

Philosophical Identities in the ‘Market’ for University Education in Uganda

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Abstract. This study examines the metaphysics and political philosophy behind market competition for Uganda’s university education. Using grounded theory to filter the voices of 12 participants, the first phase of the study, which was qualitative, revealed that a rival (contestable) market of university education in Uganda has three challenges: funding, low research capacity and deregulation. In the second phase of the study, a quantitative study involving 180 participants finds that resource mobilization, financial audit compliance, grant writing, bursaries and loan facilities for students would help to minimize the market challenge. Subsequently, the paper examines the philosophy behind the market of university education. This is with the conclusion that this philosophy is part of the problem affecting university education in the country. More governmental control—to contain the challenges deregulation has posed—is urged.

Keywords: Liberalisation; Funding; Marketisation.

1 Introduction

This study examines the philosophy behind the competition in Uganda’s university education market. The subject of competition for university education is steadily receiving attention in contemporary higher education studies. Since the 1990s, for



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example, there has been expansion in the industry of university education explained by rapid globalization ideologies such as modernism, liberalism and marketization of higher education (Salermo, 2006). These globalization currents have influenced increased student enrolments in the university, university financing challenges (Ziderman, 2003), changing patterns in management of universities and the expanding market of university education (Sicherman, 2005).

The market of university education in Uganda is characterized by the expanding size of the industry, from one university in 1987 to over 50 universities to-date. Locating this analysis in the language of economics, the university education market is characterized as “monopolistic competition”. Nijai (2017) defines competition as a market structure with many global players competing for the buying and selling of an education product. There is free entry and exist of players and consumers described by market rivalry. In Uganda, for example, there are over twenty universities. The massification of university education access posits conflicting interests trading in a similar education product (Marginson, 2006). In the politics of education access, conflicting interests by numerous players motivate the power to bargain for customers. A university with the highest bargaining ability has a higher consumer intake and higher price status (Sergey, Parenti & Thiss, 2011). This bargaining ability may be influenced by opportunities like product branding and excessive advertising for consumer attraction, low pricing of education products, and making the institutional philosophy relevant to societal demands.

The character of competition in the university education market brings in a fleet of challenges and plausible factors of quasi-contestability (Hansmann, 1999) that need the polemics of philosophical interpretation. Although studies have explored the philosophical character of a liberalized university education market for Uganda, there is a paucity of research focusing on the metaphysical and political philosophical dimension. Therefore, this paper explores four philosophical queries:

- 1) What is the metaphysical character of the Market Competition in Uganda’s University Education?
- 2) What is the underlying political philosophy behind the Market Competition in Uganda’s University Education?
- 3) How do these philosophical identities in Market Competition influence University Policy in Uganda?

2 Related Literature

2.1 Market Competition in University Education

The market of university education can be characterized by close and rival competition because of its liberalized nature (Kasozi, 2009). But the competitive nature of the university education market in Uganda determines rivalry among multiple providers and consumers of an education good at the prevailing market

price (Roncaglia, 2005; Pepall & Norman, 2005). Rivalry is explained by close substitutability (Masanja & Lwakabamba, 2016), flaunted by huge clouts of private, national and global players (Baum, Sandy & McPherson, 2012) dealing in a heterogeneous education product but controlled by forces of demand and supply. Rivalry, in this market, induces contestability because of the differentiated nature of the education product. In Uganda there are over 50 universities, each bubbling with the question of financing education as a public good (Kasozi, 2009). Free entry and exit of players is built on the desire for attractive profits, although no comparable evidence how free entry and exist could guarantee long-run profit maximization, where firms are frozen into huge sunk costs of advertising and branding options. When the profits of education access are attractive in Market Competition, then players could enter the industry (Baum et al., 2012), although this does not validate cases where university education is supposedly non-profit making because education is a public good (Kasozi, 2009). In the non-profit design, the aim is not to make attractive profits yet people are attracted to enter business with profit expectations in the deregulated higher education industry. When competition increases, existing players reduce their price to appease the powers of competition, which, in the long-run, increases profit margins for potential customers, making sellers of the education product price-makers in volatile market competition.

