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Academic Staff Capacities in Private Universities in Tanzania

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the capacities of academic staff towards realization of teaching, research and community services university functions. Findings revealed that there are maneuvering of academic qualifications among academic staff in private universities; such unfortunate tendencies prevail as no strictly recruitment criteria like those in public universities for academic job applicants, thus adversely affecting their capacities to meet their core functions. It was also revealed that academic staff names appeared in different universities payrolls and interestingly in both payrolls such academic staff appeared as full-time academic staff. It was recommended that, recruitment process should be strictly, transparent to ensure that academic staffs were recruited and allocated workload basing on their academic qualifications and meritocracy.

Introduction

Universities are viewed in many African countries as critical institutions for natural development where a wide range of subjects are taught to a high level providing a corps of educated elite to serve the community and entire nation (Adelabu & Akinwumi 2008). Universities are

the highest centre for learning where male and female citizens who have the capacity to study acquire degree. The graduates acquire different skills, which are designed to meet the demand in all economic pursuits. Universities educate future leaders and develop the high level technical capacities that underpin economic growth (World Bank 1994). Moreover, Nyerere (1966) outlines major functions of university, these are, to transmit knowledge from one generation to the next so that it can serve either as a basis of action, or a springboard to further research, secondly, to provide a centre for the attempt to advance the frontiers of knowledge by concentrating in one place some of the most intellectually able people who are not preoccupied by day-to-day administrative or professional responsibilities and making available to them good library and laboratory facilities which are necessary to support learning and thirdly, to provide through its teaching for high level manpower needs of society. Furthermore, Nyerere (1999) observed that universities are required to be knowledge creating centers. He went on point out that to be competitive universities must be innovative, ready to venture into unfamiliar or neglected territories. He further argued that universities are challenged to discover and advance indigenous knowledge and blend it with modern sciences and technologies hence to Tanzania and Africa in general to the world development.

In Tanzania, a university college was first established in 1961 as a constituent college of the University of London. In 1963, it became a constituent college of the University of East Africa, and in 1970 the constituent colleges of the University of East Africa became an independent national universities, namely the University of Dar es Salaam, the University of Nairobi and Makerere University. Apart from University of Dar es Salaam other public universities were later established include Sokoine University of

Agriculture in 1984, the Open University of Tanzania in 1992. In 1997 two constituent colleges of the University of Dar es Salaam were established, these are the University College of Land and Architectural Studies and Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences. Consequently, the University of Dodoma was established in 2006. The limited number of public universities implies that only a small proportion of the population has access to university education. For instance, out of 82, 529 applicants in the 2007/2008 academic year, only 64,664 applicants admitted into public universities, this trend connotes that 17,865 applicants were left out of public universities. This means, while the demand for university education is increasing in Tanzania this demand does not correspond with the available university places in public universities. It is also clear that such increase is determined by using proxy indicator of admission rate, which is, comparing the number of candidates who applied to those who actually got admitted. For instance, in the 2006/2007 academic year, the University of Dar es Salaam (Main Campus) enrolled only 7,049 applicants (46 percent) out of a total of 15,185 applicants who passed the matriculation examination (UDSM 2006). This implies that 8,136 applicants who were eligible for admission could not be absorbed by the University of Dar es Salaam and the only available option is private universities. It is worth noting that this admission is not only peculiar to the University of Dar es Salaam but to other public universities in Tanzania as well. The only exception is the Open University of Tanzania, which admits non-traditional students and offers academic programs purely through distance learning. The low admission rates to public universities are one of the major reasons to the increased private universities in Tanzania. Participation in tertiary education as a percentage of the relevant

age group was one percent in Tanzania in the year 2000, compared to 3 percent for Uganda and Kenya respectively (World Bank 2003).

