

Participation of Academic Staff in the Implementation of Corporate Strategic Plans: Experience from Selected Public Universities in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the involvement of academic staff in implementing corporate strategic plans at selected public universities in Tanzania. The study was guided by participative management theory and adopted an explanatory sequential mixed research approach. The study used questionnaires and interviews to gather data. The sample comprises 199 academic staff members from the Sokoine University of Agriculture and Mzumbe University. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (percentages, mean, and standard deviations), while the interview data were subjected to content analyses. The findings indicate that department heads play a crucial role in promoting the sharing of responsibilities and encouraging staff participation in decision-making, fostering a culture of innovation. This, in turn, enhanced employees' trust and motivation among academic staff in implementing the strategic plan. The study concludes that leadership, commitment to employee engagement and academic staff willingness to collaborate are vital for building trust, boosting motivation, and ensuring the successful execution of corporate strategic plans. This study recommends that universities recognise academic staff as essential resources and prioritise participative management practices to enhance the effective implementation of corporate strategic plans.

Keywords: Academic staff participation, Corporate Strategic Plans, SUA, Mzumbe University, Public Universities

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Implementing corporate strategic plans has been highly prioritised worldwide due to its contribution to performance (Katana et al., 2016). To ensure that the education system meets international standards, the education sector, notably higher learning education institutions, both public and private, must strictly consider the necessity of developing strategic plans and implementing them. Implementing a corporate strategic plan is a complex process that requires coordination and employee commitment, and its successful implementation depends on, among others, resources and employee participation. According to Sofijanova and Chatleska (2013), employee participation is concerned with the empowerment of employees to contribute to the highest possible level of performance. Employee participation increases employees' commitment to support the strategic objectives, promotes collaboration and ensures that a strategic plan is successfully translated into tangible outcomes that drive the organisation's long-term success.

The Tanzanian government mandates that public universities develop and implement five-year strategic plans (URT, 2011; Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2019). Universities must develop corporate strategic plans that align their resources and efforts with long-term goals, respond to external challenges, and adapt to the changing landscape of higher education. A well-designed strategic plan helps universities achieve academic excellence, improve institutional sustainability, and remain competitive in a dynamic and increasingly globalised educational environment. Through strategic planning, universities ensure they fulfil their educational mission while meeting the needs of students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders.

However, the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) reports for the financial years 2020/2021, 2021/2022, and 2022/2023 consistently highlight the ineffective implementation of corporate strategic plans in Tanzania's public universities. The reports express concern regarding the academic staff's execution of research and consultancy, indicating that the universities struggle to fulfil their core research and consultancy functions effectively. Numerous studies in Tanzania and beyond, such as Chikolomo (2019), Biruk (2022), Jock (2019), Ngumbi & Wambua (2019), Dharyanti, Jati, & Pramukarso (2019), Zaidi et al. (2018), and Mugambi (2017), have focused on strategic implementation, examining the factors and processes that influence the execution of strategic plans. Successful implementation of a corporate strategic plan requires the involvement of all employees and

consideration of their suggestions for effective strategy execution (Carlier et al., 2019; Bailey, 2016; Aboki, 2014; Ruck et al., 2016; Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015). Additionally, the CAG reports for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 indicate that the key functions of research and consultancy in most public universities are not being implemented as expected. Nevertheless, universities employ academic staff responsible for executing these functions. The key question remains: are the academic staff engaged in implementing the corporate strategic plans? Are the department heads prepared to facilitate this? If so, what is the response of the academic staff? To date, no study in Tanzania has examined these questions. Therefore, this research addresses the gap by investigating the participation of academic staff in the implementation of corporate strategic plans in public universities. The study will explore the involvement of academic staff in the execution of corporate strategic plans, assessing the readiness of department heads to engage with the staff, and evaluating the responses of the academic staff.

