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Authoritative structures and its implications for decision making in Uganda's university sector

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Abstract

This study examined the perceived effect between authoritative structures in bureaucratic governance and decision making in public and private universities in Uganda. We adopted the descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The target population will include the 100 members of the Governing Councils of Universities, 100 Members of Senate and 10 Vice Chancellors of Universities in central region of Uganda, 2290 teaching and 2000 non-teaching staff, 300 student leaders and 200 opinion leaders around the universities. From the population of study given above and in accordance with the Sloven Formula (1967) the sample size of the study was 357 respondents. The sampling was done using stratified, purposive and snowball sampling methods. We analyzed the data collected using descriptive and inferential statistics in order to establish the effect of authoritative structures on decision making in public and private universities. We found out that there was correlation index for the relationship between decision making and authoritative structure is 0.589 which is between 0.4-0.7. This implies that there is a moderate positive relationship between decision making and authoritative structure. Furthermore, there is a positive effect of authoritative structure on decision making – a unit increase in authoritative structure brings about 13.1% changes in decision making. Furthermore the results indicate r^2=0.3469, which suggests authoritative structure explains 34.7% variations in decision making. This implies that 65.3% variations decisions making are explained by other factors other than authoritative structure. We therefore recommend that private universities should endeavour to adopt and use authoritative structures just like the public universities which need to be encouraged to continue using authoritative structures to improve on decision-making in their management process

Key words: Authoritative Structures, Decision Making, Universities, Uganda

Introduction

Developments in higher education particularly universities in Africa continue to be tremendous as they have been challenging for the continent, to various governments and all stakeholders (Jegede, 2012). The challenges however, have never been as profound as they now appear in recent times; thus requiring scholarly attention.

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The catalysts for educational reform which include massification, equity and social justice, inclusiveness, expansion, employability, globalization, skills and competencies shortage and developments in higher education particularly universities in Africa continue to be tremendous as they have been challenging for the continent, to various governments and all stakeholders national development have continued to multiply (Okwakol, 2009). At the same time within the continent, between countries and within countries, differences in areas such as demography, funding, physical infrastructure, levels of academic support, qualified academic staff, management and decision making and local challenges have continued to increase rather steeply This is not to mention the double-edged effect of brain drain which stands apart as an issue of major occurrence affecting higher education in Africa (Jegede, 2012).

As far as decision-making in the universities Prondzynski (2013) from the Scottish context argued that for a university to be successful in its planning and decision-making, it needs to be competent in the following four areas: communication, consultation, clarity and openness. However, none of these is straightforward. For example, communication is not about "telling", it is about exchanging views in a two-way process. Consultation should not be (but often is) undertaken in the sense used by medical consultants. Clarity requires a degree of predictability of method; without, however, the fixation on avoiding precedent characteristic of many universities. And openness is about avoiding the constant search for reasons why something should not be disclosed (Ambalika and Kumar, 2007). Nevertheless, it is also fair to point out that universities have access to and hold a lot of sensitive information, and have complex strategic requirements. So decision-making needs to be efficient as well as open, and there has to be a capacity to address issues decisively.

Authoritative structures are part of bureaucracy is an organization made up of many departments and divisions that are administered by lots of people. The characteristics of bureaucracy were first formulated in a systematic manner by the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), whose definition and theories set the foundations for all subsequent work on the subject. They refer to (1) the division of labor in the organization, (2) its authority structure, (3) the position and role of the individual member, and (4) the type of rules that regulate the relations between organizational members. A highly developed division of labor and specialization of tasks is one of the most fundamental features of bureaucracy. This is achieved by a precise and detailed definition of the duties and responsibilities of each position or office. The allocation of a limited number of tasks to each office operates according to the principle of fixed jurisdictional areas that are determined by administrative regulations

The bureaucratic organization is characterized by a rational and impersonal regulation of inferior-superior relationships. In traditional types of administration (feudal, patrimonial), the inferior-superior relationship is personal, and the legitimation of authority is based on a belief in the sacredness of tradition (Pearson, 2010). In bureaucracy, on the other hand, authority is legitimized by a belief in the correctness of the process by which administrative rules were enacted; and the loyalty of the bureaucrat is oriented to an impersonal order, to a superior position, not to the specific person who holds it (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). When one shifts the focus of attention from the organization as a whole to the role and status of the individual member, the following features characterize the bureaucrat's position. Starting with the mode of recruitment, the bureaucrat is not selected on the basis of such considerations as family position or political loyalties. His recruitment is based on formal qualifications (diplomas, university degrees) that testify that the applicant has the necessary knowledge to accomplish effectively his specialized duties (Person, 2010). However, the other most important issue that was noted by Pollitt & Bouckaert (2011) in as far as bureaucratic management is concerned is that of decision-making. Endeavour to show the bureaucratic nature of universities.

