Do the Dominantly Used Managerial Techniques Differ According to Private University Type in Uganda?

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Abstract: This paper presents part of the findings of the study carried out in private universities in Uganda to investigate among other things, whether or not there is a difference in the dominant usage of particular managerial techniques between denominational and non-denominational private universities in Uganda. Using a cross-sectional survey design, the data were collected from 380 academic officials who were selected using universal sampling. A standardized questionnaire, the Managerial Grid Survey was used to collect the data, and the data on this particular aspect was analysed using the t-test. The findings indicated that the academic officials’ dominant usage of particular managerial techniques in denominational and non-denominational private universities in Uganda differed significantly (sig.0.32). It was thus recommended that the founders of non-denominational private universities should borrow a leaf from the denominational private universities to promote team management in their universities.

Key Words: Managerial techniques; private university type (denominational universities, non-denominational universities)

I. INTRODUCTION

Private universities came in existence in Uganda from the year 1988, starting with the Islamic University in Uganda. Some of the private universities were founded along religious lines, hence are denominational, yet others were founded by individuals, business partners, and ethnic communities without any religious inclination, hence being non-denominational (Segawa, 2007). All universities in Uganda are guided by the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act which was enacted in 2001, with subsequent amendment in 2006. This regulates and provides guidelines in the establishment and management of universities and other higher educational institutions. The National Council for Higher Education was established in 2003 under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act. The management of universities usually differs from type to type. For example, denominational universities are usually governed along their respective religious principles. They appoint Chancellors, Vice Chancellors and many other officials who manage their universities. Non-denominational universities however do not have specific ways of how to be managed. However, given the huge amounts of money the founders usually invest in the universities, they usually manage universities in a way which can enable them to serve the public and to get profits (Muwagga-Mugagga, 2006).

Based on the Managerial Grid Model, developed by Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton in the year 1957 and was revised in 1999, managers use different managerial techniques in the execution of their duties. The managerial techniques are seven, namely: indifferent management (impoverished); accommodating management (country club); dictatorial management (task/produce or perish); status quo management (middle - of - the - road); and team style management (sound) opportunistic management and paternalistic management. Though managers usually use a combination of the fore mentioned methods of management, they, due to different reasons, dominantly use each one of the fore mentioned methods of management (Daft, 2000). Given the influx of business-minded and profit-oriented people in the establishment of universities, the management of such universities seems to raise questions of concern, hence the current study.

Problem Statement

According to different authors and researchers, there are many gaps in the management of private universities in Uganda, which translates into poor service delivery, poor quality of outputs (National Council for Higher Education, 2010). The current study was therefore carried out to answer the question, Is there a difference in the extent of the dominant usage of particular managerial techniques between denominational and non-denominational universities in Uganda?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Daft (2000), the seven fore mentioned management techniques or methods of managing an organisation are directed towards two aspects namely, concern for people (relationship-oriented management), and concern for production or the organization (task-oriented management). Indifferent management (impoverished) is the type of management where a manager has low concern for both people and production. Accommodating management (country club) is whereby a manager has high concern for people and low concern for production. Dictatorial management (task/produce or perish) is whereby a manager has high concern for production and low concern for people.
Status quo management (middle-of-the-road) is whereby a manager tries to balance between company goals and workers’ needs by giving some concern for both people and production. Team style of management (sound) is whereby a manager has high concern for both people and production. Opportunistic management is whereby a manager adopts whatever method or behaviour which offers him or her the greatest personal benefits. Paternalistic management is whereby a manager usually praises and supports his or her people/employees, but does not want to be challenged (Mammoria and Gankar, 2001).

There are several internal forces that influence a manager’s managerial techniques, namely: value systems, confidence in employees, leadership inclinations, and feelings of security in an uncertain situation. Robins (1996) hold that managers need to take certain practical considerations into account before deciding how to manage. They suggest that a manager should consider three sets of forces before choosing a managerial technique, namely: 1) forces in the manager, that is, one’s managerial technique is influenced by his or her background, knowledge, values and experience; 2) forces in the subordinates, that is, a manager can allow greater participation and freedom when subordinates crave independence and freedom of action, want to have decision-making responsibility, identify with the goals of the organization and are knowledgeable and experienced enough to deal with the problem efficiently; and 3) situational forces for example the organization’s preferred style, the specific work groups, the nature of the groups, work tasks, the pressures of time and environmental factors which may affect organizational members’ attitude towards authority.

