

The Relationship between Gender Diversity and Academic Staff Productivity in Private Chartered Universities in Central Uganda

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Abstract

This paper presents part of the study carried out in Central Uganda among the chartered private universities. It investigated, among other things, the influence of gender diversity on academic staff productivity. The study used a mixed research paradigm, with quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population in this study was 1109 academic staff from the six (6) chartered private universities in Central, Uganda. A sample of 385 academic staff was selected to fill the questionnaires. In addition, 12 teaching staff were subjected to oral interviews. The response rate of the questionnaires was 93%. The data were analysed using independent samples't-test. The findings were that gender diversity not statistically significantly impact on productivity of academic staff, considering overall productivity ($t = 0.6520$; $p = 0.515$). It was concluded that gender diversity does not significantly affect academic staff productivity, when productivity is aggregated. But when it (productivity) is analysed in a disaggregated format, gender diversity significantly affects research productivity, with the male staff being more productive as compared to females. Gender as a natural characteristic does not determine more productive and the less productive academic staff in private universities

Key words: *Gender diversity, Academic staff productivity, chartered private universities.*

Introduction

Workforce diversity is the collective mixture of employee's differences and similarities, work force is widely recognized as a key issue facing today's human resource managers and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (William, Parker & Turner, 2018). Workplace diversity first emerge in mid 1960s following the introduction of equal employment laws and affirmative laws. (Dong, 2021). Workforce diversity is a complex phenomenon to manage in an organization. The management of workforce diversity as a tool to increase organizational productivity cannot be ruled out especially with the current changes sweeping across the globe (Ongorl & Evans, 2007). The impact of workforce diversity has not been a major problem in Africa before as much as it is today. The freedom of economics and structural adjustment policies opened doors to free market economies especially in Africa. This policy brought about in free movement of labor as a commodity which resulted in the diverse workforce across the continent. The privatization of most of the state-owned enterprises like universities in Sub-Saharan Africa especially Uganda also created an open door for migration of labor from all over the world.

Workforce diversity refers to organizations that are becoming more heterogeneous with the mix of people in terms of gender, age, race, and education background (Robbins, 2018). A diverse workforce, for instance, includes gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, and education back ground and others. According to Robbins (2018), workforce diversity has important implications toward management practices and policies. Frequently, diversity is viewed in a limited fashion, primarily addressing issues of race or gender differences, and linked to the laws providing protected status to certain groups. Broader definitions of diversity were listed such as religion, cultural background, academic background, gender, age, ethnic, language and others to encompass most characteristics that individuals possess that affect the way they think and do things. In this study workforce diversity is conceptualize in terms of gender

diversity, age diversity and nationality diversity. Age diversity refers to the acceptance of different ages in a professional environment, while gender diversity refers to fair representation of people of different genders and nationality diversity: refers to the presence of people from a variety of nationality background from different countries who are working the academic institutions.

Productivity refers to an assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers. In actual terms, productivity is a component which directly affects the company's profits (Sels *et al.*, 2006). Productivity may be evaluated in terms of the output of an employee in a specific period of time. Typically, the productivity of a given worker will be assessed relative to an average out for employees doing similar work. It can also be assessed according to the number of units of a product or service that an employee handles in a defined time frame (Piana, 2001). As the success of an organization like academic institutions rely mainly on the productivity of its employees/academic staff, therefore, academic staff productivity has become an important objective for academic institution (Sharma & Sharma, 2014). In this study, academic staff productivity is conceptualized in terms the three functions of higher education: teaching productivity, research productivity and community service or involvement productivity. Productivity in education is taken as the search patterns of school organization that produce the best student's outcome (Levin, 1993). The idea of production for education depends on seeing education being a production process which means that inputs are transformed into outputs in a standard way.