However, the sunk cost ideology impairs the institution's investment potential to a shut-down position in the long-run (Roncaglia, 2005). When universities invest excessively in buying huge chunks of land for expansion and in excessive advertisement, they are amassing a huge challenge on their future potential in market competition. The survival of private universities in Uganda is highly dependent on cost management for revenue maximization (Musisi & Nansozi, 2003). It is in the wisdom of players in this market competition to minimize the sunk cost and promote consumer welfare (Otieno, 2004). When Makerere University was a monopoly of university education in Uganda, the quality of higher education crippled because of low contestability (Mugerwa, 2002). It is hugely contested in the literature (Hansmann, 1999) that, market competition possesses an 'associative character' with efficiency and fairness outcomes. When choosing a university, a student is interested not just in the curriculum, policy and facilities, but also global connectivity. The customer's attribute to specific quality requirements predates customer willingness to pay the prevailing price for the associative product (Hansmann, 1999). The products of higher education specify the type and quality they demand, and the market is available to provide a commensurate price of education for producers of associative goods have an incentive to pick only those that are of highest quality.

In market competition, product demand is stratified, and stratification gives market power not just to the institutions at the very top of the status hierarchy, but also to institutions lower down as well. In a status hierarchy, a university faces little threat of competition from high ranking institutions because of multiple products by multiple players in the industry of education (Pepall & Norman, 2005). Profits

should be at levels just enough to reward investment and to accommodate varied expectations, those in higher status and those in lower status dimensions.

The researchers conclude that the market of university education in Uganda today is monopolistically competitive with huge costs to provide and access higher education. There are many providers and consumers of higher education and because of its highly competitive nature, providers of university education must each decide their entry into the market by each designing their own competitive institutional values. Profit maximisation (although education is not supposed to be profit oriented) is only attained where each university puts in place competitive drives that enable it access many consumers of its programmes and its philosophy.

2.2 Philosophy behind Market Competition in University Education

Philosophical issues have a remarkable impact on education to determine a 'philosophy of education' (Muwagga, 2011) to direct the "What" and "How" of organizing education challenges and policy. The philosophy of education influences education decisions and choices, education aims and strategy (Ornstein, 2011). The philosophy guiding university education is spelt out in the Government White Paper on Education 1992 and the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001. Constitutionally, Uganda's national philosophy of education emphasizes a set of epistemological and axiological values to promote good citizenship (Sekiwu, 2013) and globally, the philosophical direction of higher education in developing countries is teaching, research and community engagement.

Universities are institutions founded on different philosophical orientations dogged by the founding ethos (Muwagga, 2007). Their philosophical orientation gives them identity in rival market competition. The identity of Private-for-Profit Universities is to maximize profits while that of Public/Government Owned Universities is to promote the national directives on education, and they use this philosophical identity for branding. However, in competition, there is discrimination and intolerance among players because of market stratification calling for political philosophy to question policy alternatives (Sapru, 2007), public legislation (Bell, 2002), welfare scarcity and education access imbalances (Kasozi, 2009).

It can be concluded that each university in Uganda has its own philosophy on which its principles are drawn. This philosophical orientation of each university describes the uniqueness of a particular university. At the same time, the competitiveness of a university in the market of university education is determined by its philosophical orientation. However, much of the literature on the philosophy behind university education in Uganda focuses on the epistemological (knowledge bases) and axiological (values) direction of university dynamics. However, it is vital also to point to the metaphysical dynamics of these universities and their political philosophy as other perspectives of interpreting the philosophical identity behind the market for university education.

2.3 Linking Market Competition and University Policy

The challenges of the rival market competition can be resolved through political legislation, when the state mandates the university to make policy that counters the detriments of contestation and protects the opportunities of contestation (Osuji, Mafara & Chagbe, 2016). Contestability politics, in the market of university education, provides that institutions operate in a systems wave (Sapru, 2007). Here, environmental factors and forces determine demand for state legislation through institutional policy (Easton, 2007). University policy inputs are derived from environmental forces and challenges necessitating political inclusion to deal with the contestability dilemma.

In conclusion, debates in the literature provide an analytical domain to focus the key research questions. The analytical domain of this paper questions the metaphysics in market competition for University Education, by describing its factors, challenges and their underlying causes (Lajur, 2014). Second, to question those political ontologies explaining market competition for Uganda's university education, by querying political legislation in university policy decisions (Senyonyi, 2015). The paper does not extend debate to epistemological and axiological orientations of market competition of university education because this was the subject of earlier studies.

