

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318005238>

# The Interplay between Quality Movement, Reputation and Funding on Private Students' Choice of Universities in Uganda

Article in *SSRN Electronic Journal* · January 2016

DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2887858

---

CITATIONS

3

READS

119

1 author:



Wilson Muyinda Mande

Nkumba University (NU)

11 PUBLICATIONS 11 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Business Ethics [View project](#)

# THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN QUALITY MOVEMENT REPUTATION AND FUNDING ON PRIVATE STUDENTS CHOICE OF UNIVERSITIES IN UGANDA

*Wilson Muyinda Mande*

## ABSTRACT

The current study purpose to analyse the influence of the quality movement on private students' choice of universities in Uganda. First, the paper points out the fact that there is a quality movement in Uganda's higher education sub-sector. Second, it was found that quality movement have a significant relationship with the reputation of a university [ $r(392) = .629, p < 0.01$ ]. Third, there was a significant relationship between reputation and funding [ $r(392) = .596, p < 0.01$ ]. Fourth, there was a significant relationship between funding and choice [ $r(392) = .512, p < 0.01$ ]. Fifth, there was a significant relationship between quality and choice of a university by private students [ $r(392) = .636, p < 0.01$ ]. It was concluded that quality influenced students' choices of universities in Uganda.

## INTRODUCTION

The central task of this paper was to analyse the influence of quality movement on private students' choice of universities in Uganda. In Uganda the students who join universities can be differentiated by the way their tuition is paid. Those whose tuition is paid by the state are referred to as government sponsored, and those who pay for themselves are referred to private students. The study was premised on the fact that since the 1990s there was liberalised university education in Uganda. This metamorphosis in higher education ushered in a quality movement. The drivers of the quality movement in Uganda's higher education in the last one generation have included: (i) Response to unemployment of university graduates; (ii) The push by national regulators and their networks; (iii) The liberalisation of university education in the country; (iv) Increased incidences of academic dishonesty; (v) Rising unemployment especially of university graduates; (vi) Remonstrations by employers over insufficient or lack of skills among graduates. These six factors explain the crystallisation of quality practices into a movement. With the above drivers, quality movement in higher education took route. However, the question is did the interplay between quality movement and reputation and finance influence students' choice of a university?

### **Justification of the study**

It is an open fact that the quality movement is well recognised in the country. All Ugandan universities, public and private, have for more than a decade now endeavoured to comply with the quality requirements and demands. Universities have had differing degrees of attainment.

In view of that, one would harbour the assumption that private students who join the universities and pay for themselves would be influenced by quality considerations in a particular university. However, all universities get private self-sponsoring students in spite of the universities differences in quality attainments. This phenomenon raised the question, how much did quality considerations influence private students' choice of universities in Uganda.

It was often noted that some private students would choose a university even when such a university would have received scathing criticism over quality (Matthews, 2011; Sylvester, 2013, Spaul, 2015). Furthermore, some students complained over dubiety of quality in various universities (Kayiira 2009, Businge 2010, and Businge 2011) but would still go ahead and join them. All this raised a question of how much influence did quality movement impose on private students when they make choices of universities. The above situation made the current study necessary.

#### *Purpose of the study and the specific objectives*

The purpose of this study was to analyse the extent to which the quality movement influenced private students' choice of universities in Uganda. This problem was broken down into the following specific objectives: (1) To analyse the relationship between quality movement and university reputation; (2) To analyse the relationship between reputation and private students' choice of universities; and (3) To assess the influence of quality movement on private students' choice of universities.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The available literature was reviewed under a number of themes including quality of university education, total quality management, choice, reputation, teaching, and facilities.

#### *Quality of university education*

Nyaigotti-Chacha and Ayoo (2001) examined the strategies of the inter-university council for East Africa in promoting quality assurance in East African universities. Nyaigotti-Chacha and Ayoo provide the following as the quality assurance mechanisms spearheaded by the inter-university council for East Africa: (i) monitoring admissions policies; (ii) regular students' assessment; (iii) guidelines for appointment, (iv) promotions and review of academic staff; (v)

introduction of new courses, (vi) regular audits of affiliated institutions; (vii) re-orientation of staff; and (viii) student assessment and teaching. All this worthwhile work of the inter-university council for East Africa. The focus was not on exploring why students move from one country to another in search of university education.

### *Quality Education*

Academic quality can be understood as one way of describing how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their rewards. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for. The way forward is to educate students in the important role that they play in the higher education system not as naïve customers and enduring co-production process with uncertain outcomes (Eagle and Bremman, 2007). In early attempts to define quality in higher education, Harvey et al (1992), noted that there are many ways to define quality in higher education and that any definition of quality in higher education is “stakeholder relative”.

They also noted that there may be many stakeholders including students, employers, teaching and non-teaching staff, government and its funding agencies, accreditors, validators, assessors, and community at large, each with their own criteria and perspective. In addition to that, Lewis and Smith (1994), the significant amongst these stakeholders must be the active participant in higher education, namely the students.

### *Total Quality Management in higher education*

Amid environmental pressures from stakeholders, there is a substantial interest in Total Quality Management (TQM) in higher education (Coate, 1990; Cope and Sherr, 1991; Cornesky et al., 1991). Debate about quality has been on for quite sometime (Craft, 1992; Goodlad, 1995). The current study therefore makes a contribution to that important and valuable debate that has been on for a long time. There are many people (Schrock & Lefevre, 1988; Mortimore and Stone 1990; Lagerweij and Voogt, 1990; Crawford, 1991; Green, 1994; Harvey and Knight, 1996) who have endeavoured to clarify the concept of quality in education. However, they have not laboured much on the quality of education and choice making by international students who wish to enrol in private universities in Uganda. This study will fill that gap.

### *Choice*

There is literature on choice criteria used by international students to select countries and universities to study. Wilkins, Balakrishnan and Huisman (2012) studied the motivations for

students to study at international branch campus in United Arab Emirates. They found that the main motive of students who choose to study at an international branch campus are different to those students who choose to study at home campuses. Although this is a useful study, it is different in that it focuses on choice to study at a branch of a foreign university but in one's own country. The concerns of the above study are different from the current study. In Wilkins et al study students do not have to move out of their country but in the current students have to leave their home country. So there is a gap which the current study will fill.