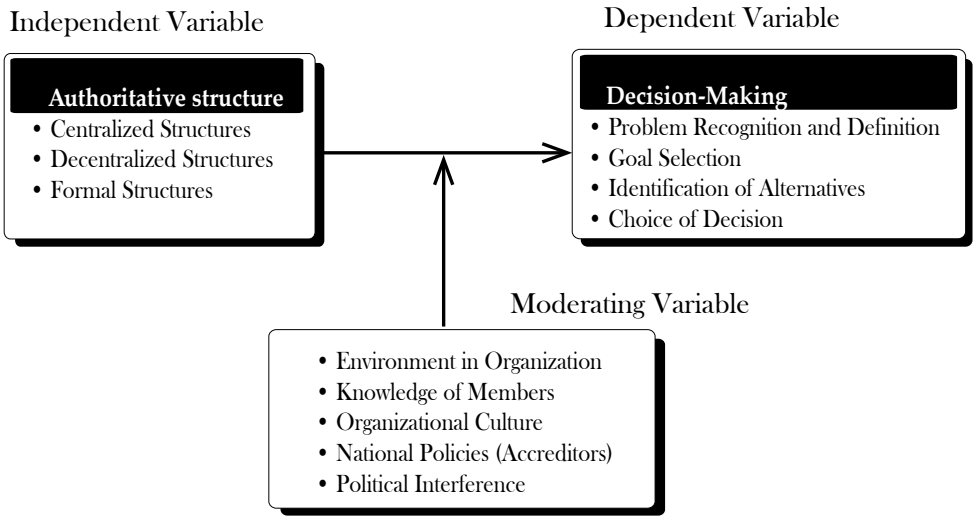
Until 1987, Uganda had only one public university with about 10,000 students (Okwakol, 2009). Currently, there are six public and 31 private universities with a total of over 300,000 students (NCHE, 2014). This implies that it is not only the demand for university education that has increased but this has been accompanied by a number of decision-making challenges. Decision-making is very important in the management of university education. Decision-making is the thought process of selecting a logical choice from the available options (Ambalika and Kumar, 2007). When trying to make a good decision, a person must weigh the positives and

negatives of each option, and consider all the alternatives (Doya and Shadlen, 2012). For effective decision making, a person must be able to forecast the outcome of each option as well, and based on all these items, determine which option is the best for that particular situation (Triantaphyllou, 2000). The problems arise when there are difficult decisions to be taken, particularly about staffing and resources. At such moments it is important to have clarity and predictability of processes, and an acceptance that these are fair and inclusive to the most appropriate degree (Doya and Shadlen, 2012). And it is imperative that the factors that contributed to a decision are known and understood.

However, since 2004, a number of Ugandan universities have faced challenges, including failure to pay lecturers on time, under funding of research, high turnover of experienced professors, crumbling physical infrastructure, lecturers and students' strikes, poor international rating and lack of teaching materials (Kasozi, 2005; Ocwich, 2005 & Tabeja, 2008). Several arguments have been put forward to explain this situation and they include issues of poor governance, under funding, business pressure and profit motivation in the private universities, some universities being temporarily closed down while others have been de-registered. However, some of the challenges are believed to be associated with decision-making and that they led to student riots and strikes. For instance, in the past five years, strikes at Makerere University related to the university decision to raise fees for Non-Uganda students was believed to have been done without involving staff and student leaders (New Vision, 2012). The most recent scenario pertains to the management of Kyambogo University which has gone on for almost two years and demands were made for the Vice chancellor, Professor Isaiah Diege to resign (New Vision, October 23, 2013). The issue led to the intervention of Parliament, Cabinet, the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Inspectorate of Government. The Vice Chancellor was accused of making unilateral decisions and not involving staff and other stakeholders (New Vision, Nov 7, 2013). Later the Vice Chancellor was re-instated but the reinstatement met with a lot of resistance.

Given that most universities have authoritative structures in a bureaucratic fashion and that studies alluded to above point to decision making as pertinent in the challenges faced by universities, it was imperative that an empirical study on authoritative structures and decision making was carried out to establish both the relationship and effect on management of universities particularly in Uganda. We sought to find answers to a number of questions; for instance, how does the rational and impersonal regulation of inferior-superior relationships in authoritative structures in universities affect decision making? On the other hand, how does legitimization of authority and the correctness of the process by which administrative rules are enacted affect decision making? How does the loyalty of the bureaucrat's orientation to authoritative structures and superiority in position affect decision making? These and several other questions pertaining to the authoritative structures in the universities, needed an empirical study to explain the ultimate effect on decision making in universities in Uganda.