3 Methodology

The research used grounded theory. This guided the generation of emic explanations for the diverse forms of philosophical identities in a philosophical worldview. A mixed methods approach was followed. Qualitative data, which was collected using key informant interviews, was obtained during the first phase of the study. The key informants included two student leaders, two graduate students, two University Managers, two lecturers, two NCHE officials and two Officials from the Ministry of Education (Table 1). In order to protect the identity of the respondents and their institutions, pseudonyms were used.

Table 1. Participants' Profiles

Pseudonym	Location	Designation
Patrick	Lakunde University	Student Leader
Monica	Makomo University	Student Leader
Buladda	Lakunde University	Graduate Student
Bridget	Makomo University	Graduate Student
Akello	Lakunde University	Professor
Vincent	Makomo University	Registrar
Paul	Lakunde University	Dean of Students
Catherine	Makomo University	Lecturer
Pinto	NCHE	Accreditation
Lucky	NCHE	Quality Assurance
Kenneth	Ministry of Education	Research
Edith	Ministry of Education	Planning

Quantitative data collection was done in the second phase of the research. This was done using a questionnaire that was administered in October 2018. The mini-questionnaire elicited perceptions of what the respondents perceived as the most preferred remedies for dealing with the market contestability challenges of funding, low research and the deregulation problem. The study participants were individually approached by the researchers to seek verbal and written informed consent. Participation was voluntary and with informed consent. All the interviews and discussions were conducted by trained assistant. The qualitative data was subjected to thematic analysis using grounded theory. Subsequently, the themes identified were cross-referenced with other scholars' findings and conclusions. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics.

3 Findings and Discussion

3.1 Metaphysical Challenges

3.1.1 The Financing Problem

Funding is a big metaphysical challenge facing rival competition of Uganda's university education as indicated by Vincent, a Registrar in Makomo—a Public University, reiterating that:

Since the privatization of University Education in the 1990s, financing university activity has been a problematic...Student enrolment is increasing in every university. And management, in these universities, needs money to expand facility. Of course, our university has faced many hurdles because of limited government funding.

Observations by Vincent corroborate Maringe, Felix & Gibbs (2009), that in market competition for education, economic actions are oriented towards financing the education product. Scarcity and exclusiveness are part of the economic hermeneutics of the contested market for education. This interpretation by Krauss conjugates with the empirical voice of Buladda, a graduate student of a degree of Master of Education Management of Lakunde University:

The market of higher education in any society is about financing the education good to support acquisition of equipment, recruitment of adequate and quality teaching staff. However, in our university, we have a problem of inadequate teaching space—we are forced at times to have our lectures under trees”. He puts on a sombre face, “We are inconvenienced as postgraduate students because we study amidst inadequate facilities. We wonder what our money does.

Buladda’s trajectory of the market of university education is similarly expressed by Grima (2013) that funding is the final causality in the existential order; the prime theological path to the growth of higher education. Kasozi (2000) says that without funding, higher education is grossly impaired. But Akello, a Professor of Education in Lakunde University, a legend with a powerful trajectory of publishing in the field of higher education, tries to provide a deeper scholarly analogy of the funding dilemma facing universities in the developing world:

I accept that funding is a big hindrance to the progress of university education in the developing world, but each university has some sort of quality assurance mechanism to regulate its financial functioning and then plan for resource mobilization.

Akello’s reality about funding is linking well with Howard (2006) who offers that the cost of education is determined by the education cost theory. When the market of education increases, the cost will equally increase, needing a resource mobilization alternative as the efficient cause operative. Being a professor in management of higher education, Akello reasons that much as financing is a soaking market competition problem, in her scholarly wisdom; universities must think strategically and be visionary to ensure that they have more robust coping mechanisms like putting-up a critical resource mobilization base and implement it without fear or favour. The publishing, research and teaching she has done for over 20 years have taught her that talking about the university problem and pushing complaints under the carpet is not messianic enough to save the crippling institutions.