Wilkins *et al* (2012) contended that there are mainly six factors: recommendation of family, quality of education, recognition of degree gained, university reputation, economic and cultural links and cost issues that influence international students to choose to go to the three developed countries of USA, UK and Canada. It is true many international students have found themselves in one of the three countries because of the above reasons. The above findings cannot be generalised and applied to the East African region as far as students choosing Ugandan private universities are concerned. So the current study seeks to ascertain whether cost plays a key role in this matter.

In a study carried out in Indonesia the factors considered by Indonesian students when choosing a university were: cost, reputation, proximity, job prospect, and parents. These were the five most important factors (Kusumawati, Yanamandram, and Perera, 2010). Although the factors include cost, it is not possible to take it that impact of cost in Indonesia is the same in Uganda. This implies that there is still a need to explore the influence on cost the choices of universities international students make when they decide to come to Ugandan private universities.

### *Quality and Reputation*

The complete guide to universities (2013) reports that "Most people would like to go to the best university that they can". Some of the ways they find out which are the best is use of League Table rankings. By bringing together a variety of measures the League Table rankings try to give a reasonable and independent basis for deciding how good a university or a subject within a university really is. The Subject Tables rank universities on the basis of their research quality, the entry standards of their new students and how successful their graduates are at finding work or further study. It was found in *National Student Survey of 2012* that 83% of students at UK Universities are satisfied with the quality of their degree course. This was good information which

showed that in UK reputation is critical in choosing a university. However this literature does not link cost, quality and choice of university by international students. For that matter therefore, there was a gap which the current study sought to fill especially as far as private students' choices of universities were concerned in Uganda.

### *Teaching*

Pedagogy can be defined as “the science and art of education, specifically instructional theory. An instructor develops conceptual knowledge and manages the content of learning activities in pedagogical settings. Modern pedagogy has been strongly influenced by the cognitivism of Piaget, the social-interactionist theories of Bruner, and the social and cultural theories of Vygotsky. Students learn as they internalize the procedures, organization, and structures encountered in social contexts as their own schema. The learner requires assistance to integrate prior knowledge with new knowledge. Children must also develop metacognition, or the ability to learn how to learn” (*Wikipedia*, 2013).

It was recently noted that: (i) The university should have a deliberate plan to train lecturers to update their knowledge and skills; (ii) To train students to learn to learn; and (iii) University to put in place facilities and resources for both lecturers and students (Mande, 2007).

### *Benefits of quality teaching*

- (1) It emphasises independent thinking.
- (2) It encourages learners to be innovative
- (3) It promotes competence of learners
- (4) It allows learners' room to process information into knowledge on their own
- (5) It enables all students to develop own learning styles.
- (6) It leads learners to be adaptive.

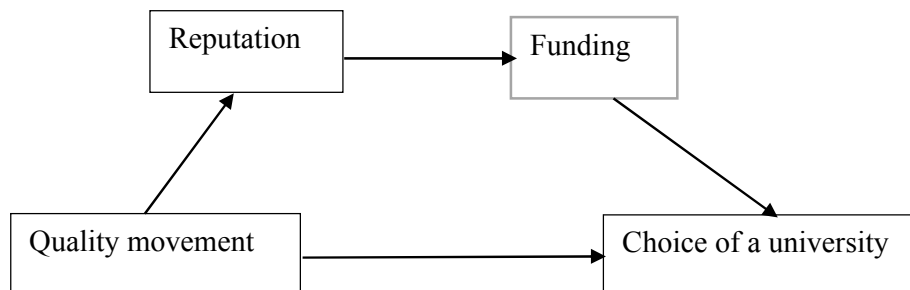
Mande's work as reviewed above is useful. However it did not focus on the relationship between pedagogy and choices of universities. For that reason there is a gap which the current study seeks to fill.

### *Facilities of a University*

It has been stated by the University of Essex (2013) that high facilities for students, staff and visitors contribute to quality of educational life in a University. Similarly the University of Minnesota (2013) outlines the role of the University Facilities Services management in improvement the quality of environment for the university community. In the area of ICT

Akuegwu, Ntukidem, Ntukidem and Gaja (2011) found that availability of ICT facilities for quality instructional service delivery in Universities in AkwaIbom and Cross River States, Nigeria was significantly low except internet-connected desktop computers and institutional cybercafés; lecturers' utilization of ICT facilities was significantly low; lecturers from federal universities in the two states utilize ICT facilities more than their state universities counterparts. Lecturers from universities in AkwaIbom State differed significantly with their Cross River State counterparts in their utilization of some of the ICT facilities. Thus, recommendations were made to enhance the provision and utilization of ICT facilities in Nigerian universities. In view of the above literature reviewed, it is right to assert that the importance of facilities in universities has been clearly underscored. However, none of the above studies have focused on facilities and cost or choice. This means that there is a gap in the foregone studies. That gap is to be covered by the current study.

The relationship of variables (quality movement, reputation, funding and choice of a university) in this current study were conceptualised as indicated in figure 2 below.



*Figure 2. Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework tallies well with the objectives of the study. The first objective is represented by the relationship between quality movement and reputation; the second objective is reflected in the relationship between reputation and choice of a university; and the third objective was represented by the relationship between quality movement and choice of a university.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The field research for this study was conducted in the universities of Makerere, Kyambogo, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Nkumba, Kampala International, Busoga, Islamic University in Uganda, and Uganda Christian University.

### *Research design*

The study used a cross-sectional design. A good field research required a plan for conducting field research (Ahuja, 2005). So data was collected from a cross section of respondents from the above universities. The major research methods used in this study was the survey method. In tandem with that method, quantitative and qualitative data was gathered using a questionnaire and interview guide. The use of several methods was very useful because it was possible for the study to gain greater validity and reliability than employing a single methodological approach (Gill and Johnson, 1991, White, 2002). Views of respondents were analysed according to themes as they rhymed with objectives.

### *Sample and sampling techniques*

The number of people in all the departments of the four universities was rather big. In the current study, the rule of the thumb approach was used to determine the number of respondents. The advocate of use of the rule of the thumb (Roscoe, 1975) in determining a sample size, contended that in social science research any sample between 30 and 500 was sufficient to give credible results. So a total of 392 respondents who are mainly students. The sample of 392 was considered an appropriate sample for the study. All these students responded to the questionnaire.

In order to get to the respondents a convenient sampling technique was employed. Convenient sampling was where data was gathered from members of the strata who happened to be available at the time of the field research and who were conveniently ready to provide the required data by filling the questionnaire (Sekaran, 2003). It were therefore those university students who happened to be available in the universities during the period of the field research who participated in this study a respondents.

