

Performance monitoring and quality teaching and research in Private Universities in Uganda

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Abstract. This study assessed the influence of performance monitoring on quality teaching and research in private Universities in Uganda. Specifically, the study investigated how performance tracking, performance reviews, performance dialogue, and consequence management influence quality teaching and research. A positivist approach and cross sectional survey design were adopted for the study. Four chartered private Universities were selected using disproportionate stratified random sampling, basing on the foundation status. Data were collected from 181 lecturers, 5 Deans, 23 Heads of Department, 3 Quality Assurance officers, 3 Senior Officers from the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and 39 Student Leaders using a questionnaire, interviews, documents reviews and observation methods. Descriptive statistics and regression analyses, collaborated with content analysis were used to analyze the data. Study findings revealed a positive contribution of performance monitoring to quality teaching and research. The study concluded that staff performance monitoring practices in private universities are coercive and unsustainable in enhancing quality teaching and research. Therefore, the authors recommend that managers in the sampled private universities should use a variety of participatory-oriented performance monitoring mechanisms where targets are agreed upon, constructive feedback is provided on staff performance and staff are rewarding based on performance reviews.

Key terms: Performance monitoring; quality teaching; quality research; private universities.

Introduction

Many countries world over have endorsed privatization as a policy to guide their educational systems in view of its inherent benefits (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2014). Privatization has led to the proliferation of private service providers in all sub sectors including the higher education sub-sector, and more especially the establishment of private universities (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2014). The increase in the number of private universities has led to the commercialization of higher education, the introduction of market-oriented courses and the tendency of some lecturers to engage in surface teaching in several universities looking for additional income. This has created a challenge of maintaining the quality of education (Ochwa-Echel, 2016; OECD, 2007; Mamdani, 2007). Therefore in such an environment, there is need for

close monitoring of teaching staff to ensure that their inputs contribute to quality teaching and research.

The study was anchored on Total Quality Management (TQM) theory by Deming (1986). The TQM theory focuses on continuous improvement, increased involvement of employees in activities of the organization, long-range thinking and team-based problem solving as some of the ways of improving quality (Deming, 1986). The theory emphasizes the involvement of employees in all aspects of their work, and empowering them in ways that give them a real voice in decision making and in so doing, work processes directly under their control will be improved. The TQM theory focuses on a holistic approach to teaching where teachers attempt to improve the quality of instruction in such a way that the needs of the students and those of the prospective employers in the labour market are best served. The dynamic force behind TQM is the continued desire to improve quality and productivity by ensuring that everybody in the organisation continually and aggressively evaluates how every job, every system and every product can be improved. TQM therefore encourages continuous improvement of the work processes in an organization and this is possible through performance monitoring.

The study focused on performance monitoring, quality teaching and research. The practice of performance monitoring is described as the review of employee performance in accordance with set organizational goals and objectives (Armstrong, 1995). It is a management strategy aimed at enhancing organizational performance through closely following what employees do at the work place in a bid to achieve the organizational goals (Musaazi, 2006). Monitoring performance involves three essential activities: information gathering, information analysis and taking action (UNESCO, 2007). These according to McCormack, Propper and Smith (2013) involve performance tracking (information gathering), performance reviews, performance dialogue (information analysis) and consequence management (taking action). The study adopted the monitoring practices as advanced by the above-cited authors to include; performance tracking, performance reviews, performance dialogue and consequence management. These were deemed crucial as far as quality teaching and research in Universities were concerned.