In a slightly different philosophical flavour, Monica a Third-year student of social sciences and student leader in Makomo University, innocently, shifted the blame to the university management, complaining about the ever-increasing tuition fees that students pay every year, “*Our university management thinks that addressing the challenge of an infrastructure vacuum is by keeping on raising tuition fees every other year*”, she lamented.

Similarly, Pinto—an Accreditation officer at NCHE advances that,

The unhealthy competition that is thrown around the university market”, he advances his argument, “...has registered frustration and dismal expectations on the minds of most university managers in Uganda today.

Pinto seems to augur well with Jones (2018) that rival competitors in the market of university education force a cost implication on universities surviving in this environment. Bureaucrats must advertise extensively, they must rebrand their product and, above all, must recruit expensive, high calibre staff to fit into the contestable market euphoria. This further fits Aristotle's (1943) treatise, all men by nature have a desire for money, as the intuitive reason for this economic narrative. Fitting into the contestable market logic is an end and the sort of end that exists not for the sake of something else, but a sign of this natural joy competitors put in their sensibility, for quite some usefulness.

However, Pinto is blaming the low funding challenge to external market forces that pause unfair competition with devastating consequences that cripple the revenue-base of the institution, “*The tendency to regard university education as a profit maximization venture is running the whole trade crazy*”, he decries with despicable verity. Brittle (2007) has the same opinion that if the value which men attribute to the economic sensibility in the market of university education is not sensational enough to counter the grief of the end-user (consumer) of the education good, then it is pure logic to disrepute the market forces.

Paul is a Dean of Students in Lakunde University. Being the students' spokesperson at the top management of the university, Paul told the research team that his main idea is to defend students' interests much as he must defend the interests of his university. As such, his ideas are not quite far from those of Pinto, especially on the argument that the positive expectations of universities are crushed by the highly priced university education,

“The only way to afford a competitive environment of university education is to either highly price education. This is what we in management do because we want to keep the university running for some time...”

3.1.2 Low Research Capacity

Intellectual freedom at the 'Ivory Tower' cannot be guaranteed if the research and publication culture of the academia is depressingly declining (Mamdani, 2017). However, the current status of research development in Ugandan universities is devastating leading us to question the level of intellectual freedom pertaining. Professor Akello candidly justifies this gap by recounting that many universities are into quantitative numbers and teaching as a material cause of student learning, other than in the quality of research and publications. In her words:

Academic staff are quite buried into teaching, teaching and teaching, plus changing curricular because NCHE demands periodic reviews. There, universities are rightly doing the needful! But there is less scientific research done and winning of fundable projects done really...little initiative indeed!

Akello's voice is re-echoed by (DiMartino & Jessen, 2018; Barnett, 2011) that intellectual education cannot be actualized if research programmes are ignored or given less treatment in the material cause of student learning. For no learning can occur without the instrumentality of pragmatic reference to social changes, to which research is an essential duality that gives the final contemplation of the highest good. However, Kenneth, an officer working with the research department of NCHE, does not discredit the capacity of academic staff to grow the research function:

But all universities have the capacity to look for research grants because they have quality staff with an interdisciplinary record. In fact, Ugandan Universities rank top in the East African region on matters of research competence and development prospects.

Although Catherine, a lecturer in Makombe University, adds to Kenneth's voice, she however indicates that this academic staff potential to develop the research function of the university is despicably frustrated by the simmering politics of publishing, as she resonates below:

Academic staff really have the skills to conduct research and publish but many cannot do it in 'cutting-edge' journals and publishing houses. Personally, I have tried many times to get a post-doc scholarship in some prestigious universities, but many times, I have been let down by the selection team who have often declined my application on the pre-text that I lack a list of publications in the so-called credible and high impact journals like Social Science Citation Index [SSCI]!

The question in the voices of the study participants is *'what does it take to publish in a so-called high impact journal?'* If it means getting the skills after one gets a Postgraduate degree, such training seems to be muted! Many participants, though not elaborative on the subject, still contend that *'training to win fundable research grants'* has been barely treated by the Directorate of Research and Graduate studies of these universities. Participant voices seem to suggest that research and publishing are a popular and powerful tool with which to account for excellence in contemporary university environments if universities could work hard to eliminate the hurdles to its nourishment. Their voices are close to Arnold's (2004) observation that through research and publishing, critical thought is advanced in the learners and the professor as the credibility of any modern university and a contribution to the development of knowledge for social progress.