## **Research methods**

Several methods were used to collect data from the field. These methods were:

### *(a) Survey method*



This method of data collection is one where respondents provide answers in pre-determined order (Saunders, et al. 1997). For this study a questionnaire was administered to 392 respondents from the four universities. The survey method was deemed appropriate because it was possible to gather facts and figures from a large number of respondents. In that way, it is a quite useful methods (Gilbert, 1995). Indeed it was the only method that could generate responses from a large number of people at four different points in a short time.

*(b) Unstructured interview*

Unstructured interview method is one of the four types of interview. Others being: the structured; the non-directive; and the focused (Cohen and Manion, 1994). The unstructured interviewing is where there is great freedom and flexibility (Saunders, *et al.*, 1997). This method was considered useful for some line managers who had oversight responsibilities even other line managers. These included Principals and Deans in some instances.

### **The major research instrument**

*Questionnaire.* The main tool used to obtain primary data from respondents was a questionnaires. As already indicated, the questionnaire had several main sections: demographic characteristics; quality movement, reputation, and choice. The items on the questionnaire were measured by a Likert scale of: strongly disagree = 1; disagree= 2; neither disagree nor agree = 3; agree = 4; and strongly agree = 5. This scale applied to all sections except the first of demographic characteristics.

### **Validity and reliability**

The issue of validity and reliability of the research instrument and its outcome were taken into account. It was noted that validity was concerned with the idea that research design fully addressed the research objectives. In the current study, validity was established through a validity test using the content validity index (CVI). The instrument was validated using the scale of: not valid at all = 1; somewhat valid = 2; valid = 3; and quite valid = 4. The items rates as valid and quite valid were summed up and divided by the sum of all. The product was the validity test was 0.683. Since conventional research wisdom requires that a credible research instrument should have validity score between 0.5 to 0.7 (Amin, 2005; Sekaran, 2003; Sullivan, 2001). So the

validity score of 0.68 meant that the questions that were posed were relevant and valid to the study variables.

The reliability was also considered. The reliability test was done using the Cronbach's (1964) alpha ( $\alpha$ ) test so as to ascertain the internal consistency of the study variables. The results of reliability test were as indicated in Table 1 below:

*Table 1: reliability test results*

	<i>Scales</i>	<i>Cronbach alpha coefficients</i>
1	Quality movement	0.67
2	Reputation	0.82
3	Funding	0.66
4	Choice	0.77
	<b>Average</b>	<b>0.73</b>

Source computed using SPSS version 20.0

The average alpha was 0.73 and its implication was that the study variables were reliable and consistent. The 0.73 was within the acceptable range of scores for a reliability (Amin, 2005). So that matter therefore, it is apposite to infer that the scale used were reliable.

### ***Data Analysis***

The quantitative data collected from the field was analysed using SPSS software program. The frequencies, the descriptives, the correlations and regressions were all done with the aim of answering the hypotheses research objectives. The qualitative data collected from unstructured interviews and document analysis were analysed thematically in consonance with the specific variables of the study.

## **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section contains the results obtained from field investigations, their interpretations and discussion. They are presented in three broad themes of quality movement, reputation and choice.

Each of these is explained, its field results presented, interpretation given and test of the related hypothesis reported.

It is appropriate to analyse the nature of the quality movement in Ugandan higher education. As already noted, quality movement in Ugandan universities focuses on improving the components that make up higher education. Such components include: bettering teaching so as to make learning possible, relevant and exciting to university students; quality improvement being integrated and therefore institutionalised in the university life; taking into account view of most if not all higher education stakeholders who included students, employers, the state, other educational institutions, higher education regulators and academics.

### **Quality movement**

Quality movement in Uganda's university education system, was driven by many factors. The subject of quality movement and choice has ever been considered albeit in other contexts like In USA (Buchanan, 1995), in Europe Friend-Pereira, Lutz &Heerens (2002), in India (Mishra, 2006), and in the UK (Kenny, 2006). These studies brought to fore several issues: (i) that there is such a thing as quality movement in higher education; (ii) that quality movement is regional and specific; and (iii) that quality movement in each country had its antecedents. However, none of these studies covered Uganda.

### **Antecedents of quality movements in higher education**

The factors responsible for the emergence of quality movement in Uganda included the following:

#### *(a) Response to unemployment contributed to emergence of quality movement in universities*

The challenge of unemployment in the country. The issue of graduate unemployment in Uganda is a complex matter. First of all, it was estimated that an average of 400,000 young people graduated from Ugandan universities with various qualifications. However, there were usually about 9,000 jobs or vacancies for university graduates to occupy. This meant that about 31,000 graduates without immediate employment opportunities in the sectors (public and private). Second, the youths, that is, those aged between 18 and 30 years constitute 23% of the 34,634,650 population in 2014 (*Uganda Census of 2014*, main report, 2016). This meant that they youths were about 7,965,970. It was further noted that 36% of the university graduates were not

meaningfully and gainfully employed. Other commentators in Uganda put the unemployment percentage much higher. Although the accuracy of the percentage of unemployed graduates could be debated, the fact remained that jobs for university graduates were scarce in Uganda. This situation compelled some observers to prophesy that the country was seated on a time-bomb (Kiwumulo&Nabatanzi, 2011; Sekadde, 2013;;Mwesigwa, 2014; Mbogo, 2015; Namatovu, 2015; Ssenkumba, 2016).

The situation of unemployment had been precipitated by several reasons. One, it was held that unemployment of graduates was caused by education system which was a replica of the colonial system which trained people to be teachers, clerks, lawyers and the like thereby not giving graduates the necessary skills (Mwesigwa, 2014); Two, ILO's view was that unemployment in Uganda was partly caused by a mismatch between acquired education and available jobs (Ahaibwe&Mbowe, 2014). The preponderance of unemployment was largely blamed on the university education. Since governments and private companies had failed to create enough jobs for the university graduates, it is universities that were expected to equip their students with that turned them into skilled entrepreneurs. That is, job creators and not job seekers.

In response to the criticism of developing of creators, universities embarked on quality improvement as one of the strategies of producing skilled graduates who would be ready to create their own jobs on day one. As that endeavour became wide spread because each university, wanted to remain relevant in the higher education market, quality considerations became a movement.