Quality teaching according to Hénard and Roseveare (2012) is the use of pedagogical techniques to produce learning outcomes for students. Quality teaching involves effective design of curriculum and course content, use of a variety of learning contexts (including guided independent study, project-based learning, collaborative learning, experimentation, etc.) soliciting and using feedback, effective assessment of learning outcomes, well-adapted learning environments and student support services (OECD, 2012). The Uganda National Council for Higher Education [NCHE]-2014) defines quality teaching as the process of transmitting knowledge based on the prescribed pedagogical techniques, in a conducive environment that will help learners acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them be productive in the working environment. Quality research according to Tibenderana (2013) is the creative work undertaken by a university on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of human kind, culture, and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications. Quality teaching in this study was conceptualized basing on the OECD (Hénard and Roseveare, 2012) and NCHE (2014) indicators, as the process of transmitting knowledge to students through adequate course content coverage, teacher preparedness, use of modern teaching methods, use of students feedback, assessment of

learning outcomes, provision of student support services and a conducive learning environment. Quality research was conceptualized as the percentage of the university budget devoted to research and publications, support to research by policy committees, funds earned from research projects by the universities and its staff, the support the universities gives to its staff to promote research and staff research outputs that include staff publications, citations, supervision of students in research , staff paper presentations in international and local conferences, research groups and research grants (NCHE, 2014).

Statement of the problem

Universities are expected to support development by teaching courses that are fit for purpose and preparing graduates who are well trained and with appropriate skills that employers need. The universities are equally expected to engage actively in research, generate new knowledge and develop new innovations (NCHE, 2016; Tibenderana, 2013; Hénard & Roseveare, 2012). However, there is a growing chorus of criticism about the quality of teaching and research in Uganda's private universities. Reports indicate some lecturers interact with students only half of the expected contact hours, miss lectures and are not consistent in class. The visibility of private universities as far as research output is concerned is poor with very low international rankings (Rwahire, 2017). The quantity of peer-reviewed publications from private universities compared to public universities is equally very low (Baryamureeba, 2016). There are several complaints about delays in supervision of students' research, which in most cases causes some students to miss graduation (Kyaligonza, 2010; Mamdani, 2007; Kasozi, 2003); and yet the NCHE Quality Assurance Framework for Universities in Uganda (2011) provides for research as one of the criteria for assessing the quality of a university (NCHE, 2016). There seems to be very low level of monitoring of staff performance to assess their contribution to quality teaching and research, and if this is left un attended to, the contribution of lecturers towards quality teaching will remain ambiguous. This study, therefore, set out to establish the influence of performance monitoring on quality teaching and research in selected private universities in Uganda.

Study Objectives

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of performance monitoring on quality teaching and research in private universities. The study specifically focused on the influence of performance tracking, performance dialogues, performance reviews and consequence management on quality teaching and research in private universities in Uganda.

Literature Review

Several studies (Malunda, 2016; Biruk, 2014; Şencana and Karabulutb 2014; Amin, et al., 2014; Owolabi & Makinde 2012; UNESCO, 2007) emphasize the necessity of performance monitoring because it ensures consistency between implementation and the planned strategic direction of the organization, as well as enhancing quality. Biruk (2014), for example, emphasizes the importance of monitoring performance of individuals in an organization to assess their contribution towards realizing set organizational goals. Monitoring staff performance is therefore a results-oriented process that calls for clear, measurable definition of the expected targets (Amin, et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2007).

However, other studies contend that monitoring alone is not good enough. It must be accompanied by constructive feedback to help the employees know if they are performing their

jobs to the expectation of their employers, and if not, find better mechanisms of improving their job activities (Obwogi, 2011). Karelina, Sobolev and Sorokin (2016) recommend that the feedback should not only be made available to individual employees but the general public as well since this would force the employees to reshape their work-related behaviors.

Several scholars (Nabaho, 2017; Chuan and Heng 2014; Spooren, Brockx & Mortelmans 2013; IUCEA 2010; Zenawi, 2012; Yeoh, Ho & Chan, 2012; Spooren and Mortelmans, 2006) advise that monitoring of staff performance should be done through the use of students' evaluations, because students are in the best position to provide feedback on the quality of delivery of instruction. Students are the most exposed to the teaching of lecturers and hence have the most accurate idea of its appropriateness at that level. Other studies (Benton & Cashin, 2012; Beran & Rokosh, 2009; Burden, 2008; Kember, Leung & Kwan, 2002;), have shown discontent with the use of students' evaluations. The Inter-University Council for East Africa ([IUCEA],2010) however strongly advises that each university should adopt students evaluations as a regular activity to learn what students think about the programmes, the staff, the delivery methods and the learning environment.