Many academic staff engage in research and publishing for academic growth and to improve their curriculum vitae. Catherine, a lecturer in the department of Humanities, adds her voice; *"Most of us research when it is an opportune time to tender in our application for a promotion...There is rather not much research activity apart from that really..."*. It is inner intuition for Catherine to reason that research and publishing are used for ulterior practical ends, like vying for an academic promotion. Apart from that, staff rarely apprehend it.

However, there are voices who contend that research and publication are not economically paying ventures. So, they are not bothered, what brought them to teach at university is to earn income to invest in their other streams of businesses for personal development. Bridget, a graduate student at Makomo University, seems to have heard one of her professors say something like this; “...*the research culture in the Ugandan university is less fancied because people think it does not pay dearly, which is why many do not engage in the trade*”, she had made the point. When the business of research becomes for economic gains, then its central axioms are irrationally defensible—it is intuited as immaterial since the substance to which its formal causality is prefigured is destroyed in the principle of contradictions.

3.1.3 The Deregulation Challenge

Although the deregulation of Uganda’s university education permitted breaking of government’s long-time monopoly over the business of higher education, allowing the private sector players to participate in provision and management of university education; deregulation has both sociological and philosophical drawbacks. Edith, an officer in the department of planning in the Higher Education Ministry, just articulated her pessimism about deregulation of university education:

The policy only widens the gap of social stratification and inequity in university education access...There are many potential students out there who cannot afford to pay for their university education, but who, if they got such education, would be useful to this country.

Deregulation creates social stratification. To Max Weber’s meta-cognition, the basic condition of deregulation is the emergency of class—the unequal distribution of economic power, to which multiple universities are entrenched, and to unequal distribution of opportunity in so far as this chance is determined by the power to dispose of education goods or skills for the sake of income in a given market for higher education (Bendix, 1966). It is this inequity that sprinkles the cost of education to the detrimental effect of the actual end-user.

Being an economist and planner, Edith’s worry is focused on the widening poverty level in the country that could not afford parents and guardians take their children to university, now that the legal provisions for access were relaxed by the privatization of higher education and introduction of cost-sharing in the public university. Edith’s metaphysics links to Scullion and Nixon (2011) who examine the social distance hypothesis in the distribution of education as an economic good versus its public nature. Status stratification becomes the order of things in capitalist economic provision, creating social distance and mutual exclusivity. The more nearly the education society reaches a caste system, the more heterogeneous in character, discriminatory in economic conventions.

On the other hand, Patrick, a student of a degree of Master of Development Studies in Lakunde University, directs his dissatisfaction of the deregulation problem to ever-increasing and “un-friendly” user fees charged to students to

pursue their education. The tuition fees are quite high because many players in the market of university education are into the trade for profit-making reasons only. Patrick's submission is as such:

It is good the government privatized university education so that many can afford to get a degree, because Uganda today needs graduates! However, the tuition fees are too high and university managers do not mind whether the fees are high...They are just into business because that is what the proprietors of the university business want—to get more and more profits...Not all students can afford to pay for these expensive courses and programmes. Some come from a humble economic background; some of us pay for our tuition fees yet we also have families to support. It really becomes a huge problem on us.

The problem of high tuition fees is a cutting-edge dilemma in the marketization of university education in Uganda. The principles to which education is priced are indemonstrable, not logically defensible in terms of the public interest. With many families struggling to get the antidote to employment, leaving on just meagre resources because of rampant poverty and limited support systems to enable them to put their children to university; there is no-doubt that payment of tuition fees will always remain a thorn in the foot of the many wailing families and student fraternity. The supreme wisdom rests upon lowering the cost of access for the sake of knowledge. Being the most universal, the object of knowledge generation is the farthest a university can bestow, framed by systems of men to escape from their ignorance.

