positive behavioural outcomes among adolescents (Corey, 2016; Hough, 2014). Nevertheless, challenges such as inadequate counselling resources, limited professional counsellors, concerns about confidentiality, and students' reluctance to seek help continue to constrain the effectiveness of counselling programmes. Addressing these barriers is therefore essential for maximizing the contribution of individual and group counselling to students' biopsychosocial wellness.

Conclusion

The study concludes that individual and group counselling significantly influence the biopsychosocial wellness of students in selected secondary schools in Kampala and Wakiso Districts of Uganda. Effective counselling services contribute positively to students' biological, psychological, and social wellbeing by enhancing emotional stability, self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, health-conscious behaviors, academic confidence, and resilience. The findings demonstrate that strengthening counselling programmes can significantly improve students' holistic development and overall quality of life.

Key Recommendations

The Ministry of Education and Sports should institutionalize structured individual and group counselling programmes in all secondary schools and integrate counselling sessions into official school timetables.

School administrations should recruit qualified professional counsellors and support continuous professional development in adolescent mental health, counselling practice, and crisis intervention.

Schools should strengthen peer-support programmes, mentorship initiatives, life-skills clubs, and wellness forums to complement formal counselling services and promote students' social and psychological wellbeing.

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TOPIC

Performance Of Agricultural Producer Cooperatives And Economic Development Sustainability Of Rural Community Farmers In Burundi: A Case Of Ngozi Province

Keywords: Agricultural producer cooperatives.

AUTHORS

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ABSTRACT

According to the International Cooperatives Association (ICA, 2005; 2018), cooperatives are autonomous associations of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through jointly owned and democratically-controlled enterprises, respectively. Agricultural producer cooperatives are basically the most binding and prominent examples of cooperative enterprises in contexts like rural Ngozi Province (UWCC, 2022). The cooperatives are according to Ortmann and King (2007); UWCC (2022), started by farmers producing similar products in either crop or animal husbandry or both.

Farmers use producer cooperatives to leverage on joint and large purchases of agro inputs to cut procurement and production costs and to enhance production efficiency by processing raw products for value addition (NCDC, 2021). Farmers also rely on producer cooperatives for marketing purposes; products can effectively access larger markets, attract well negotiated prices and lead to increased production returns. Agricultural producer cooperatives may also be used to provide the following support services: transportation, storage, artificial insemination, legal and accounting support, equipment repair, and among others (EOSDA, 2022).

Performance agricultural producer cooperatives. The performance of agricultural producer cooperatives measures how well a group of farmers are organized and supported to reach shared economic, operational, and social goals from their intended and comprehensive mix of cooperative practices or services; supplies, marketing and support services (EOSDA, 2022). Irrespective of whether farm production is jointly or individually done, agricultural producer cooperatives are mainly oriented on delivery of such services to member farmers. Supplies are inputs that cooperatives supply their members for agricultural production, including seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, fuel, and machinery and sometimes water (Eka, 2022; EOSDA, 2022). Cooperative marketing services include promotion, transportation, packaging, pricing, distribution, and sales of farm products, both crop and livestock (USDA, 2000). Support services include those specified above.

Rural farmers' economic development sustainability. Sustainability of economic development of rural farmers refers to achievement of quantitative and qualitative prosperity of such rural dwellers without exhausting future welfare prospects including natural agricultural resources (Krueger & Myint,

2022; Universal Class, 2022). According to SFU (2020), such development is the capacity of rural farmers to consistently meet their economic needs while preserving the farming environment that supports that ability. Such a sustainable rural community has the potential to enhance own economic livelihoods and at the same time spare resources for future generations. This involves minimizing destruction and promoting efficiency in the utilization of local agricultural resources.

As a sustainability issue, rural agro-economic development, according to the EU (2006), includes wealth creation and uplifting living standards of the poor farmers without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This symbolises cross generational community driven improvements in the livelihoods of the rural poor. There is a myriad of economic development gains that agricultural cooperatives can sustainably engender and are consistent with the livelihood needs of rural farmers. In the context of Ngozi province, key of these gains include commercialization of agriculture, agricultural productivity, employment opportunities, food security, quality social services, conserved natural resource management

Introduction

The study was conducted to assess performance of agricultural producer cooperatives, and its contribution to economic development sustainability of farmers in predominantly rural and agricultural Ngozi Province. The study report covers nine chapters beginning with introduction to the study as chapter one, followed by chapter two for review of literature, chapter three on historical and philosophical trends of study variables, particularly agricultural cooperative performance, and then chapter four that covers the research methodology. The report proceeds with chapters five, six, and seven used for presentation, analysis, interpretation and discussion of findings. Chapter eight presents a consequent research model on agricultural cooperatives

performance, and research contribution to knowledge. Finally, the report covers chapter nine that presents research conclusions and recommendations, as well as areas of future research.

Study Objectives

The objectives of the study were to assess performance of agricultural producer cooperatives in rural Ngozi Province, examine the sustainability of economic development among rural community famers, and determine the relationship between cooperative performance and that economic development sustainability in the province.

Methodology

The study was based on the research philosophy of post positivism. It adopted a descriptive and correlational research design based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Field research targeted all stakeholders associated with agricultural producer cooperatives operating in Ngozi Province and across the 9 Communes that form the province. The Communes include Busiga, Gashikanwa, Kiremba, Marangara, Mwumba, Ngozi, Nyamurenza, Ruhororo, and Tangara (World Bank, 2022). For accessibility and close field research, the study engaged a study sample of 319 intended participants of whom 300 were cooperative, including 220 respondents to the questionnaire, 25 for interviews and 55 others engaged in focus group discussions (FGD). Data was collected using Self-Administered Questionnaire, Interview Schedules and Focus Group Discussion Guides. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for quantitative analysis of mainly questionnaire data, while thematic and interpretive content analysis methods were employed for qualitative findings from interviews and focus group discussions.

Findings

The findings of the study were that performance of the target producer cooperatives was just average. Performance was average bearing greater quality gaps of poorly rated three cooperative practices, namely cooperative provision of input supplies, farm products marketing and farming support services. The rest of the cooperative practices or performance parameters were fairly better; capacity building,

farmers' cooperative participation and control and level of cooperative transparency. Findings also showed that the sustainability of economic development was also average among almost all rural community farmers in the province. The sustainability gaps were greater in three of the seven development indicators analysed, namely agricultural commercialisation, then sustainable employment, and income generation sustainability. The other indicators were relatively better; agricultural productivity, food security, quality of life, and natural resources management.

With these descriptive findings, inferential results were generated of which regression analysis indicated that sustainability of rural community farmers' economic development in Ngozi Province was significantly predicted by only three of the six cooperative performance parameters or practices investigated; cooperative participation and control, transparency and input supply. On the other hand, it was not significantly associated with cooperative farming services, capacity building and farm products marketing. In light of mainly inferential results a new research model, was proposed and developed. It was codenamed the 'Community Driven Agricultural Cooperatives and Rural Economic Development CDACRED Model'. The model was crafted mainly basing on cooperatives performance gaps, especially for the most wanting

cooperative practices as a new paradigm that could logically contribute to knowledge, useful for scholarly and best practice needs. The significance of the model cannot be limited to Ngozi province but may also apply to the rest of Burundi and beyond, with cooperative economic development needs.

Recommendations

Basing on the model it was recommended that government agencies and agricultural producer cooperatives should ensure a balanced performance in all cooperative practices in a fashion that effectively propels community driven sustainable economic development.

Future Research

Further studies should be conducted on the contribution of other factors to economic development sustainability, the determinants of cooperative performance, then as the dependent variable, and other provinces in the rest of Burundi and beyond. Similar studies should be carried out on other sectors of cooperatives in Burundi and the rest of the world, and can adopt other suitable designs including cross-sectional or longitudinal research design or any other.

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TOPIC

An Interrogation Of The Precursor Effects Of Logistics Management Practices On Perceived Financial Performance Among Managers In Cement Manufacturing Firms In Tororo, Uganda

Keywords: Distribution Management, Transport Management, Logistics Information Systems, Perceived Financial Performance, Cement Manufacturing Firms, Uganda

AUTHORS

ERIC OKELLO



ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines the effects of logistics management practices; transport management, distribution management, and logistics information systemson managers' perceived financial performance in cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda.

Design/methodology/approach – A cross-sectional mixed-methods explanatory design was employed. Data were collected from 125 managerial employees and 15 key informants and analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and hierarchical regression in SPSS 27.

Findings – Logistics management practices significantly influenced perceived financial performance. Transport management was the strongest predictor (β = .365, p< .001), followed by logistics information systems (β = .220, p = .013), while distribution management had a positive but insignificant effect (β = .122, p = .162).

Practical implications – Firms should strengthen transport optimisation, logistics information systems, and operational coordination to improve efficiency and financial performance.

Originality/value – The study provides empirical evidence from Uganda's cement industry, highlighting transport management and logistics information systems as key drivers of perceived financial performance in developing-country manufacturing.

Introduction

Logistics management is a strategic capability within Supply Chain Management (SCM) that enhances operational efficiency, competitiveness, and financial performance through effective transport management, distribution management, and logistics information systems (Christopher, 2016; Chopra & Meindl, 2016; Mentzer et al., 2001). In Uganda's cement manufacturing industry, logistics efficiency is particularly important due to bulky products, dispersed markets, rising transportation costs, and infrastructure constraints. Industry reports identify transport efficiency, distribution capability, and logistics information systems as key drivers of operational effectiveness and competitiveness (Hima Cement, 2023; Simba Cement Uganda, 2023; Tororo Cement Limited, 2024; UBOS, 2024; UNRA, 2023). However, empirical evidence on how these specific logistics management practices influence financial performance in Uganda's manufacturing sector remains limited. This study addresses this gap by examining the influence of transport management, distribution management, and logistics information

systems on managers' perceived financial performance in selected cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda, thereby providing context-specific evidence to inform logistics management theory and practice.

Objectives

To examine the relationship between distribution management and perceived financial performance among managers in cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda.

To examine the relationship between transport management and perceived financial performance among managers in cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda.

To examine the relationship between logistics information systems and perceived financial performance among managers in cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda.

Hypotheses

H01: Distribution management has no statistically significant relationship with perceived financial performance among managers in cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda.

H02: Transport management has no statistically significant relationship with perceived financial performance among managers in cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda.

H03: Logistics information systems have no statistically significant relationship with perceived financial performance among managers in cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda.

Literature Review

The Resource-Based View (RBV) underpins this study by positing that valuable organisational resources and capabilities generate sustainable competitive advantage and superior performance. Within this perspective, logistics management capabilities; transport management, distribution management, and logistics information systemsenhance operational efficiency, supply chain coordination, and organisational effectiveness (Bowersox et al., 2013; Christopher, 2016; Gunasekaran et al., 2004). Transport management improves routing, fleet utilisation, and delivery reliability; distribution management enhances product availability and customer service; while logistics information systems facilitate real-time information sharing and decision-making across the supply chain. Although prior studies generally report positive relationships between logistics management and organisational performance, evidence from developing economies remains limited and inconsistent due to infrastructure constraints, technology adoption, and institutional challenges (Ayantoyinbo&Gbadegesin, 2021; Karia &Asaari, 2016; Koufteros et al., 2002). Consequently, the individual effects of these logistics management practices on perceived financial performance in Uganda's cement manufacturing industry remain insufficiently understood. This study addresses this gap by examining the influence of transport management, distribution management, and logistics information systems on managers' perceived financial performance.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional mixed-methods explanatory design to investigate the influence of logistics management practices on perceived financial performance among managerial employees in selected cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda, namely Tororo Cement Limited, Hima Cement (Tororo Plant), and Simba Cement Uganda Limited. The target population comprised 216 managers, from whom 140 respondents were selected using Slovin's formula and proportionate stratified sampling. Additionally, 15 key informants were purposively selected to provide qualitative insights.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observation, and document review. The validity of the research instruments was established through expert review and exploratory factor analysis, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, with all constructs exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS

version 27 through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis, while qualitative data were analysed thematically to complement and enrich quantitative findings. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and secure handling of research data, were observed throughout the study.

Key Study Findings/Results

Descriptive analysis indicated generally positive perceptions of logistics management practices among respondents. Transport management recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.64), followed by distribution management (M = 3.55) and logistics information systems (M = 3.51). Perceived financial performance also recorded a positive mean score (M = 3.51), suggesting favorable assessments of both logistics' practices and organisational financial performance.

Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between all logistics management practices and perceived financial performance. Transport management exhibited the strongest association ($r = .529$, $p < .01$), followed by logistics information systems ($r = .449$, $p < .01$) and distribution management ($r = .385$, $p < .01$). Regression analysis further showed that transport management ($\beta = .365$, $p < .001$) and logistics information systems ($\beta = .220$, $p = .013$) significantly predicted perceived financial performance, whereas distribution management had a positive but statistically insignificant effect ($\beta = .122$, $p = .162$). Collectively, the logistics management practices explained 33.9% of the variation in perceived financial performance ($R^2 = .339$, $p < .001$).

These findings indicate that transport management and logistics information systems are the most influential logistics capabilities driving perceived financial performance among cement manufacturing firms in Tororo, Uganda. The results support previous studies highlighting transportation efficiency and information integration as critical drivers of supply chain performance and organisational competitiveness (Bowersox et al., 2013; Christopher, 2016; Gunasekaran et al., 2004). Accordingly, H01 was supported, while H02 and H03 were rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that logistics management practices are important determinants of perceived financial performance within Uganda's cement manufacturing industry. Specifically, transport management and logistics information systems significantly enhance financial performance, while distribution management exerts a positive but statistically insignificant influence. These findings extend logistics management literature by providing empirical evidence from a developing-country manufacturing context and support the Resource-Based View by demonstrating that strategic logistics capabilities constitute valuable organisational resources that improve competitive performance. Practically, the study highlights the need for cement manufacturers to prioritise transportation efficiency, digital logistics integration, and cross-functional coordination to achieve sustainable operational and financial performance.

Recommendations

Cement manufacturers should prioritise transport optimisation and integrated logistics information systems to improve logistics visibility, operational efficiency, and financial performance.

Although distribution management was not a significant predictor, firms should strengthen distribution planning and cross-functional coordination to complement other logistics capabilities.

Policymakers should invest in transport infrastructure and support digital transformation to enhance manufacturing competitiveness.

Future research should adopt longitudinal designs and incorporate objective financial performance measures to validate these findings across other manufacturing industries.

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TOPIC

School Management Functions And Students' Academic Performance In Government-Aided Secondary Schools In Dokolo District, Uganda

Keywords: School Management Functions, Academic Performance of Students, Government -Aided Secondary Schools, Dokolo District, Uganda.

AUTHORS

OKELLO ROBERT PIUS



INTRODUCTION

Education remains a critical driver of national development and human capital formation, with its effectiveness largely dependent on how schools are managed and how resources are utilized to achieve desired learning outcomes. In Uganda, the Ministry of Education and Sports continues to invest significantly in secondary education, including support for government-aided schools. However, disparities in students' academic performance persist, particularly in rural districts such as Dokolo, where performance has consistently remained below national standards (Dokolo District Education Officer Report, 2023).

The performance of students in government-aided secondary schools in Dokolo District has shown a concerning declining trend despite the presence of qualified teachers, government funding, and other support mechanisms. This persistent decline, evidenced by Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) reports from 2020 to 2024, raised critical questions regarding how school management functions specifically planning, organizing, and controlling were being implemented and their impact on learner achievement. District authorities, with support from the government, had undertaken several measures including recruitment of qualified staff, construction of facilities, timely funding of schools, and enforcement of quality control processes. Yet academic performance remained low, with Dokolo District consistently ranking among the lowest nationally in UNEB assessments.

This mismatch between efforts made and outcomes achieved raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of school management functions. Previous studies have examined factors such as teacher quality, resource availability, and parental involvement. However, limited research has focused on how school management functions themselves influence academic performance, particularly within rural contexts. This study therefore investigated the relationship between school management functions (planning, organizing, and controlling) and students' academic performance in government-aided secondary schools in Dokolo District, where performance had consistently remained below national standards.

Study Objectives

The study was guided by the objective:

To evaluate the effect of management planning function on academic performance of students in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District.

Research Questions

What is the effect of management planning on academic performance of students in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District?

Methodology

The study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, where quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to explain and elaborate on the quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This approach enhanced validity through triangulation and provided a deeper contextual understanding of the relationships among the study variables.

Study Population and Sample: The target population comprised 247 respondents drawn from seven government-aided secondary schools in Dokolo District, including 7 Head Teachers, 7 Deputy Head Teachers, 7 Directors of Studies, 7 Class Teachers, 140 Subject Teachers, and 105 members of the Prefects' Body. Using Yamane's (1969) formula, a sample size of 229 respondents was determined. Additionally, 14 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted (two per school), along with key informant interviews with the District Education Officer and District Inspector of Schools.

Sampling Techniques: Purposive sampling was used to select key informants including head teachers, education officers, and school administrators. Simple random sampling was employed to select teachers and prefects, ensuring each member of the population had an equal chance of selection, thereby minimizing bias.

Data Collection Instruments: Three main instruments were used: questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), interview guides for in-depth qualitative data, and document review checklists for analyzing secondary data including UNEB reports, school annual reports, and inspection reports.

Data Quality Control: Content Validity Index (CVI) scores for all constructs ranged from 0.7413 to 0.7963, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Reliability was established through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.7551 to 0.9240, all above the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Qualitative trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability measures.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, percentages, standard deviations) and inferential statistics including Pearson's correlation and regression analysis using STATA 18.5. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, with emerging themes presented alongside direct quotations from respondents. Path analysis was employed to examine direct and indirect relationships among variables and assess mediating effects.

Key Study Findings

Management Planning: The findings revealed that management planning practices were generally well implemented in schools, with an overall mean of 3.843 (High). Respondents agreed that schools have clear vision and mission statements (Mean = 4.262), set academic goals (Mean = 4.083), and involve teachers in planning activities (Mean = 4.066). The regression analysis showed that management planning has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance ($\beta = 0.2819$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.1739$). However, planning showed a negative indirect relationship with school environment factors ($\beta = -0.4794$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that planning alone does not automatically improve school conditions unless effectively implemented.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings indicate that academic performance is influenced more strongly by direct management practices, particularly controlling and planning, than by indirect environmental factors. However, the school environment remains an important complementary factor that enhances the

effectiveness of management functions. This suggests that improving academic performance requires a balanced approach that strengthens both internal management systems and environmental conditions, with greater emphasis on effective implementation and accountability mechanism

Recommendations

The study recommends Schools should strengthen the implementation of planning processes by ensuring that plans are translated into clear, actionable, and measurable activities.

The study recommends Schools should strengthen co-curricular programs to support holistic student development and improve engagement.

The study recommends The Ministry of Education and Sports should develop capacity-building programs for school administrators focusing on integrated management practices.

The study recommends District education authorities should strengthen monitoring and accountability systems for school-level implementation of management functions.

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TOPIC

The Effect of Budget Monitoring on Education Service Delivery in Selected Public Universities in South Sudan

Keywords: Budget monitoring; education service delivery; public financial management; audit; oversight; public universities; South Sudan

AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION

Public financial management is the cornerstone of state capability, particularly in post-conflict and fragile administrative environments (Andrews et al., 2017). Within the public sector, budget monitoring serves as the feedback mechanism of the expenditure cycle,the critical phase in which financial transactions are tracked against institutional plans, variances are identified and resolved, and oversight bodies hold spending units accountable (Kusek & Rist, 2004). When carried out by structured, independent, and well-resourced units, budget monitoring ensures that public resources reach their intended social and developmental destinations (Borden & Perie, 2020). However, in fragile states, the monitoring phase is frequently undermined by weak capacity, manual financial systems, and political capture, reducing accountability to a performative compliance exercise (Mutiganda & Järvinen, 2021).

In South Sudan, public universities operate under extreme conditions of fiscal volatility, infrastructure deficit, and institutional rebuilding (Majer & Makuac, 2023). Despite successive public financial management reforms, public institutions struggle to translate financial allocations into reliable educational outcomes (Adebayo, 2022). While the literature has established a general link between financial oversight and organizational performance in stable economies, there is a distinct shortage of empirical research that isolates the budget monitoring phase within post-conflict municipal and academic ecosystems (Majer & Makuac, 2023). This paper addresses this gap by isolating and examining the third objective of a comprehensive institutional study.

Study Objectives

The primary objective of this paper is to examine the effect of budget monitoring on the delivery of educational services in selected public universities in South Sudan. To guide the empirical inquiry, the study formulated and tested the corresponding null hypothesis (H03), which posits that budget monitoring has no statistically significant effect on the delivery of educational services in the selected public universities of South Sudan.

Methodology

This study was grounded in a pragmatic paradigm and executed via a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. This dual approach enabled the concurrent collection and independent analysis of quantitative and qualitative data streams, ensuring robust triangulation and cross-validation within a single field phase. The target population comprised academic administrators, finance officers, internal

auditors, senior university management, and policymakers from the University of Juba, the University of Bahr El-Ghazal, Upper Nile University, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. From an initial distributed sample of 400 determined via Slovin's and Cochran's formulas, a final analytic sample of 358 valid responses was retained, representing an 89.5% response rate. Qualitative data were gathered from 21 purposively selected key informants and three student focus group discussions.

Budget monitoring was operationalized using a 12-item scale measuring performance assessment, variance detection, record accuracy, compliance monitoring, and independent audit oversight. Education service delivery was measured via a 10-item scale assessing teaching quality, research output, community engagement, and student satisfaction. Both instruments used a five-point Likert scale. Scale purification demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.873$ for budget monitoring and 0.886 for service delivery, confirming a reliable measurement foundation. Quantitative data were processed in SPSS using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. To address minor heteroscedasticity, HC3 heteroscedasticity-consistent robust standard errors were incorporated into the regression model. Qualitative transcript analysis followed the six-phase thematic template framework of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Key Study Findings

Descriptive evaluation revealed a distinct institutional phenomenon known as the awareness-practice paradox. The budget monitoring construct returned a composite mean of 3.37 (SD = 0.99), with the highest-rated individual survey item being the general acknowledgement that weak monitoring is a major challenge to financial management (M = 4.35, SD = 0.68, endorsed by 89.7% of respondents). Conversely, specific operational practice items yielded significantly lower scores, including prompt variance detection (M = 3.01), accuracy of financial records (M = 3.15), and oversight preventing fund misuse (M = 3.28). This reveals that university staff possess a high conceptual awareness of the value of monitoring, yet actual compliance and execution remain weak due to binding structural constraints.

Inferential statistical results confirmed a strong positive relationship. Bivariate Pearson correlation indicated a large, positive, and statistically significant relationship between budget monitoring and educational service delivery ($r = 0.554$, $p < 0.01$). Simple linear regression modelled the predictive influence of the monitoring construct:

Education Service Delivery = 1.179 + 0.637(Budget Monitoring)

The regression model confirmed that budget monitoring alone explains 30.6% of the total variance in education service delivery in South Sudan's public universities ($R2 = 0.306$, {Adjusted} $R2 = 0.305$, {Std. Error} = 0.614, $F(1, 356) = 157.31$, $p < 0.001$). The unstandardized slope coefficient ($B = 0.637$, $t = 12.542$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that a one-unit improvement on the budget monitoring scale is associated with a 0.637-unit increase in educational service delivery. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H03) was rejected.

Thematic analysis revealed three key barriers explaining the quantitative model. First, the absence of systematic frameworks makes monitoring ad hoc and donor-driven, causing operational disruptions. Second, severe capacity constraints, including manual records, infrastructure deficits, and understaffed audit departments, limit oversight. Third, political interference suppresses audit findings and threatens staff, reflecting leadership appointed via patronage rather than merit. Consequently, while quantitative data links monitoring to service delivery, qualitative insights prove that this relationship requires political independence and enforcement capability. Without these, monitoring remains a performative compliance exercise shielding administrative failures.

Recommendations

To transform budget monitoring from a performative compliance exercise into a functional mechanism for educational development, the study proposes six key recommendations:

Independent Monitoring Units: Establish dedicated evaluation units reporting directly to University Governing Councils to insulate internal auditors and ensure findings reach decision-makers.

Expand and Professionalize Staff: Partner with the Ministry of Higher Education to recruit and train certified public accountants, resolving severe personnel deficits.

Digitize Expenditure Tracking: Transition from manual, paper-based ledgers to localized or cloud-compatible digital tracking systems to enable rapid variance detection.

Implement Whistleblower Protections: Enact formal legal safeguards to shield audit and finance personnel from political intimidation and retaliatory dismissal.

Tie Budgets to Performance: Implement performance-based financing that links central budget allocations to positive audit compliance and variance resolution.

Reconstruct Executive Recruitment: Transition vice-chancellor appointments away from patronage toward transparent, merit-based academic criteria.

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TOPIC

The Role of Revitalized Community Empowerment Practices in Enhancing Local Ownership of Tourism Enterprises Alleviating Poverty in Kinigi Sector, Rwanda

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism, Revitalized Empowerment, Socio-economic Wellbeing, Local ownership, Kinigi Sector

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ABSTRACT:

Nature based tourism has rapidly been growing in rural areas while the communities remain economically marginalized. This study examines the role of revitalized community empowerment practices in enhancing local ownership of tourism enterprises mitigating poverty in the Kinigi Sector, Musanze District. Using a mixed-methods descriptive research design, primary and secondary data were collected from 272 sampled local members of community cooperatives and tourism cum conservation stakeholders. The findings reveal that targeted capacity building, community expertise – specifically tourism awareness and knowledge dissemination, availability of accessible resources, and government service provision are statistically significant predictors of successful indigenous enterprise ownership and management. Furthermore, empowering residents to participate in community-based tourism (CBT), expanding the Tourism Revenue Sharing (TRS) basket and program allows the community to leverage natural and financial resources, leading to evident improvement in the local living standards. The study concludes that revitalized empowerment practices directly stimulates local innovativeness, inclusiveness, enabling entrepreneurs to design competitive, authentic community tourism products and services.

Introduction

Focusing on the Kinigi Sector in Rwanda, this research analyzes the role of revitalized community empowerment practices in fostering local ownership of tourism enterprises and mitigating poverty. Traditional tourism models in the Global South often exclude host communities from direct benefits. This study highlights how utilizing local cooperatives and the Volcanoes National Park revenue-sharing program backed by localized training and inclusive governance allows residents to transition from mere employees to business owners. This structural shift supports Rwanda's Vision 2030, Vision 2050, and SDG targets, serving as a vital mechanism for long term socio-economic growth.

Tourism has historically served as a critical pillar of Rwanda's economy, driving national development and foreign exchange. While the government established the Tourism Revenue Sharing (TRS) programs to redistribute 10% of park revenue to local communities, earlier efforts were sometimes criticized as mere "Tokenism". Today, however, a fundamental transformation is underway. Local population are transitioning from mere "beneficiaries" into true "owners" of tourism assets (Jackson 2025). This

empowerment is spearheaded by the development of Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) in rural areas. By emphasizing sustainable, community-operated, and culturally focused experiences around national parks, local residents in the Kinigi Sector are moving beyond basic revenue handouts. Through active participation, specialized training, and authentic ownership, these communities are now empowered to act as stewards of their own natural and cultural resources ultimately paving a localized path to poverty alleviation (National guidelines for CBTEs in Rwanda 2022).