Performance dialogues and reviews are also part of the important aspects of performing monitoring. Gibbs and Irons (2011) and Westerman and Smith (2015), stress the importance of these practices because they argue that the quality of education in a university depends on the performance of teachers. It is therefore important to identify the objective indicators that measure the performance levels of teachers and these indicators must be agreed upon between the teachers and their supervisors. Dialogues and reviews also provide an excellent opportunity for public praise and sharing of best practices when things go well and when results are not entirely positive. However, they should serve as a blame-free forum for conducting a positive analysis on what could have not been right. A study carried out by Kare mire (2013) on private and public universities in Uganda exposed the wrong approach being used to dialogues and reviews as court proceedings where the supervisor is the judge and the supervisee is the accused who must defend himself about his performance. Kagaari (2010) advises that there should be a collaborative approach to performance reviews and dialogues to ensure that the work allocated to individual staff is done according to the set plans and corrective actions are taken in case of any deviations based on the standards.

Methodology

A cross sectional survey design was used to conduct the study. The study targeted the 41 private universities in Uganda. The sample was selected from the private chartered universities. The choice of chartered universities was because these universities are expected have all the minimum requirements needed to offer quality education before being accredited. Four private chartered universities were selected out the eight representing 50% of the target population. The disproportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to enable representation on the basis of the foundation status of the universities. The selected universities included two faith-based universities and two private-for-profit universities. From the selected universities, 356 lecturers and 44 student leaders were randomly selected. Deans, Heads of Departments, Directors of Research, Quality Assurance Officers, and Senior Officers from NCHE were purposively selected as key informants.

Questionnaire, interview, observation and document review methods were used to collect data. The questionnaire was piloted before it was administered. The quantitative results of the descriptive analysis were presented in tables indicating frequencies and percentages. Correlation and regression analyses were used to test the degree, strength and direction of the influence of performance monitoring on quality teaching and research. The tests of significance were performed at the probability level of $p < .05$. Qualitative data collected using the structured interview guide, the observation checklist and document review guide was deductively analyzed based on pre-determined variables from the conceptual framework of the study.

Results

The results focused on the respondents' opinions on the influence of management practices on quality teaching and research. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to present and analyze the data collected.

Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	Below 25 years	2	1.0
	25 to below 45 years	151	83.5
	45 and above years	28	15.5
Level of education	Bachelors	15	8.3
	Post graduate	53	29.3
	Masters	87	48.1
	PhD	24	13.3
	Missing	2	1.1
Sex	Male	111	61.3
	Female	70	38.7
Length of service	less than 2 years	28	15.5
	2 to less than 8 years	140	77.4
	8 and above years	12	6.6
Employment status	Missing	1	0.6
	Full time	171	94.5
	Part time	10	5.5

Source: Primary data

Results in Table 1 demonstrate that most of the lectures in the private universities were young (between 25-45 years old). Staff in this age bracket are strong, energetic and able to contribute positively to the development of their universities. Qualifications however indicated that the number of PhDs were very few (6.6%), yet according to the NCHE Quality Assurance

Framework, for one to qualify to teach in a university, he/she must either have a PhD or must be in the process of acquiring one (NCHE, 2016). This meant that private universities were severely under-staffed in regard to qualified staff to spearhead both teaching and research functions. Results further showed that there were more male teachers (61.3%) compared to their female counterparts (38.7%), suggesting a gender disparity in employment. On tenure of service, majority of the lecturers (57.5%) had worked for less than 5 years in their respective universities, suggesting lack of stability of lecturers. Demographic results also showed that there were more full time staff (94.5%) than part-timer staff (5.5%) who took part in the study. This implied a positive move of the universities towards acquiring full time teaching staff compared to the past years where private universities were dominated by part-timer staff.