Literature Review

According to Powell (2018), gender refers to as the physiological inference of a person being either male or female. Studies on gender diversity focus on beliefs people have concerning how male and female staff differ, not only in their physiological characteristics, but also in their productivity. This is based on the beliefs or assumptions that these gender variations influence the way in which individuals react to situations, environments, influences and behaviours of others in work places and other settings of life. Some scholars theorize that gender diversities are partly responsible for variations in performances, productivity and other achievements in life endeavors (Xie & Shauman, 1998; Van den Besselaar & Sandstrom, 2017; Van Arensbergen, van der Weijden & van den Besselaar 2012; Sugimoto, Lariviere, Ni, Gingras & Cronin, 2013). Others believe that these variations are not due to differences in physiological features of men and women, rather they are caused by stereotypes prejudices and discriminations (Cameron, White & Gray, 2016; Symonds, Gemmell, Braisher, Gorringer & Elgar, 2006; Hong, 2021; Sax, Hagedorn, Arredondo & Dicrisi, 2002). Evidences supporting these arguments have been presented amidst attacks and criticisms from those who do not support a certain school of thought.

The gender diversity factor and its influence on staff productivity and performance, has been studied and approached from different angles and as such, different results have been produced. Therefore, reaching a conclusion may be difficult because, the researcher believes that the influence gender could be having is multifaceted and for each facet, the effect of gender affects a different category, depending on factors behind what is being assessed. For example, most of the researchers in this area have assessed research productivity and have produced differing results. In other words, there are more studies measuring productivity in terms of research outputs than in terms of teaching and community service. But even then, the findings in this line differ due to differences in the way research productivity is measured.

For example, a study by Sax *et al.* (2002) examined gender variations in productivity, with respect to research output. They revealed that factors influencing male and female research productivity are almost the same. But they identified that family-based factors, like having children, have very insignificant effects on research productivity. On the other hand, a study by Abramo *et al.* (2013) was on male and female differences in research cooperation. Their results indicated that female researchers exhibited a higher level of research collaboration in all the different ways examined, except for international collaboration, where male staff exceeded females. A study by Yuan (2017) was on gender differences in the research output among university academic staff. The findings indicated superiority of male staff in research productivity, but explained that family burdens and capacity to cooperate in research, were the actual factors responsible for differences in staff research outputs.

Contrary to findings by Abramo *et al.* (2013), evidences by Yuan (2017) indicated that female teachers spend more time on research while at campus compared to male staff and the reason for this was to compensate the lost time put on family issues while at home. Yuan's findings also disagreed with those of Abramo *et al.* (2013), when she indicated that female staff were less likely to participate in research cooperation compared to male staff, and

according to her, this was the reason why female research outputs were still lower compared to male. In comparison, the findings by Xie and Shauman (1998) had confirmed that gender variations in research productivity originate from structural locations that were majorly favoring men. They indicated that secular improvements in female research and scientific positioning can positively improve their research productivity. The findings by Xie and Shauman (1998) influenced many studies on gender diversity and factors it can really influence. Like it was pointed out by Cole and Zuckerman (1984), it has been always been that female researchers get less promotion opportunities compared to male researchers, especially in large institutions. This was also confirmed by Sun (2012) and several other researchers believe like that.

Regarding the argument of whether it is necessary to mix up staff teams with both male and females, Hoogendoorn *et al.* (2011) indicated that teams with equal gender mix perform better in terms of sales and profits, compared to male-dominated teams. They produced evidences that supported the argument that staff teams with lower numbers of females produced owe sales and profits compared to teams with a balanced gender mix. One explanation for this, as provided by Gallego-Álvarez, García-Sánchez & Rodríguez-Domínguez (2010) is that female team managers have a more positive attitude towards equality and diversity than their male counterparts. To me, this reason is not so convincing in understanding why teams with a balanced mix of male and female researchers perform better than teams where there are more male staff. Unless evidences of teams where women dominate are produced, it may not be logical to take this position seriously. As per now, we can use the idea provided by Martins and Parsons (2007) that indicate that, it seems both male and female staff need each other and when they are mixed, they support each other than when each of the genders dominates. However, this position needs three strong empirical evidences on productivity of three types of team mix; male dominated, female dominated and equal mix.

On the question of why and how gender affects productivity especially in scientific research activities, many scholars agree on the big variations in terms of time invested in research by male and female staff (Van den Besselaar & Sandstrom, 2017). This is true, especially in the period after getting married and producing children, where women become more occupied by marriage and child rearing activities at home and they spend more time there than men, something that results into reduced research outputs for women. This idea is in line with findings of Yuan (2017), who revealed that family burdens and cooperation significantly affected staff research productivity. How these homes affect research outcomes are clearer, when analyzed in terms of time invested, but also in terms of concentration and focus. No doubt, a person who invests more time in some activity (like research or teaching) will produce more than another who invests less time in it. Likewise, more time means more concentration and focus.