Research has revealed that, the concept of concern for people and for the organization requires certain aspects for it to be effected properly. For example, a qualitative research was carried out in 1982 by Peter and Waterman as cited by Babalola (2006). They held oral interviews with the management of 62 companies in the United States. It was revealed that a number of attributes of excellence like the following are necessary for effective and efficient management of an organization: lean and simple organization structure; action – biased; people – centred; consumer/customer- focused; authority and autonomy balancing; value-oriented; and entrepreneurship attitude. These findings were however based on what had been observed in the United States of America, not in Uganda. Even the respondents were not based in Uganda, hence the current study.

Concern for others is a fundamental part of human motivation. As social animals, we seek others to satisfy our physical and social needs. This seemingly relates to the study conducted by Syser and weed in 1975 about managerial effectiveness. Using a sample of 1000 employees of a public utility, the study found out that subordinates’ locus of control influenced their preference for their supervisors’ managerial techniques or styles. Subordinates with an internal locus of control preferred a participatory management style but subordinates with an external locus of control preferred a directive style (Richard, Robert and Gordon, 1999). This seems not to differ much from the findings of the study made by House in 1974, cited by Maicibi (2003). The study reported that the managerial styles subordinates favoured were particularly determined by their personal characteristics. Individuals who believed that their environment was affected by their behaviour favoured a participatory style, while those who believed that events occurred to them because of luck or fate would tend to find an authoritarian style more satisfying. This study was however, not carried out in the private universities of Uganda, a gap that partly prompted the current study.

Similary, the Ohio State University and University of Michigan studies were carried out. At Ohio State University, researchers studied the effectiveness of what they called initiating structure (task-oriented) and consideration (employee- oriented) leadership styles. They found out that, employee turn-over rates were lowest and employee satisfaction highest under leaders who were rated low in consideration and high in initiating structure. Task- oriented organizations had high grievance and turn over rates among their employees. The University of Michigan studies centered on employee- centered managers. The studies found out that the most productive work groups tended to have managers who were employee- centered rather than production-centered. They also found out that the most effective managers were those who had supportive relationships with subordinates, tended to use group rather than individual decision making (Armstrong, 2001). These studies were however not carried out in Uganda.

In a similar vein, Beatrice and John Whiting carried out a study on children in 1975 in six cultures namely, Kenya, India, the Philippines, Okinawa, Mexico and the United States. They measured how often children behaved altruistically, that is, offering help, support or un selfish suggestions (which can be equated to concern for people), or egoistically, that is, seeking attention, or wanting to dominate others (which can be equated to dictatorship). This study was subsequently re-analysed and in 1988 five new cultures were added to it. American children were found out to be the least altruistic on all the three measures and the most egoistic (Rice, 1998). This seems to imply that, there is a relationship between managerial techniques and culture. This study was however not carried out among adults.

Despite the importance of concern for the employees in organisations, research has indicated that in some organizations there is no equal concern for all the employees. For example, a human resources management survey which was carried out on 1,078 managers in Chicago, USA in 1991 uncovered ten serious ethical situations done by managers at varying degrees, namely: hiring and promotion based on favoritism, 30.7%; allowing differences in pay, discipline and promotions being due to friendship with top management, 30.7%; sex harassment, 28.4%; sex discrimination in promotion, 26.9%; using discipline for personnel
Relatively, Vargas (2005)’s study examined employees’ perceptions of their managers’ cultural orientations, power distance, and management styles in California, USA. Results revealed partial support for what had been hypothesized that, European American managers would be perceived as being individualistic, having a small power distance, and demonstrating a more consultative and participative management styles than Latin American managers; and that Latin American managers would be perceived as having a more collectivistic orientation, as having a large power distance, and portraying more autocratic and persuasive management styles than European American managers. The findings of the study thus seem to reveal that some times culture determines one’s dominant managerial technique as well as one’s concern for people and production. The study however assessed management in terms of only consultation and participation of the employees. It did not assess the different managerial techniques such as indifferent, accommodating, country club, team, paternalistic and opportunistic. This gap was filled by the current study. The findings of Varga (2005)’s study seem not to differ much from the findings of a related study of Frittz (2005) who studied transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership in the university classroom environment. In this study, the findings were that, transformational scales were statistically significant and correlated positively with outcome factors. Using the ANOVA to determine differences in student perceptions of leadership styles for different classes, it was found that there was a difference in the perception in leadership styles in different classes and that there were no significant differences in the perceptions of leadership styles by students and the self –perceived leadership style of the instructor (cited in Kirk-Chang and Cucha, 2010). This study was however not on the universities in Uganda.