*(b) The institution of higher education regulators and networks also propelled quality movement*

Another factor that helped to develop the quality into a movement, was the development of quality standards by higher education regulators. In Uganda although there was quality at University, there was no law and body that focused eminently on quality. The *University and Other Tertiary Institutions Act* was promulgated in 2001. Therefore after the Uganda National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) was set up. The NCHE being the regulators of higher education in the country, gazetted a quality assurance framework for universities in 2014. Besides the regulator, professional bodies like Uganda Law Society (ULS); the Institute of Chartered Public Accountants in Uganda (ICPA); the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council (UMDPC); the Uganda Architects Registration Board (UARB) to mention but only a few. Such

professional bodies were granted legal status and therefore they were legally empowered to set minimum quality standards in Universities. So, almost all Ugandan universities endeavoured to attend. Interuniversity council of East Africa (IUCEA) also had quality prescriptions for the member universities.

As a result of the tremendous focus on quality at international, continental, regional, national, and institutional levels, a number of organs were created at all these levels to support and promote quality of higher education. This is encapsulated in Table 2:

*Table 2: Agencies promoting higher education quality*

<i>Quality assurance agency</i>	<i>Catchment area</i>	<i>Primary purpose</i>
International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAHE)	Global level	Supports external quality assurance agencies to improve their performance.
African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN)	African Continental level	Set up under AAU to prop quality assurance initiatives of national institutions.
East African Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN)	East African Community	Created in 2011 to foster collaboration ad linkage of quality assurance practitioners in East Africa.
Quality Assurance Forum of Uganda (QAFU)	Country level	Set up to promote the role quality assurance personnel in Ugandan universities
Directorates of Quality Assurance (DQA)	University level	Officers appointed by universities to oversee the compliance with quality standards at university level.

Source: *IUCEA Principles and Guidelines* (2014); *NCHE Quality Assurance Framework* (2014).

In view of the information on Table 2, it could be noted that quality is a movement that every university is involved in. It is taken seriously by all stakeholders of higher education. So could be argued from the above discussion that promulgations of laws, establishment of organs concerned with quality regulation and networking with quality agencies across universities and nations contributed significantly to entrenching the quality movement in higher education in Uganda.

(c) *The unprecedented increase in numbers of universities and enrolment of students*

The history of university education in Uganda is rather simple and straight forward. In 1922 Makerere College was established in Kampala. In 1963, the University of East Africa was established on June 29, 1963 to serve the nations of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The University was originally instituted as an independent external college of the University of London. This arrangement of higher education obtained until 1970 when the University of East Africa was split into three independent universities of Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Makerere. Until 1988 and 1989 when the Islamic University in Uganda and Mbarara University of Science / Technology were established respectively. For all the years before the 1990s, the enrolment at Universities were rather small, that is below 5,000 as indicated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: *Changes in general university enrolment in Uganda*

<i>Decade</i>	<i>Number of universities in Uganda</i>	<i>University enrolment</i>	<i>Percent growth</i>
1950s	1	250	-
1960s	1	888	72%
1970s	1	2,581	47%
1980s	2	4,045	49%
1990s	9	17,578	60%
2000s	24	34,773	72%
2010	31	88,185	61%
2015	38	160,190	82%

With the establishment of Makerere College in 1922 and the changes that occurred thereafter, g at one institution, Makerere, government had a monopoly of University education in Uganda. A monopoly is a situation in which a single group owns all or nearly all of the market for a given type of product or service. During the period from 1920s to 1990s the cost of university education was shouldered by the state. All people who joined the university and other tertiary institutions had the cost of their education underwritten by the state.

Liberalisation of University education in Uganda began in earnest in 1990s. Besides the quasi-governmental Islamic University in Uganda established in (1988), private universities that started in the 1990s were Ndejje University (1992), Uganda Martyrs University (1993), Nkumba University (1994), Bugema (1994), Uganda Christian University (1997), Busoga (1999) and Kampala University (1999). By 2013 Uganda had six public universities and 34 private universities. The private universities funded their operations using mainly from the tuition fees which they charged. The charges differed greatly depending on the university and the nature of the programme

Since the number of universities and students had catapulted, there was need to regulate the work of universities. Consequently, quality movement emerged and took root in the country.

*(d) Response to ubiquitous academic dishonesty*

It is true that the issue of academic dishonesty has dogged the higher education for quite some time. In 2012 it was revealed that academic dishonesty was one of those factors that affected the career growth of universities' academic staff in the country (Namagembe&Ntayi, 2012). These was also the incidences of plagiarism (Bunoti, 2010). Uganda was not the only country where incidents of academic fraud occurred. It was a world-wide problem (Eckstein, 2003). Students' cheating in examinations also became ubiquitous in the last one decade (Lathrop & Foss, 2012; Heneghan, 2012; Kalundu, 2009)). This implied that quality had been compromised. For that matter universities had to ensure that quality was restored, hence the quality movement taking root in the country.

*(e) Response to skills gap among graduates contributed to emergence of quality movement*

There has been a recurrent criticism of university graduates being incompetent in the workplaces. A survey carried out in 2014 indicated that half of the graduates from East African universities lacked employability skills (Ernest, 2014). Consequently it was reported that employers shunned East African graduates. Among the skills that graduates were assumed to lack was literary competency. That was probably why some of them could not write convincing job applications letters (Agaba&Kifubi, 2016). It was further believed that shaky employability skills partly led to big percent rates of graduate unemployment in East Africa as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: *unemployment of graduates due to skills gap*

	<i>East African nation</i>	<i>percent</i>
1	Uganda	63
2	Tanzania	61
3	Burundi	55
4	Rwanda	52
5	Kenya	51

It was noted that lack of competencies in communication compelled law faculties to introduce pre-entry examinations for prospective law entrants (Ahimbisibwe, 2016) Although Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) complained about this requirement, law faculties

contended that there were students who joined law programmes and failed to measure up to expectations. Yet they had usually joined with very good grades at UNEB. This translated into high failure rate and incompetent after university (Ahimbisibwe, 2016). This reflected badly on universities. So to keep with quality, universities introduced pre-entry tests.

Besides law students, there was a complaint raised against the hospitality programmes. It was observed that many Ugandan graduates were usually left out of jobs because they were considered incompetent (Nalubega, 2012). As if that was not enough issue, it was held that some Ugandan graduates did not meet the needs of the job market (Mwesigwa, 2014, January). It was pointed out that about 62% of youths in Uganda were unemployed. Of these 36% were university graduates (Kanyeheyo, 2015). This was in a way a call on universities to rethink their curricula so that graduates obtain skills that could turn them into entrepreneurs and self-employed citizens. Some graduates claimed that they did have the requisite skills (Nahamya and Mukakanya, 2013). It was only when graduates were able to create their own jobs that they would be regarded to have received quality education. In pursuance of that objective, many universities emphasised internships. All this implied that universities did not impart requisite skills into their graduates.