Similarly, some expectations are linked with male and female due to their inborn tendencies, natural affiliation, beliefs about which type of behaviour, attitude, cognitive skill or interest attracts one sex rather than the other. These gender differences influence the approach in which individual react in workplace. Sometimes gender diversity adversely affects the behaviours like discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping. Eventually such attitude negatively influences the productivity at workplace (Ahmad & Rahman, 2019). On the other hand, Dike (2013), noted that the impact of workforce diversity on organizations like universities or academic institutions, on the high productivity was one of the positive benefits of increased workforce diversity. While the study by Roberge and Van Dick (2010) highlights that gender diversity among workforce of an organizations has positive outcomes like creativity, problem-solving and innovations. However, they sighted the challenges like aspects, - increasing conflicts, decreasing group performance and decreasing group performance and decreasing cohesiveness. While according to Stephen, *et al.* (2018), increasing the number of gender diversity initiative is not enough. It was recommended that growth and advancement opportunities should be created to as to bridge the gap between male and female genders to improve staff productivity like in higher educational institutions.

In the last decades, those organizational barriers that hinder women from advancing to the top in their career have been a vital in a private university research. Singh and Vinnicombe (2018) in their study discovered that women are almost if not completely absent when it comes to occupying senior positions in private universities. However, male directors often form an elite group at the top of the corporate world and only very few women are able to breakthrough these glass ceiling into this elite group, despite making inroads into middle management. This point out that gender in the board of directors in some big organization is a barrier for career advancement. Singh and Vinnicombe (2018) argued that this is a matter of concern, because the talents of women are not being fully utilized. The private sectors are seen and characterized as influential, powerful, financially important and generally not controlled by the state. Historically, the private sector, including the board of directors has been male dominated

where men have controlled the majority of high-level positions and especially those related to power (Healy, Kirton & Noon, 2018; (Asmita, 2015; (Dahlin, Weingart & Hinds, 2018; Asimwe & Steyn, 2013, Asimwe & Steyn 2014; Asimwe & Zuena, 2023).

One of the most prevailing metaphors used to describe women's absence in senior organizational positions has been that of the 'glass ceiling'. Mavin (2018) citing Morrison and VonGlinow (1990) said the phrase 'Glass ceiling' was made up in the 1960s. This is used to describe a subtle obstacle that is so clear but yet very powerful that it can hinder women from claiming up the managerial ladder. Glass ceiling was coined to describe those organizational practices and processes which creates difficulties and limitations in which women encounter when trying to attain the highest position of their particular field. Here, women may be unable to reach the top of the management hierarchy even though they can see it (Gatrell & Swan, 2017).

The glass ceiling appears to restrict women's access in to top management positions only because they are women (Powell, 2018). Powell adds that in terms of pay, the average female full-time worker continues to receive pay that is lower than that of their male counterparts. The economic status of women in most organizations remains lower than that of the men. This gap exists partly due to the lower average wages of workers in female intensive occupations than that of workers in male intensive occupations. Glass ceiling is not a barrier that is based on women's lack of ability to handle upper-level management positions. Instead, the barrier keeps women from advancing higher private university because they are women. Removing the glass ceiling and other obstacles to women's success, represents a major challenge to organizations. As such, those policies that promotes equality in pay and other benefits programs for women; policies that promotes equality in pay for jobs of equal value and encourage other benefit programs of special interest to women are needed private universities (Asmita, 2015; (Dahlin, Weingart & Hinds, 2018; Asimwe & Steyn, 2013, Asimwe & Steyn 2014; Asimwe & Zuena, 2023).