The study conceptualises employee participation in public universities, tracking various implementations, such as the commitment to share responsibilities, collaborating, and contributing to decision-making processes. Participative management theory guided the study. Participative management is a significant concept in modern organisations, with a history spanning over 60 years. The idea emerged in the 1930s with Hawthorne's experiments, which showed that supportive and encouraging work environments foster employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment (Chandrasekar, 2011). Participative management, also known as employee involvement or participative decision-making, promotes stakeholders' engagement at all organisational levels in problem analysis, strategy development, and solution implementation (Maslina et al., 2015). Employees are encouraged to participate in activities such as goal setting, work schedules, and making suggestions, thereby sharing in the firm's decision-making; however, participative management goes beyond simply allowing employee input; it also requires management to treat employee ideas and suggestions with respect and consideration (Vroom, 2015). The most comprehensive form of participative management is direct employee ownership of the company. Participation includes defining daily and medium-term work objectives, formalising and integrating organisational values, and fostering internal cohesion and group involvement (Arrigo and Casale, 2010). More concisely, participative management encompasses employee involvement in decision-making, sharing responsibilities, encouraging collaboration, and providing feedback that builds trust and motivation within the company. It

also insists that companies that implement participative practices would achieve a higher rate of productivity and profitability (Arrigo and Casale, 2010). Successful organisations recognise employees as vital resources and prioritise their satisfaction (Shaed et al., 2018). Managers who value human skills and intellect cultivate strong employee relationships, understanding that organisational performance is directly linked to their workforce. Globalisation's demand for high-quality goods and services necessitates engaging competent staff with sound decision-making to drive organisational performance. Participative management fosters a cooperative and empowered workforce to meet these demands (Vroom, 2015). This management style enhances employee satisfaction and a sense of involvement, motivating them to boost productivity and performance (Shaed et al., 2018). Many organisations adopt participative management to gain a competitive edge in today's market and maintain a leading position against global and domestic competitors.

Participative management is widely recognised as a highly effective management practice and a leading theory for understanding the positive correlation between participative management and employee participation in decision-making, sharing responsibilities, encouraging collaboration, providing feedback, and building trust and motivation in organisations worldwide (Yukl, 2010). Participative management actively engages employees in decision-making and empowers them to solve problems (Rolková & Farkašová, 2014). This involves soliciting and considering employee ideas, suggestions, information, and input before making key decisions (Kim, 2011). This approach manifests in various forms, including consultative management, empowerment initiatives, collective decision-making, democratic management styles, and power-sharing arrangements (Maslina et al., 2015).

The theory emphasises involving the staff in the decision-making and implementation to increase the likelihood of gauging the level of buy-in and commitment, ultimately influencing organisational performance (Shaed et al, 2018). The theory is the most effective due to the rapid change in the environment, politics and cultures (Maslina et al., 2015) and its benefits, as documented by Yukl, 2010 include high-quality decision-making, sharing responsibilities, provision and effective feedback utilisation, encouraging collaboration, building trust and motivation, increasing employee satisfaction and commitment and employee skills enhancement.

2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Study Design and Sampling

The study was guided by the research question that examines the participation of academic staff in implementing corporate strategic plans, and an explanatory sequential mixed research approach was adopted. The approach required the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data (Lebo, 2015) to capture the experience of the head of the department and academic staff while increasing data reliability. Two (2) public universities in the Morogoro region, Mzumbe University (MU) and Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) were selected purposively to represent other public universities, given that all public universities have a corporate strategic plan. In addition, the Controller and Audit General (CAG) report for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 indicated that MU and SUA are among the public universities where the key functions of research and consultancy are not implemented as expected, even though the universities have academic staff responsible for implementing the functions.

When the data for this study were collected in June 2023, the two universities had 648 academic staff. 190, about 29.3% of all academic staff, were selected as the study's sample size. In addition, 75 and 115 were selected from MU and SUA, respectively, using a proportionate sampling method. Again, purposive sampling was used to select nine informants from MU and SUA, including the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Deans, Principals, and Heads of Department, who possessed relevant information for this study.

2.2 Data Collection

Data collection includes systematically gathering and measuring data on specific variables to answer the research questions and evaluate outcomes (Anasel & Swai, 2023). Interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data. The five-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from strongly disagree to agree strongly, was distributed to 190 respondents, including the academic staff and heads of departments in the two universities, to measure opinion concerning the participation of academic staff in the implementation of the corporate strategic plan. Most respondents (182) filled out the questionnaires and returned them when completed, while some (three) asked a researcher to fill in the provided responses. Five respondents asked the researcher to send the questionnaires to their email addresses, fill them out, and return them once completed.