Within education, private sector involvement is considered critical for meeting the Education for All (EFA) targets (World Bank 2003). Also World Bank (1994) argues that private universities are an important element of some of the strongest higher education systems to be found today in developing countries. They can respond efficiently and flexibly to changing demand and they increase educational opportunities for all. It is in this respect that governments are implored to encourage and facilitate the development of private universities to complement public universities. This would also act as a means of managing the costs of expanding higher education enrolments, increasing the diversity of training programs and broadening social participation in higher education.

It must be mentioned that private universities did not exist in Tanzania until 1995 when the first private university–Tumaini University, Iringa University College was established. This university is currently the largest private university in Tanzania with 7 constituent colleges. Another private university was established in 1998 St. Augustine University of Tanzania which currently has 7 constituent colleges. Thus by January 2010 there were 21 private universities in Tanzania as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Current Tanzania Private Universities and University Colleges

S/N	Institution	Year Established	Registration Status
1	Hubert Kairuki Memorial University	1996	COA
2	International Medical&Techn. Univ.	1996	CFR
3	Zanzibar University	1998	CFR
4	Tumaini University	1999	COA
5	St. Augustine University of Tanzania	1996	COA
6	Mt. Meru university of Tanzania	2002	CFR
7	University of Arusha	2003	CFR
8	Teofilo Kisanji university	2004	CFR
9	Muslim University of Morogoro	2005	CFR
10	Iringa University College	1996	COA
11	KCMC University	1997	CFR
12	Tumaini Univ. Dar College	1997	CFR
13	Makumira University College	1996	CFR
14	Aga Khan University-TIHE	1996	CFR
15	Weill Bugando Univ. of Health Sciences	2002	CFR
16	Mwenge University College of Education	2005	CFR
17	Stefano Moshi Mem. University College	2006	CPR
18	St. John's University of Tanzania	2007	CPR
19	University College of Zanzibar	1998	CFR
20	Sebastian Kolowa University College	2007	CPR
21	Ruaha University College	2005	CFR

Source: The Tanzania Commission for Universities (2010). The Universities and University Colleges

Key: COA= Certificate of Accreditation; CFR = Certificate of Full Registration; CPR = Certificate of Provisional Registration

Table 1. shows that four (20 percent) of the 21 private universities have Certificate of Accreditation, 3 (15 percent) have Certificate of Provisional Registration, 13 (65 percent) have Certificate of Full Registration. This implies that the majority of private universities (about 80 percent) have yet to meet the required standard to be offered Certificate of

Accreditation, as to be awarded Certificate of Accreditation a university has to attain full registration status and conduct an internal self-evaluation in accordance with institutional self-assessment and quality assurance guidelines prescribed by TCU. Certificate of Accreditation is granted after a Technical Evaluation Committee appointed by the TCU has made a thorough review and assessment on various issues, for instance, the adequacy of the facilities and services such as academic staff: students, students: facility ratio, adequacy of number, qualifications and the experience of academic, administrative and technical support staff. Only 20 percent of all private universities in Tanzania have been awarded Certificate of Accreditation.

In recognition of the importance of the private sector in the provision of higher education, the government decided to liberalize the provision of higher education in Tanzania by amending the Education Act No. 10 of 1978, which was replaced with the Education Act No. 10 of 1995. This new Act has a provision for the establishment of private higher education institutions. Also, the 1999 National Higher Education policy justifies the need for involvement of the private sector participation in the provision of higher education;

...to encourage private organizations, individual, non-governmental organizations and communities to take an active role in establishing and maintaining institutions of higher education. To introduce guidelines for incentives such as tax relief, government grants for institutions maintaining high quality of teaching, research and public service' (URT 1999,23).

Also, Higher Education Development Programme 2010–2015, MoEVT (2010) supports the public-private partnership (PPP) in the provision of higher education, further insisted that PPP is an important, necessary and a matter that requires encouragement, if properly exploited, it offers a

considerable opportunity for higher education institutions to leverage resources for enhancing provision of services to students and staff, PPP may range from financing and maintenance of academic facilities, students hostels, cafeteria, social amenities such as, sports facilities and staff houses for mutual agreed period. It is urged that PPP is attractive because it can fully recover investment costs and can be self sustained.