Gaps in the literature

Eradicating global poverty remains the foremost target of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Veriassa and Waite (2017), with sustainable tourism increasingly recognized by government and development organizations as a critical driver for achieving this objective (Economic Development in Africa Report 2017). However, despite widespread international aid projects, structural adjustments, and development plans, progress towards these targets has often been limited (Loureiro, Costa, &Malheiro, (2024).

Poverty eradication is the first of the United Nations established Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with sustainable tourism being recognized as a major development activity to the attainment of the said goals. In the recent years, commitment to tourism as a development strategy for the developing world has gained a renewed interest within governments and development organizations in the fulfilment of the United Nations MDGs. However, despite several developing plans, aid projects, grants, loans and structural adjustments, limited progress has been made to achieve the targets defined in that goal (Lima et al., 2011; Isaboke, 2017)

In the Kinigi Sector, Rwanda, revitalized community empowerment practices are vital to translating broad tourism-based development into tangible poverty reduction Isaboke, (2017) in Musanze District. By fostering community-based tourism enterprises and cooperative ownership, residents gain direct access to economic benefits and natural resources, which effectively elevates living standards and creates sustainable livelihoods.

Problem Statement

Rural communities in the Kinigi Sector the gateway to Rwanda's lucrative Volcanoes National Park remain economically marginalized despite the booming gorilla tourism industry. Current Tourism Revenue Sharing frameworks reduce residents to passive beneficiaries rather than self-sustaining enterprise owners. This exclusion stems from capacity gaps and limited resources, which risk entrenching poverty and fueling conservation resentment unless addressed through revitalized empowerment practices.

Main objective

To investigate how revitalized community empowerment practices including capacity building, inclusive decision-making, and resource accessibility strengthen local ownership of tourism enterprises and promote poverty alleviation among residents of the Kinigi Sector.

Specific objectives

To evaluate how revitalized community empowerment practices enhance ownership of tourism enterprises management capacity of residents operating tourism enterprises in the Kinigi Sector.

To evaluate the relationship between revitalized community empowerment practices and socio-economic development in Kinigi Sector

Research hypothesis

H01: There is no statistically significant relationship between revitalized community empowerment practices and enhanced enhance ownership of tourism enterprises management capacity of residents operating tourism enterprises in the Kinigi sector.

H02: There is no statistically significant relationship between revitalized community empowerment practices and socio-economic development in the Kinigi Sector.

Method and Materials

This proposed study adopted a descriptive design in order to evaluate community empowerment practices as tools in equipping the community in Kinigi sector in Musanze District to own tourism enterprises. A descriptive research design was adopted to evaluate how community empowerment practices function as a tool for equipping the community in the Kinigi sector of Musanze District to own tourism enterprises. The target population comprised 855 individuals from various cooperatives, including tourism park management, community leaders, cell and district administration leaders, association/cooperative managers, and community tourism consultants. A sample was selected from the local community residing in the Kinigi sector.

Simple random sampling techniques were used to select participants from the local community for quantitative data collection. From the tourism cooperatives, a sample of 272 respondents was selected based on the Slovin's formula, representing a 5% margin of error. This research employed a mixed-method approach, utilizing focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and a questionnaire survey, all of which were complemented by documentary analysis.

Main Conclusion

In the Kinigi sector, Musanze District, Rwanda, community empowerment and local ownership of tourism enterprises show a moderate correlation. While capacity building, accessible resources, and community expertise are strong predictors of enterprise ownership, government services (such as infrastructure, revenue sharing, and administrative support) act as a critical moderator that significantly accelerate these empowerment practices.

Recommendations of the study

Local empowerment will be strengthened through targeted education and outreach. Experts from Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and Rwanda Tourist Board (RTB) should lead public hearings to mobilize residents to attend these hearings, while consistently communicating the long term sustainability and well-being benefits of community-managed businesses.

To ensure long-term viability, the government should increase funding for the creation and scaling of new tourism enterprises. Financial experts from Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) should guide national budgeting committees on these financial allocations. Furthermore, expanding the Tourism Revenue Sharing (TRS) program to include more new enterprises that will broaden the available resource envelope

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TOPIC

Customer Relationship Management And Firm Profitability In Hotels In The Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, Uganda

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Firm Profitability, Hotels, Customer Retention, Hospitality Industry, Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, Uganda.

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ABSTRACT

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) seeks to improve customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty, and eventually enhance firm profitability This study examined the effect of Customer Relationship Management on firm profitability in hotels within the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area (GKMA), Uganda. The study was motivated by the growing need for hotels to strengthen customer relationships in order to improve firm profitability amidst increasing competition in the hospitality industry. Guided by the Resource-Based View Theory and the Service Profit Chain Theory, the study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design grounded in the pragmatist paradigm. Quantitative data were collected from 340 frontline employees and qualitative insights from hotel managers and customers. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. CRM was assessed through dimensions of people, technology, and processes, while profitability was measured using ROI, ROE, and Net Profit indicators. Findings indicated high CRM implementation, with a strong positive correlation between CRM and profitability ($r = 0.8777$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis confirmed CRM as a significant predictor of profitability ($\beta = 1.0109$, $p < .001$), explaining 77.04% of profitability variation. The study concludes that effective CRM practices can enhance customer retention and financial performance, recommending further investment in integrated CRM systems and employee training, and customer-focused strategies to strengthen profitability and competitiveness within Uganda's hospitality sector.

Introduction

The hospitality industry has become one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, contributing significantly to employment creation, foreign exchange earnings, and economic development. In an increasingly competitive business environment, hotels are under pressure to attract, retain, and satisfy customers while simultaneously improving their financial performance. Consequently, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has emerged as a critical strategic tool that enables organizations to build long-term relationships with customers through effective management of people, technology, and organizational processes (Payne & Frow, 2005; Guerola-Navarro et al., 2021).

Customer Relationship Management refers to the integration of organizational processes, human resources, and technology to acquire, retain, and develop profitable customer relationships (Chen & Popovich, 2003). Research indicates that effective CRM practices enhance customer satisfaction, encourage customer loyalty, improve service delivery, and ultimately contribute to increased firm profitability (Ridwan et al., 2021; Cavaliere et al., 2021). Hotels that effectively utilize customer information and personalized services are more likely to create positive customer experiences that translate into repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and sustainable competitive advantage.

Modern CRM framworks associate the application of an organization's valuable, rare, imitable, and non-subsituted (VRIN) resources to gain a competitive advantage. The utilization of an organization's VRIN resources is what creates a competitive advantage, according to Wernerfelt's Resource Based View (RBV) theory, which served as the study's first theoretical foundation (Barney, 2001; Wernerfelt, 1984). The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory argues that organizations achieve superior performance by effectively utilizing valuable resources such as human capabilities, information technology, and organizational processes (Barney, 2001; Wernerfelt, 1984). Similarly, the second theory that served as the study's compass is Reynolds' (2002) Service Profit Chain theory (SPC). The Service Profit Chain theory suggests that quality customer relationships and service delivery contribute to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and improved financial performance (Heskett et al., 1994). These perspectives highlight the importance of CRM as a strategic resource for enhancing organizational profitability in the service industry.

In Africa, the rapid growth of the tourism and hospitality investment has increased the need for customer-oriented management systems that can sustain competiveness and profitability. However, many hotels in Africa continue to face numerous challenges related to inadequate technological infrastructure, limited CRM expertise, weak customer feedback systems, inconsistent service delivery, poor customer retention strategies, and ineffective customer relationship management practices which undermine customer satisfaction and organizational performance (Ayo et al., 2021; Sigala, 2005).

In Uganda, the hotel industry has experienced significant growth over the past decade, particularly within the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area (GKMA), which hosts the country's largest concentration of four-star and five-star hotels. Despite this growth, the industry operates in an increasingly competitive environment characterized by changing customer preferences, technological disruptions, rising customer expectations and escalating operational costs (UTB, 2023; MTWA, 2023; Kiggundu, 2019). Although, CRM is expected to improve firm profitability through personalized service delivery, effective communication, efficient complaint handling, and stronger customer relationships, its implementation remains inadequate and fragmented, with approximately 61% of hotels lacking the financial resources, technological infrastructure, and specialized CRM expertise required for effective implementation (UTB, 2015).

As a result, a substantial proportion of hotels in Uganda continue to experience operational inefficiencies, including inconsistent service delivery, delayed complaint resolution, inadequate customer follow-up, weak service recovery systems, and limited personalization of guest experiences. These shortcomings have adversely affected customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and customer retention (Ngoma et al., 2020; Mwesiga, 2018; Nalubega, 2018; Adongo, 2022). These challenges are evident even among premium hotels in the GKMA, where inadequate integration of people, technology, and service processes has contributed to declining customer loyalty, reduced repeat patronage, unstable occupancy rates, negative online reviews, and lower profitability (UTB, 2023; Tukamushaba et al., 2022). These CRM implementation weaknesses also have significant financial implications, as a 5% decline in customer retention can reduce annual hotel profitability by USD 25,000–85,000 for hotels generating approximately USD 1 million in annual revenue (Nitu et al., 2014).

Although previous studies have examined the relationship between CRM and customer outcomes such as satisfaction and loyalty, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the effect of CRM on firm profitability within Uganda's hotel sector. This study therefore examined the effect of customer

relationship management on firm profitability among hotels in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, Uganda.

Study Objective and Research Question

Objective

To assess the effect of customer relationship management on firm profitability in hotels in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area.

Research Question

What is the effect of customer relationship management on firm profitability in hotels in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area?

Literature Review

Customer relationship management refers to the integration of people, technology, and organizational processes to acquire, maintain, and strengthen profitable customer relationships (Chen & Popovich, 2003). Existing literature consistently shows that effective CRM contributes significantly to organizational performance by enhancing customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, and firm profitability (Payne & Frow, 2005; Guerola-Navarro et al., 2021). Through personalized interactions, customer data management, and improved service delivery, CRM enables firms to develop long-term relationships that generate sustainable competitive advantage and financial returns.

The conceptual foundation of this study is anchored on two prominent theories: the resource-based view theory developed by Wernerfelt, (1984) and the service profit chain theory developed by Heskett, et al., (1994) as a theoretical framework to understand the influence of CRM on firm profitability. The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory suggests that organizations achieve superior performance when they effectively utilize valuable resources such as human capital, information technology, organizational knowledge, and strategic processes (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 2001). Similarly, the Service Profit Chain (SPC) theory argues that customer satisfaction and service quality are critical drivers of customer loyalty, revenue growth, and profitability (Heskett et al., 1994). Empirical studies have demonstrated that firms with effective CRM practices report higher customer retention, increased sales revenue, and improved profitability compared to organizations with weak customer relationship management systems (Kim et al., 2020; Ridwan et al., 2021).

Within the hospitality industry, CRM has become increasingly important due to intense competition, changing customer expectations, and the need to deliver personalized services. Studies indicate that hotels that successfully integrate CRM systems are more likely to improve customer satisfaction, strengthen customer loyalty, and achieve higher financial performance (Choi & Kandampully, 2019; Zhao et al., 2020). However, evidence suggests that implementation challenges related to employee skills, technological infrastructure, and organizational processes continue to limit the effectiveness of CRM in many hotel establishments, particularly in developing countries (UTB, 2015; Ngoma et al., 2020).

Most previous studies have focused on CRM outcomes such as customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and service quality, with limited attention given to its direct effect on firm profitability within the hotel industry. Furthermore, few studies have examined these relationships within Uganda's hospitality sector, where contextual factors such as technological limitations, resource constraints, and varying service standards may influence CRM effectiveness. The scarcity of context-specific evidence from hotels in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area created a knowledge gap that this study sought to address.

Methodology

This study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design guided by the pragmatist paradigm to investigate the relationship between customer relationship management and firm profitability in hotels in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, Uganda. The explanatory sequential

design enabled the collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The study further employed the principles of Critical Realism, which suggests that organizational outcomes are shaped by observable phenomena and hidden structural mechanisms.

A descriptive-correlational cross sectional survey design was utilized for the quantitative approach. The target population was comprised of 2,407 employees from six selected four-star and five-star hotels in GKMA. A sample of 343 respondents was selected using simple random sampling and Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula. Structured questionnaires were distributed to front line employees of marketing and sales, front office, food and beverage, accommodation and accounts departments. In the qualitative phase, purposive sampling method was used to select key informants which consisted of general managers, marketing managers, sales managers, departmental managers and selected corporate and individual hotel guests who participated in semi-structured interviews to provide contextual insights and enrich the quantitative findings.

Customer relationship management constituted the independent variable and was operationalized using three dimensions: people, technology, and processes. Firm profitability, the dependent variable, was measured using indicators reflecting return on investment (ROI), return on equity (ROE), and net profit. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enhanced the validity of the study by enabling triangulation and providing a more nuanced interpretation of the relationship between CRM and firm profitability. Instrument validity was established using the Content Validity Index (CVI), while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, all of which exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70.

Quantitative data were analyzed using STATA 18 and AMOS through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, regression analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Qualitative data obtained from interviews were analyzed thematically and used to enrich the interpretation of quantitative findings. Ethical considerations included obtaining approval from Clarke International University Research Ethics Committee and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), securing informed consent from respondents, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and guaranteeing voluntary participation throughout the study. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provided a deeper understanding of how CRM practices influence firm profitability in hotels operating within the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area.

Findings of the Study

The findings revealed that Customer Relationship Management is highly practiced among hotels in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, with respondents reporting strong implementation of the people, technology, and process dimensions of CRM. The People dimension recorded a high overall mean score ($M = 4.499$, $SD = 0.506$), indicating that hotels place significant emphasis on recruiting competent employees, staff training, customer-focused attitudes, and effective customer engagement. Similarly, the Technology dimension was rated highly ($M = 4.446$, $SD = 0.587$), demonstrating that hotels extensively utilize CRM systems, customer databases, digital communication channels, and information technologies to personalize services and manage customer interactions. The Process dimension also recorded a high mean score ($M = 4.456$, $SD = 0.522$), reflecting the existence of structured procedures for handling customer feedback, service delivery, complaint management, and continuous process improvement. Qualitative findings further showed that hotels rely on staff commitment, customer information systems, and standardized service processes to strengthen customer relationships, improve service experiences, and encourage repeat patronage.

The study further established that firm profitability among hotels is strongly linked to CRM practices, with respondents reporting high levels of profitability associated with customer retention, customer satisfaction, and long-term customer relationships ($M = 4.465$, $SD = 0.578$). Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between CRM and firm profitability ($r = 0.8777$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis

further demonstrated that CRM significantly predicts firm profitability (β = 1.0109, $p < .001$), explaining 77.04% of the variation in firm profitability (R^2 = .7704). The findings indicate that improvements in CRM practices lead to enhanced Return on Investment (ROI), Return on Equity (ROE), and Net Profit through increased customer loyalty, repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and reduced customer acquisition costs. Consistent with the Resource-Based View Theory and Service Profit Chain Theory, the results suggest that CRM serves as a strategic organizational resource that enhances customer satisfaction, service quality, and ultimately financial performance within the hospitality industry.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study concludes that Customer Relationship Management is a significant predictor of firm profitability in hotels within the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area. Hotels that effectively integrate people, technology, and organizational processes are better positioned to develop strong customer relationships, improve customer satisfaction, and enhance financial performance. The findings demonstrate that CRM contributes significantly to profitability by increasing customer retention, encouraging repeat business, generating positive referrals, and strengthening customer loyalty. The results further confirm that CRM is not merely an operational tool but a strategic resource that creates sustainable competitive advantage and long-term profitability. Therefore, effective CRM implementation remains essential for hotels seeking to improve their financial performance and maintain competitiveness in the hospitality industry.

Recommendations

Hotel managers should strengthen investments in integrated CRM systems that facilitate customer data management, personalized service delivery, customer feedback management, and performance monitoring. Continuous training programs should also be implemented to equip employees with customer relationship skills, communication competencies, and service recovery techniques necessary for building long-term customer relationships.

The Uganda Tourism Board and the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities should promote the adoption of CRM best practices among hotels through policy guidelines, capacity-building initiatives, and industry training programs. They should encourage hotels to leverage technology-driven CRM solutions to improve service quality, customer satisfaction, and competitiveness within Uganda's hospitality sector.

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TOPIC

Beyond The Ivory Tower: Research Activities And Community Engagement Outcomes In Selected Universities In Central Uganda

Keywords: Research activities; community engagement; knowledge production; research funding; publication output; knowledge translation; university-community partnerships; Uganda.

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INTRODUCTION

Universities are increasingly recognized as key actors in socio-economic transformation through their mandates of teaching, research, and community engagement (World Bank, 2008; Trinh, 2023). Contemporary higher education systems are expected not only to generate knowledge but also to ensure that such knowledge addresses societal challenges and contributes directly to policy formulation, innovation, and community development (Berrell, 1998; Mandau et al., 2022). Consequently, research activities have become central to assessing the societal relevance and impact of universities.

Theoretical perspectives on knowledge production have evolved significantly over the last three decades. Gibbons et al. (1994) and Nowotny et al. (2001) argue that knowledge production has shifted from traditional disciplinary approaches (Mode 1) towards socially distributed, application-oriented, and transdisciplinary approaches (Mode 2). This shift emphasizes collaborative knowledge generation and stronger linkages between universities and communities. Similarly, Boyer (1990) advocates for an expanded conception of scholarship that integrates discovery, application, and engagement with societal needs.

In Africa, universities are increasingly expected to support national development agendas through research and innovation (Bailey et al., 2011; Cloete et al., 2015). In Uganda, policy frameworks such as Vision 2040 and the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) identify research and innovation as critical enablers of socio-economic transformation and sustainable development (NPA, 2025). The number of universities and scientific publications has expanded significantly, with scientific publications increasing from 136 in 2001 to 934 in 2020 (KNOEMA, 2023). Despite this progress, there remains a persistent gap between research production and societal utilization.Several studies have reported that a substantial proportion of research outputs in Uganda remain theoretical and have limited influence on policy and community development (Mukama & Nampala, 2020; Makerere University, 2021). Nankabirwa et al. (2020) further estimate that up to 96 percent of research findings remain unimplemented, reflecting weaknesses in knowledge translation and dissemination mechanisms. Consequently, universities are often perceived as "ivory towers" that produce knowledge without sufficiently addressing community priorities (Brackmann, 2015; Mugabi, 2015).This study therefore examined the influence of research activities on community engagement outcomes in selected universities in Central Uganda. Specifically, it sought to establish the extent to which research activities contribute to policy change, community improvements, and stakeholder satisfaction and perceptions.

Objective

To analyze the influence of research activities on community engagement outcomes in selected universities in Central Uganda.

Research Questions

What is the nature and extent of research activities in universities in Central Uganda?

How do research activities influence community engagement outcomes?

Which dimensions of research activities significantly predict community engagement outcomes?

Literature Review

Research activities remain the cornerstone of university knowledge production systems and are increasingly viewed as vehicles for addressing societal challenges (Godin & Gingras, 2000; Trinh, 2023). Effective research contributes to policy reforms, innovation, and community development through knowledge generation and dissemination (Nutley et al., 2007).Research funding has been identified as a critical determinant of institutional research capacity and societal impact. Adequate financing enables universities to undertake applied research, strengthen infrastructure, and support outreach initiatives (Cunningham et al., 2018; UNCST, 2023). However, dependence on donor funding may redirect research priorities towards externally driven agendas at the expense of locally relevant challenges (Sarpong, 2022; Kasozi, 2019).

Research collaboration is similarly recognized as a mechanism for enhancing knowledge exchange and community participation (Veira, 2024). Collaborative and participatory research approaches strengthen social capital, policy influence, and community ownership of research outcomes (Pritchard et al., 2024). Nevertheless, collaboration alone does not automatically generate community impact unless accompanied by effective knowledge translation mechanisms (Graham et al., 2006).Studies on university-community engagement further demonstrate that research contributes to policy change, improved livelihoods, and enhanced stakeholder perceptions when aligned with local needs (Hart & Northmore, 2011; Goddard et al., 2016; Bock et al., 2025). Despite these insights, limited empirical evidence exists regarding how research activities influence community engagement outcomes within the Ugandan context.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed-methods approach using a cross-sectional concurrent triangulation design. The study was conducted in three universities representing urban, peri-urban, and rural contexts, namely Makerere University, Uganda Martyrs University, and Bugema University.A sample of 330 academic staff was selected through stratified random sampling, while purposive sampling was employed to identify key informants, including university administrators, policymakers, and community representatives.Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires measuring publication output, research funding, and research collaboration, as well as indicators of community engagement outcomes, including policy influence, community improvement, and stakeholder satisfaction. Qualitative data were obtained through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis in STATA version 18.5, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically using NVivo version 10. Instrument validity and reliability were established using the Content Validity Index and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Ethical principles of confidentiality, informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed.

Key Findings

The study found that research activities in the selected universities were generally strong (Mean = 3.552; SD = 0.563), particularly regarding publication output and research collaboration.Academic staff reported high levels of publication in peer-reviewed outlets and significant efforts to disseminate research findings beyond academic circles. Research outputs were largely perceived to address community and societal needs.Research funding, however, received only moderate ratings, suggesting that financial support remains insufficient to fully support community-oriented research activities. The findings indicate a funding disconnect whereby institutional support for community engagement is not adequately matched with research aspirations.Research collaboration with communities, industries, and government institutions was highly rated and contributed to partnerships in training, policy development, and community projects.

Community engagement outcomes were also rated highly (Mean = 3.873; SD = 0.341). Respondents indicated that university research had contributed significantly to policy reforms, improved livelihoods, local economic development, innovation adoption, and stakeholder trust.

The correlation analysis demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship between research activities and community engagement outcomes ($r = 0.4267$; $p < 0.001$).Regression analysis revealed that research activities significantly predict community engagement outcomes ($F(1,328)=73.03$; $p<0.001$), explaining 18.2 percent of the variation in community engagement outcomes.

Multiple regression results further indicated that:

Publication output significantly influenced community engagement outcomes ($\beta = 0.101$; $p = 0.003$).

Research funding exerted the strongest positive influence ($\beta = 0.159$; $p < 0.001$).

Research collaboration had a negative but statistically insignificant effect ($\beta = -0.024$; $p = 0.519$).

These findings suggest that while collaborations are necessary, they require stronger institutional structures and effective knowledge translation systems to generate measurable community outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that research activities significantly influence community engagement outcomes in universities in Central Uganda. Research funding and publication output emerged as important determinants of policy influence, community development, and stakeholder satisfaction.However, substantial gaps remain between research production and research utilization. Universities continue to face challenges relating to inadequate funding, weak dissemination mechanisms, and insufficient institutionalization of knowledge translation processes.The study recommends that universities should:

Prioritize applied and problem-oriented research aligned to community priorities;

Strengthen institutional mechanisms for knowledge translation and dissemination;

Develop formal systems for communicating research findings back to communities;

Increase investment in community-oriented research;

Establish incentives that promote policy-relevant and community-engaged scholarship; and

Institutionalize participatory research approaches that facilitate co-creation of knowledge and sustainable development.

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TOPIC

Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Early Aflatoxin Detection in Groundnuts to Advance Sustainable Postharvest Food Safety Management.

Keywords: Aflatoxin; Artificial Intelligence; Deep Learning; Convolutional Neural Networks; Food Safety; Groundnuts; Inception-ResNet-V2; Postharvest Quality; Transfer Learning

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ABSTRACT

Aflatoxin contamination of groundnuts remains a significant food safety and economic issue in Uganda; however, the traditional laboratory methods for its detection. ELISA, a high-performance liquid chromatography, and thin-layer chromatography are expensive, time-consuming, and largely unattainable for smallholder farmers and postharvest handlers. This work investigates whether a deep learning model, trained solely on images, can provide a quicker and more accessible method for screening groundnuts for aflatoxin-related problems during sorting. A convolutional neural network, Inception-ResNet-V2, was created using transfer learning to categorize groundnuts into four postharvest classifications: healthy, moldy, pest-infested, and physiologically disordered, each associated with varying levels of aflatoxin risk. On the reserved test dataset, the model attained an accuracy of 99.29%, precision of 100%, recall of 98.44%, and an F1-score of 99.21%, with the moldy class being categorized nearly flawlessly (AUC = 1.00). The findings indicate that image-based deep learning can significantly enhance low-cost postharvest inspection, while also identifying some categories, primarily pest-infested groundnuts, where the model's discriminative ability is relatively poorer and necessitates further methodological development.

Introduction

Aflatoxins are toxic secondary metabolites produced mainly by Aspergillus flavus and A. parasiticus, and are classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as Group 1 human carcinogens(Koshiol et al., 2026). They contaminate staple crops such as groundnuts (Arachis hypogaea) particularly in tropical and sub-tropical regions where heat and humidity favour fungal growth, and the FAO estimates that around a quarter of the world's food crops are affected annually. In Uganda, groundnuts are both a dietary staple and a key income source for smallholder farmers, yet poor postharvest handling and storage practices leave them highly vulnerable to contamination, with several studies reporting Ugandan samples that exceed safe aflatoxin thresholds.

The methods currently used to confirm aflatoxin contamination, ELISA, HPLC, and thin-layer chromatography, are analytically reliable but require specialized equipment, trained personnel, and time that most postharvest handling points in Uganda do not have(Akullo et al., 2025). This creates a practical gap: contaminated groundnuts frequently reach markets and consumers before

contamination is detected, with consequences for both public health and farmers' incomes. Deep learning, and convolutional neural networks (CNNs) in particular, have shown strong performance in detecting visual patterns imperceptible to the human eye across a range of agricultural image-classification tasks, but AI-based screening tools specific to groundnut postharvest inspection remain scarce, and existing agricultural CNN studies rarely distinguish between the several distinct causes of visual defect (mold, pests, and physiological stress) that carry different implications for aflatoxin risk. This study addresses that gap by asking: can a deep learning model, trained on images of groundnuts, reliably distinguish healthy produce from mold, pest, and physiological-disorder-affected produce with sufficient accuracy to support real-world sorting decisions?

2. **Research Objectives and Questions**

2. 1 **Study Objectives**

The study aimed to develop and evaluate an Inception-ResNet-V2 deep learning model for the automated classification of groundnuts into quality categories associated with aflatoxin contamination risk. Specifically, the study sought to (i) construct a labelled image dataset comprising healthy, moldy, pest-infested, and physiological-disorder groundnuts; (ii) design and fine-tune an Inception-ResNet-V2 model using transfer learning for four-class classification; and (iii) evaluate the model's performance using accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, ROC-AUC, and statistical validation.

2.2 **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

How accurately can a deep learning model classify groundnuts into categories associated with aflatoxin contamination risk?

Which groundnut quality categories can the model distinguish most reliably, and which remain challenging?

Is the model's performance statistically robust enough to support future field deployment?