Nine Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect data from the selected key informants from the two universities. The key informants included the Deputy

Vice-Chancellors, Deans/Principals, and Heads of departments. The researcher introduced the purpose of the study and sought an appointment with the participants. The interviews were conducted following the acceptance of the appointment, and all procedures were followed. The interview guide prepared before the data collection and improved during the data collection was used to guide the conversations. The number of respondents recruited for interviews was guided by the theoretical principle of saturation, whereby the information collected begins to repeat itself, i.e. reaching a threshold (Hennink et al., 2010; Swai, 2017; Mwita, K, 2022a).

In addition, all ethical considerations were considered to ensure the research ethics were observed (Anasel et al., 2019).

2.3 Data Management and Analysis

Data management and cleaning were conducted immediately after data collection. Data management involves creating, organising, editing and coding the data. One hundred and ninety (190) respondents filled out the questionnaires, and all the responses were included in the analysis. The responses were further coded to reflect all details of the answers given by the respondents (Anasel & Swai, 2023). The codebook was created, sorted into categories and groups, entered into Excel, cleaned and exported to SPSS for data transformation and analysis (Anasel & Swai, 2024). A descriptive study was conducted to analyse data, describing features of a data set and presenting the data through various visual and numerical methods, including tables and descriptive measures such as percentages, mean, and standard deviations. Frequency distribution describes the occurrence of data within the data set, mean describes the average response for each statement, calculated by assigning numerical values to the Likert scale and standard deviation measures the variability of responses around the mean. A lower standard deviation indicates that responses are clustered closer to the mean and that the data is relatively consistent. A higher standard deviation indicates more significant variability, making the data less consistent.

The data collected through interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (Mwita, 2022b). The interview focused on gathering information on the readiness of the head of the department to involve the academic staff in implementing the corporate strategic plan and how the academic staff respond to the head of the department's action. Immediately

after the interviews, the audios were converted to texts, and translations from Kiswahili to English were conducted. The responses were categorised and presented with meaningful themes based on the study question. The data were coded and classified into themes, and the interpretations were made to reflect the study question and used to write the result sections.

3.0 STUDY FINDINGS

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The study sought to determine the participation of academic staff in implementing corporate strategic plans in public universities. Data were collected from two universities, analysed, and presented using percentages, mean, standard deviations and quotations. The response rate is 100%; all 190 respondents in two public universities filled out and returned questionnaires. Most (about 143) respondents were male academicians, and the majority (143) had a PhD, followed by those with a master's degree and bachelor's degree, suggesting comprehensive experience among the respondents. Most participants were lecturers, followed by senior lecturers, associates, and full professors, as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1:0: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Attributes of Respondents	Frequency	Per cent
Collected Questionnaires:		
Mzumbe University	75	39.5
Sokoine University of Agriculture	115	60.5
Respondent's Designation (Job Position):		
Professor	22	11.6
Associate Professor	5	2.6
Senior Lecturer	53	27.9
Lecturer	63	33.2
Assistant lecturer	30	15.8
Tutorial Assistant	17	8.9
Gender Distribution:		
Male	143	75.3
Female	47	24.7
Education Level of Respondents:		
PhD Level	143	75.3
Master Level	30	15.8
Degree Level	17	8.9
Working Experiences of Respondents:		
0-5 years	22	11.6
6-10 years	51	26.8
10-15 years	37	19.5
16-20 years	44	23.2
Over 20 years	36	18.9

3:2 Participation of academic staff in the Implementation of CSP

The study was guided by the research question that examined the participation of academics in implementing corporate strategic plans. Two major issues were studied in this study. First is the department head's readiness to engage the staff in implementing the corporate strategic plan. Second, the response of the academic staff.

3.2.1: Readiness to Engage Academic Staff in the Implementation of the CSP

The study assessed the department head's readiness to engage academic staff in implementing the corporate strategic plan (CSP). It examined their commitment to sharing responsibilities and providing and using feedback, which are critical to facilitating staff involvement.

3.2.1.1 Readiness to Share Responsibilities

Readiness to share responsibilities was measured using the five-Likert scale, where the respondents were given a chance to indicate their response in the statement *'My head of department embraces sharing responsibilities among academicians'*.

The findings indicate the mean average is 3.94 and the standard deviation is 0.691, implying that most respondents agreed that their head of department embraces sharing responsibilities among academicians and perceive their department head as supportive. Only 3% of respondents disagreed with the statement, suggesting minimal dissent. Despite the low percentage of disagreement, it remains noteworthy and warrants consideration that something must be done to ensure all academic staff feel they are part of implementing the CSP. The frequency, mean and standard deviation of respondents' answers are summarised in Table 2.