Descriptive results on performance monitoring

The study sought the views of respondents on the practice of monitoring staff performance and their responses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the management practice of monitoring staff performance in universities

Performance Monitoring	Agree	Non-committal	Disagree
I am comfortable with being supervised while I am teaching	135(74.5%)	4(2.2%)	40(22.1%)
Monitoring my performance makes me more committed to my work	45(24.8%)	6(3.3%)	128(70.7%)
I am comfortable with my supervisor using students to monitor my class attendance.	60(33.1%)	14(7.7%)	106(58.7%)
The Feedback I get from students evaluations helps me improve on my teaching.	43(23.8%)	7(3.9%)	131(50.3%)
I am always consulted in the process of setting performance measurement standards.	78(43.1%)	14(7.7%)	88(48.6%)
My head of department always assesses my performance in teaching and research basing on the set performance standards.	90(49.7%)	20(11.6%)	68(37.5%)
My head of department always discusses with me the feedback he/she gets about my performance.	68(37.6%)	9 (5.0%)	104(57.4%)
The feedback I get from my head of department about my performance is constructive.	94(51.9%)	13(7.2%)	74(40.9%)
I am always rewarded well for the good performance.	66(36.5%)	3(1.7%)	112(61.9%)
Promotion to a higher position in my department is based on research output.	95(52.5%)	16(8.8%)	69(38.1%)
There is punitive measure for academic staff who fail to deliver on the set targets.	116(64.1%)	17(9.4%)	48(26.5%)

Source: Primary Data 2017

The results in Table 2 indicate that majority of the lecturers (74.5%) were comfortable with being supervised while teaching but over half of them (58.7%) were not comfortable with the practice of their supervisors using students to monitor their class attendance. Results also showed that 70.7% of the lecturers did not think that monitoring their performance makes them more committed to their work. Similarly 50.3% of them found the use of the feedback from students'

evaluations as a tool for monitoring not very helpful in making them improve their teaching. The results therefore suggest that monitoring does not necessarily translate to improved performance. Regarding setting performance standards, only 43.1% of the respondents said they were consulted in the process of setting performance measurement standards. Results equally indicated that 49.7% of the staff had their heads of department assessing their performance in teaching and research based on the set performance standards. This suggests that either the rest of the lecturers (37.5%) did not have any performance standards set or their supervisors simply defined for them what they should do. On the issue of performance dialogue, only 37.6% of the lecturers said their supervisors discussed with them feedback they got about their performance and 51.9% of them found the feedback from their supervisors constructive. Lastly, on consequence management, majority of the respondents (61.9%) were rarely rewarded for the good performance but 52.5% agreed that promotion to a higher position in my department is based on research output. Over a half (64.1%) of the respondents indicated that performance feedback was used more for punitive purposes especially for academic staff who fail to deliver on the set targets.

Descriptive results on quality teaching

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

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on lecturers views on quality teaching

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

Source: Primary data 2017

Results in Table 3 suggest that the teaching and learning materials were inadequate. However, departments had to a great extent put in place initiatives to improve teaching such as; providing students with knowledge of education paths and internship opportunities (72.9%), and following up students to know what they were doing in their internship (91.8%). The results further indicated that learner-based approaches of delivery were hardly employed (29.3%),

minimal effort was put in place by the departments to have special programs for weak students (29.3%) and the teaching and learning environment was largely (59.1%) un conducive. On a positive note, over 85% of the lecturers indicated that assessment of students was planned as an integral part of the teaching process and that lecturers (94.5%) promptly gave feedback on students' assignments. Results also suggest that course outlines were consistent with the approved curriculum.

Interviews with heads of departments and senior quality assurance officers in the sampled universities pointed out the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials as one major factor affecting quality teaching. One senior quality assurance officer explained;

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

Interviews further reported unethical behaviors of hiding equipment like projectors by some lecturers to use them alone. Such a habit not only inconvenienced other users, it also impacted negatively on the teaching.