3. **Methodology**

The study followed an experimental design comprising image acquisition, preprocessing, model development, and evaluation. Groundnut samples were photographed under standardized lighting and environmental conditions using a high-resolution digital camera, and each image was labelled by expert agronomic annotation into one of four categories: healthy, moldy, pest-infested, or physiological disorder(Tamale et al., 2025). A total of 813 labelled images were collected (226 healthy, 236 moldy, 191 pest-infested, 160 physiological disorder) and partitioned into training, validation, and test sets using stratified sampling to preserve class balance across splits.

Images were resized to 256 × 256 pixels and augmented, through rotation, width/height shifting, zooming, and horizontal/vertical flipping, at higher rates for the moldy and physiological-disorder classes to compensate for their smaller sample sizes and reduce overfitting. Transfer learning was implemented using an Inception-ResNet-V2 backbone pretrained on ImageNet; early convolutional layers were frozen while the final ten layers were fine-tuned, and custom dense layers with batch normalization and dropout were appended to the network(Szegedy et al., 2017). Training used the Adam optimizer, categorical cross-entropy loss, and class weighting to counter residual class imbalance, with hyperparameters (learning rate, batch size, dropout rate) selected via grid search and a learning-rate scheduler applied to stabilize convergence over 50 epochs. As the study used photographs of agricultural produce rather than human or animal subjects, no ethical clearance beyond institutional research approval was required; data handling followed standard research-data management practice.

Model performance was assessed on an independent test set using accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and ROC-AUC, supported by a confusion matrix to examine class-level performance. To test whether the results reflected genuine learning rather than chance, five-fold stratified cross-validation and a permutation test with 1,000 label shuffles were conducted.

4. **Study Findings**

The model achieved an overall test accuracy of 99.29%, precision of 100%, recall of 98.44%, and an F1-score of 99.21%. Per-class ROC-AUC values were 0.98–0.99 for healthy, 1.00 for moldy, 0.96–0.97 for pest-infested, and 0.99 for physiological disorder. Five-fold cross-validation produced a test-accuracy standard deviation of only 0.71%, and a permutation test returned $p < 0.01$, together indicating that the model's performance is stable across data splits and statistically unlikely to have occurred by chance. Table 1 summarizes the overall and per-class performance metrics.

Metric	Value (Test Set)
Accuracy	99.29%
Precision	100.00%
Recall	98.44%
F1-score	99.21%
AUC – Healthy	0.98–0.99
AUC – Moldy	1.00
AUC – Pest-Infested	0.96–0.97
AUC – Physiological Disorder	0.99

Table 1. Overall and per-class performance metrics on the held-out test set.

The confusion matrix (Fig 1) identifies accurate and inaccurate classifications by true and anticipated class, offering insights into classification performance. It indicated that the moldy class was nearly flawlessly distinguished from the others (63 of 65 samples accurately classified), aligning with the characteristic discoloration and fungal texture linked to mold contamination, a trend also documented in previous CNN-based plant disease research(Sadimantara et al., 2024). In contrast, the pest-infested category was the most misidentified, with numerous samples erroneously labeled as healthy or physiologically impaired, while healthy samples were occasionally misinterpreted as pest-damaged. This pattern suggests that the model, like human inspectors, has significant difficulty in areas where visual indicators really converge, early-stage insect damage and physiological stress may appear similar to the inexperienced observer, rather than indicating a fundamental flaw in the architecture. This aligns with comparative findings indicating that Inception-ResNet-V2 surpasses other CNN architectures (e.g., ResNet-50, VGG-16, DenseNet) in agricultural picture classification tasks, while encountering comparable challenges with visually ambiguous categories(Panchbhai et al., 2024).

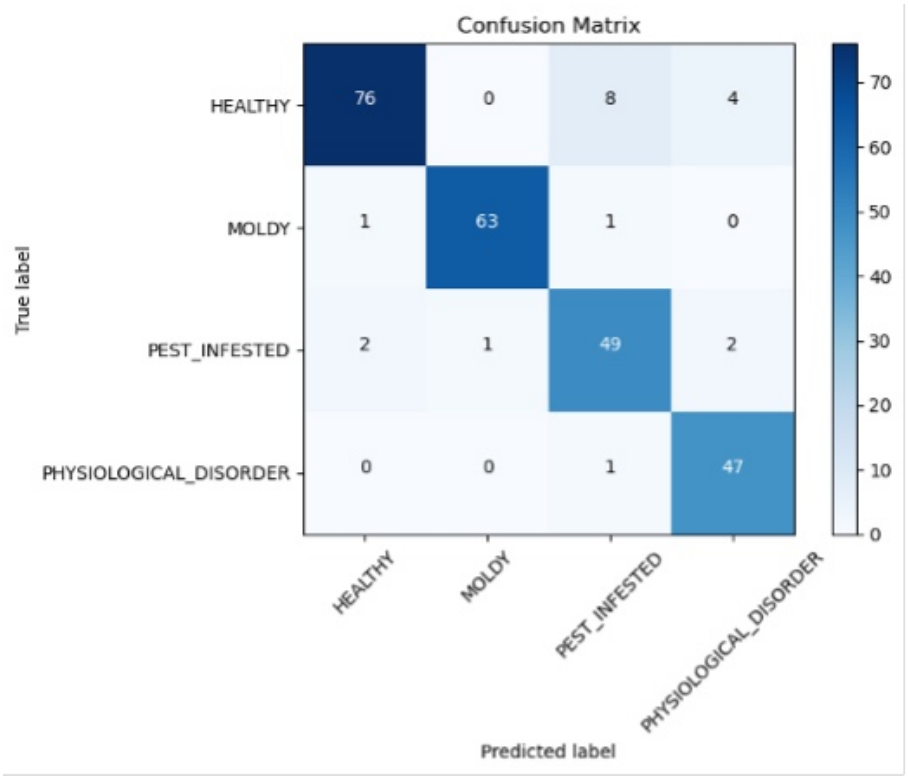


Fig 1: Confusion matrix for the four groundnut quality categories (rows = true label, columns = predicted label; diagonal = correct classifications).

The findings indicate that a deep learning network can accurately classify groundnut postharvest quality using solely a normal digital image, without the need for laboratory chemicals or specialist equipment. The nearly perfect score on the moldy class should be approached with caution until corroborated by larger, more diverse, and independently gathered datasets, while the relatively inferior performance on pest-infested samples highlights a specific, actionable target for further model enhancement rather than a fundamental constraint of the methodology.

5. **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study aimed to ascertain if deep learning could accurately classify groundnuts into aflatoxin risk categories for practical application. The findings show accuracy exceeding 99%, statistically validated stability, and consistent correlation with previous agricultural CNN research indicate a cautiously positive conclusion. The model demonstrates robust performance overall; however, its relative challenges with pest-infested and physiologically disordered samples indicate that additional improvement is necessary prior to field deployment. In accordance with the study's explicit aims, it is advised that:

The dataset should be augmented with additional samples of pest infestations and physiological disorders, gathered from other places and seasons, to mitigate the visual-overlap mistakes reported in this study.

Attention-based or fine-grained feature-extraction strategies should be investigated to enable the model to concentrate on the nuanced areas that differentiate insect damage from physiological stress.

The model must be validated on an independent, field-collected dataset, rather than a singular controlled-condition dataset, prior to any assertions of real-world ready, especially about the moldy class.

A cost-effective mobile or web-based prototype should be tested with postharvest handlers and cooperatives to evaluate its usability and practical utility in real operational settings.

Future doctorate research will expand this methodology to other susceptible to aflatoxin staples, such as maize, to evaluate the generalisability of the concept beyond groundnuts.

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TOPIC

Balancing Tradition And Modernity Of Agriculture Practices; Smallholder Farmer Perspectives On Fertilizer Adoption And Improved Crop Varieties In The Teso Sub-Region, Uganda

Keywords: Smallholder Farmers; Farmer Perspectives; Fertilizer Adoption; Improved Crop Varieties;

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative exploratory study examined smallholder farmers' perspectives on fertilizer adoption and improved crop varieties amid resource constraints and evolving agroecological conditions. Data were collected through focus group discussions with 32 smallholder farmers across the Kateta, Nyero, Oriyo, and Apeduru sub-counties of the Teso Sub-Region, Uganda, using a semi-structured discussion guide. The discussions elicited farmers' experiences with fertilizer use and improved crop varieties, alongside their perceptions of the associated benefits and adoption challenges. Audio-recorded sessions were transcribed verbatim and subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns across participant accounts. The analysis yielded five interrelated themes: (1) sustained reliance on organic fertilizers as the cornerstone of soil fertility management; (2) strategic incorporation of inorganic fertilizers to boost productivity; (3) growing uptake of commercial productivity enhancers for crop growth and pest management; (4) diffusion of improved crop varieties facilitated by public and private extension networks; and (5) enduring structural barriers to agricultural innovation—namely, limited technical knowledge, high input costs, climate variability, pest pressure, and post-harvest losses. Participants indicated that hybridizing indigenous farming knowledge with modern agricultural inputs enhanced crop performance and yield outcomes. Nonetheless, these gains were frequently tempered by affordability constraints, insufficient training in input application, environmental risks, and market-related limitations. The findings suggest that sustainable agricultural transformation among smallholder farmers necessitates integrated support systemscombining input accessibility with targeted farmer training, climate-smart extension services, post-harvest infrastructure development, and strengthened market linkagesto translate technological adoption into lasting productivity and livelihood gains.

Introduction

Smallholder agriculture sustains rural livelihoods across sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 2021; World Bank, 2023), but productivity is constrained by poor soils, climate variability, pests, and limited input access (Jayne et al., 2019). Inorganic fertilizers and improved crop varieties have been widely promoted for their yield, income, and food security benefits (Abate et al., 2017; Walker & Alwang, 2015), yet adoption remains uneven, and existing researchlargely quantitativeoverlooks farmers' perceptions and decision-making, even though adoption is a social, contextual process in which farmers blend modern and traditional practices (Kassie et al., 2015; Chambers & Conway, 1992; Scoones, 2015).

In Uganda's understudied Teso Sub-Region (UBOS, 2024), this study explored farmers' perspectives, experiences, and decision-making on fertilizers and improved varieties, to inform policy, extension, and development interventions for sustainable agricultural transformation and improved rural livelihoods.

Problem statement

Inorganic fertilizers and improved crop varieties have long been promoted across sub-Saharan Africa as pathways to higher yields, income, and food security (Abate et al., 2017; Walker & Alwang, 2015; FAO, 2021). Ideally, sustained promotion should yield widespread adoption and productivity gains, yet adoption remains uneven and partial (Kassie et al., 2015; Mwangi & Kariuki, 2015). The Teso Sub-Region exemplifies this paradox: despite intensified promotion by government programmes, NGOs, and agro-input dealers, productivity remains low amid land degradation, erratic rainfall, and limited input access (UBOS, 2024; Jayne et al., 2019).

Moreover, adoption research remains largely quantitative, neglecting farmers' perceptions, experiences, and decision-makingeven though adoption is a social and contextual process in which farmers blend modern technologies with traditional practices (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Scoones, 2015). This study therefore explores farmers' perspectives, experiences, and decision-making on fertilizer and improved variety adoption in Teso, to inform policy, extension practice, and development interventions for sustainable agricultural transformation and improved rural livelihoods.

Objectives

To examine the influence of the use of fertilizers on the livelihood outcomes of selected smallholder farmers in the Teso Sub-Region.

To assess the influence of the use of improved crop varieties on the livelihood outcomes of selected smallholder farmers in the Teso Sub-Region.

Research Questions

How does the use of fertilizers influence the livelihood outcomes of selected smallholder farmers in the Teso Sub-Region?

How does the use of improved crop varieties influence the livelihood outcomes of selected smallholder farmers in the Teso Sub-Region

Literature Review:

Fertilizer Use and Livelihood Outcomes: Literature from African contexts consistently shows that both organic and inorganic fertilizers improve smallholder livelihoods through enhanced soil fertility, yields, income, and food security. Inorganic fertilizers increased cassava yields and revenues in Nigeria (Donkor et al., 2019), raised land productivity by 55% and agricultural income by 30% in Ghana (Martey et al., 2019), and improved soil health in Kenya when combined with climate-resilient crops (Musafiri et al., 2023). Organic optionscompost, manure, and biofertilizerssimilarly boosted incomes, food security, and soil quality (Setsoafia et al., 2022; Okoth et al., 2024), while balanced use supported environmental sustainability (Ulukan et al., 2022). Nonetheless, adoption barriers persist, including inadequate supply, low awareness, and labour-intensive application (Bese et al., 2021).

Improved Crop Varieties and Livelihood Outcomes: Evidence across six crops confirms improved varieties as key drivers of productivity and livelihoods (Radeny et al., 2022). Improved cassava raised yields, income, and food security in Uganda and Ghana (Okoth et al., 2024; Acheampong et al., 2021); watermelon boosted productivity in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Sudan (Tegen et al., 2024; Aroyehun et al., 2024); maize enhanced yields, welfare, and food expenditurewith female farmers benefiting most (Sinyolo, 2020; Martey et al., 2020); tomato increased incomes through disease resistance and quality (Ddamulira et al., 2021; Asante et al., 2024); mango raised profitability in Bangladesh and Ghana (Rahman et al., 2019; Yiran et al., 2023); and rice delivered higher yields in Vietnam and Nigeria (Ho et al., 2021; Bello

et al., 2021). However, uptake of some varieties remained low, with farmers retaining local cultivars (Chukwuka et al., 2021; Mwakyusa et al., 2023).

Overall Conclusion: Both strands converge on the finding that fertilizers and improved varieties substantially enhance smallholder yields, incomes, and food security across Africa and Asia. Yet adoption remains unevenconstrained by limited awareness, input availability, labour demands, and attachment to traditional practicesand these barriers, together with gaps in existing evidence, justify the current study.

Methodology, The study employed a qualitative exploratory design to capture the perspectives and practical realities of farming communities. Primary data were collected through Focus Group Discussions in four purposively selected sub-counties of the Teso Sub-RegionKateta, Nyero, Oriyo, and Apeduruchosen to reflect varying market access, soil conditions, and a mix of staple food production and commercial horticulture. Participants included male and female smallholders of diverse ages and asset levels, ensuring representation of a wide spectrum of household vulnerability. Discussions were guided by semi-structured protocols covering soil fertility practices, experiences with organic and inorganic nutrients, seed sourcing, and post-harvest risks of new varieties. All sessions were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using an inductive thematic framework, with themes drawn from farmers' recurring priorities and shared constraints, and verbatim quotations retained to preserve direct field evidence.

Findings; Demographic characteristics of the study respondents

The study involved 32 smallholder farmers aged 27–55 years (mean 40.8), most aged 35–55 (75.0%), male (56.3%), and married (75.0%). Primary education was most common (40.6%), followed by secondary (31.3%) and tertiary (15.6%). Catholics (37.5%) and Anglicans/Protestants (31.3%) dominated religious affiliation, while crop farming was the main occupation (65.6%).

Fertilizer Usage and Soil Fertility Management; The findings show that smallholder farmers do not depend on a single agricultural input; instead, they combine organic, inorganic, and commercial productivity enhancers to cope with resource constraints and maximize crop output. Five themes emerged under fertilizer usage and soil fertility management.

Theme 1: Organic Fertilizers as the Foundational Practice

Organic fertilizer, mainly cow dung, remains the most widely used soil fertility strategy. Resource-constrained households favour it for its local availability and low cost, serving as both a financial safety net and a sustainable traditional practice where commercial supply chains are weak or prices prohibitive.

“We use basically cow dung as manure, since it is readily available and affordable. Manufactured fertilizers are expensive.” (FGD/07/2025, Katete Sub-County)

Theme 2: Strategic Integration of Inorganic Fertilizers

Modern inputs complement rather than replace traditional practices. Farmers increasingly adopt inorganic fertilizers such as NPK and DAP alongside organic matter, reflecting a shift toward Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM), where chemical inputs address acute nutrient deficits while organic matter maintains soil structure.

“Apart from cow dung, we also buy chemical fertilizers such as NPK and DAP to supplement soil fertility and improve crop yields.” (FGD/10/2025, Katete Sub-County)

Theme 3: Types of Improved Crop Varieties Known and Adopted

Farmers showed growing knowledge of improved varieties, citing specific hybrids and F1 seeds for staple and highvalue horticultural crops indicating strong awareness of advanced seed technologies. Participants from ApeduruSub-county, for instance, identified a range of improved varieties;

"We use improved crop varieties such as Narocas for cassava, Kadima F1, Safa F1 for tomatoes, and Red Corot F1, Redman F1 for onions" (FGD/01/2025).

Theme 4: Storage Challenges

Despite widespread adoption, improved varieties like Narocas are highly perishable, forcing rapid sale or consumption. This limits gains from higher yields and exposes farmers to market pressure and price volatility, especially during simultaneous harvests. One respondent mentioned;

"Narocas is not long-lasting… you have to sell or eat it otherwise it gets spoiled, unlike some other varieties that can be stored for longer periods." (FGD/02/2025).

Conclusion

Smallholder farmers in Uganda's Teso Sub-Region are actively adopting fertilizers and improved seed varieties, but face persistent challengesinput costs, application risks such as seedling damage, and significant post-harvest losseswhich mean the benefits of these innovations are not automatic. For agricultural technologies to deliver stable, long-term livelihood improvements, farmers' investments require deliberate, complementary support beyond the mere provision of inputs.

Recommendations;

The study recommends that agricultural extension services (led by MAAIF and district local governments) should shift from input distribution to hands-on, farmercentred training in proper fertilizer application to reduce risks and improve input use efficiency.

Policymakers should improve financial inclusion and market access via targeted credit mechanisms (VSLAs, SACCOs, subsidies), rural feeder roads, and strengthened farmer cooperatives.

Future research should quantify livelihood effects through mixed-methods and longitudinal studies, test findings in other regions, and examine gender dimensions and the viability of value-addition technologies.

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TOPIC

Influence of Transformational Leadership on Organizational and Personal Outcomes of Academic Staff in Universities in Uganda: Application of Givens's (2008) Framework

Keywords: Agricultural producer cooperatives.

AUTHORS

JACOB O. ONEP

F E K Bakkabulindi



INTRODUCTION

Leadership is globally recognized as a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness (Jaiyeola et al., 2025), particularly in universities where academic staff play pivotal roles in teaching, research, innovation, and community engagement. Among contemporary leadership approaches, transformational leadership has attracted considerable scholarly attention because of its capacity to motivate followers, stimulate creativity, and initiate organizational change (Ali, 2026). Bass and Avolio (1994) identified idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration as the four core dimensions of transformational leadership. When transformational leadership is effectively practiced, academic staff are more likely to demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviours, embrace a shared organizational vision, contribute to a positive organizational culture, and experience higher levels of empowerment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, self-efficacy, and motivation (Givens, 2008). These outcomes can contribute to improved institutional performance, innovation, staff retention, and the overall quality of teaching, research, and community engagement.

In Uganda, universities operate in an increasingly demanding environment in which academic staff may experience heavy workloads, administrative pressures, job insecurity, and inadequate institutional support. Such pressures can contribute to faculty burnout, reduced work effectiveness, lower job satisfaction, and challenges to staff well-being (Deep et al., 2025). These challenges have important implications for both organizational outcomes, including organizational citizenship behaviour, organizational culture, and organizational vision, and personal outcomes, including empowerment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, self-efficacy, and motivation among academic staff in universities Uganda. Effective transformational leadership may help address some of these challenges by fostering supportive, innovative, collaborative, and motivating work environments. However, empirical evidence examining the influence of transformational leadership on both organizational and personal outcomes among academic staff in universities Uganda remains limited. This gap provides a basis for examining how transformational leadership relates to these outcomes within the contet of universities in Uganda.

Accordingly, this study is anchored in Givens's (2008) transformational leadership framework, which proposes that transformational leadership influences both organizational and personal outcomes. The framework provides a useful basis for examining how transformational leadership behaviours exhibited by university leaders may shape organizational citizenship behaviour, organizational culture, and

organizational vision, as well as academic staff members' empowerment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, self-efficacy, and motivation. By examining these relationships within universities in Uganda, the study seeks to contribute empirical evidence to the understanding of transformational leadership and its implications for the effectiveness and well-being of academic staff in universities.

Main objective

We shall apply Givens's (2008) framework to assess the influence of transformational leadership on the organizational (organizational citizenship behaviours, organizational culture, and organizational vision) and personal outcomes (empowerment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, self-efficacy beliefs, and motivation) of academic staff in universities in Uganda.

Specific objectives

- To examine whether transformational leadership positively influences organizational outcomes among the academic staff in universities in Uganda.
- To examine whether transformational leadership positively influences the personal outcomes among the academic staff in universities in Uganda.
- Research hypotheses
- Transformational leadership positively influences organizational outcomes among the academic staff in school of education in universities in Uganda.
- Transformational leadership positively influences the personal outcomes among the academic staff in school of education in universities in Uganda.

Methodology

We will ground our study in the positivist paradigm, which emphasizes objectivity, empirical evidence, and quantitative measurement to establish relationships between variables. Guided by this philosophical orientation, our study shall adopt a quantitative approach to systematically measure and analyse the relationships among our study variables. We shall employ a correlational cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships between our study variables. The cross-sectional survey design shall facilitate the collection of data at a single point in time, making it appropriate for examining the existing relationships among the study variables.

We shall collect data from 169 academic staff selected from the Faculties/Schools of Education at four selected universities in Uganda, namely Makerere University, Gulu University, Uganda Martyrs University, and Uganda Christian University. Within each university, we will select respondents through simple random sampling. Our study shall employ the survey method of data collection, whereby primary data shall be obtained through a questionnaire adapted from validated instruments that have been widely used in previous empirical studies. We shall measure all questionnaire items using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), thereby facilitating the collection of standardized quantitative data across our study variables.

We have ensured the quality of the data collection instruments through validity and reliability procedures. We ensured content validity by aligning the questionnaire items with the study objectives and Givens's (2008) conceptual framework, established face validity through expert review, and strengthened criterion validity by adopting validated instruments. We shall assess reliability using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient in IBM SPSS Statistics after data collection, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicating acceptable internal consistency.

We shall manage the data by checking all completed questionnaires for completeness, consistency, and accuracy before coding them for analysis. We shall then enter the coded data into IBM SPSS Statistics, where we shall undertake data-cleaning procedures to identify and correct errors, inconsistencies, missing values, and outliers. We shall subsequently analyse the quantitative data using

descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. We shall employ inferential statistical techniques, specifically Pearson product-moment correlation and multiple regression analysis, to determine the influence of transformational leadership on our organizational and personal outcomes and to test our study hypotheses.

Anticipated results

In this study, we shall reveal the extent to which transformational leadership influences the organizational and personal outcomes of academic staff in universities in Uganda.

Anticipated conclusions

In this study, we shall draw conclusions on the influence of transformational leadership on the organizational and personal outcomes of academic staff in universities in Uganda. We further anticipate concluding that Givens's (2008) framework provides an appropriate theoretical basis for explaining these relationships within the universities in Uganda.

Anticipated recommendations

In this study, we shall hence make recommendations aimed at strengthening transformational leadership practices in universities in Uganda. We shall further aim at recommending the implementation of leadership development and capacity-building programmes to enhance organizational and personal outcomes of academic staff.

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TOPIC

Effectiveness of Makerere University E-Learning Environment: A Quantitative Study Based on DeLone and McLean's (2003) Information Systems Success Model

Keywords: Effectiveness, DeLone and McLean's (2003) model, MUELE

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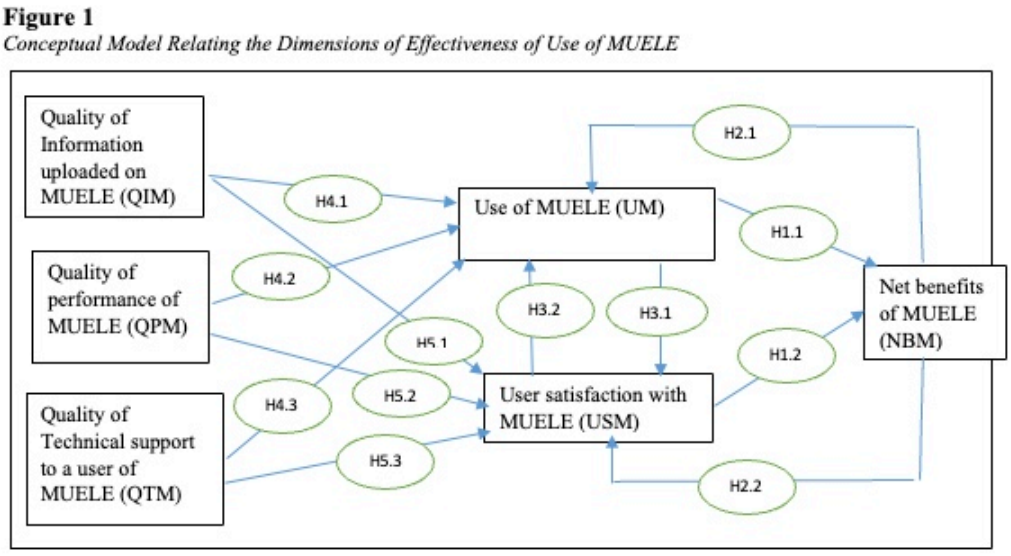


Abstract

Introduction. As institutions of higher education embrace ICT in the field of teaching and learning, managers and decision makers need to know whether they are able to achieve their investment goals or not. In other words, how can managers and decision makers in institutions of higher education have an appreciation of value added from the investment in ICT in teaching and learning? An answer to this question is crucial for justification of the expenses on ICT in teaching and learning. This calls for a clear understanding of the dimensions of effectiveness of ICT in teaching and learning. Hence we conducted a study on effectiveness of Makerere University E-Learning Environment (MUELE) a learning management system used as an ICT tool in teaching and learning. Our study was guided by DeLone and McLean's (2003) information systems success model which suggests six dimensions of evaluateffectiveness of MUELE as per Figure 1:

Figure 1

Conceptual Model Relating the Dimensions of Effectiveness of Use of MUELE



Notes. Adapted DeLone and McLean's (2003) information systems success model

According to Figure 1, *net benefits of use of MUELE* (NBM) is dependent on *use of MULEL* (UM) and *user satisfaction with MUELE.* Hence our first hypothesis H1 as to the effect that:

H1: *Net benefits of MUELE* are positively influenced by the *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE.*

Figure 1 also shows that *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE* are dependent on *net benefits of MUELE.* Hence our second hypothesis H2 was to the effect that:

H2: *Net benefits of MUELE* positively influence the *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE.*

From Figure 1, *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE* depend on each other. Henec our third hypothesis H3 was to the effect that:

H3: *Use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE* positively influence each other.

Still from Figure 1, *use of MUELE is dependent* on *quality of information uploaded on MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE* and *quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE.* Hence our fourth hypothesis was to the effect that:

H4: *Use of MUELE* is positively influenced by the *quality of information generated by MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE* and *quality of technical support received by user MUELE.*

Finally according to Figure 1, *user satisfaction with MUELE* is dependent on *quality of information uploaded on MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE* and *quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE.* Hence our fifth and last hypothesis was to the effect that:

H5: *User satisfaction with MUELE* is positively influenced by the *quality of information generated by MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE* and *quality of technical support received by users of MUELE.*

Study Objectives. Our first objective in this paper was to assess the effectiveness of Makerere University E-Learning Environment (MUELE) as a learning management system used by students in Makerere University. Our second objective was to test the relationships between the constructs of effectiveness of MUELE as per the as per Figure 1.