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
My head of department embraces sharing responsibilities among academic staff.	3	1.6	2	1.1	27	14.2	129	67.9	29	15.3	3.94	0.691
Total	3	1.9	2	1.1	27	14.2	129	67.9	29	15.3	3.94	0.691

Source: Field Data, 2023

These findings concur with the experience shared by the participants during the interviews, where the views shared by the head of the department suggest that the head of the department is willing to engage academic staff in implementing the CSP as clarified in the quotation;

We usually have teams where academic staff work together to implement a particular task. For example, when we win consultancy assignments, we ensure the school has a team with competent members to execute the assignment effectively. As a HoD, I cannot do everything, and my role is to ensure smooth coordination in implementing the assignment (Interview, informant 3; 13/06/2023).

The study further suggests that the academic staff were not only assigned roles to perform and left alone but also encouraged to collaborate. This indicates a commitment to involve the staff and ensure a good relationship, which is critical to successfully implementing the CSP. Most participants interviewed have shared that they are always encouraged to collaborate with other academic staff. They clarified that *“the HoDs encourage collaborations not only between academicians but also between leaders and other staff to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the execution of given tasks”*. It was further clarified that the academic staff were encouraged to make operational decisions in their daily operations, as explained by one of the deans interviewed;

As a Dean, I always encourage academicians to make decisions in their operations. For example, although the University Almanac provides weeks for all university activities, the academic staff can make operational decisions on implementing the activities (Interview, informant 5; 12/06/2023).

The quotation indicates a commitment to sharing responsibilities and supporting staff in making decisions about their daily operations. The head of the departments ensured that the academic staff had all the required support to implement the CSP.

3.2.1.2 Readiness to Provide and Use Feedback

The department head's willingness to engage academic staff in implementing the corporate strategic plan was also examined by examining their readiness to provide and use feedback. Readiness to give and use feedback was measured using three statements: *‘I usually provide constructive feedback to the academic staff’*, *‘I normally receive feedback from HoD’*, and *‘I usually use the feedback to improve my performance’*.

The findings show a mean average of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.713, implying that the head of the department provides feedback to academic staff, who usually use it to

improve their performance. Few respondents, about 3%, disagreed with the statement that they do not receive constructive feedback from the HoDs. Even though the number of respondents who disagreed is small, mechanisms must be established to improve the situation. The respondents' answers are summarised in Table 3.

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
I usually provide constructive feedback to the academic staff	3	1.6	2	1.1	27	14.2	129	67.9	29	15.3	3.94	0.691
I normally receive feedback from HoD	5	2.6	0	0	49	25.8	113	59.5	23	12.1	3.78	0.725
I normally use the feedback to improve my performance.	3	1.6	0	0	41	21.6	113	59.5	33	17.4	3.91	0.725
Total	3.6	1.9	2	1.1	39	20.5	118.3	62.3	28.3	14.9	3.87	0.713

Source: Field Data, 2023

The interview results concur with the responses from the questionnaires that most of the interviewed participants agree that they usually receive feedback from their supervisors, as clarified by one of the participants;

We usually use direct communication to promote transparency and ensure efficiency in implementing a strategic plan. We also use meetings and email and encourage two-way communication to get some input for the betterment of our university (Interview, informant 9; 28/06/2023).

Further, the results show that most respondents agreed that they usually use feedback from the HoDs to identify mistakes and solve problems related to their jobs as clarified by one of the participants;

I normally use the feedback from our immediate supervisor to guide us in ensuring job-related problems are solved to reach the given targets (Interview, informant 7; 23/06/2023).

This experience concurs with the view provided by one of the heads of the department, who indicated they are sure that the academic staff use their feedback, as clarified in the quotation;

I believe the academic staff use our feedback effectively because their performance is good. This is also shown in our annual performance, which is elevated compared to previous years (Interview, informant 4; 13/06/2023).

The experience of the academic staff and their immediate supervisors indicates that they agree that academic staff participation in implementing the CSP is practical in the two universities.

3.2.2: Response of the Academic Staff in Implementing the CSP

The study examined the academic staff’s response to implementing the corporate strategic plan, including their motivation to participate and the level of trust in their institutions.