Descriptive results on quality research

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

Table 4: Descriptive statistics the lecturers views on quality research

Research	Agree	Non-committal	Disagree
There is a departmental policy for staff engagement in research	126(69.6%)	24(13.3%)	31(17.1%)
Policy guidelines for conducting research are relevant	47(26%)	20(11.1%)	113(62.4%)
The budget for research activities in my department is adequate	27(15%)	20(11.1%)	134(74.0%)
My department facilitates academic staff to attend international conferences	45(24.9%)	22(12.2%)	114(63%)
I have presented papers at international conferences	24 (13.3%)	14(7.7%)	143(79%)
Staff are facilitated with funding to carry out research work	69(38.1%)	15(8.3%)	97(53.6%)
My department facilitates staff to do research in terms of reduced teaching load	11(6.1%)	10(5.5%)	160(88.4%)
Collaborating with colleagues to do research makes it easy	165(91.1%)	5(2.8%)	10(11%)
Research groups in my department are very active	43(23.8%)	10 (5.5%)	160(88.4%)
I regularly publish articles in internationally peer reviewed journals.	55(30.3%)	13(7.1%)	113(62.4%)
I always publish articles in peer reviewed local	65(35.9%)	6 (3.3%)	110(60.7%)

journals.			
My department receives research grants from the researches done by the staff.	15(8.3%)	6(3.3%)	160(88.4%)
My published work is usually cited by other researchers.	41(22.1%)	32(17.7%)	108(59.7%)
I always assist students to complete their research projects in time	123(67.9%)	17(9.4%)	41(22.7%)
My department usually organizes research dissemination workshops	57(31.5%)	11(6.1%)	113(62.4%)

Source; Primary data 2017

Results in Table 4 indicate that private universities have a policy on staff engagement in research; however majority of the lecturers (62.4%) find the policy guidelines irrelevant. Results also suggest that majority of the lecturers (74%) find the research budget inadequate to engage the lecturers fully in research activities such as presentation of papers at international conferences. Probably the inadequate research budget accounts for the low staff (38.1%) engagement in research work and very few (31.5%) research dissemination workshops. Only 6.1% of the lecturers indicated that departments facilitated them in conducting research by reducing teaching load. However, results in Table 4 indicate that majority of the lecturers (91.1%) agree that collaborating with colleagues to do research makes it easy. Nonetheless, in the current study about two quarters of the lecturer respondents (30.3%) regularly published in internationally reviewed journals and 35.9% in local journals. This suggests that collaborations are either not strong or they are not being utilized. Majority of the respondents (67.9%) indicated that they were involved in supervising students' research.

Despite the low outputs in research, interviews with the directors of research indicated that universities have come up with various strategies to support the lecturers do carry out research. The director of research in one of the private for- profit universities elaborated the strategies their university has put in place thus:

We encourage the creation of research groups and clusters and encourage these to write fundable proposals. We offer grants to those groups that come up with innovative ideas. We have found this the best method of encouraging members to engage in research especially the beginners. We also support members to publish their work as a group. We also offer free trainings to lecturers on the use of different data analysis techniques such as SPSS, STATA, etc. This has greatly improved the lecturers' engagement in research activities.

However, interviews with the director of research, development and documentation at NCHE revealed that most of the private universities exaggerate their involvement in research as part of their advertising gimmick because NCHE expects all universities to deposit copies of their research works and engagements with them, and this is not being done.

A visit to some of the libraries did not show strong evidence of research products since staff publications were scanty and the web depository of the research works dissatisfactory.

Information from document reviews also revealed lack of comprehensive policies on research clearly stating the strategic goals and objectives of research in the sampled universities, funding, strategic partnerships and collaborations, implementation and dissemination strategies. What was more evident were guidelines on how research was to be conducted and supervision of students' researches. This suggests that the sampled private universities are more of teaching than research universities.