Conceptual framework



Source: *Literature Review- Max Weber; Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992)*

Literature Review

Effective management of universities involves the authorities making decisions about fundamental policies and practices in several critical areas concerning universities. Obondoh (2001) suggests that university managers across the world should put emphasis on the following issues: degree requirement, standards expected in student performance, quality of research and public service activities; and freedom available to individual faculty members in their institutional and research efforts. According to Obondoh (2001) besides the issues above, university managers in the world should consider the following: the appointment of staff, internal organizational structure; and the allocation of available resources to operate and support programmes for effective governance.

In university management, there are at least five important decision making dimensions that have to be made (Murphy 2000). These dimensions include academic decisions on core activities; administrative decisions about resource acquisition, allocation and expenditure; accountability to stakeholders; unforeseen challenges and strategic planning. According to Birnbaum (1992) as cited in (Gayle, 2003), the decisions in Australian universities are made by politicians, civil servants and various interest groups. Gayle, Tewarie and White (2003) consider this undemocratic and likely to create dependency on government bureaucracy by the universities. Such dependency might kill institutional initiatives, incentives and innovations in management. On the other hand, Gayle et al (2003) argue that putting powers and resources in the hands of local communities would promote responsibility and informed decision making for effective governance in universities.

Universities and other Tertiary Institutions in Uganda are governed by University and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001 as amended. The Acts empower Universities to constitute governing boards; councils, appointments boards, senate and academic boards as organs of authority. These organs of authority monitor and control performance of Universities and other Tertiary Institutions as stipulated by Act 2001 as amended. The organs are constantly involved in decision-making processes that include but not limited to staff welfare, curriculum, infrastructural development and student welfare. Sometimes, decisions made by the various authoritative organs have led to problems within the universities and other tertiary institutions.

For instance, between 2007 and 2008 a number of decisions were made and approved by Kyambogo University Council and these include restructuring of staff, appointments, salaries and benefits (Kyambogo University Strategic Plan 2006/7). These have caused unrest among the academic staff at Kyambogo University. The academic staff took the issue to courts of Law, (Daily Monitor Newspaper, July 2005) which courts ruled in favour of the academic staff and ordered management of Kyambogo University to reverse the earlier decision on appointment letters. Kyambogo University council did not play its role to the satisfaction of the academic staff instead the courts of law had to resolve the matter. The legal costs paid by the University in addition to the time lost, and unrest caused disruptions in operations of the University. Furthermore, there was turbulence caused by the non-academic staff of Kyambogo University for fear that the University management could delay issuing integration letters to unfairly lay them off and replace them with other people, (Red Pepper Newspaper September 30, 2006).

Another typical example where organs of authority in a university setting made decisions that have had significant impact on management of the university is in Makerere University. Between 2005 and 2008, Makerere University Council made decisions and approved a new fees structure for the academic year 2005/2006. This caused public outcry and Government had to intervene and stopped the increment in fees (Daily Monitor Newspaper August 22, 2005). In another case, Makerere University Business School Council in 2003 as an affiliated Institute of Makerere University approved new fees structure which included computer and medical fees recommended by Management in the strategic plan 2003/04 and were to be paid annually by all students. However, continuing students agitated and refused to pay computer and medical fees. This caused unrest in the student community to the extent of students disrupting lectures at MUBS campus (Monitor Publication October 18, 2005).

In a similar situation, Mbarara University of Science and Technology had a debt of Shillings 420 million as compensation to former owners of University Inn buildings since 1989 which the University Council and Top management failed to settle and instead continued to appeal to Government for their rescue (MUST Annual Financial reports 1990 – 2005). Failure to make a precise decision to settle the debt continued to cause management problems at MUST. The University was under threat to be sued (Red Pepper September 11, 2006, p3).

In many developing countries such as India, Pakistan and Kenya, university education is a field where politicians play their games of dispute (Kogan, 2000). Kogan (2000) contends that conflicting political parties find it easy to mobilize groups of students or teachers at a university in order to influence political thinking. In playing these political games, politicians interfere with university decision making processes. This political interference has reduced the talents and opinions of university managers in ensuring effective management. Political influence in the decision making at the university differs from country to country (Nadam, 2008). According to Nadam (2008) participation of teaching staff in decision making process in Pakistan universities is ignored. Researchers like Kogan (2000); Nadam (2008) and Gayle et al (2003) agree that the facilitation of greater involvement of teachers in university affairs came out as a serious administrative and leadership problem. The general absence of a culture of dialogue and joint forums in our universities is manifested in rising cases of unrest (Chacha, 2000).