Methodology. In this study, we used a quantitative approach of research in that we collected measureable or quantifiable data which we analyzed using statistical procedures. We used a survey in that we collected data from a large pool of respondents so that we could generalize the results to the population from which we had drawn the sample. The study was cross-sectional in that we collected our data at a particular point in time so as to reduce on the costs of data collection. Itas correlational in that we examined the relationships between the variables in our conceptual framework (Figure 2) by testing hypotheses. We obtained data from a sample of 491 undergraduate students whom we selected randomly from four colleges in Makerere University. We assessed effectiveness of *MUELE* by descriptively analyzing each of the six dimensions in the conceptual framework (Figure 2). We then employed inferential statistics to test the hypotheses.

Key Study Findings. From the descriptive analysis we found out that respondents averagely rated effectiveness of use of MUELE on all its six dimensions. From the inferential statistics, we tested five hypotheses (H1 – H5) using linear regression. As per Figure 1, the hypotheses (H1 - H2) and the sub hypotheses are as given in the mathematical Expressions that follow:

H1: NB = f (UM, USM) 1

From Expression 1 we had two sub-hypotheses H1.1 and H1.2 as per Expressions 1a and 1b respectively:

H1.1: NB = f (UM) 1a

H1.2: NB = f (USM) 1b

H2: UM, USM = f (NB).....2

From Expression 2 we had two sub-hypotheses H2.1 and H2.2 as per Expressions 2a and 2b respectively:

H2.1: UM = f (NB)..... .2a

H2.2: USM = f (NB).....2b

H3: UM = f (USM), USM = f (UM).....3

From Expression 3 we had two sub-hypotheses H3.1 and H3.2 as per Expressions 3a and 3b respectively:

H3.1: UM = f (USM)..... .3a
H3.2: USM = f (UM)..... 3b

H4: UM = f (QIM, QPM, QTM) 4
From Expression 4 We obtained three sub-hypotheses H4.1, H4.2 and H4.3 as per Expressions 4a, 4b and 4c respectively:
H4.1: UM = f (QIM) 4a
H4.2: UM = f (QPM) 4b
H4.3: UM = f (QTM) 4c

H5: USM = f (QIM, QPM, QTM) 5
From Expression 5 we obtained three sub-hypotheses H4.1, H4.2 and H4.3 as per Expressions 5a, 5b and 5c respectively:
H5.1: USM = f (QIM) 5a
H5.2: USM = f (QPM) 5b
H5.3: USM = f (QTM) 5c

Results from testing of the hypotheses were as per Table 1:

Table 1
Results of Simple and Multiple Regression Models for Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Sub-Hypothesis	Path	Measures of Goodness of the Model	Standardized Coefficient β	Hypothesis Supported?
H1	H1.1	UM - NBM	Adjusted R^2 = 0.477, F = 219.474, p = 0.000	β = 0.369, p = 0.000	Yes
	H1.2	USM - NBM		β = 0.413, p = 0.000	Yes
H2	H2.1	NBM - UM	R^2 = 0.401, F = 325.299, p = 0.000	β = 0.634, p = 0.000	Yes
	H2.2	NBM - USM	R^2 = 0.390, F = 306.317, p = 0.000	β = 0.625, p = 0.000	Yes
H3		UM - USM	R^2 = 0.431, F = 364.016, p = 0.000	β = 0.657, p = 0.000	Yes
H4	H3.1	QIM - UM	Adjusted R^2 = 0.328, F = 78.751, p = 0.000	β = 0.301, p = 0.000	Yes
	H3.2	QPM - UM		β = 0.286, p = 0.000	Yes
	H3.3	QTM - UM		β = 0.100, p = 0.028	Yes
H5	H5.1	QIM - USM	Adjusted R^2 = 0.487, F = 150.712, p = 0.000	β = 0.324, p = 0.000	Yes
	H5.2	QPM - USM		β = 0.363, p = 0.000	Yes
	H5.3	QTM - USM		β = 0.156, p = 0.000	Yes

Notes. NBM = Net Benefits of MUELE; UM = Use of MUELE; USM = User Satisfaction With MUELE; QIM = Quality of Information Uploaded om MUELE; QPM = Quality of Performance of MUELE; QTM = Quality of Technical Support Received by a User of MUELE

Our first hypothesis (H1) was to the effect that *net benefits of use of MUELE* is predicted by *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE*. Hence, we used multiple linear regression to test this hypothesis. According to Table 9, *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE* explained 47.7% of the variations in the *net benefits of use of MUELE* (adjusted R^2 = 0.477, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The regression model was significant (F = 219.474, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The adjusted coefficients of *use of MUELE* (β = 0.369, p = 0.000 < 0.05) and *user satisfaction with MUELE* (β = 0.413, p = 0.000) significantly predicted *net benefits of use of MUELE*. Thus the two sub-hypotheses (H1.1 & H1.2) were supported.

Our second hypothesis (H2) was to the effect that *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE* are predicted by *net benefits of use of MUELE*. We used two simple linear regression models to test this hypothesis. From Table 9, *net benefits of use of MUELE* explained 40.1% of the variation in *use of MUELE* (R^2 = 0.401, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The regression model was statistically significant (F = 325.299, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The standardized coefficient (β = 0.634, p = 0.05 < 0.05) indicated that *Net benefits of use of MUELE*

was a significant predictor of *use of MUELE*. In the same Table (Table 9), *net benefits of use of MUELE* explained 39.0% of the variation in *user satisfaction with MUELE* (R^2 = 0.390, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The regression model was statistically significant (F = 306.317, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The standardized (β = 0.625, p = 0.000 < 0.05) indicates that *net benefits of use of MUELE*) significantly predicted *user satisfaction with MUELE*. Hence the two sub-hypotheses (H2.1 & H2.2) were supported.

Our third hypothesis was to the effect that *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE* predict each other. We tested this model using a simple linear regression model to test this hypothesis. From Table 9, *use of MUELE* explained 43.1% of the variation in *user satisfaction with MUELE* (R^2 = 0.431, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The regression model was statistically significant (F = 364.016, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The standardized coefficient (β = 0.657, p = 0.000 < 0.05) indicated that *use of MUELE* significantly predicted *user satisfaction with MUELE.*

The fourth hypothesis was to the effect that *use of MUELE* is predicted by *quality of information generated by MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE* and *quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE*. We used a multiple linear regression model to test this hypothesis. According to Table 9, *quality of information uploaded on MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE* and *quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE* explained 32.8% of the joint variation in *use of MUELE* (adjusted R^2 = 0.328, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The regression model was statistically significant (F = 78.751, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The standardized coefficients of *quality of information generated by MUELE* (β = 0.301, p = 0.000 < 0.05), *quality of performance of MUELE* (β = 0.286, p = 0.000 < 0.05) and *quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE* (β = 0.100, p = 0.028 < 0.05) indicated that each of these three predictors of *use of MUELE* were significant.

The fifth hypothesis was to the effect that *user satisfaction with MUELE* is predicted by *quality of information generated by MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE* and *quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE*. We used a multiple linear regression model to test this hypothesis. According to Table 9, *quality of information generated by MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE* and *quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE* explained 48.9% of the variation in *user satisfaction with MUELE* (adjusted R^2 = 0.487, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The regression model was statistically significant (F = 150.712, p = 0.000 < 0.05). The standardized coefficients of *quality of information generated by MUELE* (β = 0.324, p =. 0.000 < 0.05), *quality of performance of MUELE* (β = 0.363, p = 0.000 < 0.05) and *quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE* (β = 0.156, p = 0.000 < 0.05) suggested that these three predictors of *user satisfaction with MUELE* were significant. Hence the three sub-hypotheses (H5.1, H5.2 & H5.3) were supported.

Conclusions and Recommendations. Our first objective in this paper was to assess the effectiveness of Makerere University E-Learning Environment (MUELE). Hence we found out that respondents moderately rated effectiveness of MUELE on all its six constructs namely, *net benefits of MUELE, use of MUELE, user satisfaction with MUELE, quality of information uploaded on MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE and quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE.* Our second objective was to examine the relationship between the six constructs of MUELE by testing five hypotheses (H1 – H5). From our first hypothesis (H1), we found out that both *use of MUELE* (UM) and *use satisfaction with MUELE* (USM) were strong predictors of *net benefits of MUELE*. From our second hypothesis (H2) found out that *net benefits of MUELE* strongly predicted both *use of MUELE* (UM) and *use satisfaction with MUELE* (USM). On the third hypothesis (H3) we found out that that both *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE* were strong predictors of each other. As per the fourth hypothesis (H4) we found out that *quality of information uploaded on MUELE* (QIM), *quality of performance of MUELE* (QPM) *and quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE* QTM) were strong predictors of *use of MUELE* (UM). For fifth hypothesis, we found out that *quality of information uploaded on MUELE* (QIM), *quality of performance of MUELE* (QPM) *and quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE* QTM) were strong predictors of *user satisfaction with MUELE* (USM). We recommend that for effectiveness of MUELE to be achieved, responsible stakeholders should give adequate attention to all its constructs. We also recommend that both *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE* should be given attention to increase on the *net benefits of MUELE*. In addition, *net benefits of MUELE* should be given more emphasis in order to increase both *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE*. We further recommend that *quality of information uploaded on MUELE, quality of performance of MUELE* and *quality of technical support received by a user of MUELE* be given more attention for both *use of MUELE* and *user satisfaction with MUELE* to be increased.

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TOPIC

Leveraging Indigenous Totemic Traditions with Modern Strategies for Enhancing Wildlife Conservation in the Buganda Kingdom, Uganda

Keywords: Community-based conservation; cultural institutions; environmental sustainability; modern conservation strategies; totemic practices; wildlife conservation.

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INTRODUCTION

Totems are animals and plants that are sacred and have special symbolic meanings to some groups of people. Disturbing or eating a totemic animal or plant amongst these groups of people is usually forbidden, the practice that may lead to plant or animal conservation. The overall purpose of the study was to synthesize the contribution of totemic practices towards wildlife conservation. A mechanism of integrating the Buganda totemic practices to wildlife conservation as a modern and alternative conservation practice of wildlife species and their habitats was derived. Specifically, the research was guided by the following objectives. To explore the cultural values, beliefs and norms of totemic practices in relation to wildlife conservation in the Buganda kingdom; and to evaluate the relationship between totem practices and wildlife conservation in the Buganda Kingdom.

A cross sectional research design was employed to achieve the stated objectives because, the study based on the people's experiences on totemic practices and wildlife conservation amongst some groups of people. Both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches were employed to obtain the data. A total number of the 388 research participants which was obtained from a target population of 13,500 people from the Mawokota, Busiro, and Buddu counties of Buganda were included in the study.

Some key informants from the Buganda Heritage Tourism Board, Uganda Wildlife Education Centre and the Uganda Wildlife Authority were included in the study for qualitative data. These were purposively selected since they were assumed to have some requisite knowledge about the study subject. The questionnaire survey, interview and focus group discussion methods were used to generate data.

The quantitative data obtained were entered into a Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version

23.0 for analysis. The qualitative data were thematically analyzed to generate information to supplement to the quantitative findings. The study revealed that some cultural values, beliefs and norms within the Kingdom positively contributed to wildlife conservation and habitat protection. The majority of the respondents (97.9% and 99.7%) agreed that involvement of the local communities and enhancing indigenous environmental education programmes respectively, contributes to the protection and conservation of wildlife species.

In addition, strengthening the enforcement of the wildlife protection laws (94.9%) and collaboration with traditional leaders (92%) to integrate totemic practices and modern conservation strategies was viewed as a valuable approach towards wildlife conservation. A totemic Integration Practices Model (TIPSM) was

then formulated aimed at giving some modern and alternative conservation strategies to the Government of Uganda for furthering and strengthening the wildlife conservation practices and habitat protection. In addition, the integration of the cultural values, beliefs and norms of the local community, and the totemic practices amongst the Cultural Institutions are very crucial for wildlife conservation and habitat protection in an area, which may culminate into environmental sustainability.

1.2 Study Objective

The purpose of the study was to justify the significance of totemic practices to wildlife conservation in Buganda kingdom and Uganda as whole hence coming up with a model. After critically analyzing and discussing the findings of the study, the new hypothesized TIPSM model was established. The model is based on the study findings and the conceptual framework exploring the significance of totems practices and wildlife conservation in Buganda Kingdom and Uganda. The TIPSM aims at amending the existing modern conservation strategies with the indigenous technical knowledge for wildlife conservation and ecosystems management.

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional study design which involved the collection of data from a population or a representative subset at a single point in time to assess the prevalence of a particular phenomenon. In the context of studying totem practices and their role in the conservation of wildlife resources in the Buganda kingdom, a cross-sectional study was chosen because it allows capturing a snapshot of the existing beliefs, traditions, and practices within a community. By examining these practices at a specific moment, researchers were able to gain insights into how totems are integrated into the daily lives of individuals and communities and their potential impact on wildlife conservation efforts (Smith et al., 2019).

Data were collected from a diverse of individuals within the selected three counties of the Buganda kingdom (Buddu, Mawokota and Busiro) by employing various methods, such as surveys, interviews, and observations, to understand the prevalence and nature of totemic practices. This design provided an exploration of correlations between totemic beliefs and wildlife conservation behaviors, hence shedding light on how cultural factors influence conservation efforts. Cross sectional design provides a comprehensive overview of the existing totem practices and their potential implications for wildlife conservation (Gordon & Jones, 2020).

Key findings

The findings revealed that the majority (97.9%) of respondents generally agreed that community based conservation projects, which involve local communities in wildlife protection efforts, are important for the conservation of totems. Only 2.1% disagreed. This indicates that conservation initiatives that empower communities are likely to be more successful, as local people have both the knowledge and vested interest in preserving their cultural and environmental heritage. There is a clear need to further develop and fund community-based conservation programs that align with traditional beliefs and practices.

The findings also revealed that the majority (99.7%) of respondents generally agreed that enhancing indigenous environmental education programs in schools would help raise awareness about wildlife conservation, with 0.3% strongly disagreeing. This finding emphasizes the importance of education in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of future generations towards wildlife conservation.

By introducing indigenous environmental education into schools, particularly with a focus on local totem species and their cultural significance, it could help to ensuring the long-term protection of these species and reinforcing the community's connection to them. In addition, the findings revealed that the majority (93.3%) of respondents generally agreed with the idea of establishing protected areas for totem species and their habitats. This indicates that while there is general

support for the creation of protected areas, some respondents may have concerns regarding the feasibility or potential impact of such areas on collaboration with traditional leaders to integrate totemic practices and modern conservation strategies is a valuable approach towards wildlife conservation. This indicates strong support for incorporating totemic beliefs and traditional leadership structures into modern conservation efforts. This response highlights the importance of involving cultural institutions in the conservation efforts. In the same vein, about 92.0% of respondents strongly agreed with the idea of encouraging sustainable agriculture and land use practices aimed at reducing habitat destruction.

The notion indicates the widespread support for the idea that agricultural and land use practices should be aligned with conservation goals to minimize their negative impacts on totemic species' habitats. This suggests that promoting sustainable farming and land management practices can be a key strategy in protecting totemic species' and ensuring and ecologically sound habitat.

Among the respondents, about 86.1% strongly agreed with engaging the youth in wildlife conservation through activities like wildlife clubs and volunteer programs. This indicates a strong belief in the importance of involving the younger generation in conservation efforts and recognizing that the future of totemic species lies in the hands of young people.

Engaging youth in conservation efforts is critical for ensuring that future generations continue to value and protect totemic species. Relatedly, about 85.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that conducting research aimed for understanding the ecological needs and threats faced by totem species is paramount. This shows a strong support for scientific knowledge as an important tool for improving conservation of wildlife resources.

This suggests that research about the ecological needs and threats faced by totemic species is essential for developing effective conservation efforts. Further still, 98.1% of the respondents generally agreed with the idea of providing financial incentives for landowners who conserve totem habitats, a strong indication for incentivizing private landowners to conserve totemic species' habitats. This highlights the potential of using financial incentives as a tool to engage landowners in conservation efforts. Offering compensation or rewards for landowners who preserve totemic species' habitats could help reduce habitat destruction and encourage private participation in the conservation efforts.

Conclusion and recommendations

The findings of this study demonstrate the Buganda community's strong support for community-based conservation initiatives that involve local people in protecting totemic species and their habitats. There is a clear consensus on the importance of environmental education programs, particularly in schools, to raise awareness about wildlife conservation, and this approach is seen as essential for engaging younger generations in preserving totemic species. Findings also revealed widespread support for the creation of protected areas for totem species, although concerns about land use and local livelihoods should be addressed in policy development. Furthermore, there is a significant belief that strengthening the enforcement of Wildlife Protection Laws, promotion of ecotourism initiatives, and collaboration of wildlife conservation agencies and traditional institutions would enhance wildlife conservation efforts. Therefore, the study recommended that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities and the Buganda Kingdom Ministry of Heritage should collaborate with Clan Heads aimed at promoting totemic practices for wildlife conservation. Agencies like NEMA, NFA, and UWA should work hand in hand with the Cultural Institutions for the success of the wildlife conservation efforts.

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TOPIC

Male Allyship in Advancing the Career Development of Female Academics at Makerere University

Keywords: Male allyship, Female academics, Career development, Gender equality, Higher education

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INTRODUCTION

As institutions of higher education embrace gender equity and equality, increasing attention is being given to the role men can play in addressing gender inequalities within academic environments. Men's substantial representation in university leadership and decision-making positions places them in positions from which they can contribute to the career development of female academics. Consequently, increasing attention has been given to male allyship as a way of involving men in addressing gender inequalities and supporting women's career advancement. However, despite this growing attention, limited research has examined how male allyship operates specifically within higher education and how it contributes to the career development of female academics. This gap is particularly relevant in African universities, where social, cultural and institutional contexts may shape men's participation in efforts to address gender inequalities. The study was informed by Betty Friedan's liberal feminist perspective. The perspective emphasizes women's equality of opportunity and challenges social and institutional arrangements that restrict women's participation and advancement. In relation to this study, it provides a basis for viewing gender equality as a shared responsibility in which men and women can participate in addressing institutional barriers. Male allyship is therefore understood not as men acting on behalf of women, but as men using their positions and relationships within academic institutions to support equitable opportunities while recognizing women's agency. At Makerere University, there is therefore a need to examine the institutional conditions that support male allyship, what encourages male academics to take on this role, and how their efforts are perceived by female academics in relation to their career development.

Study Objectives: To explore institutional strategies that foster male allyship in advancing the career development of female academics.

To explore the motivations that encourage male academics to engage as allies in advancing the career development of female academics.

To examine female academics' perceptions of male allyship in advancing their career development.

Methodology: Our study was conducted at Makerere University, focusing on male allyship in advancing the career development of female academics. We adopted a qualitative research approach to understand the experiences of administrators, male academics and perspectives of senior female academics involved in gender equality initiatives. We used semi-structured interviews to obtain

participants' views on institutional strategies, their motivations, and female academic's perceptions of male allyship. Purposive sampling and snowball were used to select 14 participants who were administrators, Gender Committee members, Makerere University Men's Hub/Men's Forum plus senior female academics. These participants were selected because of their experience and involvement in gender equality and male engagement activities at the University. We also conducted a document check of relevant institutional policies and initiatives. Data were analyzed thematically by first transcribing and reading through the interview responses, identifying and coding important ideas, grouping similar responses together, and interpreting these patterns to develop the main themes.

Key study findings

We obtained three main findings from the study. First, the study found that institutional strategies for promoting male allyship included gender-related policies and governance frameworks, leadership commitment, training and capacity building, men's engagement structures, academic programmes on masculinities, institutional support structures, and opportunities for inclusive and collaborative engagement. These strategies created opportunities for male academics to participate in gender equality activities and support the career development of female academics. However, participants sometimes used male allyship and male engagement interchangeably, pointing to a need for greater clarity about what constitutes allyship. Second, we found that men became involved as allies for different reasons, including personal beliefs about fairness and equality, awareness of the challenges experienced by female academics, exposure to gender-related knowledge and training, and participation in gender equality activities. These experiences helped some male academics to recognise gender inequalities and become more willing to take action. Third, we found that female academics viewed male allyship as meaningful when it involved practical action rather than words alone. This included creating opportunities for women, providing mentorship and sponsorship, opening professional networks, advocating for women, challenging unfair practices, and working together with female academics. The findings therefore showed that male allyship involves men taking deliberate and practical steps, together with women, to create better opportunities for female academics to advance their careers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that male allyship can make a real contribution to the career development of female academics when men do more than simply express support and take practical steps to promote women's advancement. Although Makerere University has policies, structures and programmes that provide opportunities for men to engage in gender equality work, what matters is how these opportunities are taken up and translated into action. Male allyship should therefore be seen as an ongoing practice in which men and women work together to address barriers and create better opportunities for women in academia. We recommend that Makerere University strengthen and clearly define its approach to male allyship and connect it more closely to existing gender equality programmes and institutional practices. The University should provide regular and practical training for male academics on gender equality, masculinities and allyship, and give greater support to structures such as the Men's Hub and Men's Forum. Male academics, especially those in leadership positions, should be encouraged to mentor and sponsor female academics, open professional networks and support access to opportunities that can advance their careers. The University should also create more opportunities for men and women to work together in identifying and addressing practices that may hinder women's progression. This would help male allyship move beyond words and become a more consistent part of efforts to improve the career development of female academics.

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TOPIC

Legitimacy in University Affiliation Relationships: Perceptions of Tutors and Managers in Early Childhood Education Teacher Training Institutions Affiliated with Makerere University

Keywords: University affiliation; legitimacy; Edward Said; filiation; affiliation; Early Childhood Education; quality assurance; support supervision; monitoring; assessment; certification;

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INTRODUCTION

University affiliation has become an important mechanism through which universities extend academic oversight, quality assurance, and professional recognition to teacher training institutions (Di Leo 1999). In Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), affiliation enables universities to extend academic oversight through curriculum alignment, support, supervision, monitoring, assessment, and certification, with the intention of maintaining academic standards and strengthening the credibility of teacher preparation (Shushu, 2024). Quality assurance has become increasingly important within African higher education as institutions seek to demonstrate academic standards, accountability, and institutional effectiveness (Mireku & Bervell, 2024). Legitimacy enables universities to exercise academic authority, foster institutional cooperation, and sustain confidence among educators, students, regulators, and the wider public (Daries, 2023). Understanding affiliation requires attention not only to institutional structures but also to the meanings, relationships, and experiences through which legitimacy is continuously negotiated in practice. However, formal affiliation does not necessarily mean that the relationship is experienced as legitimate by those who participate in it. Mule & Kamaara 2024) indicate that institutional relationships may promote collaboration and capacity development while also presenting challenges related to equity, mutuality, and institutional power. This study therefore examines how tutors and institutional managers perceive the legitimacy of affiliation between Early Childhood Care and Education Teacher Training Institutions (ECCE TTIs) and Makerere University.

Higher education institutions rely on affiliations as a vital mechanism for improving quality (Shushu 2024). This study explores perceptions of tutors and managers in Early Childhood Care and Education Training Institutions (ECCE TIs) affiliated with Makerere University and examines their affiliation relationship.

Purpose, Objectives and Research Question

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine how the legitimacy of affiliation between Early Childhood Education Teacher Training Institutions and Makerere University is perceived by tutors and institutional managers.

Research Objective(s)

To examine how educators perceive the legitimacy of affiliation between Early Childhood Education Teacher Training Institutions and Makerere University.

Research Question

How do tutors and managers perceive the legitimacy of affiliation between Early Childhood Education Teacher Training Institutions and Makerere University?

3. **Methodology**

The study adopts an interpretivist paradigm informed by a relativist ontology and transactional epistemology to understand participants' lived experiences. A qualitative phenomenological design is employed to explore how educators interpret legitimacy within university affiliation relationships (Kivunji & Kuyini, 2017). The study is conducted in affiliated Early Childhood Education Teacher Training Institutions located in Kampala, Mukono, and Wakiso districts in Central Uganda. Purposive sampling is used to select information-rich participants with direct experience of the affiliation process. The participants comprise sixteen educators, including eight tutors and eight institutional managers.

Data are collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and relevant institutional document review. Interviews provide detailed accounts of participants' experiences with university affiliation, while document analysis offers contextual understanding of affiliation policies and quality assurance practices (Creswell 2023; Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2004). Data are analyzed thematically following systematic coding, categorization, and interpretation. Throughout the analysis, Edward Said's theory of affiliation guides interpretation of participants' perceptions of legitimacy.

4. **Expected Results**

The study is expected to demonstrate that legitimacy within university affiliation is shaped by tutors' and managers ' experiences of support supervision, monitoring, assessment, and certification, rather than through formal affiliation agreements alone

Support supervision is expected to be perceived as enhancing professional competence and development through mentoring and academic guidance, although concerns may emerge regarding the frequency and consistency of supervisory visits. Monitoring is anticipated to strengthen institutional accountability and compliance with university standards, while simultaneously creating perceptions of administrative control and unequal institutional relationships. Assessment practices are expected to be viewed as promoting fairness, academic integrity, and standardization of learning outcomes. However, participants may identify challenges associated with limited institutional participation in assessment-related decision-making. Certification is expected to emerge as the strongest indicator of legitimacy because association with Makerere University enhances institutional credibility, graduate employability, and public confidence in Early Childhood Education qualifications.

Overall, the findings are expected to show that legitimacy is not determined solely by formal affiliation agreements but is continuously negotiated through everyday quality-assurance practices and institutional interactions. Edward Said's theory is expected to demonstrate that affiliation simultaneously legitimizes institutions while reinforcing asymmetrical relationships between universities and affiliated colleges.

5. **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study is expected to conclude that university affiliation remains an important mechanism for strengthening quality improvement and institutional legitimacy in Early Childhood Education teacher education. Legitimacy is likely to be constructed through effective support supervision, transparent monitoring systems, credible assessment practices, and recognized certification processes. Nevertheless, affiliation may also produce unequal institutional relationships that require more collaborative governance approaches.

The study recommends that universities strengthen participatory quality improvement by actively involving affiliated institutions in monitoring, assessment, and decision-making processes. Regular academic support supervision should be enhanced to promote institutional capacity development rather than regulatory compliance alone. Policymakers should also develop clear national guidelines that balance accountability with institutional autonomy in university affiliation arrangements. These measures would contribute to more equitable and sustainable affiliation relationships while improving the quality of Early Childhood Education teacher preparation in Uganda.

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TOPIC

Community Self-Help Projects and Enhancement of Socio-Economic Well-Being: Evidence from Rwanda.

Keywords: Community self-help projects; socio-economic well-being; community-based tourism; employment; local enterprise development; market access

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ABSTRACT.