Verification of hypotheses

To establish the extent to which monitoring staff performance influences quality teaching and research in private universities, a multi regression was conducted to test the following null hypotheses:

- i. Monitoring staff performance does not influence quality of teaching in private universities in Uganda.
- ii. Monitoring staff performance does not influence quality of research in private universities in Uganda.

Results of the analysis are presented in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5: Multiple regression analysis results on monitoring staff performance and quality teaching

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta			
	(Constant)	2.212	.144		15.341	.000
1	Performance tracking	.112	.047	.223	2.371	.019
	Performance dialogue	.207	.079	.410	2.625	.009
	Performance review	-.124	.061	-.280	-2.030	.044
	Consequence management	.195	.044	.325	4.417	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Teaching 1

Source: Primary data 2017

The results in Table 5 indicate that performance tracking, performance dialogue, and consequence management significantly contributed to quality teaching ($p < 0.05$). These results suggest that with other factors held constant, a unit change in performance tracking results in a 0.112 unit change in quality teaching, a unit change in performance dialogue results in a 0.207 change in quality teaching, while a unit change in consequence management results in a 0.195 unit change in quality teaching. However, performance reviews were found to negatively contribute to quality teaching. The results further indicate that when all the staff monitoring practices are combined, performance dialogue contributes most to quality teaching.

The study further established the extent to which monitoring staff performance influences quality research and the results are presented in the Table 6.

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis on monitoring staff performance and quality research

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.927	.132		14.559	.000
Performance tracking	-.009	.043	-.021	-.218	.828
Performance dialogue	-.113	.072	-.248	-1.555	.122
Performance review	.204	.056	.511	3.633	.000
Consequence management	.160	.041	.297	3.961	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Research 1
Source: Primary data 2017

Results in Table 6 indicate that performance reviews and consequence management significantly contribute to quality research ($p < .05$). These results suggest that with other factors held constant, a unit change in performance reviews causes a 0.204 unit change in quality research while a unit change in consequence management results in a 0.160 unit change in quality research. On the other hand, there was no statistically significant evidence to show that performance tracking and performance dialogue contributes to quality research.

Discussion of Findings

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of performance monitoring on quality teaching and research in private Universities in Uganda. The specific areas of focus included: performance tracking, performance dialogue; performance reviews and consequence management. Although the findings indicated a weak positive contribution of performance monitoring to quality teaching and research, other studies (Malunda, 2017; Biruk, 2014; Chuan & Heng, 2014; Şencana & Karabulutb, 2014) established the importance of monitoring teachers as one way of improving the quality of education. This current study however revealed that most lecturers did not appreciate the practice of being monitored especially through the use of students' evaluations. These findings are in congruence with the views of other scholars (Benton & Cashin, 2012; Spooren & Mortelmans, 2006; Williams & Harvey, 2010; Nadiri, Kandampully & Hussain, 2009; Kwan, 1999) who observed that academics are antagonistic towards student evaluations despite the fact that a number of researches conducted have established their validity and reliability. This could be attributed to the academic freedom lecturers conjure as entitlement. Therefore, evaluation of their teaching, for instance, is construed as intrusion to this freedom.

Interviews with student leaders also showed general discontent with the utilization of the data generated from the monitoring exercise since in most cases, they never saw any change in the lecturers even after their weaknesses had been pointed out. A UNESCO Report (2017) made similar observation that feedback from the students is often overlooked and data generated from quality monitoring is often not used for decision making in the improvement of higher education provision. Studies like that of Chuan and Heng (2014) stressed the relevance of providing feedback as a mechanism of ensuring that those being monitored, especially the lecturers get to know about their performance in the classroom, as well as know whether the

teaching methods and strategies being used are appropriate to the students who are the recipients of the knowledge being delivered.