Getting student bursaries is often a much pressed-for remedy to address the university affordability mismatch. Universities have three types of bursaries: a) State bursaries, b) University bursaries, c) Donor-community bursaries, and c) Non-governmental Organizations (NGO) bursaries. However, accessing these bursaries is political, as some participants seem to agree. For example, Monica's plight has been saddening as she tries to narrate her ordeal:

I have tried to get a bursary in one of the NGOs to enable me fund my education uninterruptedly but have really failed. In some of these offices, the desk officers ask for bribes, others want something beyond the bursary you want—if you are a lady, men want to use you first. It is really crazy...

Buladda, strong and hopeful, gives a glimpse of his disheartening story,

“Me...I have tried this ‘bursary thing’ several times since my first year and am still trying. Am hopeful that one day I will get a bursary to relieve my guardian of this burden of paying tuition fees”.

Buladda is in his second year of study and he is very optimistic it will work out someday.

“I have tried the government bursary scheme, but it is not easy to get. They told me that it is given to students offering science disciplines [He wonders]. I must

try elsewhere. I went to Bulange-Mengo, in the education ministry to see if I can get the opportunity, but the policy was very clear: bursaries are given to students in their first year of study and must have been identified by the King's chiefs."

Some NGOs have helped students with bursaries using the Higher Education Access programme for students who did not meet the government bursary entry points but have potential to excess. The Higher Education Access scheme is restricted to just a few universities. Paul is a university representative of an NGOs funding students on the Higher Education Access programme "*I have been engaged in linking the NGO funding to some students in my university to the university management*" he says boldly. "*The programme helps only students doing science courses and a few diploma holders*". He explains the contents of the scheme as well as the challenge within this scheme "*...the Higher Education Access programme can only support very few students given the number of student entrants and potential entrants into the university*" yet access to bursaries is, manifestly, for men to seek universal knowledge for no utilitarian end, because it is supposed to be free science, for it alone exists for itself (Aristotle, 1943). But even the NGO programmes in place to support students' access to universal knowledge provide restricted and limited assistance, yet the number of those who would like to access free higher education is growing.

3.2 Resolving the Market Contestability Challenge

In phase two of data collection, we sought quantitative data on how to resolve the three challenges (i.e. Funding problem, Low Research and Publication, and the deregulation problem), using 180 participants (Students=100; Lecturers=60; University Managers=20) picked from Lakunde and Makombe Universities.

3.2.1 The Funding Problem

On the funding problem as a contestable market challenge, we gave the participants a list of possible remedies to this problem then asked the following question "*Can the following remedies minimize the funding problem of the university in this competitive market of university education? [Please indicate your opinion for each remedy]*." Using descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation), participant opinions were summarized in Table 3.

Table 2. Resolving the Funding Challenge

Responses	Students (=100)		Lecturers (=60)		Managers (=20)	
Resource mobilization	1.4	0.49	1.5	0.50	1.8	0.41
Grant writing	1.1	0.30	1.7	0.42	1.7	0.47
Student loan schemes	1.8	0.40	1.4	0.49	1.45	0.51
Academic programmes	1.5	0.50	1.46	0.53	1.6	0.502
Financial audit compliance	1.3	0.47	1.5	0.50	1.75	0.44
Attract bursary opportunities	1.7	0.42	1.4	0.49	1.4	0.50
State Regulation of fees levied	1.7	0.42	1.36	0.48	1.3	0.47
Subsidized student employment	1.3	0.47	1.2	0.37	1.2	0.41

In Table 2, students indicated the student loan scheme as their most preferred (Mean=1.8) remedy for resolving the funding problem in the contestable market of university education. Then attracting more student bursaries (Mean=1.7) and government to regulate the fees levied by different universities (Mean=1.7) by putting a common fee bracket were other alternative remedies for students. However, students did not side with grant writing (Mean=1.1) because they did not understand how grants can help resolve their fees problem. Even in universities with a big grant winning record, they contemplate that fees have remained 'pathetically' high.

For the lecturers, grant writing (Mean=1.7) was the most sighted remedy to the funding problem of the universities. The lecturers feel universities should fulfil the higher education objective of research development by writing winning research grants. This would help the university diversify its funding options as it elevates the publishing record of the academic staff. Resource mobilization (1.5) was rated second by the same lecturers, because they feel all universities should have a robust research mobilization agenda. Encouraging student loan schemes (1.4), writing more academic programmes (1.46) and attracting more student bursaries (1.4) are also possible options to minimize the funding problem in universities as perceived by lecturers.