Tourism receipts in Rwanda continue to expand rapidly, with gorilla trekking around Volcanoes National Park a principal driver of growth in the sector. National policy instruments such as the Tourism Revenue Sharing Programme have been established to channel a portion of park revenue toward community infrastructure and welfare in areas adjacent to protected areas, including the Kinigi and Nyange sectors of Musanze District. Alongside these state mechanisms, a dense layer of community-organised self-help activity has emerged: savings cooperatives, community-based tourism associations, skills-sharing networks and locally owned enterprises through which residents attempt to convert proximity to a major tourist attraction into livelihoods, employment and enterprise ownership.

Prior Rwandan studies have examined how government service provision and access to information shape residents' ability to own tourism businesses, and case studies of individual community tourism sites have documented income and cultural benefits. However, no study has isolated the independent contribution of community-organised self-help, as distinct from state revenue-sharing or government service delivery, to socio-economic well-being, nor has any study jointly examined both the Kinigi and Nyange sectors using quantitative, path-analytic methods. This gap matters because local ownership of tourism-related enterprises around Volcanoes National Park remains limited despite decades of revenue sharing, and constraints such as low household savings, weak entrepreneurial capacity and uncompetitive local products continue to limit how far community self-help can translate proximity to tourism into tangible economic gains.

Continental reviews of community-based tourism confirm its promise for advancing poverty- and employment-related development goals, yet also flag a shortage of evidence on the long-term, quantifiable contribution of self-organised mechanisms as opposed to donor- or state-driven interventions. Within Rwanda specifically, existing studies remain narrow in geographic scope, typically confined to a single sector or site, and rely on largely qualitative or case-based designs rather than inferential statistical testing. This study responds to three identified gaps: the absence of research spanning both Kinigi and Nyange sectors jointly; the lack of statistical evidence isolating community-organised self-help from state revenue sharing or government service provision; and the scarcity of path-analytic evidence testing the magnitude, rather than merely the existence, of the relationship between self-help and household-level socio-economic outcomes.

This study examines the relationship between community-based self-help initiatives and socio-economic well-being in the Kinigi and Nyange sectors, with particular attention to market access, household income, employment opportunities and local enterprise development. It is guided by

Kanter's Theory of Structured Empowerment, which holds that empowerment arises from access to structural, power-generating resources within an organisation or community rather than from individual traits, and that such access enables people to accomplish tasks, grow and gain recognition. The study tests the null hypothesis that self-help initiatives have no significant relationship with socio-economic well-being in the Kinigi and Nyange sectors.

A mixed-methods design combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. Kinigi and Nyange sectors were purposively selected as the study sites given their proximity to Volcanoes National Park, and individual respondents were then selected using simple random sampling. From a target population of 1,099 residents, a sample of 385 was drawn using Cochran's formula; 343 usable questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 89.1 percent. Self-help activities were measured using a five-point Likert scale, and reliability and construct validity were confirmed through Cronbach's alpha and exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and path analysis in AMOS to test the hypothesised relationship between self-help and socio-economic well-being. This was supplemented by twelve semi-structured interviews and two focus group discussions, offering qualitative insight into residents' lived experience of self-help.
Respondents were fairly evenly split between men (52.2 percent) and women (47.8 percent), with the largest age group being 30–39 years, and roughly 80 percent having received some level of formal education. Descriptive results showed broad agreement (total mean of 3.68 on the five-point scale) that self-help activity supports sustainable tourism management, self-reliance, capacity building, and the leveraging of culture and nature for economic gain, as well as improved financial access and hospitality training.

Factor analysis confirmed a clean two-factor structure distinguishing self-help initiatives from socio-economic well-being, and confirmatory factor analysis, after covarying selected error terms, produced an acceptable model fit (CMIN/DF = 2.256; RMSEA = .061; CFI = .964; TLI = .956). Bivariate correlation revealed a positive and statistically significant, though weak, association between self-help and socio-economic well-being ($r = .326$, $p < .01$). Path analysis confirmed this relationship: self-help initiatives accounted for approximately 33.3 percent of the variance in socio-economic well-being (standardised path coefficient $\beta = .333$, $p < .001$), leading the study to reject the null hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between the two constructs.

Qualitative interviews reinforced these quantitative results, with residents describing self-help as a way of avoiding the cost and conditionality associated with hiring external managers or relying on government and donor support, and as a means of organising more effectively for free training offered by partners such as GIZ and the Rwanda Tourism Board. Respondents also described packaging local culture, including dance, music and traditional crafts, as a distinctive way of generating income from visitors. A notable limitation is that some sampled residents were unavailable during data collection because they were engaged in economic activities elsewhere, and difficult terrain in parts of the study area constrained full coverage, so findings should be interpreted with these access constraints in mind. The findings support Kanter's premise that access to structural resources, rather than individual characteristics alone, underpins empowerment: where self-help groups provided access to financial services, training and market information, residents reported a greater sense of capability and independence. The results are consistent with prior community-based tourism research from Rwanda and elsewhere in Africa and Asia showing that self-organisation can substitute for scarce or unpredictable external investment, particularly through the mobilisation of local cultural and natural assets.

At the same time, the modest size of the path coefficient suggests that self-help alone is not sufficient to drive substantial socio-economic transformation. Persistent constraints, including low household savings, limited entrepreneurial skills and the weak competitiveness of local products and services relative to those offered by external operators, continue to restrict how far community self-help can convert proximity to a major protected-area tourist attraction into household income, employment and enterprise ownership. This nuance is important for policy: it implies that community self-

organisation and formal, state-led revenue-sharing mechanisms should be understood as complementary rather than substitutable pathways to socio-economic improvement, since neither alone appears sufficient to overcome the structural barriers, such as limited access to start-up capital, that residents in park-adjacent communities continue to face.

Community-based self-help initiatives in Kinigi and Nyange make a statistically significant but modest independent contribution to socio-economic well-being, distinct from state-led revenue sharing. Strengthening this contribution requires targeted capacity building and entrepreneurship training, deliberate savings mobilisation and stronger institutional support to help local products and enterprises become genuinely competitive. Diversifying income by combining tourism-related activity with existing livelihoods such as agriculture is also recommended, as is fostering greater social cohesion within self-help groups to improve internal communication and enterprise management.

These findings extend the community-based tourism literature by providing rare quantitative, path-analytic evidence, from a joint two-sector sample, of the magnitude of the self-help and well-being relationship, and they offer policymakers evidence-based direction for designing interventions that complement, rather than substitute for, community self-organisation in protected-area-adjacent tourism economies.

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TOPIC

Strengthening Internal Communication and Stakeholder Participation in Higher Education: An Analysis of Makerere University

Keywords: Communication policy, decision-making, higher education governance, stakeholder participation, systems theory

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is the lifeblood of institutional leadership in universities, shaping how policies are formulated, how decisions are conveyed, and how stakeholders respond to the evolving academic and administrative environment (Ntim et al. 2017). In higher education institutions, communication is not merely a transactional or operational function; it is a strategic governance tool that reinforces transparency, inclusivity, and accountability (Wise et al., 2020). When effectively structured and executed, internal communication can serve as a bridge between leadership and the wider university community, fostering a culture of trust, shared understanding, and meaningful stakeholder engagement (Buhmann et al, 2024).

Universities today operate in increasingly complex ecosystems, where diverse stakeholder groups including administrators, faculty, students, support staff, alumni, and external partners have competing interests and expectations (de Groot et al, 2025). Navigating these dynamics requires robust internal communication systems that facilitate two-way dialogue and support participatory governance. Makerere University, as Uganda's flagship public institution of higher learning, exemplifies these challenges. The institution has witnessed significant transformations over the years, both in its governance structures and in stakeholder demands for greater involvement in institutional affairs (Healey 2017; Ssempebwa et al., 2019).

In such a context, strengthening internal communication becomes imperative not only to improve administrative efficiency but also to empower stakeholders to participate actively in shaping the university's policies and strategic direction (Santos et al., 2023). This paper, therefore, seeks to explore how Makerere University can enhance its internal communication frameworks to promote more inclusive stakeholder participation (Welch, 2015). By examining existing practices, institutional barriers, and potential reforms, the study aims to contribute to broader conversations on university governance and stakeholder engagement in the African higher education landscape (Hussen & Onia, 2024).

Objective (s) of the study

Our aim is to explore stakeholder experiences and perspectives on communication policy, and decision-making at Makerere University.

Methodology

Our study was carried out at Makerere University due to the communication gaps despite having well developed governance systems and structures with the 2013 promulgated communication policy in place. We used the qualitative approach with a phenomenological design in order to capture the indepth lived experiences of our respondents on the issues of communication and decision making at Makerere University. In order to capture the multiple opinions of participants on communication and decision making at Makerere University, we used interviews to collect data. We used convenient purposive sampling to select four (4) officers of the university (UOTIA, 2001), six (6) teaching staff, five (5) non teaching staff, and five (5) student leaders. These participants were mainly those who frequently communicate to stakeholders through circulars and those who represent others in decision making. We used a thematic approach of analysing data through four stages of data transcription, coding of responses, categorization of codes thus forming sub themes and interpreting sub themes to form themes.

Findings

Makerere University's communication policy is, in general terms, progressive and was formulated with an intention for inclusivity and participatory governance. Core to the communication policy's goal was to provide an opportunity for open and transparent communication amongst and between stakeholders (i.e., Students, academic staff, administrative units, and external parties) to support institutional accountability and collaborative decision making.

While the communication policy framework is generally considered progressive, the findings indicate several challenges for realizing the communication policy in practice. A significant problem is that there is a low level of stakeholder awareness of the communication policy. Stakeholders have very little awareness of its existence, the commitments and actions outlined in the policy, respective roles, and expected outcomes. This issue deeply undermines the participatory objectives of the communication policy.

Another key finding is the university operates within an over-reliance on a narrow scope of communication channels (i.e., emails and notice boards). Both channels are ineffective and not always inclusive, especially when attempting to involve broader stakeholder groups (i.e. students had little communication protocol). The time channels then fail to support or include students, part-time staff, and community partners in the communication flow. Moreover, the communication flow is also one sided, and they do not highlight the two-way flow of information that is representative of participatory governance.

There is also a significant lack of institutional commitment to developing and maintaining responsive communication systems. When feedback is offered, it is frequently late or goes unanswered, creating a sense of being excluded or being caught up in bureaucratic bypass. This lack of responsiveness has aided the disconnect between the intention of policy and what is actually enacted.

Because of these issues, stakeholders were limited to participating in decision-making. While the policy discusses the situational significance of stakeholder engagement, the operating realities of stakeholder interaction identified some gaps in structure and process, like a lack of dissemination strategies, unrealized monitoring, and evaluation strategies and limited institutional capacity to promote more inclusive communication strategies.

The disconnect between policy development and policy implementation creates serious questions about the idea of governance culture and institutional readiness for participatory models. Challenges such as growth through communication nodes, institutionalizing feedback loops, and frameworks to broaden stakeholders' knowledge need to be explicitly addressed. Otherwise, the policy will most likely remain aspirational rather than meaningful.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Taking into account the results and discussion, the study concludes that multiple communication tools should be employed to promote inclusivity and participatory governance. The study also recommends that Makerere University should undertake regular, appropriately designed sensitization campaigns to promote stakeholder awareness of the communication policy among students, academic staff, non-teaching staff, and other external stakeholders. Such sensitization could include targeted workshops, town hall meetings, briefs about the policy and social media campaigns for different stakeholder groups.

To increase access, the university should continuously diversify its communication tools. Besides routine communication through emails and official notices, there is a need to equally use SMS alerts, community radio, social media, and physical info boards in key parts of campus. Further, the university can equally think of creating decentralized communication offices in faculties or departments to augment local communication.

Institutionalize feedback mechanisms such as suggestion boxes, periodic survey feedback, online feedback portals and open discussion platforms for stakeholders to respond to institutional decisions, communications or messaging. Most importantly, these feedback mechanisms should be monitored and responses provided must be timely and transparent.

Across the university, communication officers and other leaders need continuous training and capacity building programs to develop a culture of two-way communication and responsive governance. This should entail ongoing development for staff in stakeholder engagement, communication skills that are conflict-sensitive and media that is inclusive of all voices.

Create and develop a clearly articulated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework into the communication policy. It will be beneficial to complete regular M&E audits and reviews to evaluate how the policy is performing, identify barriers to policy implementation and the need to make adjustments. Additional engagement of opportunity for stakeholders to be involved in the review will add transparency and ownership.

More than just technical fixes the need to develop a deeper cultural change is warranted. University leadership needs to model commitment to participatory governance through transparent communications, respond to stakeholder feedback and encourage shared decision-making at all levels.

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TOPIC

Graduate Students' Lived Experiences With Mental Health Services At Makerere University: A Phenomenological Inquiry

Keywords: Graduate students; mental health services; Donabedian framework; hermeneutic phenomenology; lived experience; Makerere University

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health difficulties among university students have risen over recent decades, driven by academic pressure, financial strain, social dislocation, and the transition into adulthood (Eleftheriades et al., 2020), and the issue aligns with SDG 3 and 4, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and Uganda's Fourth National Development Plan (African Union Commission, 2015; United Nations, 2015; National Planning Authority, 2024). Graduate students are a particularly at-risk group: depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation are consistently higher among graduate and doctoral students than in the general population or among undergraduates, linked to publishing pressure, an unpredictable academic job market, supervisory relationships, and financial and social isolation (Barry et al., 2018; Bolotnyy et al., 2022; Evans et al., 2018; Levecque et al., 2017). In Uganda, depression prevalence is estimated at 27% in the general population and 26.9% among university students (Kaggwa et al., 2022; Opio et al., 2022).

Makerere University established a Guidance and Counselling Centre in response to rising concern about students' psychosocial wellbeing, yet only about 15% of students aware of the Centre actually use it (Nkabala et al., 2021). Existing studies document distress levels and awareness rates but do not explain what happens between a student recognizing a need for help and actually receiving it; qualitative work on this question is scarce, often merges graduate and undergraduate populations, and is drawn largely from outside Sub-Saharan Africa. This study addressed that gap by exploring how graduate students themselves experience the accessibility, adequacy, delivery process, and effectiveness of mental health services at Makerere, asking not merely whether services are underused, but why.

Objectives: To explore graduate students' lived experiences regarding (i) accessibility, (ii) adequacy, (iii) service-delivery processes, and (iv) perceived effectiveness of mental health services at Makerere University.

Theoretical Perspective: The study drew on Donabedian's (1966, 1988) Structure-Process-Outcome framework, reinterpreted through van Manen's (1990) and Munhall's (2012) four lifeworld existentials of spatiality, temporality, corporeality, and relationality. Rather than using Donabedian's triad as an external assessment tool, the study treated structure, process, and outcome as phenomena that are lived. A counselling center experienced as “hidden away” is structure lived spatially; hours that clash with work schedules are structure lived temporally; waiting experienced as embodied distress is structure lived corporeally and surveillance felt within the counselling relationship is structure lived relationally. This mapped onto the study's objectives: accessibility and adequacy as the structural domain, delivery

process as the process domain, and effectiveness as the outcome domain, transforming Donabedian's model from an evaluative tool into a way of conceptualizing lived experience.

Methodology: The study adopted a qualitative interpretivist design, located within Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology, and operationalized through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). That choice was made partly because it keeps an idiographic, case by case commitment, and also because it treats understanding as a double hermeneutic (Smith et al., 2009). Eleven graduate students (nine master's, two doctoral) who had used the Guidance and Counselling Centre were recruited via purposive and snowball sampling, and the sample size was navigated by information sufficiency, not a fixed number target (Malterud et al., 2016). For data collection, semi structured interviews were used, alongside reflective letters, and a check of institutional policy documents. Analysis followed IPA's iterative method for theme development, plus the cross-case synthesis step. Trustworthiness was ensured through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria, and the researchers' positionality as Ugandan mental health practitioner, and as a graduate student, was reflexively handled.

Key Study Findings: Four findings emerged, corresponding to the study's objectives. First, accessibility was undermined less by the absence of services than by their structural unreachability: awareness was mainly through informal networks, services were centralized against a dispersed student population, chronic understaffing, and rigid hours misaligned with the working lives of many graduate students. Second, even where accessed, services were experienced as inadequate, they were generic rather than tailored to postgraduate stressors, and delivered in spaces that discouraged disclosure. A funding-surveillance paradox emerged as the study's most distinctive finding: scholarship-sponsored students experienced service engagement as institutional monitoring tied to their funding, while self-sponsored students experienced the same services as simply out of reach. Third, the quality of the care process shaped engagement as much as its existence: warmth and privacy at first contact encouraged disclosure, while the absence of proactive follow-up left continuity of care dependent on already-distressed students re-initiating contact, reflecting an implicit assumption that distress is purely individual rather than also structurally produced. Fourth, effectiveness was real but bounded: counselling produced genuine relief where distress was personal or acute, but where distress was institutionally rooted like unresponsive supervision and unresolved confidentiality risk, the same interventions brought only temporary relief, and in some cases a loss of trust in the service altogether.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Findings suggest that mental health services at Makerere cannot be meaningfully improved by establishing whether they exist; what matters is the lived structural, spatial, temporal, corporeal, and relational conditions under which graduate students reach, use, and benefit from them. The study recommends decentralized service points and extended, schedule-aligned hours; increased and postgraduate-specialized staffing; redesigned, private counselling spaces; standardized warm intake paired with mandated proactive follow-up; and a dedicated postgraduate mental health policy that formally separates counselling records from academic and financial administration to resolve the funding-surveillance paradox. Theoretically, the study demonstrates that pairing Donabedian's framework with van Manen's and Munhall's lifeworld existentials offers a more complete account of service quality than either alone. The former explains structural and procedural conditions while the latter clarifies how those conditions are actually felt. These insights, grounded in Makerere University, may support mental health service reform across Uganda and comparable Sub-Saharan African higher education contexts.

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TOPIC

Communication Of Succession Intent And Sustainability Of Selected Family-Owned Small And Medium Enterprises In The Central Region Of Uganda

Keywords: Graduate students; mental health services; Donabedian framework; hermeneutic phenomenology; lived experience; Makerere University

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Family-owned businesses (FOBs) dominate global economies, contributing between 70–90% of enterprises, generating over 75% of GDP, and employing more than 75% of the workforce (Arduino, 2025; PwC, 2020). Their resilience stems from values, legacy, and long-term vision, yet succession planning remains a critical challenge. Globally, only 30% of FOBs transition to the second generation, 12% to the third, and fewer than 5% beyond the fourth (Byrd & Megginson, 2013; Mutebi et al., 2024). Failures often arise from poor successor identification, inadequate training, weak communication, and fragile governance (Mazzi, 2021; Munene, 2024).

In developed economies, firms such as IKEA and BMW have institutionalized governance and mentorship frameworks to ensure continuity (Klein & Shagrir, 2021). In Uganda, however, FOBs, though contributing over 70% of GDP, remain vulnerable, with only 26% having documented succession plans (UBOS, 2021). Recent reforms, including the Succession (Amendment) Act, 2022, modernized inheritance law but focus largely on estate distribution rather than structured business continuity (Government of Uganda, 2022). Failures of enterprises such as Ssembuule Steel Rolling Mills and WBS Television illustrate systemic gaps (Luyombya, 2021; Mutebi et al., 2024). This study therefore seeks to develop a succession planning practices model tailored for FOBs in Central Uganda, integrating successor identification, training, communication, and governance to foster sustainability across generations.

Objectives and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop a succession planning practices model tailored for family-owned businesses (FOBs) in Central Uganda, where succession remains informal, gender-biased, and poorly governed (PwC, 2020; Munene, 2024). Specifically, the study seeks to: (i) clarify succession strategies to ensure continuity, (ii) enhance employee engagement in succession processes, and (iii) align roles with career growth through structured governance frameworks (UBOS, 2021; Government of Uganda, 2022). The overarching objective is to foster sustainability across generations by integrating successor identification, training, communication of succession intent, and corporate governance (Mutebi et al., 2024).

Research Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to capture both statistical relationships and contextual insights. The research was conducted in Uganda's Central Region, a hub for family-owned SMEs across agriculture, trade, services, and manufacturing (UBOS, 2021). The population comprised SMEs registered with local business associations, and a stratified random sample of 166 respondents was selected to ensure sectoral representation.

Data collection involved structured questionnaires measuring corporate governance, succession planning, and sustainability indicators, complemented by key informant interviews (KIIs) with business owners and managers. Instruments included Likert-scale items assessing HR policy, organizational culture, and employee engagement, alongside open-ended questions for qualitative depth. Reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha, while validity was ensured via expert review (Munene, 2024).

Quantitative data were analyzed using Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test hypothesized relationships. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed to provide contextual explanations of governance and succession practices. Triangulation of both methods enhanced robustness, allowing integration of numerical trends with narrative insights. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of succession planning dynamics in Ugandan family-owned SMEs, aligning with contemporary methodological standards (Mutebi et al., 2024).

Findings

The regression analysis confirmed that communication of succession intent significantly predicts business sustainability in family-owned enterprises. The model explained 33.7% of the variance (R^2 = 0.337), demonstrating that clear and structured communication contributes substantially to continuity and resilience. The regression coefficient (β = 0.362, t = 9.12, $p < 0.001$) showed that improvements in succession communication are directly associated with higher sustainability outcomes, while the overall model was statistically significant ($F(1,164) = 83.23$, $p < 0.001$).

Correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.580$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing that transparent communication of succession strategies, timelines, and career pathways enhances employee engagement, reduces uncertainty, and strengthens long-term performance. Enterprises that institutionalized feedback mechanisms and aligned roles with career growth reported stronger leadership pipelines and improved retention.

However, since the model accounts for only one-third of the variance, other factors such as training, governance structures, and leadership development also play critical roles in sustainability. Hypothesis testing provided strong evidence against the null, confirming that succession communication has a significant positive effect on business sustainability. Overall, while communication is a powerful predictor of resilience and continuity, it must be complemented by broader organizational practices to secure long-term success.

Discussion and Study Implications

The results demonstrate that communication of succession intent is a statistically significant predictor of sustainability in Ugandan family-owned enterprises. The moderate correlation ($r = 0.580$, $p < 0.001$) and regression coefficient (β = 0.362, $p < 0.001$) confirm that structured communication enhances continuity, resilience, and employee engagement. These findings reinforce Stewardship Theory, which emphasizes trust and long-term orientation, and the Resource-Based View, which highlights tacit knowledge and intergenerational culture as strategic assets. Clear communication institutionalizes these resources, reducing uncertainty and strengthening leadership pipelines.

Practically, enterprises must formalize succession strategies through multiple communication channels, integrate succession intent into performance reviews, and establish inclusive forums for dialogue. Such practices foster transparency, inclusivity, and trust, thereby enhancing organizational resilience. Policy reforms like the Succession (Amendment) Act, 2022 provide a legal framework but must be

complemented by organizational governance systems that prioritize structured succession planning. Importantly, the model explained only 33.7% of the variance, indicating that communication alone is insufficient. Training, governance structures, and leadership development remain critical complementary factors.

Thus, while communication is a powerful driver of sustainability, broader organizational practices must be integrated. Effective succession planning requires a holistic approach that combines communication, governance, and leadership development to secure long-term success.

Conclusion

This study highlights the central role of succession communication in sustaining family-owned enterprises in Uganda's Central Region. Regression and correlation analyses confirmed that transparent communication of succession intent significantly predicts sustainability, explaining 33.7% of the variance. Enterprises that clearly articulate succession strategies, timelines, and career pathways achieve stronger employee engagement, reduced uncertainty, and improved continuity. However, the moderate strength of the relationship underscores that communication alone cannot guarantee resilience.

Broader organizational practices, including structured training, governance frameworks, and leadership development, must complement communication to secure long-term success. Failures of enterprises such as Ssembuule Steel Rolling Mills and WBS Television illustrate the risks of informal, inconsistent succession practices. Conversely, firms that institutionalize communication and governance demonstrate stronger resilience and continuity.

The study contributes to theory by integrating Stewardship Theory, the Resource-Based View, and the Modified Family Succession and Transition Model, offering a holistic framework for analyzing succession planning. Practically, it provides a model emphasizing successor identification, training, communication, and governance as pillars of sustainability.

In conclusion, succession communication is a critical but partial driver of sustainability. To ensure generational continuity, Ugandan family-owned enterprises must adopt comprehensive succession planning systems that combine communication with governance and leadership development.

TOPIC

Examining the Influence of Strength Development on Psychological Capital: The Case of Public Secondary School Teachers in Wakiso District, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Public secondary school teachers in Wakiso District navigate an increasingly hostile occupational work environment characterized by overcrowded classrooms, resource constraints, and intense bureaucratic demands. This taxing work environment triggers occupational burnout and severe resource depletion, threatening teachers' psychological capital and institutional stability (Cimen & Yilmaz, 2018). Grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), individuals must invest in existing resources to prevent loss and recover from strain. This is why contemporary organizations are shifting from deficit correction to strength development encompassing skills, talent, and knowledge development (Woerkom et al., 2016), Therefore a critical empirical gap remains regarding how these institutional mechanisms nurture teachers' internal psychological reserves within public secondary schools. Addressing this gap is vital because public school evaluation systems predominantly focus on correcting deficiencies, which intensifies teacher fatigue. This study therefore was to investigate the impact of strength development on teachers' psychological capital. The findings provide schools' management, policy makers and ministry of education officials with evidence based strategies to transform supervisory frameworks, buffer teachers against burnout, and cultivate a confidence, resilient, hopeful, and optimistic educational workforce.

Purpose

To investigate the relationship between strength development and psychological capital among public secondary school teachers in Wakiso District.

Aim

To demonstrate how institutional strength development enhances teacher resilience, self-efficacy, hope, and optimism to mitigate burnout and inform educational policies.

Research Objectives

To assess the relationship between skills development and teacher psychological capital

To evaluate the impact of talent development on teacher psychological capital

To examine the influence of knowledge development on teacher psychological capital

Hypotheses:

There is no significant relationship between skills development and psychological capital of teachers

There is no significant relationship betweenTalent development and psychological capital

There is no significant relationship betweenKnowledge development and psychological capital

3.0 Methodology

This study deployed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to systematically evaluate the relationship between strength development and psychological capital among public secondary school teachers.

3.1 Participants & Sampling

The target population comprised 229 teachers N = 229 across four government secondary schools in Wakiso District, Uganda, with individual teachers as the unit of analysis. Grounded in Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) criteria, a minimum sample of 144 was required at a 95% confidence level. Utilizing proportionate random sampling, 169 questionnaires were administered to buffer against non-response, yielding 150 usable responses.

3.2 Data Collection

Primary data were gathered via a self-administered 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree). Strengths Development was measured across skill development (cognitive, practice, affective), talent development (gifts, creativity, motivation), and knowledge development (mind, interaction, experience). Psychological capital was assessed via self-efficacy (Luthans, 2002), hope (Snyder et al., 1991), resilience (Fu, 2025), and optimism (Karademas, 2006).

3.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic profiles, while Pearson's correlation and multiple linear regression evaluated hypothesized linear relationships and variance prediction.

4.0 Empirical Results

The bivariate correlation and multiple regression analyses evaluated the relationship between the multidimensional components of strengths development (skills, talent, and knowledge development) and teacher psychological capital

4.1 Statistical Significance: Correlation analyses confirmed that all three dimensions of strength development were positively and significantly associated with teacher psychological capital establishing clear linear relationships across all tested hypotheses.