University problems increase if there is lack of mutual communication between administrative and university staff (Garicano and Hubbard, 2003). Universities are not only pressured with a period of new social demands and rapid pace of technological and scientific change, but also with an increased number of government regulations and control. Governments steer university decisions and actions using various instruments (Kreysing, 2002). Government influences key university governance issues like appointment of boards, councils and the senate with clear agendas to pursue. Besides, government determines resources to be allocated and sets conditions for application of these resources. Matthai (1992) as cited in Nadam (2008) observes that decisions such as programme selection, faculty selection, planning and allocating budgets and formulating the academic policies, should be participatory. Nadam (2008) argues that this would involve all members of the statutory bodies. Such an arrangement of the government has reduced the powers of university managers and left everything to be managed by the government in power.

However, the structure of Pakistan universities, for instance, does not offer a great degree of autonomy to members to make decisions. Researchers such as Kezar and Eckel (2004); Kreysing (2002) and Allport (2001) found that the principal decision maker in Pakistan universities is the Vice Chancellor. This suggests that decision making and consensus are done in a black hole. Kezar and Eckel (2004) noted that decision making in Pakistan universities is unsatisfactory due to centralization of powers and exploitation of rules and regulations. From the foregoing, decision making in Pakistan universities is not made on the basis of specific techniques but according to bureaucratic culture and political influence of the ruling party. Rahim (2002) argues that the Malaysian university is losing its autonomy due to the interference from certain government departments and ministries. The power of the senate has become less effective in determining the future changes and direction of public universities. Rao (2001) is of the view that higher education institutions must be given autonomy to manage their internal affairs, but this autonomy must be clear and transparent, be accountable to the government, parliament, students and the wider society.

In other universities of the world like in Australia, members of academic staff are not involved properly in decision making especially in departments. Matters such as institutional policies, allocating budgets, determining goals and work plans are determined by government (Allport, 2001). This is normative ideal of the rationalist perspective on decision making which implies that government sets the legal framework, has control over decision making process and the implication of policy. Management structures based on division of labour are also challenged by changes in educational technology, resources and participation. Allport (2001) argues that members of university academic staff in Australia do not participate in institutional policies, budgetary processes and in departmental work plans. Disparities in structures create different interpretations

about management (Gayle et al, 2003). Allport (2001); Minor (2003) and Bradley (2003), have pointed out how differences in structures can lead to various expectations and interpretations.

Awaleh (2003) identifies similar problems of decision making as common in African universities like Mzuzu University in Somali where staff and student governance has been largely acrimonious. Awaleh (2003) further notes that quality of student leaders strongly shapes opinion and responsibility within campus. This has been a common source of friction between students and the administration and the process of a stable student government has been a difficult dream to attain. Awaleh (2003) contends that refusal to involve students and staff has resulted into strikes in some African universities. The ideas of Awaleh (2003) are supported by findings of Minor (2003) that the reduction of involvement of the faculty in institutional decision making has resulted into many challenges where governance systems cannot respond appropriately. According to the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (2001), many governing bodies, faculty members and chief executives believe that internal governance arrangements have become so cumbersome, that timely decisions are difficult to make and small factors often are able to impede the decision making process. This could be true of the situation in Ugandan universities.

Decision making is considered as the process by which top management (including but not limited to University Council, Senate, Chancellor, University Secretary and Registrar) and makes its most fundamental decisions. Decisions are important, in terms of the action taken, the resources committed, or the precedents set (Mintzberg et al., 1976). Research on decision making processes has been fairly extensive, and the literature reveals a large number of decision modes (Das, 1986; Schwenk, 1995). Each of them denotes a different perspective for the decision-making process and highlights particular aspects of the process. Considerable empirical evidence has been found to support a number of these modes (Hart and Banbury, 1994; Schwenk, 1995). Since the coexistence of many seemingly contradictory decision making modes generates much confusion, researchers have often felt the need to classify various modes (Cyert and Williams, 1993; Lyles and Thomas, 1998).

Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992) proposed three dominant paradigms of decision making processes: rationality and bounded rationality, politics and power, and garbage can. The rational and bounded rational paradigm are concerned with the degree to which decision makers have purposes, and describes decision making as a rather purposive, systematic and comprehensive process (Allison, 1997). In the case of universities, the leadership should be engaged in defining the purpose of the university, establishing the vision, and developing supporting strategies to achieve it; deciding what to do, when, and how. Accordingly, strategic decisions are made by the members of the university who have the ultimate responsibility to ensure fulfillment of its purpose and who accept the consequences when it does not. For the universities, strategic decisions are made by the Senate, Vice Chancellor, University Secretary and Registrar; all of whom bear responsibility to the University Council.

In these two paradigms, decision makers are supposed to start with known objectives, then collect information, develop alternatives and finally identify the optimal course of action (Simon, 2005). The politics and power mode posits that the emergence, competition and resolution of conflicting interests are the essence of strategic decision processes (Baldridge, 1997). As decision makers harbor different and often conflicting goals in organizations, decision making often becomes a political operation whose ultimate result reflects the preference of the most powerful coalition. Finally, the garbage can mode (Simon, 2005) portrays decision-making processes as organized anarchies, in which a decision is largely dependent on chance and timing. In this kind of process, decision makers do not know their objectives ex ante, but merely look around for decisions to make. This could be the case for the universities in Uganda, given the scenarios that have manifested in Makerere and Kyambogo universities.

Similarly, Hickson (1998) identified three basic modes of decision making: dual rationality, incrementalism and garbage can. Hickson' s garbage can mode is very similar that of Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992) in that he believes that decision-making using this mode is largely dependent on chance and timing.

The dual rationality mode posits that decision making is a process of handling both problems and politics (Hickson, 1998), so that it could be viewed as an integration of the rational mode and the political mode. For instance, in Makerere University where sometimes top management allows resolution of conflicting interests through the essence of strategic decision processes while at other times, decisions are left under the ambit of those with power. This has also been observed in the case of Kyambogo University where the vice chancellor has persistently been accused of making lone decisions. Although the different perspectives on decision-making have often been viewed as competitive explanations of decision-making processes, several authors have argued that they are complementary (Browne, 1993; Harrison, 1995).

Incremental decision making on the other hand, is a step-by-step process and the strategy is always amenable to adjustment. A series of incremental actions is adopted to ensure that large, complex strategic problems are factored into smaller, less complex, and hence more manageable increments for implementation (Joyce, 1998). There is some distinction to be made between logical incrementalism (Quinn, 1998) and disjointed incrementalism (Lindblom, 1999), the difference being in whether there is consistency among the increments towards a broad (rather than local) objective (Joyce, 1998). The garbage can mode is the same one as in Simon (2005) study.

On his part, Lyles and Thomas (1998) list five primary modes of decision making: rational, avoidance, adaptive, political and decisive. Four of these are similar to the modes identified by Hickson (1998) and Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992). For example, the adaptive mode is largely based on logical incrementalism, and the garbage can mode is the key constituent of the decisive mode. On the other hand, the avoidance mode (Cyert and March, 1996) which delineates decision making as a systematic process aimed at maintaining the status quo appears to be an important supplement. In essence, the avoidance mode is about avoiding the identification of new problems so that strategic changes can be rendered unnecessary (Janis and Mann, 1997). This is also typical of the situation in Uganda's universities where at times decision-making is delineated to ensuring a status quo in the interest of only a few.

An examination of the above typologies indicates a considerable degree of consensus regarding what the major modes of strategic decision making are. However, it should be noted that there are various other frameworks of decision making in the literature (Hart and Banbury, 1994; Nutt, 1998). For instance, Shrivastava and Grant (1998) suggested four prototypical patterns of decision making: autocracy, bureaucracy, adaptive and political. However, these four prototypical patterns of decision making remain largely unexplored especially with reference to management of universities. Decision makers are known to rely on a few judgemental rules, or heuristics, to simplify complex decision situations. Although these rules of thumb are often necessary and useful, they also introduce challenges that can lead to severe and systematic errors in decision making (Kahneman et al., 1998). Thus, challenges can be viewed as a negative consequence of adopting heuristics. Challenges divert decision makers away from making optimal decisions in terms of utility maximization.

Methodology

We adopted the descriptive and the causal comparative research designs with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The casual comparative research design was appropriate because according to Odiya (2010) casual comparative design is used when investigating the causes of difference between two things or situations. Our target population included the Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors members of Senate, teaching and non-teaching staff; student leaders and some members of the university communities. From the statistics obtained from NCHE (2014), the target population of the study was 5420. From the proportion of public and private universities in Uganda, determination of the number of public and private universities used was in a ratio of two to three that is 40% to 60% respectively. So four public and six private universities were selected on regional basis and used in the sample. From the population of study given above and in accordance with the Sloven Formula (1967), our sample size of the study was 373 respondents.