These are government's strategies to attract private sector support into higher education. Following the government's decision to enhance partnership in the provision of education, several private education institutions (from pre-primary to universities) have been established in the country. A rapid increase of private universities in Tanzania was highly noted during the third phase government under the leadership of President Benjamin Mkapa, who gave some of the public-owned colleges/schools to private organizations mainly religious denominations to be used as private universities, for instance, TANESCO Training College was given to the Muslim Development Foundation which established the Muslim University of Morogoro, Mazengo Secondary School was given to the Anglican Church of Tanzania (now St. John's University of Tanzania), Magamba Secondary School was given to Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (now Sebastian Kolowa University College), Bank of Tanzania Training Institute – Iringa was given to Roman Catholic church of Tanzania (now Ruaha University College). This private sector response in the establishment of universities has been quite intense and has made Tanzania to become aligned to the change of deregulated educational industry worldwide where private sector participation is taking pride in the provision of what was originally the preserve of the government.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to critically examine the capacities of academic staff in private universities in Tanzania. This study will look at academic qualifications, experience in teaching, and research and community services as a measure for their capacities to perform academic duties.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Identification of Academic Qualifications and Working Experience of Academic Staff

The central point of this task was to identify the academic qualifications of academic staff in PRUs. Semi-structured interview and document analysis methods were used to collect data from the respondents. Respondents were the Deputy Vice Chancellors – Academic Affairs, (DVC – AA) in respective private universities. The Data obtained through questionnaires are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Academic Staff by Qualifications in the three sampled private universities in 2010

University	Academic Staff by Qualifications												Total No. of Academic Staff		
	Doctorate			Masters			PGD			Bachelor			F	T	%
	F	T	%	F	T	%	F	T	%	F	T	%			
A	3	10	32	18	56	18	1	3	75	11	28	48	33	97	28
B	4	16	52	49	249	79	0	1	25	5	22	38	58	221	65
C	0	5	16	1	11	3	0	0	0	0	8	14	1	24	7
Total	7	31	100	68	316	100	1	4	100	16	58	100	92	342	100

Key: M = Male, F = Female, T = Total, Male = T – F, PGD=Post Graduate Diploma

Table 2 shows that doctorate holders were just 31 or 9 percent in the sampled private universities. The majority of the doctorate holders were

found in university B and A who were 16 (52 percent) and 10 (32 percent) respectively. Few doctorate holders, that is 5 (16 percent) were found in university C, few availability doctorates in university C was due to incapability of the university to pay large number of them (doctorate holders), it was further observed that among those 31 doctorate holders 10 of them were part-time academic staff. Such shortage of full-time doctorate holders connoted that the workload for the few available doctorate holders was heavy which may lead to sacrifice quality education, as it was observed that one doctorate holder was allocated up to 90 teaching hours per semester with an average of 300 students' class. Such a heavy teaching load meant that much time of these academic staff was devoted to teaching and thus neglecting the other university's core functions that is, research and community services. Hence, it is argued that number and academic qualifications alone should not be the only criteria during recruitment and distribution of the workload, focus should be on the needs of the faculty or department so as to recruit in accordance with departmental/faculty needs in a proportion that will ensure medium or low unit cost and proper utilization of academic members of staff in areas of teaching, research and community services.

Too much reliance on part-time academic staff increase unit cost, hence operational cost of universities tend to inflate which results to universities sacrifice quality by enrolling more students so as to raise funds to pay part-time lecturers, also, hiring large number of part-time lecturers denied the students the opportunities to seek consultation and academic advice from their lecturers on matters concerning students course as well as career counseling as it is insisted by Coates and Dobson (2010) that

universities should increase students' interaction with their lecturers because this is critical for students' retention and graduate prospects.