Relatedly, studies have revealed that relationship-oriented management usually leads to improved organisational performance. For example, a study done by Duerr (2009) about leadership styles and their relationships with non-profit engineering society organisational performance indicated a positive correlation between transformational leadership styles and organisational effectiveness; a weak correlation between transactional leadership style and organisational effectiveness, and a strong negative correlation between laissez faire leadership style and organisational effectiveness. This study however looked at only three leadership styles namely, transformational, transactional and laissez faire. It did not address other areas such as opportunism and paternalistic leadership approaches which, according to Armstrong (2001) are also sometimes applied in the management of organizations. This partly prompted the current study.

Relatively, Kayindu (1998) carried out a study on pre-martial sex education among secondary school students in Kampala city, 1986-1995. The findings were, among others, that head teachers and school owners were rarely involving teachers in the management of schools, were showing less concern to the teachers and were rarely punishing immoral students for fear of annoying them, “the customers”. That partly contributed to sexual immorality among students especially in the private day schools. This seemingly reveals the negative effects of educational managers having concern for one party in an educational institution at the expense of other parties. The study was however on secondary schools, not universities.

The laws of many countries hint on the humane element at the places of work, which can be translated into concern for people. In Uganda for example Section 56(1) of the Employment Act, 2006 stipulates that a female employee as a consequence of pregnancy has a right to 60 working days leave from work on full wages. Section 57(1) is about paternity leave, that a male employee, immediately after the delivery or miscarriage of his wife shall have a right to a period of four working days leave from work. The humane element seems to be that a woman who has given birth needs enough rest and treatment. Even the husband needs time to be with his wife to give her care. Also, subsection 1 of section 41 of the Penal Code Act states that promoting sectarianism is an offence, and one who does it commits an offence punishable by a maximum of five years imprisonment (Republic of Uganda, 2006). Thus, as applied to organizations where people of different ethnic groups, religions or race are found, that law seems to be partly meant to promote mutual concern for others. These laws are relevant as far as the issue of concern for people at the places of work is concerned. However, having laws in place is one thing and implementing them is another.

Research has revealed that task-oriented management requires sound policies to be made and to be properly implemented, as indicated by the study of Basekanakyo (2006). This study explored the relationship between bureaucracy and staff productivity in Busoga University, Uganda. One of the findings of the study was that there was a relationship between the practice of bureaucracy (adherence to standard rules and procedures, having technically competent staff, and specialization) and staff productivity. The study does not however show the degree of correlation between the variables. However, though the degree of correlation is not shown, it is implied that the concern for the organization requires proper bureaucracy and competent staff. The fact that this study was carried out in only one private university in Uganda made the researcher of the current study question the generalizability of the findings to all the private universities in Uganda.

Based on the findings of the study carried out by
Bard- Kuvaas and Anders (2010) who studied human resource management and motivation, they found out that task-oriented management usually leads to poor employee performance. Thus, the findings do not differ much from the claims that employees may respond to perceptions of unfair treatment with negative emotions, such as anger, outrage, resentment and desire for retribution. The perception of organizational injustices may also have a subtle impact on organizational dynamics which would then trigger a range of direct and indirect behavioral responses such as theft, vandalism, sabotage, reduction of citizenship behaviour, withdrawal and resistance to change (Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994). Other scholars such as Folger and Tesluk (1991), cited in Kirk – Chang and Chuchai (2010) hold that the relationship between perceived injustice and organizational retaliatory behavior is moderated by personality factors such as negative affectivity and agreeableness. Though Bard-Kuvaas and Anders (2010)’s study was carried out in Asia, it is significant. However, the fact that it was carried out outside Uganda, partly made the current study inevitable.

III. METHODOLOGY

Using a cross-sectional survey design with quantitative and qualitative approaches, 380 managers of private universities namely Heads of Department, Assistant Deans, Deans, Assistant Directors or Directors of Faculties, Colleges or Schools in the denominational universities and non-denominational universities. The two categories of private universities were chosen with a conviction that, the denominational universities have some peculiar characteristics. For instance, in the denominational universities in addition to teaching secular studies, there is emphasis on observing particular religious principles and practices by both students and staff, yet in the non-denominational universities there is liberalism in the social, religious and cultural aspects for both students and members of staff. Six denominational and seven non denominational universities were selected to participate in the study.

Out of the 380 questionnaires distributed, 296 usable questionnaires were returned, thus, yielding a response rate of 77.86%. The researcher believes that academic officials in 13 private universities that participated in the study constitute fairly a large enough sample and can make a sound generalizability of the study findings to all the private universities in Uganda.