Universities in Uganda took these issues of skills gap very seriously. They took several measures to address these gaps. One of the measures was quality improvement. Consequently, a quality movement emerged as each institution endeavoured to promote quality so that its graduates could be accepted by the job market. For that matter was appropriate to argue that the urge to plug the skills gap contributed to the promotion of quality movement in the country's higher education.

Regarding the question whether there was a significant relationship between quality and reputation, a test was carried out. First the correlation results indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between the two variables [ $r(392) = .632, p < 0.01$ ]. This implied that the higher the quality and better the reputation of a university.

When a simple linear regression matrix was executed, it produced results which showed that the Adj.  $R^2$  was .397. From this, it was noted that quality of a university contributed 40% to the university's reputation. The same test revealed that there was linearity between the two variables, that is, quality and reputation [ $F(1, 390) = 258.847, p < 0.01$ ]. From this statistic one could conclude that the more quality a university exhibits, the more and better reputation a university enjoys. Furthermore, the results revealed that there was a significant relationship between quality and reputation [ $\beta = .632, p < 0.01$ ]. Reputation is a result of quality attainment. This implies that without quality, a university is less likely to a reputation.



## Reputation and funding of universities

The importance of reputation went without saying because it gave assurance to stakeholders some confidence. It increased the visibility of a university. The most reputable universities in the world have good track records in research, innovations, and have a massive pool of well-placed alumni. Given the importance of reputation, all universities use several approaches to maintain or promote institutional reputation. Some of the approaches used to promote institutional reputation included the following:

*University ranking.* Universities build reputation by improving their web-based ranking. The students interviewed at Nkumba University argued the internet based ranking was good because it showed the sponsors and prospective employers that a specific university exists first of all, and secondly that it was doing well. The internet based ranking also led to a healthy comparison of universities. For most students (90%), university ranking gave confidence to people who studied and worked there. This enabled many prospective students to readily and willingly associate with a university even if it was abroad. So the ranking of Universities promoted the reputation of a university. In table 5 the ranking of Ugandan Universities was projected as an indicator of institutional reputation.

Table 5: *The ranking of universities in Uganda, January 2016*

University		Uganda	East Africa	Africa	Globally
1	Makerere University	1	2	11	1156
2	Mbarara University of Science & Technology	2	26	58	2647
3	Uganda Christian University	3	46	179	9050
4	International School of Business & Technology	4		553	8942
5	Kampala International University	5	58	250	11786
6	Kyambogo University	6	27	330	13521
7	Uganda Martyrs University	7	44	377	14322
8	Gulu University	8	41	291	8169

9	Makerere University Business School	9			12741
10	Islamic University in Uganda	10	47	378	14338
11	Uganda Technology and Management University	11	141	482	14026
12	International University of Health Sciences	12	199	412	14826
13	Bugema University	11	203	374	14026
14	St Augustine International University	14	273	439	15213
15	Ndejje University	15	141	482	15607
16	International University of East Africa	16	170		15736
17	Mutesa I Royal University	17	245	494	15794
18	Uganda Management Institute	18	68	514	16133
19	Nkumba University	19	89	557	16653
20	Mountains of the Moon University	20	157	556	16721
21	Busitema University	21	102	581	17033
22	Kampala University	22	126	427	17069
23	Victoria University	23	86	618	17429
24	Busoga University	24	166	732	18540
25	Livingstone international university	25	243	836	19453
26	Bishop Stuart University	26	151	852	19549
27	Cavendish University	27	184	937	20205
28	African Rural University	28	254	987	20651
29	Uganda Institute of ICT	29		1025	20881
30	Virtual University of Uganda	30	206	1058	21189
31	Muni University	31	255	1059	21216
32	St Lawrence University	32	161	1178	22144
33	Kumi University	33	240	1189	22215
34	Kabale University	34	169	1205	22402
35	University of Africa	35			22466
36	Uganda Pentecostal University	36			23151

37	All Saints University Lango	37		1222	23180
38	Soroti University	38		1336	23214

*Key: Uganda - these are rankings of 2016; East Africa - these are rankings of 2015  
Africa - these are rankings of 2016; Global – these are rankings of 2016*

From the above university ranking of 2015 and early 2016, it emerged clearly that Makerere University was ranked number 1 in Uganda in 2016 and number 2 in East Africa in 2015. In Africa Makerere was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> and globally 1156<sup>th</sup>. In Uganda, therefore, Makerere was the most reputable university. Students who participated in this study as respondents testified that they had known about the ranking of Makerere University since 2012. This had partly influenced their making of Makerere the first choice. About 96% of the respondents intimated that they had preferred Makerere because of its reputation.

It could be inferred that Universities took quality improvement very seriously because they wanted to keep their reputation. Besides ranking reputation was built around the alumni of a university. Many universities usually tried to associate with their successful alumni by awarding them honorary degrees. Although the criteria for giving an award are (a) significant contribution to well-being of society, (b) outstanding academic achievement, and (c) significant contribution to the development of a particular institution, universities use these honorary awards to boost their reputation. When notable members of the society associate with a university, it promotes the reputation of a university just as much as it raises the fame of the individual recipient. Given the reputation considerations, it was common for a university to publicise its notable alumni. It was in this spirit that universities gave out honorary degrees to already successful personalities. For instance in the recent past Ugandan universities gave out honorary degrees as shown in Table 6 below.

*Table 6: Some instances of honorary doctorates awarded by Ugandan universities*

	<i>University</i>	<i>Degree</i>	<i>Awardee</i>	<i>year</i>
1	Makerere University	LLD	(i) To a president of a foreign country	2016
		LLD	(ii) To a former president of foreign country	2012
		LLD	(iii) To reigning president	2010
		D.Sc.	(iv) To an excellent scientist	2010
		LLD	(v) To former resident of a neighbouring	2009

		LLD Professor	nation (vi) To person who raised more for a university (vii) Honorary professorship	2007 2006
2	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	D.Sc. LLD	(i) awarded to career vice chancellor (ii) To reigning president	2010 2012
3	Nkumba University	LLD LLD LLD LLD	(i) To the third founder of the university (ii) To the fourth founder of the university (iii) To a prominent business person (iv) To a successful judge of globe repute	2014 2014 2014 2014
4	Islamic University in Uganda	LLD LLD LLD D.Lit.	(i) To a prominent politician (ii) Former Diplomat (iii) Secretary General Muslim Congress (iv) To well established personalities	2014 2012 2010 2005

It could be noted that universities have a culture of awarding honorary doctorates to a few reputable individuals with the aim of boosting university's reputation.