It was also found that there are fewer female academic staff than male academic staff, for instance, in all sampled private universities there were only 7 female doctorate holders out of 31, this trend of few female doctorate holders in these private universities may be attributed to the absence of gender policy which could give opportunities for more qualified females to be recruited, trained as well as promoted to high academic and administrative ranks, as it is practiced in public universities, for instance, University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) gender policy states that, UDSM shall mainstream gender in staff recruitment, development, training and retention, hence as a result of such policy implementation, it has managed to increase the percentage of female doctorate holders from 10 percent in 2004/05 academic year to 18 percent in 2009/2010 academic year. Therefore, absence of gender policy in these private universities may be the cause for them having a few female doctorate holders. This suggests that there is a need for private universities to put in place deliberate measures to correct such gender imbalance both at institution level and across faculties, for instance, at university C the researcher found only one female academic staff.

Furthermore, it has been observed that the majority of academic staff hold masters degrees, for example, in all three PRU's, 316 hold masters degrees (77 percent), followed by 58 (14 percent) bachelor degree holders. The majority of the masters degree holders whom most of them were just recruited hence lack adequate working experience in terms of teaching, scholarly research and publication were allocated teaching load of up to 90

teaching hours and much worse allocated to teach even masters degree programmes, this signifies that in these private universities focus is on teaching without regarding knowledge stock that academic member of staff hold. Moreover, in university B the researcher found masters degree holders academic staff teach and supervise masters degree students, while in university A researcher noted that bachelor degree holders (Tutorial Assistants) were included in the teaching timetable and allocated up to 60 teaching hours in a semester to teach undergraduate courses, yet tutorial assistantship is a training post and were not supposed to teach. This practice of allocating teaching workload to even bachelor degree holders (tutorial assistants) and masters holders to teach masters degree classes is a notable violation of TCU regulations which had an impact on the quality of knowledge, skills students receive from those less qualified academic staff, as a result may lead unfulfilling of university's core functions of teaching, research and community services hence compromise quality.

The researcher found that in University A, academic staff member whose academic qualification is "*Doctor of Philosophy*" was equated to Master of Philosophy degree by the Tanzania Commission for Universities, (TCU) a mandatory body to standardize, recognize and equate degree by virtue given by the Universities Act No. 7 of 2005 in its public notice on Daily News July 26, 2007 while such academic staff in university A still indicated as doctorate holder and categorized to the rank of lecturer also held the post of director of one of the bureau. Such observation shows that there is maneuver (tricks) done in university A to blanket the real academic qualification of such an academic staff member who has been re-categorized by TCU as holding a masters degree instead of doctorate degree which he claims to hold. Such unfortunate tendencies of deceiving academic

qualifications of academic staff members if not checked by TCU in collaboration with pertinent universities may allow unqualified people to penetrate as academicians into higher education institutions particularly private universities whose recruitment eligibility criteria are not as strict as in public universities as reported by Rugonzibwa (2009) that one academic staff who teaches in several private universities in Tanzania for more than five years, is under probe accused for using fake degree certificates, on the other hand in the public universities recruitment criteria for an academic staff is very strictly and demand high academic performance, for instance, at University of Dodoma (public university) for a person to be recruited in a particular faculty or department as an academic staff should possess relevant first degree with an overall GPA of 3.8 in undergraduate level plus an average of GPA of not less 4.0 in masters degree results, while in the sampled private universities no any entry point had been set, in terms of minimum GPA for a job applicants on academic staff category to be eligible for employment (UDOM 2007).

Moreover, this study found double-appearance of names of academic staff in different universities payrolls, in both universities' payrolls such academic staff indicated as full-time academic staff, that is, academic staff who appeared in university 'A' as full-time academic staff also appeared in university 'B' as full-time academic staff. Another observation was made that, several academic staff in university 'B' were also listed as full-time in one public university, such double appearance of academic staff in payrolls of two different universities as full-time staff implies that, such private universities include names of academic staff even those who are not full-time members of academic staff so as to either acquire accreditation from TCU or attract prospective students to join such universities on the premise

that such universities have an adequate number of qualified academic staff. Further, such double appearance of academic staff in different universities payroll implies that these private universities have no capacities in terms of academic staff stock hence raise questions on how sustainable will achieve its core functions of teaching, research and community services.