The university managers point out resource mobilization (1.8) as the most preferred remedy, financial audit compliance (1.75) and grant writing (1.7). It is the work of management to put in place a resource mobilization strategy and observe financial audit queries in order to minimize un-necessary expenditures. Many universities, thinking that through over borrowing moneys for expansion of infrastructure, they have been victims of huge financial gaps. They fail to comply with the numerous and progressive internal and external audit queries which puts them in a gross funding fracas.

These remedies are equally contemplated by Senyonyi (2015) who argues that there are various means to support funding in universities like direct grants from government, scholarships and loan schemes as provided by the National Development Plan to continue and embrace sponsorship, research grants through

Public-Private Partnerships with various corporates, and the model of a commercial centre to create an endowment.

3.2.2 Low Research and Publication

The Lecturers (N=80) and University Managers (N=20) were asked to list what they think would be strategies to promote research and publication in the university. The question was “What do you think could be done to promote the research and publications function in your university?” A list of possible answers from these participants was compiled and analysed (Figure 1).

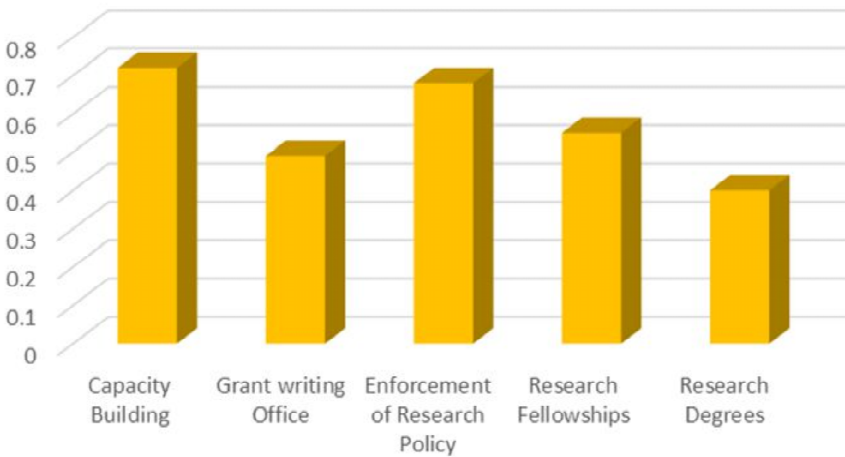


Figure 1. Suggestions for Resolving the Challenges

In Figure 1, capacity building trainings on how to write winning research grants (72%) was rated the most important strategy. Possession and enforcement of a research policy and agenda was also critical (68%), followed by institution of research fellowships (55%) like encouraging postdoc opportunities for academic staff and sabbatical leave to do cutting edge research. Establishing a grant writing office (49%) and encouraging more graduate research programmes (40%) like masters and doctorate degree scholars, were the least fancied remedies. Hazelkorn (2017) likewise thinks that African universities can sustain their research function by building a competitive advantage in training academics, establishing a research office, technological transfer and developing graduate training.

The lecturers (80) and university managers (20) combined, gave their views of how the problem associated with government’s deregulation of university education could be addressed (Table 3).

Table 3. Resolving the Deregulation Problem

Summary Responses	Count	%
Regulation of student fees levied	45	56.25
Regulation of quality of universities	70	87.5
Regulation of Academic Programmes and Courses	75	93.75
Make Education a Public Good	60	75
Political Control of University Education	30	43.75

Although the state removes regulations that make it a monopoly of university education access, deregulation poses serious efficiency challenges that usually affect consumer choice of the education product. It is vital to minimize these efficiency problems by instituting strict quality assurance mechanisms. Therefore, regulating academic programmes and courses offered by universities is the most sighted (93.75%) remedy for controlling the deregulation problem. But also, regulation of quality of the university operations (87.5%) through the licensing and chartering process (87.5%) is collectively agreed upon by lecturers and university managers. But political control of the market of university education (43.75%) was least preferred because universities would not wish to go back to the centralization of higher education.