We used purposive sampling to select the members of the University Councils, Senate and the Vice Chancellors. The other method of sampling that we used was the cluster sampling which is a probabilistic method that offers equal chance to every subject in the different faculties of the teaching and non-teaching staff to be selected and avoids biasness on the part of the researcher (Kothari, 2006). However, within each cluster, simple random sampling which is also called the lottery method was used. Therefore, we also used simple random sampling to select the teaching, non-teaching staff and the student leaders. On the other hand, convenience sampling which involves conveniently identifying available respondents; was used to link the researcher to other respondents under the category of Parents. These parents were targeted during times of admissions or graduation where several parents visit the universities for service. Also, some parents who live and work within the surrounding of the universities were conveniently selected to participate in the study.

Questionnaires are often used to collect data from large samples because they are cheap to administer, free from bias of the interviewer, provide adequate time for respondents to fill them (Kothari, 2006). Apart from being easier to administer, questionnaires are more reliable and also easier to analyze (Amin, 2005). In this respect, we used pre-tested questionnaires to collect data from the selected teaching, non-teaching staff and student leaders in the universities. We also used interviews to collect data from the members of the University Councils, Senate and the Vice Chancellors; and from the opinion leaders around the universities.

The data collected was cleaned and edited to ensure consistency, completeness and accuracy before we entered it into the Statistical Packaged for Social Scientist (SPSS). Qualitative data was analyzed by sorting out emerging themes from the various responses explaining the situation regarding authoritative structures and decision making in the universities. The major themes identified included the following; decision making procedures, decentralized authority, authority being vested in formal structures, authority being vested in hands of few top administrators and absence of authority at lower administrative levels. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression. We used SPSS to generate the means and the regression analysis in order to establish the effect of authoritative structures on decision making in both public and private universities. We have presented the results in tables and chart forms so as to make precise interpretation and conclusions

Results

The tables below present the results of our study starting with the demographic data of the respondents.

Table 1

Sex	Frequency	Percentange
Male	198	67.12
Female	97	32.88
Total	295	100

Source: Primary Data 2016

From Table 1, it was found out that 67.12% of the respondents were males while 32.88% of them were females. This indicates a ratio of 1:2 that female to male. In other words, the proportion of males was twice that of females in the sample. This ratio is a true reflection of the proportion of women to men in the target population of study. This implies that the sample of the study was representative of the general Target population. And what implications to the study variables should come out in subsequent sections.

Table 2: Duration of Service

Duration of Service	Frequency	Percentange
Less than one year	22	7.72
1-5 years	156	54.74
6-10 years	69	24.21
11-15 years	27	9.47
More than 15 years	11	3.86
Total	**285**	**100**

***Source*:** Primary Data 2016

From Table 2, it can be noted that majority (54.74%) of the respondents had served the universities under study for a period between one year and five years. This period is sufficient for anybody to get to understand what happens in the institution and thus, it is hoped that majority provided genuine data during the study. Another 24.23% of them had served the universities for a period between six years and ten years. This was even much better for them to qualify as pertinent respondents in this study to provide the much needed data. Other had served for even much longer periods. The implication is that the data collected from such respondents can be taken to be genuine and reliable.

Table 3: Designation of Respondents

Designation	Frequency	Percentange
Member of senate(for interviews)	4	1.36
Administrative staff	119	40.34
Head of Department	2	0.68
Lecturers	149	50.51
Student leaders	21	7.12
Total	**295**	**100**

Source: Primary Data 2016

From Table 3, it is evident that 40.34% of the respondents were Administrative staff, 1.36% were members of senate. Furthermore, 50.51% of them were lecturers in the universities under study while 7.12% of the respondents were student leaders. This shows that a cross-section of respondents was used in the study to provide data that was needed in this study. This implies that the data collected, analyzed and presented in this study is representative off all the stakeholders in the study.

Table 4: Level of Education of Respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentange
PhD	16	5.56
Master's Degree	150	52.08
Bachelor's Degree	109	37.85
Diploma	12	4.17
Other(specify)	1	0.35
Total	288	100

Source: Primary Data 2016

From Table 4, the respondents had various levels of education. At least 5.56% of them had PhD qualification, majority (52.08%) had masters' degrees; 37.85% had bachelor's degrees, 4.17% had

diplomas and the rest (0.3%) had varied other certificates. Level of education has a significant implication of people's ability to understand management issues and inter-relatedness to university governance and decision-making. Since majority of the respondents had attained significant level of education, it implies that the responses provided by these were from well-informed person. This makes the data collected quite reliable for drawing corresponding conclusions.