Although women who work in private university's supporting to have policies that offers equality of pay and opportunities and though most of the time, they appear to be well qualified, the career ladder for women in large organizations appear to be often shortened, while the male ladder extends to top of the career tree. Women are often hired off into special gendered positions, such as human resources-known as the 'velvetghetto' (Gatrell & Swan, 2017). These practices and processes do not only appear in large organizations and public service organizations but also in small and big firms, women are often absent at board level within family businesses, where sons continue to take precedence over daughters and where women's contribution is frequently marginalized. Men have thus become the 'somatic norm' in private university roles involving management and decision making

Problem Statement

According to the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions [UOTIA] Act of 2001 (as amended in 2006), by having a charter, it means that such a university is already fully licensed and is now comparable to a public university (Uganda Government, 2001). As a result, society expects such a university to play its core role of conducting high-level teaching, research and community engagement. Unfortunately, both public and private universities in Uganda are reportedly not adequately playing their research function. According to the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) (2018), the research productivity of the academic staff of most private universities in Uganda have remained low. In the NCHE's report of 2015/16 on the state of higher education in Uganda, it was reported that the productivity of PhD academic staff in terms of publication, for instance, was less than 10 publications in over 20-year period per staff. This was worrying since the private universities tend to enrol a large number of students comparable to the number of academic staffs that they employ.

Previous research has shown that majority of the lecturers in Ugandan public universities are underperforming their job or not productive specifically, the study of Nassuna (2017) indicates that over 80% of one of the university lecturers who participated as respondents revealed that they did not conduct all the lectures assigned to them and 70% were not regularly available to supervise research students allocated to them. The study of Kakulu (2016), revealed that over 78% of another University lecturers who participated as respondents failed to teach all the lectures assigned to them, with 67% of them been inadequate prepared prior to delivering most of the lectures to students and 56% delaying to evaluate students, thereby causing the students, especially at the postgraduate level, to miss graduating in time. According to Ddungu (2017), most the lecturers assigned to supervise research students do not guide the students as scheduled even when the students make efforts to fix appointments prior to meeting them.

The lecturers frequently call off the appointment at the last minute and postponed the supervision to another on fixed date, citing being caught up in other research projects. Furthermore, the level of most of the lecturers participating in community service is far below expectations (Ddungu, 2018a), and their involvement in research and publication leaves a lot to be desired (Ddungu, 2018b). Similar findings appear in the study of Wakida, Maling and Obua (2018), when they conducted a study in a university of Science and Technology. The preceding studies indicate that the majority of lecturers in most public universities in Uganda are underperforming or less productive in their jobs. The underperformance or low productivity however does not take place in a vacuum but under the influence of various factors.

Methodology

A research design is a scheme, outline or plan that is followed to generate answers to research problems (Orodho, 2003). For this study a cross-sectional survey design using qualitative and quantitative approaches was used. The study used the quantitative approach because it is helpful in providing data that provides meaningful descriptions of the research problem. The qualitative approach helped the researcher collect the lived experiences of the respondents and develop in depth explanations of the research problem to augment the quantitative findings. A sample of 385 academic staff was used to answer items in the questionnaire. In addition, 12 people were subjected to oral interviews. All the respondents were from six Chartered private universities and were chosen purposively and randomly.

Findings of the study

The researcher tested the first null hypothesis that; there is no significant relationship between gender diversity and academic staff productivity in private chartered universities in Central Uganda. To test this null hypothesis, the student's two independent samples t-test was used. The three numerical indices of productivity (teaching, research and community service) plus the overall numeric index on productivity were then compared against the gender categories to establish the connection between the two variables. Results of this test are presented in table 1.

Table 1: T-test Comparisons for Variations in Staff Productivity by Gender

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value	Decision on H ₀
Teaching Productivity	Male	229	3.39	0.47	-.16400	0.87	Accepted
	Female	121	3.40	0.45			
Research Productivity	Male	225	2.89	0.62	2.02700	0.043	Rejected
	Female	121	2.75	0.61			
Community Service Productivity	Male	229	2.89	0.63	-.44200	0.659	Accepted
	Female	121	2.92	0.58			
Overall productivity	Male	229	3.06	0.47	.65200	0.515	Accepted
	Female	121	3.03	0.40			

According to the results in Table 1, gender diversity seems to have no significant impact on productivity of academic staff, considering overall productivity ($t = 0.6520$; $p = 0.515$). Considering the three measures of productivity one by one, results indicate that research productivity significantly differed for male and female university academic staff ($t = 2.0270$; $p = 0.043$), since the p-value accompanying the t-statistic is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected and a conclusion is reached that research productivity has a big connection with gender diversity in universities. Results further reveal that male academic staff ($\bar{x}_m = 2.89$) are more likely to be more productive in research as compared to their female counterparts ($\bar{x}_f = 2.75$). But for the other two, teaching and community work productivity, gender seems to have no significant influence.