3.2.2.1 Academic Staff’ Trust in the University

Academic staff’s trust in the university, specifically the immediate supervisors, meaning the department head, was measured to understand their response to the head of the department's attempts to engage them. The participants were allowed to indicate their response to the statement ‘*I have confidence that my university always accepts and acknowledges my contribution*’ across a five-Likert scale questionnaire. The assumption is that when the academic staff are comfortable with their head of department and have confidence in the value of their contributions to the organisation, they are likely to perform better.

The findings indicated a mean average of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 1.007, indicating that most respondents generally agreed to have confidence that the university always accepts and acknowledges their contributions. In addition, about 36.3% were still determining whether the university valued their contribution, which calls for more transparent relationships. The summary of the results is shown in Table 4.

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
	I have confidence that my university always accept and acknowledge my contribution.	14	7.4	5	2.6	69	36.3	77	40.5	25		

Total	14	7.4	5	2.6	69	36.3	77	40.5	25	13.2	3.49	1.007
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Source: Field Data, 2023

Follow-up was made during the interview. Most interviewed participants indicated trust in their immediate supervisor and the university. The academic staff further clarified that they are supported in facilitating the implementation of their roles and responsibilities, and the HoD has been making follow-ups to address the challenges related to their work. One of the HoDs clarified that the academic staff are entrusted with the university's success, and their contribution is meaningful to the university. The HoD clarified that;

We always ensure that the academic staff feel valued and respected and that their ideas are heard and implemented. We know academic staff work beyond scheduled hours, and we must appreciate them and value their contributions to our university (Interview, informant 3; 13/06/2023).

The HoD's views suggest that they understand the value of the academic staff and appreciate their contribution to the university. On the other hand, the academic staff indicated that they perform the primary functions critical to the university.

3.2.2.2 Academic Staff' Motivation to Implement the CSP

Academic staff's motivation to participate in the implementation of CSP was examined, and the respondents were allowed to indicate their response to the statement that 'I am always motivated to do my job to the best of my ability'. The findings suggest a mean average of 3.94 and a standard deviation 0.691. This result implies that most respondents agreed they are always motivated to do their job to the best of their abilities. About 14% of the respondents indicated neutral and that they still determined their motivation to participate in implementing the CSP. The respondents' answers are summarised in Table 5.

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
I am always motivated to do my job to the best of my abilities.	3	1.6	2	1.1	27	14.2	129	67.9	29	15.3	3.94	0.691
Total	3	1.6	2	1.1	27	14.2	129	67.9	29	15.3	3.94	0.691

Source: Field Data, 2023

The interview experience suggests that most participants were motivated to participate in the implementation of the CSP and clarified that they felt being part of the CSP's success. The academic staff focused on achieving the CSP targets as clarified;

All activities of academic staff are linked to corporate strategic plans through target objectives from the principals and HoDs. HoDs communicate with academic staff daily to ensure they execute targeted objectives; in doing that, academic staff participation influences the implementation of CSP in public universities (Interview, informant 2; 28/06/2023).

This was further clarified by another participant who had a view that the CSP of the universities can only be implemented efficiently if the academic staff are part and parcel of the implementers. It was further clarified that the current performance measurement requires the academic staff to report their daily progress after being assigned the activities by the head of the departments and, therefore, participate in the implementation of CSP;

Implementing a strategic plan is like building a house; one block will build the other, so you will finally have the whole house built. The activities an individual staff member performs are cascaded from the vice chancellor to the deputy vice-chancellors, deans, HoD, and finally, to the individual staff. The targets are from the annual action plan developed from the corporate strategic plan. Then, at the end of the year, the assessment will be conducted to assess the implementation of the action plan contributing to the CSP (Interview, informant 1; 12/06/2023).

It is learned from the quotation that the individual staff implement the activities cascaded from the higher organs, and the assessment is conducted to evaluate the performance of individual staff who contribute to the institution's performance. The academic staff indicated that they are given incentives to increase their morale to perform their functions, as clarified in the quotation below;

Academic staff are given incentives like an extra paid day off, promotion rewards, letters of appreciation, and human resource development to ensure they develop their personal and university knowledge, skills, careers, and abilities necessary for their performance (Interview, informant 8; 20/06/2023).

