

# Gender and Management in Uganda: The Case of Private Universities

Dr. Kayindu Vincent

*Kampala International University, Uganda, East Africa*

**Abstract:** - The current study was guided by the null hypothesis that the dominant usage of particular methods of management, hereinafter referred to as the managerial techniques, in private universities in Uganda is not related to gender differences. The study was restricted to the academic officials within the universities, selected using universal sampling. At 0.05 level of significance, the relationship between the variables of the study was found to be insignificant (sig 0.601), hence the null hypothesis was accepted.

## I. INTRODUCTION

All universities in Uganda are guided by the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act which was enacted in 2001, with subsequent amendments in 2006. It plays the regulatory and guiding role in the establishment and management of higher educational institutions and regulating the quality of higher education. The National Council for Higher Education was established under the Universities and Other Tertiary (Republic of Uganda, 2008). Since the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 stipulates the academic qualifications required of all the university teachers, from whom academic officials are elected or appointed, both men and women get managerial positions in universities, such as Faculty Deans, College Principals, Directors of Institutes and Heads of Department. Though there is an outcry of the mismanagement of universities (National Council for Higher Education, 2010), it is not indicated whether or not this can be explained by gender differences of the managers, hence the current study.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Whereas there is a relatively large number of female academics in all universities in Uganda, the number of female administrators is small compared their male counterparts (National Council for Higher Education, 2010), could there be a perception that men are better administrators than women? Conversely, is the usage of particular methods of management dependent on gender? The study was carried out to provide answers to that question.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Though human beings were created as male and female, until recently females have been regarded as weak, and were hence denied leadership and managerial positions almost throughout the world (Byaruhanga - Akiiki, 1991). The perception of

inequality between males and females can not only be traced from African traditions and cultures but also from the Islamic, Christian and Jewish Holy Scriptures, which indicate that a woman created from the man's rib, was created after the man, to help man co - create with God. This has, especially in the past been interpreted by many people to mean that men are above women (Kigongo, 1991; Mbiti, 1975). Because of this, many authors and philosophers from various parts of the world have displayed women as being below men, hence unfit to be managers. For example, ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle held that woman were weaker than men. Jean Jacques Rousseau even claimed that because women are sexually attractive, they are a threat to men, and that they have great power and potential to destroy men's structures of power (Tuyizere, 2007).

However, though Plato considered women to be weaker than men, he called for girls to be educated in the same manner as boys, with equal opportunities open to them to become rulers. Therefore, Plato championed the emancipation of woman in Greece. Many years later, other philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke stressed that all individuals are equal in nature, thereby demolishing the ancient rationale for giving some individuals more political rights than others (Lindsey, 1997). In Saudi Arabia, before the advent of the Islamic religion, women held an inferior position. They were taken like property of men. Arabs preferred boys to girls, and baby girls were usually killed at birth. Women could not assume any managerial post in society. The situation was not different from that in Africa. In Africa, only men were the rulers, leaders and managers. Women were considered inferior to men (Mbiti, 1975; Byaruhanga Akiiki, 1991). Because of this, a man was free to marry as many women as he wished, yet a woman was supposed to have one husband at a time. Widow inheritance was the order of the day and sometimes the elders chose for her who of the deceased's brother or relatives was to inherit her (Mbiti, 1975). In some societies like Buganda of Uganda the origin of death in the world was associated with a woman. While on the way, it was considered a curse to meet a woman or a girl (Kaggwa, 2001; Kirwana-Ssozi, 2002).

It was against that background that women were not accorded high status in society and could thus not be appointed to managerial positions in society. It was only in a few kingdoms where some women could be leaders or managers. For example, in Ankole kingdom of Uganda, female chiefs were there during the pre- colonial period. Women leaders were

sometimes credited with extraordinary powers. Ankole was renowned for its female diviners who included well-known women like Murogo, Nyatuzana, Kyishokye and Kibubwa. The **king** (Mugabe) Rwebishengye of Ankole appointed the famous diviner Murogo to work for him as a spy on the Banyoro north of Katonga. Murogo and her female descendants were allegedly able to turn themselves into cows and mingle with the cattle so as to give protection to people and cows (Moris 1957). In Teso region of Uganda, the main female position of importance was the **apoton ka etale**, the woman in charge of rituals that governed the taboos of the clan. She was the most senior woman in the clan with the most experience of taboo functions. Her task was to ensure that newly married women were initiated into the clan taboos; this in effect gave her control of the women and children in the clan. Women also featured as foretellers in Iteso society, with some like Amongin becoming widely known and revered (Webster et al., 1973). Before and after going to war, the Iteso warriors would consult with a foreteller, who would advise them on what rituals to perform. Foretellers not only predicted the outcomes of wars, fishing and hunting expeditions, and other future events, they also had spiritual powers to heal the sick and to prevent witchcraft directed at an individual. With this ability to predict the future, they were able virtually to control the military leaders of the nineteenth century.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century women's liberation movement started fighting for the rights of women and the girl child. Even to date, the emancipation of females is one of the priorities in the world. Women today assume managerial positions and other higher positions in society. Therefore, this shows that, though male domination in the social, political, religious and economic spheres of life existed in Uganda during the pre-independence period, there were a few women who held leadership and managerial positions in society. Women who held leadership and managerial positions in society were mainly from the royal families and families of high socio-economic status. Regarding the difference in leadership, male leaders in Uganda were alleged to have exhibited a higher level of autocracy than females (Kaggwa, 1991). Today, both men and women, because of formal education and increased level of civilization, do assume managerial and leadership positions in society.