Regression results demonstrated that institutional investments in cultivating teacher skills, innate talents, and professional knowledge development serve as significant predictors of teachers' internal psychological reserves

Explanatory Analysis: The overall regression model accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in teacher psychological capital, confirming that strength developmental approaches directly buffer teachers against occupational stress in public secondary schools.

4.2 Statistical Metrics

Pearson Correlation Coefficient: Establishes the positive direction and statistical strength of the linear relationships between strength development dimensions and psychological capital ($p < 0.01$).

Standardized Beta Coefficient: Measures the relative predictive strength and direct effect of each individual independent variable on teacher psychological capital

4.3 Interpretation

Objective 1 Skills development emerged as the most powerful predictor of teacher psychological capital beta 0.471, $p < 0.001$). Active mastery and practical skill acquisition directly build self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism among teachers.

Objective 2 Knowledge development significantly, though modestly, predicts beta (0.151, $p = 0.043$), demonstrating that intellectual growth provides a crucial baseline for confidence and hope.

Objective 3 Talent development showed no statistically significant relationship with beta (0.051, $p = 0.502$). Merely identifying raw, talent does not build psychological capital reserve, ;talent must be actively transformed into concrete skills and applied knowledge.

4.4 Theoretical Significance

Results strongly validate Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Skill development serves as a critical external resource investment that triggers positive psychological capital converting workplace learning into durable internal personal resources like confidence, hope, resilience and optimism.

4.5 Limitations of the Study

Data gathered at a single point in time prevents establishing causal direction between strengths development and psychological capital

Geographic Scope Restricting the sample to four public secondary schools in Wakiso District limits the generalizability of findings to private institutions or rural districts across Uganda.

4.6 Contribution

This study advances positive organizational behavior within the educational sector by establishing the empirical link between multidimensional strengths development and teacher psychological capital in public secondary schools.

4.7 Theoretical perspective: It validates Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by demonstrating that internal psychological resources (Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, Optimism) are not static traits, but are dynamically built through targeted work environmental investments. The findings reveal that talent development alonebeta (.051, $p > .05$)does not buildpsychological capital rather, talent development must be operationalized through structured skills developmentbeta (.471, $p < .001$) and knowledge developmentbeta (.151, $p < .05$) to trigger accumulation of positive outcomes

5.0 Conclusion: School heads, District Education Officers, and the Ministry of Education have empirical justification to abandon pure deficit correction supervision. Instead, institutionalizing structured skills development programs, peer knowledge development and sharing networks, offers a concrete, low-cost mechanism to buffer teachers against burnout and turnover.

5.1 Future Research

Expanding Geographic Scope: Replicate the study across private secondary schools, vocational institutions, and rural districts across Uganda to test the generalizability of the regression model.

Examine organizational variables such as principal leadership styles, school work environment, or organizational compassion as potential mediators in the relationship between talent identification and active skills development.

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TOPIC

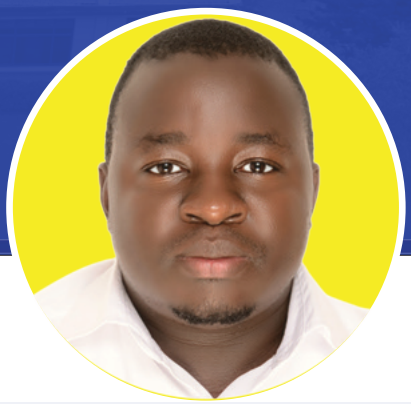
Succession Planning and Health Service Delivery in Selected Districts of Central Uganda

Keywords: Graduate students; mental health services; Donabedian framework; hermeneutic phenomenology; lived experience; Makerere University

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BACKGROUND

Human resources are widely acknowledged as the most strategic asset in healthcare organizations because they determine organizational effectiveness, leadership continuity, and health service delivery outcomes. Globally, healthcare systems increasingly recognize that sustainable service delivery depends not only on the availability of health professionals but also on effective succession planning that ensures continuity of leadership and institutional knowledge. The Resource-Based View (RBV) developed by Penrose (1959) and refined by Barney (2001)argues that organizations achieve sustained competitive advantage by effectively developing and utilizing valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable human resources. Within healthcare organizations, succession planning therefore becomes a strategic investment in human capital that strengthens organizational resilience, preserves institutional memory, and improves service continuity.

Recent literature demonstrates growing concern regarding workforce aging, increasing retirement rates, professional burnout, staff turnover, and migration of skilled health professionals. According to Haddad et al. (2022) and Kuipers et al. (2021), these demographic changes expose health systems to leadership discontinuity and operational instability unless deliberate succession mechanisms are institutionalized. Similarly, Desarno et al. (2021) observe that structured succession planning enables organizations to identify leadership potential, evaluate competencies, and prepare future leaders before vacancies occur. Deshwal (2015) further argues that succession planning improves employee motivation, career progression, knowledge transfer, and organizational learning.

The importance of succession planning has also been emphasized by William J. Rothwell (2016; 2022), who describes succession planning as an essential strategic human resource management practice that promotes leadership continuity and organizational sustainability. Likewise, Charan, Drotter and Noel (2011; 2021) argue that organizations with effective succession systems demonstrate superior leadership capability, stronger organizational performance, and better long-term strategic management. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) similarly identifies leadership development as one of the fundamental building blocks for resilient health systems capable of responding to changing healthcare demands.

Despite this global consensus, succession planning remains inadequately institutionalized within many developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Uganda continues to experience shortages of skilled health professionals, leadership vacancies, staff transfers, resignations, retirements, and delayed

replacement of key personnel. According to the Ministry of Health (2024), public health facilities operate at only 34% of the approved staffing structure, while the health sector achieved only 36.4% of its key performance targets during the 2023/2024 financial year. These statistics demonstrate persistent workforce and leadership challenges that continue to undermine effective health service delivery.

Although succession planning has received considerable attention in private organizations and developed countries, empirical evidence regarding its influence on health service delivery within Uganda's decentralized public healthcare system remains limited. Existing African studies have concentrated primarily on workforce shortages, retention, and leadership development while providing limited evidence regarding the relationship between succession planning and perceived health service delivery. This study therefore examined the association between succession planning and perceived health service delivery in selected districts of Central Uganda.

Objective

The study assessed the association between succession planning and perceived health service delivery in selected public health facilities in Central Uganda.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) proposed by Penrose (1959) and expanded by Barney (2001) and Barney and Felin (2013). The theory posits that organizational success depends largely on effective management of strategic internal resources, particularly human resources. In healthcare organizations, succession planning represents a strategic investment that develops leadership capability, preserves institutional knowledge, improves workforce sustainability, and enhances organizational resilience. RBV therefore provided an appropriate theoretical framework for examining whether succession planning contributes to improved perceived health service delivery.

Literature Review and Research Gap

The literature consistently demonstrates that succession planning enhances organizational continuity and workforce stability. Rothwell (2016) argues that succession planning remains unevenly institutionalized across healthcare organizations, with many institutions relying on reactive leadership replacement rather than strategic leadership development. Martin and O'Shea (2021) and Johnson et al. (2018) further report that retirement of experienced professionals creates leadership gaps and weakens organizational governance.

Studies by Berns and Klarner (2017), Branden and Sharts-Hopko (2017), and Husain and Omer (2016) reveal that weak succession planning undermines organizational resilience through inadequate knowledge transfer and leadership preparation. Similarly, Titzer et al. (2014) and Webb et al. (2017) found that structured succession planning improves employee morale, staff retention, and leadership development. However, these studies focused primarily on workforce outcomes rather than perceived health service delivery. Furthermore, Charbonneau and Freeman (2016) together with Nogueira et al. (2019) note that although organizations recognize the importance of succession planning, implementation remains weak, especially within resource-constrained public health systems.

These literature gaps justified the present study by examining whether succession planning significantly influences perceived health service delivery within Uganda's public health sector.

Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to health workers, while qualitative data were generated through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and document review.

The target population comprised 405 health personnel, from which a study population of 260 respondents was established. Using Slovin's formula, a sample of 158 respondents was determined, although 150 completed questionnaires were successfully analyzed. Additionally, 33 qualitative participants comprising pharmacists, human resource officers, health facility administrators, key staff, patients, and community members were purposively selected.

Stratified random sampling was used for nurses, midwives, pharmacists, clinical officers, laboratory personnel, and administrative staff, while census sampling included all medical officers and dentists because of their small numbers. Purposive sampling was employed for key informants.

Instrument validity was confirmed through expert judgment. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was 0.753 for succession planning and 0.842 for perceived health service delivery. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha produced coefficients of 0.721 and 0.811, respectively, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 29, employing descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and simple linear regression at the 5% significance level. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

Results

The demographic profile indicated that 52.7% of respondents were male, 47.3% were female, while 48.0% possessed bachelor's degrees and 12.0% held master's degrees. Most respondents (44.7%) had worked within the selected districts for between one and three years, suggesting adequate familiarity with workforce planning and health service delivery practices.

Descriptive statistics showed that succession planning remained weakly institutionalized within the selected health facilities. The overall mean for succession planning was 2.340 (SD = 1.2735), indicating inconsistent implementation across facilities. Perceived health service delivery recorded a mean of 2.240 (SD = 1.3790), reflecting continuing operational challenges. However, respondents strongly agreed that delayed succession planning contributes to poor service delivery (Mean = 4.360; SD = 0.8614), that absence of succession planning weakens service quality (Mean = 4.406; SD = 0.6356), and that poor succession planning generally results in inadequate health service delivery (Mean = 4.473; SD = 0.7391).

Correlation analysis demonstrated a weak positive but statistically insignificant relationship between succession planning and perceived health service delivery ($r = 0.064$; $p = 0.436$). Consequently, the study accepted the null hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between succession planning and perceived health service delivery.

Regression analysis further supported these findings. The model explained only 0.4% of the variation in perceived health service delivery ($R^2 = 0.004$; Adjusted $R^2 = -0.003$), indicating negligible explanatory power. ANOVA results showed that the regression model was statistically insignificant ($F = 0.611$; $p = 0.436$). Similarly, regression coefficients revealed that succession planning had only a negligible positive influence on perceived health service delivery ($B = 0.041$; $\beta = 0.064$; $t = 0.782$; $p = 0.436$).

Qualitative findings complemented these statistical results. Participants consistently reported weak institutionalization of succession planning systems, absence of formal succession structures, inadequate mentoring, delayed replacement of health workers, financial constraints, centralized staffing decisions, excessive workloads, declining staff morale, and reactive workforce management. Health managers described succession planning as a "firefighting" exercise where replacements are sought only after vacancies occur, resulting in service disruptions, staff fatigue, and loss of institutional memory. Human resource officers further emphasized that financial limitations and centralized recruitment procedures delay timely staff replacement, thereby undermining continuity of healthcare services.

Discussion

The findings present an important departure from conventional Human Resource Development literature, which generally associates succession planning with improved organizational performance. While Rothwell (2022), Charan et al. (2021), and WHO (2023) argue that succession planning enhances leadership continuity and organizational effectiveness, the present study found no statistically significant influence on perceived health service delivery.

The insignificant correlation and regression findings suggest that succession planning remains poorly institutionalized within Uganda's public health system and therefore fails to produce measurable improvements in service delivery. These findings are consistent with Ijeoma and Osigweh (2018), who observed that succession planning frameworks across many African public institutions remain informal and fragmented. Similarly, Muriisa (2019) argues that Uganda's health sector continues to rely on ad hoc workforce replacement rather than systematic leadership development.

The findings further indicate that immediate operational constraints including staffing shortages, limited funding, inadequate medical supplies, centralized recruitment systems, and excessive workloads appear to exert a much stronger influence on health service delivery than long-term administrative strategies such as succession planning. As argued by Barnett and Davis (2008), effective succession planning requires structured mentorship, knowledge transfer, and leadership overlap, conditions that were largely absent within the sampled health facilities.

Conclusion

The study concludes that succession planning, as currently practiced within selected public health facilities in Central Uganda, has no statistically significant influence on perceived health service delivery. Although succession planning remains theoretically important under the Resource-Based View, its implementation remains fragmented, reactive, and poorly institutionalized. Consequently, leadership transitions fail to preserve institutional knowledge or improve organizational performance.

The study recommends that the Ministry of Health institutionalize formal succession planning policies, strengthen leadership development and mentoring programmes, establish strategic staffing buffers, integrate succession planning into continuous professional development, and allocate adequate financial resources to workforce planning. Such reforms would strengthen leadership continuity, improve organizational resilience, and contribute to sustainable health service delivery within Uganda's decentralized public health system.

Recommendations

Health institutions should develop and institutionalize clear succession planning policies that define procedures for replacing staff during absences, retirements or transfers. Management and policy makers should ensure that these frameworks are standardized across districts to guarantee continuity of essential services.

Health units should create strategic staff buffers for key departments in high-demand areas such as maternity, outpatient and emergency services. The Ministry of Health can provide guidance and resources to facilitate the implementation of such buffers.

Health institutions should link succession planning to continuous professional development by identifying skills gaps and training staff to fill critical roles when needed. Management can track staff readiness through regular assessments and ensure that knowledge transfer is documented and accessible.

Policy makers and management should prioritize budgeting for succession planning activities including recruitment of temporary staff, training programs and technology systems to monitor workforce readiness. Adequate funding ensures that succession plans are not merely theoretical but can be

operationalized in practice, allowing health units to respond to staff shortages and maintain uninterrupted service delivery.

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TOPIC

Goodhue and Thompson's (1995) Task–Technology Fit Model: Development, Validation,and Constructs' Evaluation of an Instrument for Measuring the Performance Impact of Management Information Systems in Makerere University

Keywords: Management Information Systems (MISs); Task–Technology Fit (TTF); Performance Impact; Construct Validity; Reliability; Makerere University.

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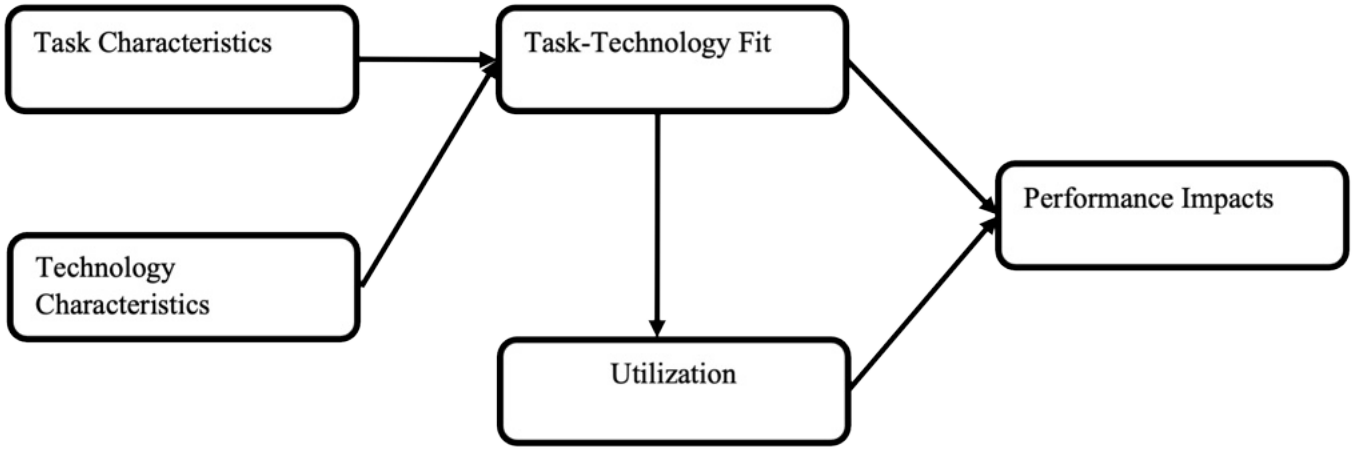
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INTRODUCTION.

In the current age of digital transformation, higher education institutions (HEIs) are increasingly reliant management information systems (MISs) to elevate their administrative and managerial processes, enable access to accurate and real time data, improve work flows, as well as enhancing overall institutional performance. At Makerere University, a number of MISs have been used to support a range of functions that include: human resource management, academic, financial and library services management. However, the existence and continued utilization of the MISs does not inevitably imply improved performance. In that regard, it becomes imperative to examine the performance impact of MISs from a perspective that considers the relationship between technology, tasks, system utilization, and performance outcomes. Our study thus used Goodhue and Thompson's (1995) task–technology fit (TTF) theory (Figure 1) as a guiding theory for examining these relationships.

Figure 1



Goodhue and Thompson's (1995) Task-technology Fit Model

Note. Sourced from Goodhue, D. L., & Thompson, R. L. (1995). Task-technology fit and individual performance. MIS Quarterly, 19, 213–233. 10.2307/249689 (p. 220, Figure 3)

The theory posits that technology is more likely to improve performance when its capabilities fit the requirements of the tasks it supports and when the technology is actually utilized. Building on their theory, our study developed and tested an instrument for assessing the performance impacts of MISs among administrative and management staff at Makerere University. We focused on five interrelated constructs: task characteristics, technology characteristics, task–technology fit, technology utilization, and performance impact. We also examined the validity, reliability, and independence of these constructs. By determining whether the five constructs can be reliably and independently measured, our study provides a methodological basis for examining how the alignment between system capabilities and task requirements contributes to improved performance within a university context.

Study objectives. Our objectives were: to develop an instrument to evaluate performance impact of MISs in Makerere University. Second, to test the validity and reliability of these TTF constructs comprised in the instrument. Third, to determine the independence of the constructs to establish their suitability as measures of performance impact of MISs.

Methodology. Our study used a methodology grounded in Goodhue and Thompson's (1995) task–technology fit (TTF) model. We developed an instrument by conducting an extensive review of previous studies that operationalized and validated the five TTF constructs: task characteristics (XT), technology characteristics (TC), task–technology fit (TTF), technology utilization (UM), and performance impact (PI). We adapted and contextualized the measurement items to the MISs used in Makerere University and assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). We collected data from 192 administrative and management staff who regularly interacted with MISs, comprising 51.6% males and 48.4% females; most respondents were aged 36–40 years (39.1%), held master's degrees (41.1%), and had more than three years of MIS experience (54.7%). The most commonly used systems were the academic management information system (ACMIS) (48.9%) and integrated financial management information system (IFMIS) (33.8%), followed by human resource management information system (HURIS) (9.4%) and Makerere library information system (MakLIBIS) (7.8%). We analyzed data using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate construct validity. We used the Cronbach's alpha to establish internal consistency and reliability, and Pearson's correlation analysis to examine relationships among the constructs.

Study Findings. We developed an instrument to measure the performance impact of MISs based on Goodhue and Thompson's (1995) task–technology fit (TTF) theory. Our instrument comprised five constructs: performance impact (PI), task–MIS fit (TMF), utilization of MIS (UM), characteristics of tasks (XT), and characteristics of MIS (XM). We adopted 23 observed items from previous studies which we contextualized to Makerere University, with responses measured on a five-point Likert scale. Validity and reliability were assessed using confirmatory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha, with a minimum factor loading of 0.5 and reliability benchmark of $\alpha = 0.70$. The results generally demonstrated satisfactory measurement properties: PI had loadings of 0.661–0.892 and $\alpha = 0.843$; TMF achieved $\alpha = 0.750$; UM $\alpha = 0.830$; XT $\alpha = 0.869$; while XM recorded $\alpha = 0.683$, which was considered acceptable for an exploratory, newly adapted instrument. The factor analyses further supported the validity of the constructs. Performance impact produced one factor explaining 68.344% of variance, while task–MIS fit produced three factors explaining 60.337% collectively, with TMF1 excluded because it failed to meet the minimum loading threshold. Utilization of MIS yielded three factors explaining 62.770%, while task characteristics produced two factors explaining 70.542%. MIS Characteristics yielded three factors explaining 60.416%, with the retained items providing reasonably reliable measures. Pearson correlations showed positive relationships among all five constructs, ranging from $r = 0.162$ to $r = 0.425$. Because the correlations were generally weak to moderate and below 0.70, the constructs were considered related but conceptually distinct, providing evidence of construct independence and supporting the suitability of the instrument for examining relationships within the TTF model.

Table 1: Overall Measurement Assessment

Assessment Criterion	Benchmark / Expected Standard	Study Result	Decision
Factor loading	≥ 0.50	Retained items met the threshold; TMF1 excluded	Acceptable
Cronbach's alpha	≥ 0.70	PI = 0.843; TMF = 0.750; UM = 0.830; XT = 0.869	Acceptable/Strong
XM reliability	≥ 0.70 generally preferred	0.683	Acceptable for exploratory/adapted instrument
Variance explained	Preferably substantial proportion of variance	60.337%–70.542% across constructs	Satisfactory
Inter-construct correlations	< 0.70 to indicate construct distinctiveness	0.162–0.425	Satisfactory
Construct validity	Supported by factor structure and item loadings	Five constructs retained with interpretable factor structures	Supported
Instrument suitability	Reliable, valid and conceptually distinct measures	Evidence supported all five TTF constructs	Suitable for further analysis

According to Table 1, the results provide evidence that the 23-item instrument was generally valid and reliable for measuring the five TTF constructs.

Conclusions and Recommendations. Our study concluded that Goodhue and Thompson's (1995) task–technology fit (TTF) model provides a sound basis for developing and testing an instrument for measuring the performance impacts of MISs at Makerere University. The instrument comprised five constructs: performance impacts, task–MIS fit, MIS utilization, task characteristics, and MIS characteristics. The validity analysis revealed that the measurement items generally loaded satisfactorily on their respective factors, while reliability results demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with the MIS characteristics construct recording a slightly lower but acceptable coefficient for exploratory research. Pearson correlation analysis further revealed positive but weak-to-moderate (r = 0.162 to r = 0.425) relationships among the constructs, confirming that they are related but conceptually distinct dimensions of MIS effectiveness. We hence recommended that our instrument be adopted and further validated in different institutional and organizational contexts, while recognizing that MIS effectiveness depends on the interaction between technology characteristics, task requirements, utilization and performance outcomes. Future studies should employ larger samples, diverse organizational settings and advanced techniques such as structural equation modelling (SEM) to further refine the instrument and examine the causal relationships among the constructs.

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TOPIC

Examination of Amnesty International's Lobbying Role in the Creation of New Ways to Combat Political Rights Violations in Uganda.

AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION

Political rights are fundamental to democratic governance, serving as the bedrock for citizen participation, freedom of expression, assembly, and association. In Uganda, the realization of these rights has been persistently constrained by a political landscape characterized by authoritarian tendencies, electoral irregularities, and the suppression of dissent. Over the last three decades, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) have become pivotal actors in promoting human rights globally. In Uganda, organizations like Amnesty International (AI) have engaged extensively in lobbying to influence policymakers, advocate for legal reforms, and raise awareness regarding violations particularly surrounding restrictive legislations such as the Public Order Management Act (POMA) and contentious electoral processes. However, while existing literature broadly acknowledges the contribution of international human rights organizations, there remains a distinct empirical gap regarding the specific mechanisms through which Amnesty International's lobbying activities influence political rights, civic awareness, and democratic participation in Uganda.

Objective and Theoretical Framework

This study aimed to explore Amnesty International's lobbying role in the creation of new ways to combat political rights violations in Uganda. The study is theoretically anchored in Constructivism, which posits that advocacy influences political behavior through norm diffusion, awareness creation, and the promotion of shared democratic values. Additionally, the study draws upon Jeremy Bentham's Interest Theory of Rights, which argues that human rights are pragmatic constructs grounded in societal duties aimed at protecting individuals' fundamental interests such as safety and freedom from harm. This theoretical lens allowed the researchers to frame AI's lobbying not merely as moral advocacy, but as a mechanism to enforce state duties to protect the political interests of Ugandan citizens.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research approach utilizing a single case study design to capture an in-depth understanding of AI's advocacy role. Data were collected between June

and September 2025. The study involved 32 participants, purposively selected from AI staff, local civil society organizations (CSOs), journalists, legal practitioners, human rights activists, and community leaders. To ensure comprehensive data triangulation, the study employed 12 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) comprising 10 members each, participant observation, and document review. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, guided by both inductive coding from participant narratives and deductive coding informed by the study objectives. Ethical approval was granted by Uganda Christian University and registered with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST).

Key Findings

The findings revealed that Amnesty International has played a catalytic role in shaping innovative strategies to combat political rights violations in Uganda through a multi-layered approach:

1. Domestic Advocacy and Evidence-Based Reporting: AI utilizes rigorous fact-finding missions and policy briefs to document human rights abuses. This evidence-based reporting serves a dual purpose: it informs international audiences and provides local NGOs such as the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), Chapter Four Uganda, and the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) with credible leverage to anchor their domestic advocacy campaigns. AI's sustained technical critique of the Public Order Management Act (2013) legitimized local calls for reform and brought international scrutiny to the legislation.

2. International Diplomatic Lobbying: AI strategically leverages diplomatic channels, lobbying foreign governments (e.g., the US, UK) and multilateral bodies (e.g., the UN, EU, and the East African Legislative Assembly). For instance, during the violent 2021 Ugandan general elections, AI's lobbying was instrumental in keeping human rights abuses on the diplomatic agenda, resulting in targeted travel bans against key Ugandan government officials by the US and EU, and resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

3. Legal Advocacy and Regional Mechanisms: The organization utilizes international legal frameworks, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter, to hold the Ugandan state accountable. By submitting detailed legal briefs to the UNHRC and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) such as the 2016 report on the violent suppression of opposition protests and the 2019 report on media censorship AI has successfully forced regional bodies to issue formal resolutions condemning Uganda's non-compliance.

4. Coalition Building and Digital Mobilization: AI fosters a united civil society front through local partnerships, buffering local activists against state repression. Furthermore, the study highlights AI's innovation in utilizing digital platforms and social media (e.g., the "Write for Rights" and "Free Bobi Wine" campaigns) to mobilize international solidarity and generate rapid public awareness.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite these successes, the study identified significant constraints on AI's effectiveness. Uganda's political climate exhibits strong "authoritarian resilience," marked by state resistance to external influence, the shrinking of civic space, legal harassment of activists, and a profound lack of political will to implement human rights recommendations. Consequently, while AI's lobbying often forces partial policy shifts (such as minor amendments to POMA), comprehensive legislative overhauls remain elusive.

Conclusion and Implications

The study concludes that Amnesty International remains a highly influential actor in advancing political rights and strengthening democratic participation in Uganda. By bridging international diplomatic pressure with grassroots civic education, AI creates a feedback loop that gradually forces state concessions, a process akin to "liberalization from below." The implications of AI's lobbying extend beyond immediate policy influence; they have catalyzed the development of hybrid advocacy models that blend traditional legal mechanisms with digital mobilization and regional coalition-building.

To sustain and expand these gains, the study recommends strengthening collaborative networks among local and international human rights actors, expanding civic education initiatives to reach marginalized groups, and enhancing institutional mechanisms for protecting human rights defenders. Ultimately, while international lobbying is a vital catalyst, the realization of political rights in Uganda remains contingent upon the resilience of domestic civil society and the political will of the state.