These results indicate that the academic staff are motivated to participate in implementing their roles, which is critical to ensuring the efficient implementation of the CSP.

The findings generally indicate that the heads of the departments are ready to share responsibilities, involve the academic staff and provide and receive feedback from the

academic staff. The academic staff, on the other hand, indicated a high level of trust in their institutions and a motivation to participate in implementing CSP. Reflecting on the CAG's report, the key functions of research and consultancy in most of the public universities are not implemented as expected; the study has found that both Mzumbe and SUA suffer a shortage of academic staff, leading to an overburden that requires working beyond scheduled hours, to accomplish given tasks. The study also found that universities employ part-time employees to shoulder the extra burden. However, most of the part-time employees only participate in teaching. One of the interviewed heads of the department has the following to share;

The academicians, especially professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, and lecturers, are overburdened with work than other staff, especially if we compare the number of students. We emphasise teamwork and employ part-time employees to shoulder the extra burden, especially in teaching (Interview, informant 1; 12/06/2023).

The government's efforts to employ academic staff are also appreciated. This indicates the potential growth of universities after a certain period, increasing their efficiency in research and consultancy. Universities should focus on capacity building, offering both long and short courses, to ensure that the academic staff acquires the skills necessary to perform the key functions of the universities as expected.

4.0 DISCUSSION

The study examined the participation of academic staff in implementing corporate strategic plans and the experience of selected public universities in Tanzania. Academicians' involvement in implementing the CSP was measured through the department head's readiness to share responsibilities, encouraging collaboration and decision-making, providing feedback and using the feedback to improve performance, the staff's trust in the university and motivation to participate.

Concerning the department head's willingness to share responsibilities to encourage academicians' participation, the study found that the HoD promotes sharing duties and responsibilities among the staff. The academic staff were also encouraged to make operations decisions in their daily routine to promote innovations. These findings align with Biruk (2022), who argued that the company should encourage teamwork and emphasise employee empowerment to implement strategic plans successfully. On the contrary, the study by

Mutuku (2021) found that most decisions related to strategic plans happen at the executive or department levels, implying that the lower cadre officers play little or no role in implementing strategic plans. This difference may be attributed to the nature of the case study where the study was conducted.

Regarding readiness to provide and use feedback, the study found that the HoD offers and receives input, which is utilised to solve job-related issues to improve performance. This concurred with the survey by Buseso, (2021), who found that adequate information and the provision of feedback during the implementation of the strategic plan are critical to the successful implementation of the plan. This, again, is enhanced by the employee's trust in the university and its leaders, where the staff have confidence that their university always accepts and acknowledges their contribution. This finding also aligns with Paine (2023), who found that organisations prioritising shared values cultivate stakeholders. In this case, employees trust and demonstrate steadfast commitment to their stated values, leading to increased support for strategic initiatives (Ejoh & Omoile, 2024). This is also aligned with the academic staff's motivation, where the level of academic staff's motivation determines their participation in implementing the strategic plan, as found by Priscillah et al. (2022).

This study reflects the theory of participative management, which is characterised by stakeholder engagement at all organisational levels, allowing employee input, and treating employee ideas and suggestions with respect and consideration (Maslina et al., 2015). The head of the department offers full support for employees' participation in decision-making and implementation. Employees' ownership of the company, in this case, understanding the direction of the universities and actively participating in achieving the goal, was evident in the two universities studied.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the participation of academic employees in implementing CSP involves sharing responsibilities, encourages collaboration, empowers academics to make decisions regarding their daily operations, and facilitates the implementation of corporate strategy while developing and maintaining a firm's competitive advantage. The commitment of leaders to share responsibilities and provide feedback, along with the willingness of academic staff to collaborate, are essential elements in building trust, enhancing employees' motivation within the organisation, and ultimately improving performance. Recognising

employees as vital resources and prioritising their satisfaction and involvement contributes to higher productivity.

6.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study primarily examines the participation of academic staff in implementing corporate strategic plans within public universities. It deliberately excludes private universities, affiliated centres, public colleges, other institutions, and administrative staff from public universities. This limitation restricts the generalizability of the study findings to only public universities. Future research could broaden the scope by conducting a comparative study across public and private universities. Such research would provide valuable insights into potential differences and similarities in how academic and non-academic staff in different types of institutions implement corporate strategic plans.

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