The relationship between funding and reputation of a university was tested by a Product Moment Correlation and a simple linear regression. The bivariate correlation yielded results which indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between the two variables [F (392) = .596,  $p < 0.01$ ]. This meant that the reputation of a university was supported significantly by funding. This implied that universities with weak financial standing would definitely project poor reputation nationally and internationally.

The simple linear regression matrix produced results which showed that funding had a linear relationship with reputation [F (1, 390) = 215.348,  $p < 0.01$ ]. It followed that the more funding a university had the more reputation it built. Furthermore, the regression test revealed an Adj.  $R^2$  of .354. In that way, funding contributed 35% to promoting the reputation of a university. In view of these revelations, it was inferred that funding and reputation bedfellows that needed to be treated seriously together by universities because without one the other would be negatively affected.

### **Funding and choice of university**

Funding of university education has several dimensions. There is funding form of capital investment in educational institutions, in case universities. A university with all academic

programmes calls for a lot of money to be invested in infrastructure, laboratories, equipment, farms, libraries and many more. In Uganda this has been an uphill task. Even public funded universities often times have sought financial assistances from international donor agencies like Carnegie, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller, and others. Private universities because of their status could not easily access bilateral and multilateral funding. So some which sought financial help from associated religious institutions, while others have picked loans from banks in order to put the necessary infrastructure in place. Once in a while a government grant is extended to a private university.

Recurrent expenses is another dimension of funding universities. Most if not all universities in the country are dependent on tuition fees. Paying staff salaries, utilities, taxes, and others depends on the money generated from tuition fees. Given the weak economy, most students cannot pay the required fees in time nor pay it fully. Oftentimes when university administrators try to enforce fees payment, students respond with strikes claiming they are poor, they have no money, but the universities should let them study even though they have not paid (Nakayiwa, 2015). From this it is clear that universities regardless of their status have had financial challenges in the last twenty or so years.

Universities in the country different fees policies. Besides that, there are often attempts by the universities to increase the fees in order to raise more money and be able to meet the expenses. Students have often protested against fees increment whenever universities have attempted to rise the fees. Between 2008 and 2015 there were about 26 strikes in various universities over fees (Mande and Nakayita, 2015, Nakayiwa 2015). This meant that on average there were about three fees related strikes in the universities across the country.

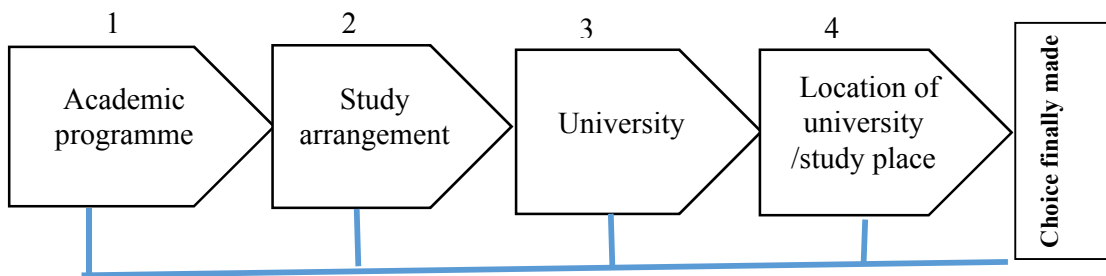
The relationship between funding and choice of a university was first tested by bivariate correlation. This yielded a positive moderate significant relationship between the two variables [ $r(392) = .512, p < 0.01$ ]. This implied that funding as factor contributed to students' choice of a university. Fees paying students often consider the issue of funding when deciding on which university to join.

The question was further subjected a simple liner regression test. The results of this test indicated first that there was a linear relationship between funding and students' choice of a university [ $F(1, 390) = 138.393, p < 0.01$ ]. From this statistic it was possible to note that any significant changes in funding in a particular university led to a significant changes in students' choice of a university. The second set of results were  $\beta = .512, p < 0.01$ . This showed that there was a definite relationship

between the two variables. Overall it was revealed that funding qua funding contributed 26% to students' choices of universities. Funding should be taken as a one of the main factors that influence the choices of students. Even where there were facilities like students' loans and bursaries, still students remained cautious.

### **Choice of a university as influenced by the quality movement**

Choice implied that one had equal chances and capacity to pick one of the alternatives available. In this case it meant that prospective university students had several universities from they selected one to go to. There were several factors that influenced the way choices about universities in Uganda are made. These factors include: (a) academic programme; (b) study arrangement (c) university; and (d) location of a university. In view of these factors it is right to argue that choice making is a continuum. This continuum is illustrated in Figure 2 below:



*Figure 2: continuum of choice making for a university*

Most students if not all students begin by electing the academic programme they want to pursue at a university. Next they select the study arrangement. That is, whether full time, part-time, evening, weekend, distance or online study arrangement. The third step on the continuum is choosing a university. Since some universities have campuses or study centres in a countries or cross borders, students have also make choices of location which could be a country, a campus, or study centre.

#### *(a) Choice of an academic programme*

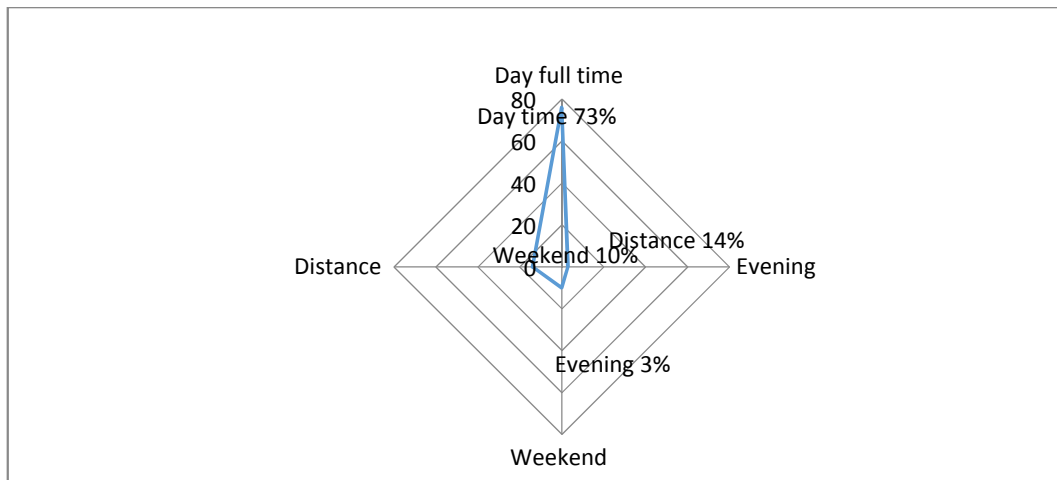
There are very many programme of study at both universities. These academic programmes were offered in the five broad categories of (i) Arts and humanities, (ii) natural sciences, (iii) science and technology, (iv) life and medical sciences, and (v) social sciences. On whether students chose

the academic programme they finally enrolled on, they were chosen as representative academic programme because of their popularity among international students. When international students were asked to state whether they personally chose the academic programmes they were offering at the two universities, they answered in affirmative.