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TOPIC

Predictive Validity of the Law Pre-Entry Examination and Student Academic Performance at Makerere University

Keywords: predictive validity, pre-entry examination, legal education, CGPA, criterion-related validity, higher education admissions, stakeholder perception.

AUTHORS

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T D Balojja & J Ssempebwa



INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-twentieth century, the massification of higher education has pushed professional disciplines such as law, medicine, and engineering toward more selective, structured admission mechanisms. This is a result of recognising that secondary-school grades alone are increasingly seen as insufficient predictors of discipline-specific competence. Internationally, instruments such as the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) (USA) and Law National Aptitude Test

LNAT (UK) formalised this shift, institutionalising standardised pre-admission testing alongside prior academic achievement. Within Sub-Saharan Africa, similar pressures rising enrolment, declining public funding, and concerns over academic preparedness prompted East African universities, including in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, to adopt aptitude-based assessments in high-stakes fields such as law and medicine.

In Uganda at Makerere University, the School of Law introduced a Law Pre-Entry Examination in 2011 as a quality-assurance response to internal concerns that students with strong A-Level results nonetheless entered the LLB programme with weak analytical reasoning, comprehension, and legal-writing skills. The examination sits within Uganda's broader regulatory framework, governed by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (2001, as amended), which mandates that universities ensure admitted students possess the competencies needed to succeed in their programs.

Despite more than a decade of implementation, evidence on whether the pre-entry examination actually predicts subsequent academic success remains thin and mixed. A prior internal analysis of the 2014/2015 cohort found pre-entry scores to be a poor predictor of first-year GPA in isolation, gaining predictive strength only when combined with A-Level results. This suggests that the exam may not function well as a standalone filter. Meanwhile, the dual-examination system: national UNEB A-Levels followed by a paid, university-administered pre-entry test imposes financial and psychological costs on candidates. This also creates anxiety and disorientation among students who feel their prior academic achievement should already suffice. In addition to this, there is a notable fraction of students who after clearing both hurdles still struggle academically and fail Law Development Centre entry examinations. This further

raises doubts about whether the pre-entry criteria capture the cognitive and analytical competencies legal training actually requires. The internal analyses may not have adequately examined differential predictive performance across sub-cohorts (gender, entry scheme, prior educational background, socio-economic status), leaving potential systemic bias in the admissions mechanism unexamined.

General Objective

Using Cronbach and Meehl's (1995) criterion-related validity theory we shall examine the predictive validity of the pre-entry examination on the academic performance of students in the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) programme at Makerere University, using cohorts admitted between 2014/15 and 2021/22 and graduating between 2019/20 and 2025/26.

Specific Objectives

To investigate the relationship between performance in the law pre-entry examination and performance in the LLB program.

To examine how stakeholders perceive the law pre-entry examination in determining the performance of LLB students?

Research Questions

Is there a significant relationship between performance in the law pre-entry examination and performance in the LLB program?

How do the stakeholders perceive the law pre-entry examination in performance of LLB?

Hypothesis

H1 -There is a significant relationship between the score in the pre-entry examination and the CGPA.

H0- There is no significant relationship between the performance in the pre-entry examination and the CGPA.

Methodology

The study will be rooted in the post-positivist philosophical perspective. Emphasis will be put on collecting empirical data and ensuring that the findings will have evidence. This paradigm proceeds by producing knowledge from what is found in that investigation, while remaining open to falsification (Popper, 1959). A mixed-methods approach will be adopted following an explanatory sequential design: a quantitative phase precedes and informs a subsequent qualitative phase, allowing the qualitative strand to help explain patterns identified in the quantitative results. The study population will include the pre-entry examination scores and CGPA records for LLB students across cohorts admitted between 2015/16 and 2021/22, graduating between 2019/20 and 2025/26. The sample size is approximately 2100 enrolled during that time. I hope to collect data using census because the data is available and it is a more credible approach to get a full picture of the complete data. Purposive sampling shall be used for the faculty, law students and the members of Law Development Centre.

We shall use a data-collection proforma to extract quantitative records (pre-entry scores and CGPA), a questionnaire shall be administered to continuing students in Years 3 and 4 and focus group discussions shall be held to generate qualitative data from faculty, students, and Law Development Centre members.

Quantitative data shall be analysed using Pearson's correlation coefficient (significance threshold 0.05) and regression analysis will be later used to estimate the proportion of variance in LLB academic performance explained by pre-entry examination scores and to generate statistical predictions. Qualitative data shall be analysed thematically, with findings subsequently merged with the quantitative results to draw integrated conclusions.

The data quality, reliability and validity are safeguarded by sourcing pre-entry scores and CGPA records directly from the University Registrar (the official record-holder), engaging appropriately qualified faculty from the School of Law, and involving students who were themselves admitted through the pre-entry examination.

Ethically, the study will adhere to Makerere University's institutional research ethics guidelines.

Anticipated Results

The study shall reveal whether pre-entry performance predicts downstream academic outcomes and whether that predictive power holds consistently across student sub-groups. It will speak directly to ongoing debates about equity, access, and the justification for retaining costly, high-stakes pre-admission testing in African legal education.

Anticipated Conclusions

In the study we shall draw conclusions on the predictive validity of thr pre-entry examinations and the performance of LLB at Makerere University.

Anticipated recommendations

The findings are intended to inform evidence-based recommendations to Makerere University's School of Law and to NCHE on whether, and how, the current admissions model should be retained, modified, or supplemented.

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- Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (2001, as amended).

TOPIC

Development of, and Proposed Test of Validity, Reliability and Independence of the Constructs in, an Instrument for Studying Completion of DoctoralStudies Through the Lens of Self-Determination Theory

Keywords: : Self-determination theory, completion of doctoral studies, instrument development, validity, reliability, constructs, independence, psychological needs, autonomy, competence, relatedness, motivation, social context

AUTHORS

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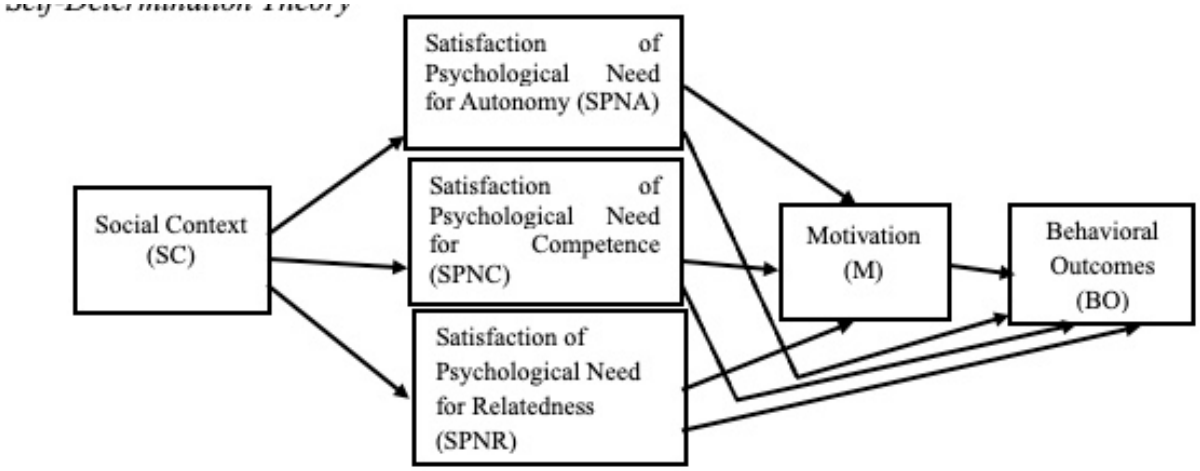


INTRODUCTION

Doctoral education contributes to advanced knowledge production, research capacity, innovation, and the preparation of highly skilled researchers and academics (Sarrico, 2022; Taylor, 2023). Consequently, successful completion of doctoral studies is an important indicator of the effectiveness of doctoral education. However, prolonged doctoral candidature remains a concern. Existing studies largely attribute this to structural and institutional factors such as funding, supervision workload, and research infrastructure (Fongwa et al., 2022; Omoya et al., 2025). Limited attention has been given to examining completion of doctoral studies through the lens of self-determination theory (SDT), particularly in African and Ugandan contexts. Moreover, existing instruments measure different aspects of doctoral completion but do not bring the relevant SDT constructs together within a single instrument. To address this gap, we adopted SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000), as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Self-Determination Theory

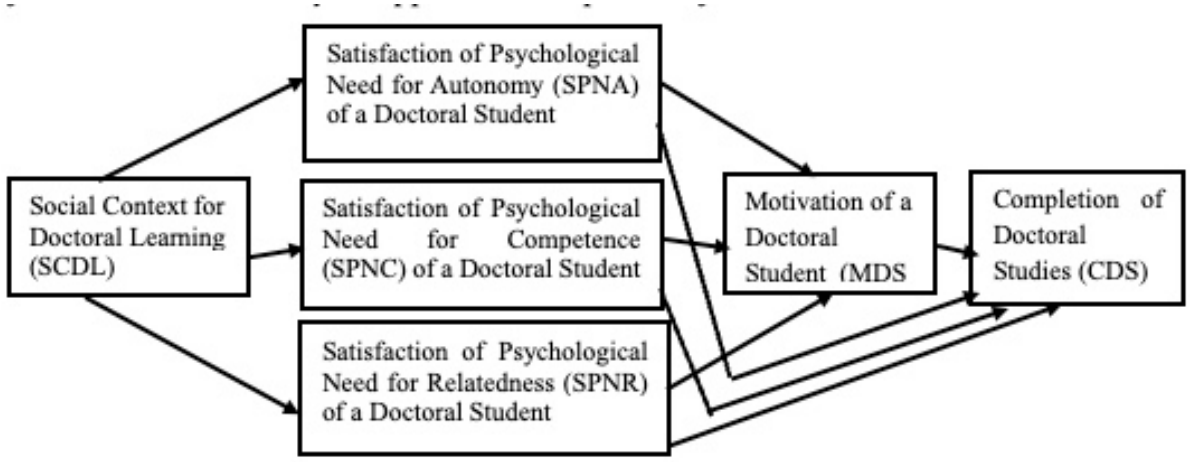


Note. "The 'what' and 'why' of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior," by Deci and Ryan (2000), Psychological Inquiry, 11(4), pp.227-268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Figure 1 presents our schematic representation of self-determination theory, based on Deci and Ryan (2000). Figure 1 shows that behavioural outcomes are influenced by motivation and satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, while satisfaction of these needs is influenced by social context. Building on Figure 1, we contextualised these relationships to doctoral education and conceptualised completion of doctoral studies as the behavioural outcome, as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2

Self-Determination Theory as Applied to Completion of Doctoral Studies



Note: Adapted from Figure 1

Figure 2 shows how we applied self-determination theory to completion of doctoral studies. We contextualised the SDT constructs to doctoral education, including motivation of a doctoral student, satisfaction of psychological need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness of a doctoral student, and social context for doctoral learning. We conceptualised completion of doctoral studies as the behavioural outcome, reflected in sustained engagement in research, persistence in academic milestone attainment, and sustained effort for timely progression. Figure 2 shows that completion of doctoral studies is influenced by motivation of a doctoral student and satisfaction of psychological need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness of a doctoral student, while satisfaction of these psychological needs is influenced by social context for doctoral learning.

2 Objectives

General Objective. The general objective of this study is to develop, and propose the test of validity, reliability and independence of the constructs in an instrument for studying completion of doctoral studies through the lens of self-determination theory.

Specific objectives. This study has three specific objectives:

To develop an instrument for studying completion of doctoral studies through the lens of self-determination theory.

To propose procedures for establishing the validity and reliability of the developed instrument.

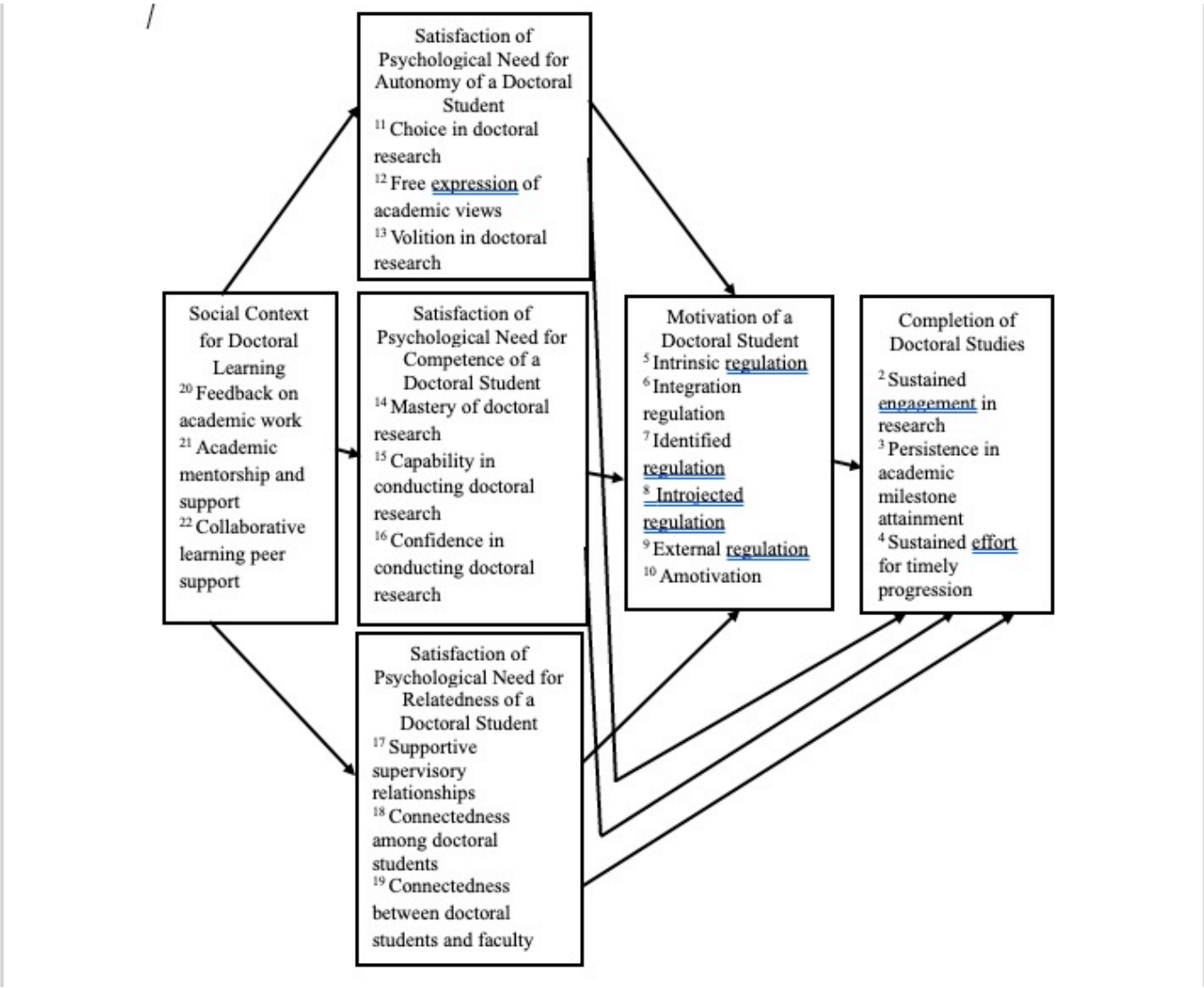
To propose procedures for examining the independence of the constructs included in the instrument.

3 Methodology

Instrument Development. We developed the instrument by adapting items from previously validated instruments to measure the respective constructs through which we operationalized the study variables within our SDT framework for examining completion of doctoral studies, as presented in Figure 3:

Figure 3

Theoretical Framework for Examining Completion of Doctoral Studies through the Lens of SDT



Note: 1 Structure adapted from Figure 2; Measures adapted from 2,17 Pyhältö et al. (2019), 2 Styk et al. (2023), 4, 21, 22,Jyothibabu et al. (2010), 5,6,7,8,9 Litalien et al. (2015, 10 Vallerand et al. (1992), 11 Duffy et al. (2012), 12 Al-Khouja et al. (2022), 13 Keller et al. (2020), 14 Marrs et al. (2022), 15 Meerah et al. (2012), 16 Sander and Sanders (2009), 18,19 Terrell et al. (2009), 20 Jellicoe and Forsythe, (2019),

Figure 3 shows the six study variables and their respective constructs, which we adapted from self-determination theory as applied to completion of doctoral studies (Figure 2). The instrument comprised seven sections. Section A measured the respondents' background variables, including gender, age range, college, school, stage of doctoral study, first academic year of enrolment, number of years on the programme, mode of study, and type of

programme. Section B measured completion of doctoral studies (CDS), which we operationalised in terms of three constructs: Sustained engagement in research, persistence in academic milestone attainment, and sustained effort for timely progression. We adapted items for each construct from Pyhältö et al. (2019), Styk et al. (2023), and Jyothibabu et al. (2010), respectively.

Section C measured motivation of a doctoral student (MDS), which we operationalised in terms of six constructs: Intrinsic regulation, integrated regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and amotivation. We adapted the items for intrinsic, integrated, identified, introjected, and external regulation from Litalien et al. (2015), and the items for amotivation from Vallerand et al. (1992). Section D measured satisfaction of the psychological need for autonomy (SPNA), which we operationalised in terms of three constructs: Choice in doctoral research, free expression of academic views, and volition in doctoral research. We adapted the items for these constructs from Duffy et al. (2012), Al-Khouja et al. (2022), and Keller et al. (2020), respectively. Section E measured satisfaction of the psychological need for competence (SPNC), which we operationalised in terms of three constructs: Mastery of doctoral research skills, capability in conducting doctoral research, and confidence in conducting doctoral research. We adapted the items for these constructs from Marrs et al. (2022), Meerah et al. (2012), and Sander and Sanders (2009), respectively.

Section F measured satisfaction of the psychological need for relatedness (SPNR), which we operationalised in terms of three constructs: Supportive supervisory relationships, connectedness among doctoral students, and connectedness between doctoral students and faculty. We adapted the items for supportive supervisory relationships from Pyhältö et al. (2019), and the items for connectedness among doctoral students and connectedness between doctoral students and faculty from Terrell et al. (2009). Section G measured social context for doctoral learning (SCDL), which we operationalised in terms of three constructs: Feedback on academic work, academic mentorship and support, and collaborative learning and peer support. We adapted the items for feedback on academic work from Jellicoe and Forsythe (2019), and the items for academic mentorship and support, and collaborative learning and peer support from Jyothibabu et al. (2010). We measured all items in Sections B to G using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree (SD) to 5 = strongly agree (SA).

Validity, Reliability, and Independence of Constructs. After data collection, we shall establish the validity and reliability of the developed instrument using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and Cronbach's alpha, respectively. CFA shall enable us to examine whether the adapted items measure the intended constructs within the self-determination theory framework; while Cronbach's alpha shall enable us to assess the internal consistency of the items measuring each construct. We shall also examine the independence of the constructs using Pearson's linear correlation coefficient. The resulting correlation matrix shall enable us to determine the extent to which the constructs are related and whether they remain sufficiently distinct from one another.

4 (Anticipated) Contributions

In this paper, we anticipate to contribute a theory-driven instrument for examining completion of doctoral studies through the lens of self-determination theory, bringing the study variables together within a single framework. We also anticipate the proposed procedures for establishing validity, reliability, and independence of the constructs to provide empirical evidence that will support the use of the instrument in doctoral education research.

5 (Anticipated) Conclusions

We anticipate that the developed instrument will provide a theory-driven means of examining completion of doctoral studies through the lens of Self-Determination Theory, bringing the

study variables together within a single framework. We further anticipate that the proposed procedures for establishing validity, reliability, and independence of the constructs will provide empirical evidence to support the use of the instrument in doctoral education research.

6 (Anticipated) Recommendations

We recommend that the developed instrument be subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using data collected from doctoral candidates in soft-applied disciplines at Makerere University in order to establish its construct validity. We further recommend the computation of Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs to establish the internal consistency reliability of the instrument. In addition, we recommend examination of the independence of the constructs to ensure that the SDT-based dimensions included in the instrument are empirically distinct. Finally, we recommend that future studies apply the instrument in different colleges and universities to determine its suitability for broader use in the study of doctoral persistence, progression, and completion in higher education contexts.

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TOPIC

Popular Culture And Trend Adoption In Contemporary Ugandan Textiles: A Case Of Selected Textile Industries Inkampala And Mukono Districts, Ca. 2000-2020

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ABSTRACT

The research addresses a notable gap in academic literature by examining how globalized and local popular culture influences have intersected with traditional textile practices in a developing national context. Using a conceptual framework rooted in popular culture studies, fashion theory and diffusion of Innovations theory, the study analyzed how textile manufacturers in key industrial hubs navigated these cultural shifts. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, using case studies of selected textile industrial hubs in Kampala and Mukono districts. Data collection methods include interviews with industry stakeholders, focus group discussions with consumers, and analysis of textile products and marketing materials. The research aimed to understand the mechanisms of trend adoption, the strategies employed by textile industries to integrate popular aesthetics, and the challenges they faced. The findings offer critical insights for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and designers seeking to understand and harness the forces of popular culture for sustainable growth within the local textile sector.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Popular culture has profoundly shaped the global textile and fashion industries, influencing consumer tastes, design aesthetics, and production strategies. The period between 2000 and 2020 was pivotal for Uganda, characterized by a burgeoning music and film industry, the rise of a new urban middle class, and increased connectivity. This era was marked by the increasing influence of globalization, technological advancements, and the pervasive effects of popular culture. While the industry has long been a key component of Uganda's economy, contributing to employment and cultural identity, its contemporary practices have been shaped by an evolving fashion landscape. Popular culture, as a dynamic and ever-present force, fundamentally influences consumer tastes and aesthetic preferences. A conceptual perspective on popular culture and trend adoption in Ugandan textiles required integrating theories from several academic disciplines and a theoretical framework that integrates popular culture studies, fashion theory, and diffusion of innovations in order to explain how

trends were adopted by textile industries in Kampala and Mukono from 2000 to 2020 while addressing a contextual perspective to establish understanding of the economic, social, and cultural forces that shaped Uganda between 2000 and 2020.

Statement of the problem

Despite overwhelming presence of popular culture in the Ugandan society and its influence on controlling mass consumption, there is lack of motivation among Ugandans to buy contemporary Ugandan textiles. Instead there is a growing motivation to buy imported textile products adversely affecting the growth and development of local textile industries. The mass culture of consuming exported textiles has continued to grow sustainably which has created a challenge in the local textile industry affecting the development of industrial textile industries and crippling several undocumented handweaving cottage industries. This study addresses a critical gap in the scholarly debate surrounding cultural globalization, trend adoption, and industrial development in a sub-Saharan African context. The existing body of literature offers a multifaceted, yet incomplete, view of this subject. (Opio, 2023).

Objectives of the study

To examine the trends in popular culture that shaped contemporary Ugandan textiles in selected textile organizations in Kampala and Mukono Districts, ca. 2000-2020

To evaluate the key aspects of popular culture that influenced preference to imported textiles in Kampala and Mukono districts of Uganda.

To establish if popular culture was an agency for the domestication of imported contemporary Ugandan textiles in Kampala and Mukono districts ca. 2000-2020

Research questions

What are the trends in popular culture that shaped contemporary Ugandan textiles in selected textile organizations in Kampala and Mukono Districts, ca. 2000-2020?

How are the key aspects of popular culture influenced by preference for imported textiles in Uganda and Mukono districts ca. 2000-2020?

To what extent is popular culture an agency for the domestication of imported contemporary Ugandan textiles in Kampala and Mukono districts, ca. 2000-2020?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars and theorists have written widely about popular culture. In his theory of critical thinking Adorno classified culture into two levels; high and low culture. The high culture is referred to as culture of the privileged and the low culture often called mass culture popularly known as popular culture (Adorno, Theodore, 2000). However, there is emerging popular slang language among the young people used for peer communication Barber, (2007).

Popular Culture is consumed through: Magazines, movies & television, music, sports and technology. People extract different things from popular culture, and what one person likes another person doesn't. However, Kaiser and Susan (2019) mention that fashion is a mode of popular culture that presents self-expression in a particular place and time making fashion one of the key aspects of popular culture in a society. Entertainment is an aspect of popular culture that created hegemony in the society through public figures and cerebritis (Austin, 2017). Advertising in form of visual images and verbal directs the viewer on advantages of the products without expressing the meanings (McCracken, 1986). Preference in a given product is created by popular culture and can breed a bad behavior and attempts to influence the artists

and media towards what they like (Goldberg, 2000). Looking at the field of popular culture, it seems challenging to single out aspects that that's strongly influence preference on a commodity within a contemporary space.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was descriptive and used qualitative research approach to examine descriptive knowledge generated from participants in a social setting. A case study research design was used to provide insights into complex phenomena.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

- In-depth unstructured participant interviews
- Participant observation
- Documented descriptions

Ethical Considerations

- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Voluntary participation
- Potential for no harm
- Integrity
- Plagiarism test

FINDINGS

The study identified popular culture as key player in the declining trends in contemporary textiles manufacturing and set out to investigate aspects of popular culture as causes of selective preference to imported textiles and provide knowledge which can be used to shape trends in preference of contemporary Ugandan textiles. The research reveals a significant decline in the development of locally manufactured textiles in Kampala and Mukono districts between 2000 and 2020, with popular culture serving as a key driver of this trend.

The findings highlight that the increased influence of social media, celebrity culture, and the proliferation of imported and second-hand clothing have created a challenging and often inequitable market for Ugandan textiles. This has resulted in the devaluation of local designs, the establishment of unsustainable consumption patterns, and the marginalization of local manufacturers.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This study concludes that there were trends in popular culture which included lifestyle modification, social activities, advertisement and fashion impacted heavily on the development and perception of contemporary Ugandan textiles by Ugandans. The study also concludes that indeed there were key aspects of popular culture which included advertisement, mass media and fashion. The study asserts that popular culture was used as an agency for domestication of contemporary Uganda textiles Kampala and Mukono districts, ca. 2000-2020. The aspects of popular culture were used to imitate original textile designs and influenced masses in adopting imported textiles as Ugandan textiles.

CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

Conclusion

The study reveals that human interaction through social interactions like social, political, religious and sports activities exposed people to information exchange through aspects of popular culture like mass media and fashion. The study concludes that indeed popular culture was responsible in influencing Ugandans to prefer imported textiles. Popular culture was spread to the consumers through key aspects of popular culture notably, mass media, advertisement, internet and fashion to appeal to unsuspecting consumers who were convinced that imported textiles wee better that locally manufactured textiles.

Contribution to knowledge

The study identified aspects of popular culture and focuses on popular culture as the root course of preference of imported textiles. The study identified trends associated with high demand of imported textiles and identified key aspects of popular culture responsible for the preference of imported textiles in Uganda and how such aspects are used to domesticate textiles. Recommendation

This study recommends that the knowledge developed in this study is ideal to for use by textile industries. The knowledge is applicable to textile manufacturers in the development of marketing strategies and client segmentation. The knowledge on popular culture and textiles offer guidelines to the textile manufacturers on how to set trends for their products and how to influence masses to prefer their textile products.