The researcher also used oral interviews so as to supplement quantitative data to give detailed information on the items. This was meant to get a detailed picture of what was on the ground in universities as far as their management was concerned, thus strengthening data interpretation. The standardized questionnaire on the managerial techniques were validated and tested for reliability using construct validity and factor analysis. They were pretested among 28 academic officials of Ggaba Primary Teachers’ College and Kibuli Primary Teachers’ College, the Church founded and Muslim founded (but Government- aided) institutions. These did not participate in the actual study. The work done by the officials of teacher training colleges does not differ much from that of the universities officials. A mathematical calculation was also used to ascertain the validity and reliability of the instruments. Construct Validity Index of 0.673 was obtained which was above 0.5, implying that the tools were valid. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient value was 0.87, which implied that the instruments were reliable and dependable. The Pearson’s chi-square was used to establish the relationship between private university type and the dominantly used managerial techniques.

Limitation

Since the academic officials were rating themselves regarding their dominant usage of the managerial techniques, their honesty cannot be guaranteed. This could have resulted in an overstatement or understatement of the relationships between the variables. Despite this however, the current study asserts that anonymous self-report which was required of the respondents provided the closest available approximation of the relationships among the variables. Despite this, the researcher believes this study has implications for future research and practices.

IV. FINDINGS

Based on quantitative data, there exists a significant difference in the dominant usage of particular managerial techniques between denominational and non denominational private universities in Uganda (Sig, 0.032). In other words, the difference in the usage of the managerial techniques was found to be big enough whereby denominational universities had better methods of management than their counterparts in non denominational universities. For instance, team management, the best method of management was more in practiced by 32.37% of the academic officials in denominational universities compared to 20.38% of the academic officials in non denominational universities. The same is true with status-quo management (20.86% compared to 7.64% of the academic officials respectively. Paternalistic and opportunistic management, the two worse styles of management were used far more in non denominational universities.

by 70.70% of the academic officials there than in the denominational universities where it was used by 43.17% of the academic officials. However, dictatorial management was almost equally not used in private universities. Also, indifferent and accommodating management were almost equally used in both denominational and non-denominational universities. All this is shown in table 1.
V. DISCUSSION

There exists a significant difference in managerial techniques between denominational and non-denominational universities (Sig, 0.032). In other words, the difference in the usage of the managerial techniques is big enough. According to qualitative data from oral interviews, this difference was attributed to the different missions and objectives of the universities. For instance, team management and status quo management were higher in denominational universities than in non-denominational universities. This could be because of the fact that 38.46% of the universities under study were church-founded. The finding that status quo management and team management were higher in denominational universities compared to the non-denominational universities could be because of that. Church-founded universities seem to be taking an example of Jesus Christ who was a teacher (preacher), a doctor (healer), and a manager (of the church) he had founded. He also had high concern for both people and production (growth of the church) as evidenced in the many people he converted, the sick he healed, the exorcism miracles he performed and the way he walked from place to place looking for people to bring them to his church as recorded in the Bible, in the gospel of Mark, chapters 9-13. Some of the academic officials in the denominational universities were ordained reverends, priests, Nuns, Brothers and Pastors. Even the founders are ordained reverends. That could account for high status quo and team management. In Bugema University for instance, one of the denominational universities under study, the University’s mission statement is, “To offer an excellent and distinctive holistic Christian education designed to prepare our students through training, research and scholarship for productive lives of useful service to God and to society with un-compromising integrity, honesty and loyalty”. The mission of Uganda Martyrs University states, “To develop an integral person by providing high quality education within an environment conducive to learning, in order to produce professionals of a wide variety of academic competencies with critical and creative abilities and who will contribute positively to the development of the nation and the world at large while observing values of service and respect. The mission is derived from a Christian understanding of a person”. Relatedly, the mission of Islamic University in Uganda states, “Aspiring to function as a highly academic and cultural institution in the service of humanity. It aims at promoting and enhancing the civilization and scientific influence of Islam in the region. The university aims at achieving these goals through the pursuit of teaching, learning, research, scholarship, good governance and affirmative action to the Muslims, the women and other disadvantaged groups”. Based on the spiritual element indirectly embedded in the missions of denominational universities, it is not surprising that team and status-quo management were higher in denominational universities than in non-denominational universities.