Based on this historical background of preferring men in managerial positions at the expense of women, the question is, "Are men really better managers than women, or are women better managers than men?". Based on Uganda's educational experience, there are several single sex boarding secondary schools. Female single sex schools are headed by women while male single sex schools are headed by men. Many of the women-headed schools perform more or less the same as the men-headed schools, as measured by the national examinations of S.4 and S.6 over the years (Uganda National Examinations Board, 2010). This can cause us to jump to a conclusion that both men and women can be good managers provided that other factors are constant.

As for the universities however, the government of the Republic of Uganda has instituted various commissions of inquiry into the management of public universities. For example, in 2006 the President of the republic of Uganda, who under Subsection 1 of Section 26 of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 is a visitor to each of the public universities, caused the setting up of a visitation committee to the public universities. The committee comprised of 12 members who carried out the visitation and completed the work after 11 months. In the then three public universities, all of which were headed by men as vice chancellors, the committee found among other things, poor management at different levels, lack of professional commitment, sexual harassment of female students (Republic of Uganda, 2008). Does this suggest that men are poor administrators at university level? Probably yes.

The view of perceiving men as poor managers in Uganda is corroborated by the alarming allegations of male administrators' sexual harassment of female students in secondary schools, tertiary institutions and universities (Onen, 2004; Cabinet Committee on the unrest and strike at Kyambogo University, 2007; Okello, 2010). Sexual harassment to students implies deteriorated ethical principles which translate into poor management.

Psychologists hold that males have a sex hormone called testosterone, whose quantity differs from person to person. Males with too much of it tend to be more aggressive than those with little of it. Because of this hormone, males tend to be more aggressive than females. Men who have higher levels of testosterone also tend to have more psychological problems. These come as a consequence of aggressive tendencies (Dabbs and Morris, 1990; Booth and Dabbs, 1993), cited in Henslin (2002). Sociologically, unlike men, women are much less likely to behave aggressively in non-provocative circumstances than men are. In most cases, when women commit acts of overt aggression, they tend to feel more guilt or anxiety about such acts than men do (Eagly and Steffen, 1986), cited in Henslin (2002).

Many authors have claimed that though males and females can perform the same roles, significant gender differences exist in the way they react to situations, how they perform their tasks, and even in behavior. For example, it is claimed that women, more than men are more sensitive to non-verbal cues, which helps explain their greater emotional responsiveness in both depressing and joyful situations. In leadership, men tend to be directive, yet women tend to be democratic. Men tend to excel as task - focused leaders and directive, yet women are social leaders who build team spirit. Men more than women place priority on winning, men are more likely to act as powerful people for example, they usually talk assertively, talk while interrupting, touching with the hand, staring more and smile less. On the other hand, women tend to be less interruptive, more sensitive, more polite and more indirect. In addition, men tend to be more

overtly aggressive and violent than women (Alcock, Carment, and Sadava, 1988; Henslin, 2002).

The implication of gender differences from the psychological and sociological perspectives is seemingly that, in the management of organizations, there is likely to be a difference in the dominant styles used by male and female managers. Men are more likely to use dictatorial or autocratic style, yet females are more likely to use democratic style, under normal circumstances. In the study of Otim (2016) however, he uncovered that secondary schools head teachers in Gulu district were dominantly using democratic management style; there was no marked differences in the use of management styles between male and female head teachers. Related findings were reported by Nabawanuka (2004). Contradictory findings were however reported by Ndagigye (2016) who carried out a study in private secondary schools in Ssembabule district using a qualitative approach and found that female headteachers, due to the desire of being respected and feared by teachers, were more autocratic than their male counterparts.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