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TOPIC

Financial Accountability and Budgetary Control in Uganda's Parliamentary Commission: Evidence from a Mixed Methods Study

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INTRODUCTION

Sound Public Financial Management (PFM) is a cornerstone of good governance, sustainable development, and efficient public service delivery. In democratic states, financial accountability and budgetary control serve as the primary mechanisms for ensuring fiscal discipline, transparency, and the alignment of public expenditures with approved national priorities. However, legislative institutions face a unique "accountability dilemma." Parliaments are mandated to approve, monitor, and evaluate the executive's use of public resources, yet they simultaneously function as administrative entities managing their own internal budgets. Uganda's Parliamentary Commission exemplifies this duality: it must uphold absolute integrity in managing its institutional funds while maintaining the moral authority to demand accountability from the executive branch.

Despite the enactment of Uganda's Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) in 2015 which introduced robust frameworks for budgeting, accounting, and auditing practical enforcement remains uneven. Auditor General's reports (2018–2023) reveal persistent systemic weaknesses within the Parliamentary Commission, including delayed submission of financial statements, poor record management, non-compliance with procurement regulations, irregular expenditures, and unaccounted advances. These lapses threaten fiscal integrity and erode public trust in the legislature's oversight capabilities. Furthermore, political interference, patronage networks, and technical capacity gaps continue to distort public financial administration. This study, therefore, investigates how financial accountability practices influence budgetary control within Uganda's Parliamentary Commission, exploring the strengths, weaknesses, and contextual challenges shaping fiscal behavior.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by four objectives: (1) To examine the relationship between financial accountability and budgetary control in the Parliamentary Commission; (2) To assess the extent of implementation of financial accountability practices, including reporting, audit follow-up, and procurement transparency; (3) To identify institutional factors and challenges affecting the effectiveness of these mechanisms; and (4) To recommend strategies for improving

accountability and enhancing budgetary control.

Theoretical Framework

The study integrates Agency Theory and PFM Theory to provide a holistic analytical lens. Agency Theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976) conceptualizes the behavioral dynamics between principals (citizens/taxpayers) and agents (public officials/Parliamentary staff). It posits that agents may act in self-interest, necessitating mechanisms like audits and reporting to mitigate information asymmetry and moral hazard. Conversely, PFM Theory (Schick & Polidano, 2002) provides an institutional lens, emphasizing that fiscal discipline emerges when systemic processes budget formulation, execution, reporting, and auditingare properly interlinked. Together, these theories allow the study to examine both "what should happen" (formal procedural compliance) and "what actually happens" (practical realities and behavioral deviations) within the Commission.

Methodology

The research adopted a convergent mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture a comprehensive picture of fiscal governance. The quantitative strand utilized a structured questionnaire administered to 165 staff members of the Parliamentary Commission (yielding a 91.7% response rate), encompassing accountants, procurement officers, auditors, and administrators. Stratified random sampling ensured functional representation. The qualitative strand involved semi-structured interviews with 12 purposively selected key informants (senior accountants, procurement managers, and internal auditors), supplemented by a documentary review of Auditor General's reports (2018–2023) and PFMA 2015. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 25 (descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and OLS regression), while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2019) framework. Instrument reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding 0.84, and construct validity was established through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (AVE > 0.50).

Key Findings

Quantitative descriptive results indicated a high perception of financial accountability (Mean = 4.21), budgetary control (Mean = 4.05), and institutional factors (Mean = 4.18) among respondents. Most agreed that the Commission upholds timely financial reporting, effective audit follow-up, and transparent procurement. Crucially, Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between financial accountability and budgetary control ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis demonstrated that financial accountability and budgetary control jointly explain 61% of the variance in institutional factors ($R^2 = 0.610$, $p < 0.001$), confirming their significant positive influence on governance outcomes.

However, qualitative findings provided critical nuance, revealing that formal accountability frameworks are heavily moderated by institutional and political realities. Three major themes emerged:

Procurement Transparency as a Moderator: Participants noted that even robust financial accountability systems are diluted if procurement procedures lack clear evaluation criteria and public disclosure of contract information.

Audit Follow-up and Enforcement: Audit recommendations only translate into improved financial discipline when accompanied by strong institutional enforcement capacity, management commitment, and clear sanction regimes. Inconsistent implementation of audit findings remains a critical bottleneck.

Institutional Oversight Capacity: The effectiveness of budgetary controls is directly proportional to the strength of internal audit units and parliamentary committees. Weak oversight structures limit the impact of budget controls, while strong institutions amplify them.

Discussion

The findings align with the public sector governance literature, demonstrating that accountability mechanisms do not operate in a vacuum but are embedded within institutional contexts (Agyemang et al., 2022). From an Agency Theory perspective, while audits and reports reduce information asymmetry, their effectiveness in mitigating agency conflicts is contingent upon institutional moderators. This is further supported by Institutional Theory (Scott, 2014), which posits that formal rules and enforcement structures shape organizational behavior.

The moderating role of institutional factors observed in Uganda's Parliament mirrors empirical evidence from other African contexts. For instance, Kamau and Njuguna (2021) found that procurement transparency moderated the effect of financial accountability on service delivery in Kenyan county governments, while Maseko (2022) reported that audit enforcement capacity conditioned the effectiveness of budget controls in Zimbabwean public entities. This study extends this evidence to a legislative institution an under-researched domain in African public administration complementing Public Expenditure Management Theory (Premchand, 1993) by proving that budgetary discipline yields results only when supported by strong institutional arrangements.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that financial accountability and budgetary control are essential mechanisms for effective public financial governance in Uganda's Parliamentary Commission. However, their impact is significantly conditioned by institutional factors. Procurement transparency and effective audit follow-up strengthen the influence of accountability systems, whereas weak institutional enforcement constrains their effectiveness. Consequently, institutional factors must be viewed not merely as direct outcomes of PFM reforms, but as contextual moderators that determine how accountability translates into tangible governance improvements.

Based on these findings, the study recommends:

Strengthening Procurement Frameworks: Enhancing disclosure protocols and evaluation criteria to ensure procurement transparency actively supports financial accountability.

Institutionalizing Audit Follow-up: Establishing enforceable timelines and strict sanction regimes for the implementation of audit recommendations to reinforce budgetary controls.

Building Oversight Capacity: Adequately resourcing internal audit units and parliamentary committees to ensure robust institutional monitoring.

Reinforcing Leadership Commitment: Cultivating political will and leadership commitment to compliance, as weak institutional will inherently undermines technical accountability reforms.

Integrating Systems and Capacity: Complementing digital PFM reforms (like IFMS) with targeted institutional strengthening initiatives, rather than treating technology as a standalone solution.

Future research should employ longitudinal or experimental designs to explicitly test the interaction effects between financial accountability, budgetary control, and institutional factors, and conduct comparative studies across legislative and executive branches to further illuminate how institutional strength moderates accountability outcomes.

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TOPIC

Financial Reporting Quality and Financial Performance of Private Secondary Schools in Kagadi District, Western Uganda

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Financial performance is a fundamental determinant of institutional sustainability, particularly for private secondary schools operating in resource-constrained environments where internally generated revenue, mainly tuition fees, constitutes the principal source of financing. Sound financial performance enables schools to meet operational obligations, invest in infrastructure, retain qualified personnel, and deliver quality educational services. However, many private secondary schools in Uganda continue to experience financial instability characterized by liquidity constraints, inadequate infrastructure development, delayed payment of staff salaries, and increasing operational costs. One of the major contributors to these financial challenges is the quality of financial reporting, which serves as the primary source of information for planning, resource allocation, financial control, accountability, and strategic decision-making. High-quality financial reporting is characterized by completeness, compliance with accounting standards and statutory requirements, and consistency in the application of accounting policies over time. Despite growing recognition of the importance of financial reporting quality in organizational performance, empirical evidence explaining its contribution to the financial performance of private secondary schools in Uganda remains limited. Most previous studies have focused on corporate organizations, listed companies, financial institutions, and public sector entities, leaving educational institutions relatively underexplored. This contextual and empirical gap motivated the present study, which examined the effect of financial reporting quality on the financial performance of private secondary schools in Kagadi District, Uganda.

The study was anchored on the Education Resource Management Theory (ERMT), derived from Taylor's Scientific Management Theory, which emphasizes the efficient planning, allocation, utilization, monitoring, and control of organizational resources to achieve institutional objectives. The theory posits that educational institutions achieve sustainable financial performance when reliable financial information supports prudent managerial decision-making, accountability, and effective resource utilization. Accordingly, the study conceptualized financial reporting quality using three dimensions: completeness, compliance, and consistency, while financial performance was considered in terms of the schools' ability to sustain operations, manage liquidity, and effectively utilize available financial resources.

A mixed-methods research design was adopted to provide both quantitative and qualitative

evidence regarding the relationship between financial reporting quality and financial performance. The study was conducted among private secondary schools operating in Kagadi District, Western Uganda. Quantitative data were collected from 255 respondents, including school administrators, bursars, accountants, and teachers involved in financial management, while qualitative data were obtained through key informant interviews with head teachers and members of school governing boards. Documentary reviews of financial records further complemented the primary data, allowing triangulation of findings and strengthening the validity of the study. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis, whereas qualitative information was subjected to thematic analysis to explain and enrich the statistical findings.

Descriptive findings revealed that the overall quality of financial reporting among private secondary schools remained relatively low. Completeness of financial reporting recorded an overall mean score of 2.46, indicating that many schools prepared financial reports that lacked sufficient detail and failed to disclose all material financial information. Respondents observed that financial statements frequently omitted important transactions, contained limited explanatory notes, and were largely summary-oriented rather than comprehensive. Documentary evidence and key informant interviews corroborated these findings, revealing that several schools maintained incomplete accounting records and rarely prepared comprehensive financial statements supported by detailed documentation. Such reporting deficiencies limited managerial decision-making, weakened accountability, and reduced stakeholder confidence in institutional financial management.

Similarly, compliance with accounting standards and statutory reporting requirements was found to be moderate but inconsistent, with an overall mean score of 2.77. Although respondents generally appreciated the importance of complying with accounting principles and regulatory requirements, practical implementation remained weak. Many schools rarely conducted periodic external audits, inadequately adhered to prescribed accounting procedures, and seldom implemented corrective measures following audit recommendations. Consequently, compliance appeared to be treated largely as a regulatory obligation rather than a strategic mechanism for improving organizational performance.

Consistency in financial reporting also recorded a relatively low overall mean score of 2.48, suggesting considerable variation in accounting methods, reporting formats, and financial statement preparation across reporting periods. The absence of standardized accounting procedures limited the comparability and reliability of financial information over time, thereby constraining effective performance evaluation and long-term financial planning. Qualitative findings indicated that frequent changes in accounting personnel, inadequate accounting systems, and insufficient technical capacity contributed substantially to inconsistencies in financial reporting practices among the sampled schools.

Inferential statistical analysis demonstrated that all three dimensions of financial reporting quality were positively associated with financial performance. Pearson correlation analysis revealed that completeness exhibited the strongest positive relationship with financial performance ($r = 0.414$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that schools providing comprehensive financial disclosures generally achieved better financial outcomes. Comprehensive financial reporting enhances managerial decision-making by reducing information asymmetry, improving transparency, and facilitating efficient allocation of scarce financial resources.

Consistency likewise demonstrated a statistically significant positive association with financial performance ($r = 0.391$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that schools maintaining stable accounting policies and consistent reporting procedures over time are better positioned to monitor financial trends, evaluate organizational performance, and make informed financial decisions. The findings reinforce the importance of comparability in financial reporting as an essential prerequisite for effective financial management.

Compliance with accounting standards also exhibited a positive and statistically significant relationship with financial performance ($r = 0.257$, $p < 0.01$), although the relationship was comparatively weaker than those observed for completeness and consistency. The relatively weaker correlation suggests that while regulatory compliance contributes to improved credibility and stakeholder confidence, compliance alone may not substantially improve financial performance unless accompanied by meaningful disclosure and consistent accounting practices.

The correlation analysis further revealed strong positive interrelationships among the independent variables themselves. Completeness was strongly associated with compliance ($r = 0.634$) and consistency ($r = 0.570$), while compliance also demonstrated a strong positive relationship with consistency ($r = 0.600$). These findings confirm that financial reporting quality is a multidimensional construct whose dimensions complement and reinforce one another in enhancing institutional financial management.

Multiple regression analysis provided additional insights into the unique contribution of each financial reporting dimension to financial performance. The regression model explained approximately 21.4% of the observed variation in financial performance, indicating that financial reporting quality constitutes an important determinant of institutional financial sustainability, although additional organizational and environmental factors also influence financial outcomes.

The regression coefficients demonstrated that completeness exerted the strongest positive and statistically significant influence on financial performance ($\beta = 0.333$, $B = 0.220$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that improvements in the completeness of financial reporting significantly enhance institutional financial performance by providing managers and stakeholders with reliable, comprehensive, and decision-useful financial information.

Similarly, consistency significantly influenced financial performance ($\beta = 0.272$, $B = 0.198$, $p < 0.001$). Schools applying consistent accounting methods and maintaining stable reporting procedures across accounting periods achieved superior financial outcomes because consistency enhances comparability, reliability, and informed decision-making. These findings underscore the importance of institutionalizing standardized accounting procedures to strengthen financial sustainability.

Conversely, compliance exhibited a negative but statistically insignificant regression coefficient ($\beta = -0.117$, $B = -0.115$, $p = 0.134$). Although compliance demonstrated a positive bivariate relationship with financial performance, its unique contribution became insignificant after controlling for completeness and consistency. This finding suggests that regulatory compliance alone does not automatically translate into improved financial performance. Rather, compliance appears to serve primarily as a supporting mechanism whose effectiveness depends on the extent to which organizations simultaneously ensure comprehensive disclosure and consistent application of accounting policies. The qualitative findings reinforced this interpretation, indicating that many schools approached compliance primarily as a statutory requirement rather than as a strategic financial management practice capable of enhancing organizational performance.

The study concludes that improving financial reporting quality, particularly through enhancing the completeness and consistency of financial reports, significantly improves the financial performance of private secondary schools in Kagadi District. While compliance remains an important component of financial reporting quality, its independent influence appears limited unless complemented by comprehensive disclosure and consistent accounting practices. The findings therefore suggest that school administrators should prioritize maintaining complete accounting records, adopting standardized accounting systems, strengthening internal financial controls, and institutionalizing consistent financial reporting practices.

The study recommends that private secondary schools strengthen financial reporting by maintaining comprehensive accounting records, adopting standardized accounting policies, implementing digital financial management systems, and conducting regular internal and external audits to improve accountability and transparency. Regulatory agencies should establish uniform financial reporting guidelines and strengthen monitoring mechanisms to improve reporting quality across private educational institutions. Future research should employ longitudinal research designs capable of establishing causal relationships between financial reporting quality and financial performance and extend investigations to public schools and other educational institutions to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

TOPIC

Entrepreneurship Education And Access To Finance Among Youth In Central Equatoria State, South Sudan

AUTHORS

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Extended Abstract

Introduction and Background Entrepreneurship has increasingly become a fundamental driver for economic growth, employment creation, and poverty reduction, particularly within developing and post-conflict countries (Odeyemi et al., 2024; Moritz et al., 2024; Radhakrishnan et al., 2025). The concept, originating from the French word entreprendre—meaning to undertake—has evolved to encompass the identification of opportunities, resource mobilization, risk assumption, and the creation of innovative products or services for economic gain (Jonsson, 2017; Rosemaro, 2022). In South Sudan, entrepreneurship education (EE) has emerged as a critical remedy for youth empowerment and livelihood strengthening. This is especially vital given that the youth constitute approximately 72% of the national population, facing severe economic instability and a shrinking public sector incapable of absorbing the growing labor force (African Development Bank Group, 2021).

Since its independence in 2011, South Sudan has faced persistent political and economic instability characterized by civil conflict, poor infrastructure, and limited industrialization (Gregory & Gorur, 2020; Arok et al., 2019). Consequently, entrepreneurship in the region remains largely subsistence-based, confined to small-scale and service-based enterprises. However, in response to these challenges, the government, alongside development partners such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the International Trade Centre (ITC), has actively promoted EE. These initiatives focus on business management training, financial literacy, mentorship, incubation hubs, and seed funding, primarily targeting youth and women (African Development Bank Group, 2020; International Trade Centre, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the expansion of EE programs, youth unemployment remains one of South Sudan's most pressing socio-economic challenges. Acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge and skills does not guarantee successful enterprise creation unless young entrepreneurs can access adequate financial resources. Youth entrepreneurs in South Sudan face systemic barriers to finance, including a weak banking sector, hyperinflation, currency depreciation, poor infrastructure, and prolonged conflict (Zreik et al., 2024; Arok et al., 2019; Akashraj & Kom, 2020). Financial institutions frequently perceive youth-owned enterprises as high-risk due to a lack of

collateral, unstable markets, and weak institutional frameworks (Ayii & Adea, 2025). Consequently, many trained youths remain unable to translate their entrepreneurial competencies into operational businesses. While EE is widely promoted as a panacea for unemployment, there is limited empirical evidence regarding the extent to which such programs actually improve access to finance among youth in South Sudan.

Objective of the Study

This study aimed to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and access to finance among youths in Central Equatoria State, South Sudan.

Theoretical and Literature Context

The literature establishes that entrepreneurship development cannot occur in isolation; it is contingent upon the provision of appropriate, inclusive financial services and friendly loan products (Ibuatu & Kubaison, 2013). In South Sudan, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) form the backbone of the informal economy, yet they often lack the skills and capital to create sufficient jobs, resulting in a 20% failure rate within the first year of operation (Ayii & Adea, 2025). Only 4% of South Sudan's population is currently engaged in entrepreneurial activities, a stark contrast to the aspirations of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063 (African Development Bank Group, 2021; Sparks, 2016).

Access to finance acts as a catalyst for entrepreneurial success. Evidence from East Africa indicates that entrepreneurial expansion heavily depends on formal savings and loan access (DeJaeghere et al., 2020). Furthermore, financial inclusion indicators—such as the proliferation of ATMs and mobile money adoption—positively and significantly impact employment generation through entrepreneurship (Fundji, 2024). In South Sudan specifically, high interest rates and limited rural financial services constrain youth entrepreneurship, meaning success depends critically on removing these credit constraints (Price & Orrnert, 2017). Even when digital financial services or Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) are utilized to reduce information asymmetry and provide alternative capital, formal financial access remains heavily dependent on macroeconomic stability, which is currently undermined by inflation and deficit financing (Vida et al., 2020; Eliste et al., 2022; van der Goltz & Harborne, 2021). Ultimately, accessible financial systems require the foundational bedrock of entrepreneurship education to be truly effective.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative approach utilizing a correlational research design to evaluate the relationship between EE and access to finance without manipulating the variables (Riset & Edukasi, 2025). The target population was youth involved in entrepreneurship education programs within Central Equatoria State. A sample size of 378 respondents was determined and data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. To ensure rigor, the data was analyzed using Pearson Correlation to determine the strength and direction of the relationship, ANOVA tests to assess the linearity and overall significance of the model, and simple linear regression to evaluate the predictive effect of entrepreneurship education on access to finance.

Results and Discussion

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and access to finance ($r = .552$, $p < .01$). This indicates that youth who participate in EE programs are more likely to navigate financial systems successfully. This finding aligns with Kasimu et al. (2024), who posit that EE equips individuals with financial literacy and business competencies that enhance their credibility

before financial institutions. Managerial skills, financial planning, and demonstrated business viability are exactly what financial institutions look for before granting loans.

The regression model summary further validated this relationship. The model explained 30.5% of the variance in access to finance (R^2 = .305, Adjusted R^2 = .303), proving to be a reliable predictor. While EE significantly contributes to improving financial access, the remaining 69.5% of the variance is explained by external factors. As noted by Hassan and Sofoluwe (2022), these external factors include collateral requirements, government policies, financial infrastructure, income levels, credit history, and institutional barriers elements that are notoriously challenging in South Sudan's fragile economy.

The ANOVA results confirmed that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 164.751$, $p < .001$), demonstrating that EE has a meaningful influence on financial accessibility. Finally, the regression coefficients showed that a one-unit increase in entrepreneurship education leads to a 0.561-unit increase in access to finance (unstandardized B = 0.561, standardized $\beta = 0.552$, $p = .000$). Interestingly, the constant value of 1.700 suggests that even in the complete absence of formal EE, a baseline level of financial access exists, likely driven by informal mechanisms such as family support or VSLAs. However, EE substantially and significantly strengthens this access.

Conclusion and Recommendations This study conclusively established that entrepreneurship education positively and significantly influences access to finance among youth in Central Equatoria State, South Sudan. Through EE, individuals acquire vital business planning, financial management, risk assessment, and investment strategies. This knowledge equips them with the confidence and financial literacy needed to engage effectively with financial institutions, thereby increasing their chances of securing capital. However, because financial constraints and macroeconomic instability continue to limit business establishment and expansion, EE alone is insufficient.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

To the Government of South Sudan: Strengthen existing youth financing schemes and establish accessible, subsidized loan facilities specifically tailored for young entrepreneurs.

To Financial Institutions: Develop youth-friendly lending mechanisms that reduce traditional collateral requirements, potentially substituting them with guaranteed funds or future cash-flow assessments based on business plans developed during EE training.

To Training Providers: Entrepreneurship training programs must move beyond theory by integrating practical business incubation and seed funding components to ensure immediate translation of skills into enterprise creation.

To Development Partners: Continue supporting the entrepreneurship ecosystem but focus heavily on sustainability mechanisms that outlast short-term donor funding cycles.

Policy Level: The government must urgently address foundational macroeconomic issues—improving infrastructure, ensuring security, and stabilizing regulatory frameworks—to foster a conducive environment for both entrepreneurship and banking sector growth.

Inclusivity: Special emphasis must be placed on women and rural youth entrepreneurs to ensure equitable and inclusive economic participation across Central Equatoria State.

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TOPIC

Exploring The Aftermaths Of Sexually Harassed Female Undergraduates Of Makerere University, Kampala.

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Keywords: Aftermaths, female undergraduates, Makerere University, psychological aftermath, relationship aftermath, sexually harassed, support services' aftermath.

AUTHORS

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Namaganda J., Kimoga J., & Kayizzi P., (2026)

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Universities are expected to ensure provision of safe, positive and respectful learning atmosphere, free from sexual harassment, where students are protected from all sorts of harm so as to thrive academically and develop life-long mutual friendship, however Sexual harassment has become a prevalent behavior in these universities (Kazaara, 2023: Kebirungi, 2021). Female students suffer sexual harassment twice as much more than male counterparts (Kebirungi, 2021). Sexual harassment of female undergraduate students remains a formidable threat which not only disturbs their psychological aftermath but challenges their relationship aftermath vis-à-vis support services access. Despite the challenges associated with sexual harassment, it has been under addressed in the education sector and universities are blamed for promoting "sex for grades" phenomenon. This is greatly attributed to power asymmetries in universities and the patriarchal nature of society, which still holds males superior over females. This leaves the female students at the verge of being sexually harassed by both their male counterparts and lecturers together with other university staff. This situation depicts collapse of traditional social norms which provided the basis for collective responsibility in nurturing the growth, safety and security of the young ones in community (Kebirungi, 2021).

Makerere University bears a policy and regulation against sexual harassment formed in 2006 and amended 2018, together with other initiatives such as "Kicking Sexual Harassment out of Higher Education (KISH), "Safer Campus Initiative", 2024 all aimed at creating awareness and advocacy for safer campus environment for enhancement of students safety and academics. Despite all the measures however, sexual harassment has continued to thrive in the university, fastened by a culture of silence, reporting barriers due to fear of retaliation, normalization of the practice due to patriarchy and power asymmetries, lack of trust in existing reporting mechanism, thus creating wider gap between policy existence and its effective implementation (Nakasujja et al, 2026: Kazaara, 2023). The escalating cases of sexual harassment paint a troubling picture (Commission of Gender Equality Report, 2024) necessitating the viability of this study, seeking to explore the aftermaths of sexually harassed female undergraduates of Makerere University.

General Objective

The study seeks to explore the aftermaths of sexually harassed female undergraduates of Makerere University

Specific Objectives

1.To explore the sexually harassed female undergraduates' psychological aftermath of Makerere University.

2.To explore the sexually harassed female undergraduates' relationship aftermath of Makerere University.

3.To understand the sexually harassed female undergraduates' aftermath of support services of Makerere University.

Research Questions

1.How do sexually harassed female undergraduates of Makerere University experience the psychological aftermath?

2.How do sexually harassed female undergraduates of Makerere University experience relationship aftermath?

3.How do sexually harassed female undergraduates of Makerere University experience the aftermath of support services?

Methodology

This study is anchored on Feminism, specifically Intersectional feminism advanced by Kemberle Crenshaw (1989), which proves efficient for advocacy and aids in reconciliation of intersecting unique identities (Saeed, 2022) which holds multiple realities subjective to lived experiences. I will apply qualitative methods to enable drawing of in-depth and explore detailed perceptions, experiences and thoughts as put forward by Yin (2016) & Crenswell (2012). The study will use interpretive single case study of Makerere University, specifically interested in the survivors' experiences at campus which I will interpret in light of policy implementation gap (Nakasujja et al, 2026). I will choose respondents purposively by the aid of the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate (GMD), Counselling and Guidance Centre, University police & hospital etc and by snow-ball technique. Data collection will be aided by use of open ended interviews to enable participants share their unique experiences exhaustively, leaving participants at liberty of withdrawal from the exercise in case one feels uncomfortable continuing with the interview.

Data quality control will be based on attainment of trustworthiness, addressing issues of credibility (truth value & correct interpretation of data), transferability (study findings relatable in another context following same steps & choice to come up with similar conclusions), Dependability of research instrument (member checks & participant review of transcripts for corrections, deletion, or additions to ensure data accuracy)and comfirmability (documenting the procedures for checking & re-checking data throughout the study. I will then analyze data from participants by transcribing it and corresponding it in files & folders. There will also be use of Vivo to aid in further categorization of data and themalizing it according to psychological aftermath, relationship aftermath & support services aftermath.

Anticipated Results

I anticipate that participants will describe in-depth their emotional and mental health related experiences, expressing general campus fear, shame, stigma, self - blame, academic challenges ranging from loss of concentration, detorialating grades, absenteeism, change or dropping of course, anxiety, distrust of faculty and/or friends, isolation, fear to engage in intimacy, lack of awareness for support services, fear to report, lack of or delayed response, confidentiality issues, avoidance of university channels in favor of informal avenues such as parents, friends.

Anticipated Conclusions

I generally anticipate conclusion in relationship of sexual harassment being more of systematic with multiple interconnected aftermaths in regard to psychological, relationship and support services identities. The assumptions is that unless sexual harassment of female undergraduates in Makerere University is addressed, it may from a list of results destruct female undergraduates' psychological well-being, challenge their relationship with counterparts and complicate survivors' access to support services.

Anticipated Recommendations

The study anticipates to recommend a shift from just mere policy availability to effective implementation, investing in mass training and awareness advocacy, culture and perception change, stakeholder engagement and confidentiality in complaint handling to ensure that support systems are trusted, used and adequately address survivor needs.

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