Table 5: Distribution of response on Authoritative Structure

Questions	N	Disagree (%)		Neutral (%)		Agree (%)		P-value	Mean	SD
		Gv't	Pv't	Gv't	Pv't	Gv't	Pv't			
In this university, the decision making procedures used negatively affect	295	20(23.81)	67(31.75)	26(30.95)	68(32.23)	38(45.24)	76(36.02)	0.267	2.092	0.822
The university has decentralized authority to departments in order to improve	295	25(29.76)	38(18.01)	19(22.62)	48(22.75)	40(47.62)	125(59.24)	0.069	2.346	0.810
In this university, authority is vested in formal structures for improvement	295	13(15.49)	35(16.59)	18(21.43)	54(25.59)	53(63.10)	122(57.82)	0.686	2.431	0.757
Failure to clearly define where authority lies has created problems in the decision	295	21(25.00)	71(33.65)	21(25.00)	54(25.59)	42(50.00)	86(40.76)	0.268	2.122	0.856
Most of the problems in this university are a result of the fact that authority is vested in the hands of a few top administrators	295	19(22.62)	62(29.38)	16(19.05)	42(19.91)	49(58.33)	107(50.71)	0.431	2.254	0.861
Centrality of decision making in a university setting negatively affects implementation	295	12(14.29)	43(20.38)	20(23.81)	57(27.01)	52(61.90)	111(52.61)	0.305	2.366	0.779
Lack of authority at the lower administrative structures in this university	295	20(23.81)	49(23.22)	9(10.71)	47(22.27)	55(65.48)	115(54.50)	0.064	2.342	0.834
Liberalization of authority has greatly improved decision making in this university	295	24(28.57)	53(25.12)	32(38.10)	82(38.86)	28(33.33)	76(36.02)	0.816	2.092	0.779
Average Mean									**2.256**	**0.812**

Source: Primary data 2016

The data in Table 5 indicates that 45.24 % of the respondents agreed that in this university, the decision making procedures used negatively affect in public universities while 36.02 % agreed that in this university, the decision making procedures used negatively affect in private universities. However, 23.81 % and 31.75 % disagreed that in this university, the decision making procedures used negatively affect in public and private universities respectively. This means that on the whole, most of the respondents remained neutral on the issue of the decision-making procedures having a negative effect in the universities in Uganda. From in the table on authoritative structures in the university, it was found out that the average mean response was 2.256 and the standard deviation was 0.812. Using the legend, this implies that on average, most of the respondents remained neutral on the issues of effect of authoritative structures on decision-making in the universities in Uganda. The analysis from Table 5 was found to be in close agreement with the data collected during the face to face interviews with members from the University Council and Senate. For instance, as regards authoritative structures, the members of Council interviewed from different universities acknowledged that both public and private universities in Uganda are authoritatively structured. In a face to face interview with a Council member from a public university, the member said:

"The university is authoritatively structured and authority flows from the Council through the

VC who channels all the information through Senate and later to Faculties and departments. On issues of decision-making, there are challenges e.g. information flow takes so long in moving from one unit to the other. This lack of fast information flow makes the system ineffective. There are therefore, delays in decision making e.g. increment on staff salary. At staff association level – considerations have been tabled for a pay rise in salary. Senate has many issues to discuss."

In another interview with another Council member from a public university, he said;

"In the authoritative structure, the final decision is taken to Council where a lot of issues are discussed and it may not turn out in the interest of the original stakeholders. For instance in 2010 a review was started in as far as the programmes are concerned. There was a deadline but this was not met due to delays – by October 187 had been submitted but 67 delayed. The entire system is bureaucratic and thus has problems – misplacement, budgetary and financial issues.**"**

In an interview with a member from a private university, it was noted that the authoritative structure is rather strict and staff have to observe the authoritative rules or else they run into trouble with management. The member said;

"Although we are a private university, our authoritative structure is such that suggestions flow either way. So some decisions – (financial) come from top while others come from down. This depends on the situation under consideration, the particular office of responsibility, one's competence, level of knowledge and experience. In some cases, the structures are ignored and not followed by some officers."

Generally, this implies that although there was a wider variation in terms of the respondents' views on authoritative structures and decision-making. It was found out that authority was vested in formal structures for improvement in universities in Uganda. This implies that failure to clearly define where authority lies had created problems in the decision in universities in Uganda. In other words, most of the problems in the universities could be a result of the fact that authority is vested in the hands of a few top administrators. In order to establish the relationship and effect of authoritative structures on decision making in public and private universities in Uganda a cross tabulation with the Pearson coefficient was run using SPSS for all the scores on authoritative structures and decision-making in each case and the results are presented in Table 6 and 7 respectively.