Based on the theory of Organizational Behavior propounded by Getzels and Guba and Theory X and theory Y propounded by Douglas McGregor, the study used a descriptive survey design. It was descriptive survey because of a relatively large number of respondents who participated in the study (380 academic officials. It was also cross-sectional in that, it aimed at getting responses from informants at once, without contacting them repeatedly. The population of this study were the managers of private universities who directly deal with academic issues and can hence oversee, monitor and assess the lecturers and cause them to perform accordingly. They were chosen because the major activity in universities is the dissemination of knowledge. This is mainly done by the university teachers (lecturers), who are under normal circumstances, answerable to their respective Heads of Department, Assistant Deans, Deans, Assistant Directors or Directors of Faculties, Colleges or Schools in the universities. Those academic officials are therefore some of the key actors in the dissemination of knowledge. Therefore, the managerial methods they use in executing their duties as well as their extent of job satisfaction is important if good results are to be achieved. In view of the limited number of academic officials in the universities, the universal sampling technique was used. All the 380 academic officials in the 13 universities were included in the study. Although Krejcie and Morgan (1970), as cited by Amin (2005) in the Table for choosing a minimum sample size from the given population states that if the population size is 380, the minimum sample should be 191, Amin (2005) asserts that the bigger the sample, the more the accuracy of the generalizability of the findings to the population. Because of that and the fact that the population was from different types of universities and different foundation bodies, universal sampling was preferred. Thus, a total of 380 questionnaires were distributed. 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.

Questionnaires were used because of the nature of the data that required the personal assessment of the respondents regarding the extent of their usage of the different managerial techniques. In addition, all the respondents were literate. Questionnaires were thus perceived to be better tools for collecting the data. They were pretested among 28 academic officials of Ggaba Primary Teachers' College and Kibuli Primary Teachers' College, 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. 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.

#### Measurement of variables

The different methods of management which university officials usually use in the execution of their duties were adopted from on the Managerial Grid Model, developed by Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton in the year 1957 and was revised in 1999. The managerial techniques are seven, namely: indifferent management, accommodating management, dictatorial management, status quo management, team style of management, opportunistic management and paternalistic management. The data were analysed using the Chi-square.

#### V. FINDINGS

Based on the sig. value of 0.601 which is larger than 0.05 level of significance usually used in Social Sciences, the findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between academic officials' gender and the dominantly used methods of management, as shown in table 1

Table 1: Gender and managerial techniques/ methods of management

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Management styles	Indifferent	2	1	3
	Accommodating	1	1	2
	Dictatorial	1	0	1
	Status quo	28	13	41
	Team style	62	15	77
	Others	133	38	171
Total		227	68	295

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.649(a)	5	.601
N of Valid Cases	295		

In other words, gender contributes very little to one's choice of the method of management to use in the execution of his or her duties. This finding suggests that it is other factors which mainly cause managers to use certain managerial techniques or methods of management, not gender. This calls for further studies in a related area to explore those other factors.

## VI. DISCUSSION

It is revealed that less than one percent of the male respondents were dominantly using indifferent management, and less than one percent of the males were dominantly using accommodating management. Yet, of the two managerial techniques, 1.47% of the females were dominantly using indifferent management and 1.47% of the females were using dictatorial management. The insignificant difference could be attributed to individual differences. Some people have weaknesses such as laziness, laxity, and taking things for granted, hence thinking that in an organization, if you put workers' needs first and satisfy them, better production will follow, hence the accommodating management. There are some managers who are frustrated, selfish, and want to put their individual interests first, hence indifferent management (low concern for people and for production).

None of the female respondents was dominantly using dictatorial management, and only 0.44% of the male respondents were dominantly using it. The difference is insignificant. This could be attributed to the formal education received. Highly educated people, as the case is with universities' academic officials, rarely have inferiority complex (Kwesiga, 2002). Dictatorship at times comes because of inferiority complex (Abraham, 1999; Morris, 1997). These findings thus refute the assertions of Daly and Wilson, 1989; Kenrick, 1987; Bulatao and Vandenbos, 1996; Loeber and Hay, 1997; Jukes and Goldstein, 1993; Singer, 1994, cited in Michener, H.A. and Delamater, J.D. (1999), that males are more dictatorial and violent than females.

About fifty nine percent (58.59%) of the male respondents were dominantly using paternalistic and opportunistic management, and 55.88% of the female respondents were dominantly using those very managerial techniques. The difference between males and females is insignificant. The high numbers of males and females using those managerial techniques reveals that in the contemporary world, hypocrisy equally exists among some men and women. While working, some managers, both males and females have selfish motives.

The insignificant difference in the usage of managerial techniques between males and females also contradicts the observations of Hunt, 1990, Batson, et al, 1986; Eisenberg and

Lennon, 1983, cited in Michener, H.A. and Delamater, J.D. (1999), that unlike men, women are usually more empathetic, being able to feel what others feel, to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. It was also claimed that as leaders, women tend to be more democratic and build team spirit, yet males tend to put priority on winning, getting ahead and dominating others.

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