It is worth noting that as far as privately funded students were concerned, joining a particular university was majorly a personal choice. The way choices of the academic programme were made was that students chose the academic programme they wanted to study but also were able to finance. When they arrived at a university, they had an opportunity to change the academic programme especially after the freshers' orientation week. Again it were students making the choices.

*(b) Choice of study arrangement*

In Ugandan universities there are basically four study arrangements. These are: (i) Day, (ii) Evening, (iii) Weekend, and (iv) Distance or online. The respondents who took part in this study, revealed that students personally made choices to join particular study arrangement as shown in Figure 3 below.



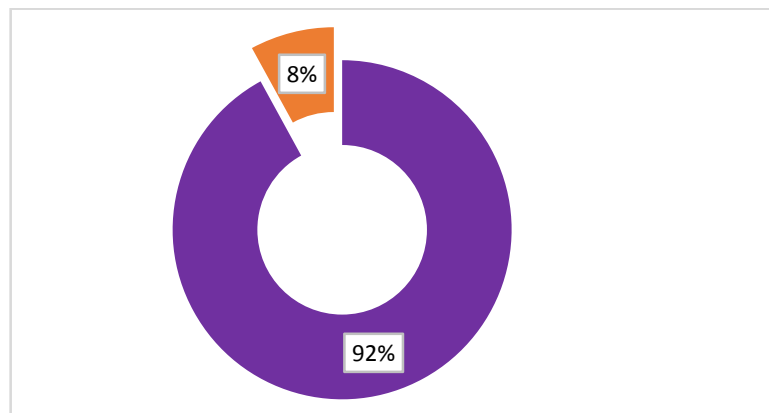
*Figure 3: Students' choice of study arrangement*

It can be ascertained that when it came to which study arrangement, students made personal choices. Most privately funded students (73%) prefer Day programme. This is because many of them being undergraduates preferred to study full time. For that reason, it was just appropriate for to enrol on the Day full time study arrangement. Distance and weekend study arrangements

took 14 and 10 percent respectively. The Evening attracted the least percentage (3%) of the students.

*(c) Choice of a University*

Joining a particular university was a matter of choice. In order to determine whether or not privately sponsored students made personal decisions to join and enrol in a particular university. Students indicated that they themselves participated in deciding on a university to study in. Figure 4 shows the percentage of students who made personal decisions to join a particular university.



*Figure 4: whether students themselves chose the university they were studying in*

From Figure 4 above, it is seen that 92% of the students who participated in the current study indicated that they personally made the choice to study in their universities where they were. This choice making was very good because it made students feel confident and happy.

Although students make decisions themselves, it was important to find out how they made the decisions join the universities. There were usually three models of decisions making. These were: the satisficing, rational, and implicit favourite.

The satisficing decision-making model allows the problem to be solved with the first solution that meets the established criteria. It may not be the best solution. In case of students and choice of universities, this model implied that students would join a university they had heard about or seen. As long as it was university, that was all.



The second model which was implicit favourite decision-making model which provided a decision maker a means to evaluate other solutions against a perceived best decision. Once all other solutions were found to be less favourable than the implicit favourite, then the implicit favourite solution was selected. Some of the students who said that they used this model were those who came from universities because a brother or sister had studied in that university. So they chose a university mainly because they knew one or more alumni who was successful.

The third was the maximizing or rational decision-making model. This model had the following steps: (a) Prioritize the problems; (b) Understand the problem; (c) Analyse the facts; and (d) Determine a course of action. About 80 percent of privately sponsored students who took part in this study indicated that they used this model. They stated that before deciding on the university they first considered whether the university offered a course of their interest; then cost of studying that in that particular university. They also said that in most cases they got information on several universities, analyse that information and then decided on one of them.

In view of the above facts, it was apposite to conclude that privately sponsored students made decisions based on facts about universities. They obtained information prior to deciding to join a particular university.

All the three aspects (choice of academic programme, choice of study arrangement, and choice of a university) constituted students' choice to study in a particular university as indicated by the results of the multiple regression in Table 7 below:

*Table 7: Multiple regression of items where choices were made.*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	.372	.100		3.729	.000
(i) Choice of academic programme	.133	.033	.156	4.072	.000
(ii) Choice of study arrangement	.199	.022	.279	9.136	.000
(iii) Choice of a University	.189	.033	.222	5.719	.000

a. Dependent Variable: choice of university

The results in Table 7 show that the three aspects had Beta values ranging between .156 and .272 with significance levels of less than 0.01. In view of the results it was appropriate to conclude that each of the three items contributed significantly towards what constituted choices students made when joining a particular university.

### **Quality movement and Choice of the University**

	<i>Public Universities</i>	<i>Approx. private students</i>
1	Makerere University	21,000
2	Kyambogo University	12,000
3	Mbarara University Science & Technology	1500
4	Gulu University	2500
5	Busitema University	2000
6	Muni University	200
<i>Some of the Private Universities</i>		
7	Kumi University	1,000
8	Islamic University in Uganda	6,000
9	Uganda Christian University	11,000
10	Kampala International University	12,000
11	Kampala University	10,000
12	Nkumba University	6,000
13	Bugema University	5,000
14	Busoga University	5,000
15	Uganda Martyrs University	5,000
16	Ndejje University	5,000

### *Test of Hypothesis 3: Quality movement and Choice of the University*

The third null hypothesis (H3o) stated that “There is no significant relationship between quality and choice of Ugandan Private Universities by international students”. In order to test this hypothesis the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlations test was first done and it indicated that there was a strong relationship between Quality of education and Choice of a university.