Table 6: Distribution of Responses from Public Universities with reference to authoritative structures and decision-making and the Pearson coefficient

Recode of Authoritative Structures	**Recode of Decision-making**			
	Agree	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Total**
Agree	1 50.00	1 1.33	0 0.00	2 2.38
Neutral	0 50.00	55 73.33	2 28.57	58 69.05
Disagree	0 0.00	19 25.33	5 71.43	24 28.57
Total	**2** **100.00**	**75** **100.00**	**7** **100.00**	**84** **100.00**
Pearson chi2 (4) = 26.8722	Pr = 0.000			

Table 7: Distribution of Responses from Private Universities with reference to authoritative structures and decision-making and the Pearson coefficient

Recode of Authoritative Structures	Recode of Decision-making			
	Agree	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Total**
Agree	2 28.57	4 2.44	1 2.50	7 3.32
Neutral	4 57.14	137 83.54	17 42.50	158 74.88
Disagree	1 14.29	23 14.02	22 55.00	46 21.80
Total	**7** **100.00**	**164** **100.00**	**40** **100.00**	**211** **100.00**

Pearson chi2(4) = 46.4080 Pr = 0.000

Source: Primary data (2016)

A correlation was run between authoritative structures and decision making resulting in **Table 8** below

Correlation coefficients		
Study variables	Decision making	Authoritative structure
Decision making	1	
Authoritative structure	0.589	1

As shown in the table above, the correlation index for the relationship between decision making and authoritative structure is 0.589 which is between 0.4-0.7. The results from these analyses indicate that there is a moderate positive relationship between decision making and authoritative structure.

Furthermore, a robust regression was run giving the results in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Regression between Authoritative Structures and Decision making in Universities

Variable	**Coef.**	**Std.Err**	**t**	**P >|t|**	**[95% Conf. Interval]**	**Prob > F**	**R-Square**
Authoritative	0.1314	0.1267	10.38	0.000	0.11065409-0.1564197	0.000	0.3469
Const	1.499	0.6687	22.42	0.000	1.367388-1.630617		

We have estimated a robust regression that constructs heteroscedasticity consistent / robust standard error to counter that threat of having incorrect test statistic. Simple linear regression coefficient indicates a positive effect of authoritative structure on Decision making – a unit increase in authoritative structure brings about 13.1% changes in decision making. Furthermore the results indicate r^2=0.3469, which suggests authoritative structure explains 34.7% variations in decision making. This implies that 65.3% variations decisions making are explained by other factors other than authoritative structure.

Discussion of results

The organizational structure of colleges and universities in many countries is an important guide to institutional activity, but not the only one. Scholars of higher education (Baldridge, Bolman and Terrence, Birnbaum) have developed a variety of multi-dimensional models of organizational behavior that also shed considerable light on college and university structure and process. Multi-dimensional models sought to explain organizational behavior across institutional types, and in various institutional activities. The models vary somewhat in the number of dimensions incorporated, from Baldridge's three dimensions (bureaucratic,

collegial, and political) and Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal's four-cornered frame (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) to Robert Birnbaum's five dimensions (bureaucratic, collegial, political, anarchical, and cybernetic). These models are quite helpful in thinking about organizational structure and process within colleges and universities.

Our results revealed that most of the respondents agreed that the university has decentralized authority to departments in order to improve in public universities. However, majority of them agreed that the university has decentralized authority to departments in order to improve in private universities. A minimal proportion of them disagreed that the university has decentralized authority to departments in order to improve public and private universities respectively. This implies that the universities had decentralized authority to departments in order to improve in decision making. This was found to be in agreement with Obondoh (2001: 29) who suggested that university managers in the world should consider the following: the appointment of staff and delegating authority; internal organizational structure; and the allocation of available resources to operate and support programmes for effective governance. This means that university managers have the obligation to delegate authority to those appointed in positions of authority.

Conclusion

There is a moderate positive relationship between decision making and authoritative structure and a positive effect of authoritative structure on decision making. This suggests that authoritative structure explains 34.7% variations in decision making. This implies that 65.3% variations decisions making are explained by other factors other than authoritative structure.

Recommendations

University management should adopt effective communication and information flow within the structures in the universities. Management should build a basis of professional bureaucratic approach properly and abandon subjective bureaucracy through attending seminars and regular meetings by the department managers in order to find out their opinions on the work of the organization and contribute to the efforts for improving the overall performance and provide transparent working environment. These meetings should be held in all departments of the universities.

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