Moreover, the researcher noted that out of 31 doctorate holders in all three private universities, 22 of them were either retirees from public universities or part-time lecturers, only 9 full-time doctorate holders were found, that is to say, there is a negligible number of full-time doctorate holders among the academic staff . It was also noted the few available doctorate holders were in most cases were appointed to hold administrative posts as Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Dean of Faculty or Heads of Departments which adversely affects the teaching workforce. The prevalence of such shortages of highly qualified academic staff somewhat hinder efforts to provide quality university education.

Overall, findings on academic staff qualifications have established that there is no commensurate expansion in the number of qualified academic staff in the sampled private universities. The difference between academic staff available and vacancies is an indicator of gaps in academic staff capacities and the extent to which existing academic staff are able to meet the university's research and teaching responsibilities.

Working Experience of Academic Staff

This section assessed the working experience of academic staff in selected PRUs. Data were gathered through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and documentary review. Respondents were academic staff, The

findings indicated that the largest group in university A, B and C (about 98 percent) of all academic staff has less than 4 years working experience, with the next small group of academic staff (only about 2 percent) who have between 5 to 10 years of working experience as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Working Experience of Academic Staff in Sampled Private Universities

University	Academic Staff Working Experience			
	1-5 years	%	6-10 years	%
A	96	29	0	0
B	213	64	8	2
C	23	7	0	0
Total	382	100	8	2

Table 3 indicates that the majority of the academic staff in the sampled private universities had little working experience (less than 5 years) in each particular university, even those few with more than 5 years experience, for the past five years they have not done any scholarly research publication, hence their experience is only counted on the number of years they have been teaching at such private university. Further analysis of data indicated that the majority of the academic staff were directly recruited fresh from studies (do not have prior working experience), that is, these universities in which they are currently working was their first working station after they finished university studies.

Moreover, DVC (AA) in university C explains that;

since we are a young university with limited funding sources our university does not have well experienced academic staff, as we do not offer attractive salary hence most of academic staff tend to look for employment opportunities somewhere else, only those who are committed Moslems

remain to teach here due to their spiritual devotion to serve the society despite of little earning

Assertion suggest that a large number of academic staff in PRUs does not have adequate working experience as most of them were recruited into university soon after they had finished their studies. Furthermore, the researcher found that in university A most of the academic staff stay for a short time before they quit the job as DVC (AA) of university A narrated;

We have high turnover of academic staff in our university. Once recruited, Some of new staff especially young staff usually stay at university for only one or two semesters before quitting the job, for instance, in 2008/2009 academic year, we recruit about 10 Masters degree holders to teach in Information Technology (IT) department but currently remained with only one academic staff over there.....

The above narration suggests that most of the academic staff in private universities do not stay long to acquire work experience instead they use their presence in these private universities as a platform to look for another job somewhere else, as Ozturgut (2009) comments that most of the academic staff in private universities usually look for a job which provides them with security and prestige. Furthermore, these academic staff look for employment in international organizations like United Nations agencies, international Non-governmental Organizations, financial institutions and telecommunications companies which offer them attractive salaries and benefits including interest-free loans, housing, medical and transport allowances, this observation concurs with what Ishengoma (2007) observes whereby experts from one organization migrate to another organization within the country in search for better payment (green pastures). Also, he further noted that there is a substantial number of experts who have migrated from Tanzania especially university professors, medical doctors and

Information Technology experts migrated to southern Africa countries such as the Republic of South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made;

- i. Strict and transparent recruitment criteria should be in place, on which job applicants will be employed basing on the needs of the departments or faculty, their academic qualifications and working experience.
- ii. PRUs should use appropriate strategies to allocate workload among its academic staff so as meet its core functions of teaching, research and community services.

Conclusions

In light of the findings, this study conclude that, double appearance of academic staff names in different universities payrolls as full-time academic staff and maneuvering of academic staff qualification is a common tendency in private universities.

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