With reference to the results of Pearson's Product Moment correlation, it is right to state that there is a strong positive relationship between quality and choice of university  $r(392) = .636$   $p < 0.01$ . This positive relationship means that the better the quality of the university in terms of reputation, pedagogy and facilities the more international students will choose to study in a particular university. The students who participated in the current study intimated universities had several elements of quality.

The above finding was further corroborated by the results of a regression matrix. This test showed first that there was a linear relationship between quality and choice of a university [ $F(1, 390) = 256.369$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ]. The more reputation a university has the more a university is likely to attract students' choices.

Quality status of a university, according to the Adj.  $R^2$  of .403, was 40%. The implication of this statistic was that quality was an important influencer of students' choice of a university. Many students were aware that quality had an influence on prospective employers. If an institution was known for having a good quality education, its graduates were more likely to find employment.

In view of the above arguments and statistics, it is true to conclude that the purpose of the study was achieved. The purpose was "to analyse the interplay between quality movement, reputation, funding and students' choice of universities in Uganda". The analysis done revealed the quality movement with the related aspects were a major influencer on students' choice of a university.

## **SUMMARY**

This study explored the interplay between quality movement and choice of a university. It was pointed out that a quality movement had emerged in the country. The antecedents of the quality movement in Uganda's higher education were discussed. Then the interplay between the four variables was also assessed systematically.

Overall it was found and proved that a strong relationship existed between quality and choice of a university. It was therefore important to conclude by stating that choice of university is partly influenced by the quality of the university. In view of that it was good to advise that Universities would do better to consider working on quality as it was a major influencer of students' choices of universities in the country.

## References

- Agaba V & Kifubi M (2016) Most graduates Cannot write applications letters. In *new vision*. June 13. <http://www.newvision.co.ug/>
- Ahimbisibwe P (2016) UNEB Queries University pre-entry exams. In *Daily Monitor*. June 13, No.165. <http://www.monitor.co.ug/>
- Binoti S (2010) The Quality of Higher Education in Developing Countries Needs Professional Support. Kampala: Kyambogo University. At <http://intconfhighered.org>
- Brennan, J., Goedegebuure, L.C.G., Shah, T., Westerheijden, D.F. and Westhop, P.M. (1992), *Towards a Methodology for Comparative Qualitative Assessment in European Higher Education*, CNA, CHEPS, HIS, London.
- Buchanan, H P (1995) The Quality Movement in higher education in the United States. *Health Libraries Review*. Volume 12. Pp141-146.
- Divoky, J.J. and Taylor, R.W. (1996), "Modeling change in curriculum: a TQM perspective", *Total Quality Management*, Vol.7 No.2 April.
- Dotchin, J.A. and Oakland, J.S, (1994a), "TQM in services, Part I: understanding and classifying services", *International Journal of Quality and Reliability management*, Vol, 11No. 3 pp. 9-26.
- Eckstein M A (2003) Combating academic fraud, towards a culture of integrity. In international Institute education planning. <http://www.unesco.org/iiep/>.
- Ernest S (2014) Over 50% of East African graduates half baked. In *the East African*. <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/>
- Bennington, L. and Cummane, J. (1998), "Measuring Service Quality: a Hybrid methodology", *Total Quality Management*, Vol. 9 No. 6, pp. 395-405.
- Fields, J.C. (1994), *Total Quality for Schools: A Guide for Implementation*, ASQC Quality Press, Milwaukee, WI.
- Frazer, M. (1994), "Quality in higher education: an international perspective", in Green, D. (Ed.), *What is Quality in Higher Education?*, SRHE and Open University Press, Buckingham
- Friend-Pereira J, Lutz K & Heerens N (2002) *European Student Handbook on Quality Assurance in Higher Education*. <http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/contrib/ESIB/QAhandbook/>.
- Heneghan E (2012). Academic dishonesty and internet in higher education. <http://www.commonstricoll.edu/>
- Kalundu T (2009). Why students cheat in examinations. In <http://www.theobserver.co.ug/>
- Kasozi A.B.K., (2009), "Financing Uganda's Public Universities: An Obstacle to Serving the Public Good", *The Decline of Public Funding for Higher Education, 1970-2005* pp.27-28.
- Kasozi A.B.K., (2003), "University Education in Uganda: Challenges and Opportunities for Reform". The gap between unit costs and fees.
- Kenny A (2006) The Quality Movement Discourse in the Higher Education Sector: A General Review. Level 3, number 4. <http://arrow.dit.ie/cserart/>
- Kanyehyo, M I (2015) The Crippling Dilemma of graduate youths' unemployment. In the *Newvision*. <http://www.newvision.co.ug/>

Lathrop A & Foss K (2012). Students' cheating and plagiarism in the internet era. <http://www.pointloma.edu/>

Mande W M (2007) *Unravelling the Quality Myth*. Quality Development Symposium Report Nkumba University Quality Development Symposium. Entebbe

Mande W M & Nakayita M (2015). Effect of fees policies on quality of education in Uganda. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education*. Volume 7 Number 1.

Mamdani M, (2007), *Scholars in the Marketplace: The Dilemmas of Neo-Liberal Reform at Makerere University, 1989-2005*.

Mishra S (2006) Quality Assurance in Higher Education: An Introduction. NAAC. Bangalore. <http://www.naacindia.org/>

Mwesigwa A (2014) Uganda's unemployed graduates held back by skills gap. At <http://www.theguardian.com/>

Nahamya W K & Mukakanya A M (2013) Learning while producing using low cost technology: the case of maize mill in Uganda. At <http://www.ubleb.go.ug/>

Nakayiwa M F (2015). Staff and students unrest in Ugandan universities: challenges and opportunities. *UVCF Bulletin*. Volume 5.

Namagemble S & Ntayi J M (2012). Ethical sensitivity, academic dishonest and carer growth of academic staff in institutions of higher education. *The International journal of economic & management science*. Vol.1 No.8.

Nalubega F (2012) Why Ugandans re perpetually locked out of the hotel labour market. In *the Daily Monitor*. <http://www.monitor.co.ke/>

Nyaiqoti Chacha C and Ayoo P O (2001) Quality Assurance in East Africa: *IUCEA strategy*. Inter-university council for East Africa

*National Council for Higher Education*. (2006) Kampala Uganda.

Senteza Kajubi, W (2001) Coping with the Challenges of Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century in Mande, W M, (Ed), *Effective Teaching in Higher Education*, pp.206-228.