The significant difference between denominational and non-denominational universities in the dominant usage of the particular managerial methods/techniques could be due to the fact that denominational universities are founded by particular bodies such as religious denominations. These have specific objectives and missions (Ssekamwa, 2000). Therefore, as a body, regular assessment of the managers of different levels is most likely. This makes the managers adopt techniques which can best enable the organization or university to achieve its objectives effectively and efficiently.

Also, the significant difference could be attributed to the strong culture within the denominational universities. As Kizza (2003) observes, different organizations have different cultures. If managers understand well the culture of the
organization, they can easily adopt managerial practices which do not contradict the organization’s cultural biases and traditions. As observed in the private universities of Uganda, culture usually differ from one university type to another, for example, religious founded universities usually have cultures different from those of the profit-oriented universities. Organizational culture consists of the values, symbols, stories, heroes and rites that have special meaning to the employees of the organization. Thus, names of denominational universities in Uganda such as ‘Uganda Martyrs’, ‘Bishop Stuart’, ‘Christian University’ imply that the respective universities need not only acknowledge the religious gurus after whom those institutions were named, but also emulate them, for example the Uganda martyrs who are remembered for the blood they shed which partly enabled Christianity to gain roots and spread in Uganda till today. It is thus not surprising that better management was realized in denominational universities than in the non denominational universities.

In some non denominational universities, organizational culture does not exist or it exists but it is not very strong, unlike in denominational universities (Kizza, 2003). Because of that, some managers of universities adopt managerial techniques, some of which are meant for personal benefits. This could account for the 70.70% of the respondents in non-denominational universities who were using paternalistic and opportunistic managerial techniques as their dominant managerial techniques, compared to 43.07% of the respondents from denominational universities who were using the very managerial techniques, as shown in table 9. Only 20.38% of the respondents from non- denominational universities were using team style, yet 32.37% of the respondents from denominational universities were using team style, a managerial technique claimed by many authors as the best managerial technique.

A very small percentage (7.64%) of the respondents in non-denominational universities, compared to 20.86% of the respondents in denominational universities, were using status quo management (Middle- of- the road management). Middle of the road managers balance organizational goals with the employees’ needs. Thus, this seemingly reveals that religious- founded universities are better than non religious-founded universities in terms of having a heart for their people and the organizations (universities). This could also be attributed to organizational culture. Culture usually represents the emotional, intangible part of the organization. Many organisations attempt to develop organizational cultures that are helpful in motivating their employees and keeping them committed to the organization. Organizational culture leads to enhanced commitment, shared perceptions, justification of behavior, enhanced cooperation, improved communication, enhanced control, and improved decision making (Mammoria and Gankar, 2001). To illustrate the issue of organizational culture further, some interviewees from Uganda Martyrs’ University said that in the months of May and October, the Holy Rosary is prayed. Though it is not compulsory for the members of staff, they (the members of staff) are encouraged to observe those prayers for 30 days of the month.

Surprisingly, none of the respondents in non-denominational universities was using dictatorial management. Yet in denominational universities, 0.72% of the respondents there were using dictatorial management. This could be attributed to the fact that the respondents of the study were middle managers, not the top managers, nor the founders. Denominational universities have cultures and norms which the organizational members have to observe such as the daily prayers and regular worship (holy services) in the church-founded universities as well as the dress code, sexual morality and the regular daily prayers in the Islamic University in Uganda. At times observing them requires coercing people, as some employees may be skeptical about observing those cultures and norms, by for example wondering how relevant they are in the contemporary religious pluralistic society, and moreover in a country like Uganda where there is freedom of worship (Kizza, 2003).

The very small percentages of respondents in denominational and non-denominational universities (less than 2%) who were using indifferent management and dictatorial management seems to imply that, those two managerial techniques are generally not desired in both types of universities. In those two managerial techniques, managers have low concern for production (the organisation). Therefore, the academic officials with a low concern for their universities were very few (less than 2%). This implies that, all academic officials in denominational and non denominational universities had high concern for their respective universities. Based on qualitative data, this was because; all respondents were holding managerial posts. As a manager, one of the peculiar roles is to ensure that organizational objectives are achieved. Achieving organizational objectives requires, among other things, having high concern for production.

The few indifferent ones could have been overlooked by the organization in terms of career progression, so they do their work with minimum effort. Though the slightly bigger percentages of indifferent managers (1.44%) and accommodating managers (1.44 %) were from denominational universities compared to the indifferent managers (0.64%) and accommodating managers (0.64%) from non –denominational universities, the difference was insignificant. The slightly higher percentage being in denominational universities could however be attributed to the hope of the same managers that, by having high concern for people as is the case in accommodating management, employees are made happy and can hence have the university at heart.

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