This study further established that staff are rarely consulted in the process of setting performance standards. This implies that staff would undertake the roles assigned to them without being given opportunity to align them to their personal goals and abilities. A study carried out by Kagaari (2010) revealed that collaborative setting of performance standards is crucial in ensuring that the work allocated to individual workers is done according to the set plans and corrective actions are taken in case of any deviations basing on the standards. The current study further revealed that assessment of performance was done but rarely strictly followed the set standards. The implication is that lack of uniform measures of evaluation of performance may provide challenge in determining progress made. This is contrary to the PDCA model (Deming, 1986) that puts emphasis on monitoring performance so that the actual performance of the lecturers is compared against the expected performance and corrective measures are put in place to ensure that the expected performance is achieved.

In regard to performance reviews, the study showed that the staff were not very satisfied with the feedback they obtained from their heads of departments. This implies that most of the lecturers are not informed about the areas that would require improvement. Further, some of issues brought forward from the feedback are not addressed and as such the status of staff performance remains unchanged. This is contrary to the advice by Yeoh, Ho and Chan, (2012) who emphasized the need of giving feedback to the lecturers. Feedback would enable them understand their areas of strengths and weaknesses and hence devise means of improvement. Spooen and Mortelmans (2006) also add that constructive feedback is an important mechanism of improving teacher effectiveness and hence contributing to quality teaching.

The study also revealed inadequate rewarding of staff for good performance. This means that whether staff performed well or not, management did not prioritize rewarding best-performing staff. It also means that good performance is not used as a measure to determine staff promotion. Interviews with the quality assurance officers revealed that there was a tendency of management delaying in making decisions to reward good performance even when the recommendations were made. The implication of this practice is that staff whose performance has been good may withdraw part of their efforts since they see no value of good performance. This in turn affects the quality of education. In agreement with this observation, Waal's (2007) study on performance management systems in institutions of higher education found a low score on action orientation, which is caused by management being composed of mainly academics who, in contrast to practitioners, tend to think things through (too long) before acting. Such delays in recognizing effort are detrimental to staff commitment, and hence affect quality. Contrary to the universities in the developed countries, the findings show that private universities in Uganda do not reward the lecturers basing on their performance especially in research. Bogt and Scapens (2012) report that while quality research in the UK and the Netherlands may not elicit direct financial benefits, it impacts indirectly via faster promotion and job offers from other universities. This fact was not observed in the sampled private universities in Uganda.

Moreover, when it came to punishments, there were punitive actions taken against staff who failed to deliver on the set targets, This means that management are conscious of the need for

staff to perform their duties as and when is required of each of them, but they prefer to use negative reinforcement as opposed to positive rewards. This finding is also contrary to findings by Malunda (2017; World Bank Report (2007 and Craig (1999) who stress that effective supervision requires supervisors to focus on providing guidance, improving performance, and enhancing professionalism and morale, rather than simply concentrate on criticism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, staff performance monitoring practices in private universities are coercive and unsustainable in enhancing quality teaching and research. The study also revealed that the sampled universities relied more on students' evaluations as a data source for performance monitoring of teaching to inform decisions. Under the current high accountability tertiary education context, institutions are under both internal and external pressure to provide evidence of performance monitoring for quality teaching and quality research. However, unless monitoring and auditing practices are accompanied by a visible emphasis on evaluation for development, majority of the private universities run the risk of continuing to offer education that does not meet the developmental needs of a country like Uganda. Further, such universities are likely to continue engaging in research that does not boost competitiveness, innovation, growth and development.

Recommendations

A variety of performance monitoring strategies should be developed by the private universities to enrich the decision making processes. Such strategies could include continuous institutional and individual staff self-monitoring, institutional and staff peer-monitoring in addition to students' evaluations. Staff should be involved in designing the self- and peer monitoring tools, administering these, analyzing the findings, providing feedback, and developing strategies for self-, peer- and institutional continuous development. The university management should use the information obtained to make informed policy-related decisions. Among such decisions could be ring-fencing funds for research activities and recognizing and rewarding best research outputs. NCHE should also step up its monitoring function through regular inspections of private universities to ensure that these universities conform to the guidelines and regulations for operating private universities in Uganda. In so doing, the quality of teaching and research will be improved in the private universities set.

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