The empirical findings on deregulation are however supported by Enders, de Boer and Weyer's (2013) secondary reflection that higher Education, world over, is dogged with the challenge of quality assurance especially where government is no longer the sole provider of education at that level. Through regulatory programmes, universities can ensure quality outputs for the market of higher education. This is also consistent with Etoru (2018) who defines quality assurance as necessary in universities to ensure excellence, meet the threshold standards and fitness for purpose.

3.3 Legislation, Rival Market Contestability and University Policy

This paper examines how the 'rival-contested' market of university education influence university policy. Again, the paper examines how the state uses political legislation to influence university policy. The role of the state in universities and their markets is emphasized in the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (2001) which mandates the state to control university processes in relation to the larger market of university education. A university is an institutionalized 'social organism' decisively affected by its contextual behaviour and constraints, and through legislation, it controls and regulates contextual behaviour. Because of the institutional nature of the university-contestable market behaviour, we tried to bring out sections of the UOTIA and try to see how they resolve the identified contestability market challenges.

The state, through act of parliament, makes laws to guide institutional administration and university functions as indicated in section 4(1) of the UOTIA

(2001). Law, according to the Weberian Model of Social Stratification, is a system that is effective because people orient their action to it. It is provided with an enforcement apparatus (Pyakural, 2018; Noah, Adesoji & Bolaj, 2017). The university council formulates general university policy to guide institutional operations as shown in section 40 (2b) of the UOTIA (2001). This regulatory power of the council is done under state jurisprudence bearing the overall responsibility of controlling and regulating market forces. Once there is institutional legislation, whatever change occurs in the market of university education and the university policy process will lead to greater conformity, facilitated by coercive processes (Greenwood, 2008). In public universities, the state selects the university council membership because public universities are state controlled. In private universities, much as it is the owners of the university that choose the membership, government may send its representatives on the council to seal government's influencing arm. This is consistent with an earlier study by Scott (1992) that, university organizations have the potential to reconstruct the rules, norms and beliefs that guide their actions in the market of university education. These rules are the law and policy establishments.

The powers of the university council (section 41) precisely include 41(a) to represent the university in all legal matters. Because some challenges of the contestable market of university education may require legal interpretation and battles, the state gives university council mandate of legal representation. In political philosophy, human life presents numerous legal problems and the state has the mandate to formulate law to regulate and/or counter these philosophical problematics. In order to tackle the funding and resource mobilization problem, the university council appoints the finance and planning committees and mandates them to address these problems. But the extent to which these committees handle the assignment is what is questionable. If they have the mandate, then why are these persistent problems?

The state has also appointed the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) to oversee university business and operations on her behalf. The NCHE statutory regulation No.85 (2005) offers institutional standards to control quality (NCHE Statutory instrument No. 85, 2005), licensing (NCHE Statutory instrument No. 61 of 2007) and provision of minimum entry requirements to any course of study (NCHE statutory instrument No. 63, 2007). This regulation is meant to control free entry and exit of players in market competition. Though entry may be free, a player ought to fulfil the requirements of entry into a rival contestability market. Section 5(i) of the UOTIA (2001) "*All academic programmes of the university must meet minimum standards as set out by NCHE*".

University policy is reviewed periodically in line with market demands and challenges [Section 43(c) of the UOTIA (2001)]. In order to manage the research and publication problem, the university council appoints senate [section 45(2)] as a responsible committee to control and organize academic matters like teaching and research. Studies by Enders, de Boer and Weyer (2013) indicate that institutional

regulation is necessary to put control on the operations and actions of an organization for collective rationality and aided performance. The senate does its role of initiating academic policy, review and evaluate courses, methodology and curricular. It also promotes the research function in the university as well as the admission policy of the university.

3.4 Conclusion and Recommendation

In this paper an effort was made to discuss the philosophical identities behind “the monopolistic competitive market” of university education in Uganda. The metaphysical character of this contestable market of university education perceives low funding, low research and publication, as well the problem of deregulation as its principle challenges. The political philosophical character dons that, forces and factors in the contestable market of university education are dealt through political legislation. The state mandates the university to make policies that challenge market forces with a destabilizing effect while protecting those that bear a long stint of opportunities for the same market. To counter all challenges of a monopolistic competitive market, this paper recommends an institutional legislation framework in which the state has the overall mandate to make regulatory frameworks.

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