Even the qualitative data revealed something related to that. One oral respondent for example said, *"It is stereotyped to say that males are more productive than their female counterparts; they think that females cannot give better research than males, which has been orchestrated for time immemorial. There is inferiority complex in the females themselves, in that in some places and people they fear to approach and make inquiries hence failing in making proper research. In some cultures, some females especially mother in-laws who might be carrying out research themselves do not ask male adults questions, hence hindering their proper research production"*

Based on the above views, males are perceived to be more productive in research due to inferiority complex, cultural beliefs and stereotyping. Another participant said that females produce less research compared to males and explained that

“Women are more restricted in terms of research, for example married women might not be more explorative as much as they want to, due to restrictions that come from their husbands, limiting their movements, for example there are some researches that you would have to do but it might require you to travel from here to there, to the other places, so given that some husbands might be very tolerant of things like that, so the outcome will be that the woman would not be as productive as she wants to be in terms of research”.

The views from this reveal that there are several factors restricting women from being more productive in research even when they want, most of which are related to being married. However, this might be partly true but can also be challenged by other factors. For instance, the findings did not show whether the female staff who are not married are more productive than those who do not have husbands (single mothers) and so have less restrictions from the husbands.

Relatedly, another oral informant said,

“There are also family matters, women are more likely to be restricted in terms of the responsibilities they have at home. For example, a woman who has just given birth or a woman who has children to attend to, so she might not be as flexible as the research wants her to be or she might not as productive as she ought to be in terms of research because she has other responsibilities to take care of, so she might not give it as much time as is needed during the research.”

These factors seem to be common for women, although more evidences are required to ascertain that when such factors are not present, for example in situations where the woman academic staff is single and has no children. Like what the third participant (P3) said, the issue of why women are less productive especially in research, is difficult to conclude. This participant had this to say;

“...it is generally difficult to conclude that male staff are more productive than their female counterparts in research; but if this is to be taken as a statement of fact, then in my opinion, this could be the reasons why male staff are considered to be more productive in research than their female counterparts; 1) males are more aggressive by nature, they seem to be generally more enterprising and eager to achieve more know roles; 2) males are generally more energetic and would almost always dispense more amount of energy in achieving a particular task including research work, that is the reason why generally males seem to be more productive than the female counterparts; 3) it is also generally assumed that males are more dominating, that is they are more represented in the research world and that seems to be a reason why most of the key positions like the editors, editor general positions, etc, seem to be dominated by males, so one can tell why it is more likely that the males dominate the research world and more productive; 4) It is usually a common slogan also that you either ‘publish or perish’, so males are more generally more often than not; they are the bread winners of their families, so because in most times research are done for publishing the manuscript, hoping to get promotions and the males are often more likely to apply for promotion in their workplace so as to earn a living for themselves and their families, so they seem to be more productive in this respect; 5) also males are more consistent by that I mean, they seem to be more in the research system, they persist longer in the scientific career and also in research work than their female counterparts and it is also generally believed that the women by virtue of their nature out of particular system by reason of having other particular duties to do at home, caring for their spouses, for their children, keeping the home, taking out maternity leaves and so on. Above all, the male counterparts seem to be more focused and consistent in research work, I think they are always almost more consistent than their female counterparts, that is also the same reason why in some organisations women are hired less; 6) it is also generally perceived that research should be male associated, so it places females at a disadvantaged position; 7) A particularly important point is the fact that only about 28.4% of the women are actually involved in science by a particular study, so this places the females at a disadvantaged position, so one of the reasons why most females are less represented and then probably less productive in research; 8) There is also this unknown issue of cultural and psychosocial factor that has to do with gender bias, generally believed in the number claims that generally the science world is a male gender venture, so male are generally given the hand of fellowship more in gender, in the quality kind of general perception and so also in science world in research it not different, so one of the reasons why the males are more productive in research than their female counterparts.

What comes out from the views of this oral informant is another proof that several factors can explain why males dominate the research world. What is not specifically mention in all these findings is whether these factors can be contextual, that is, if in some institutions, the differences in research productivity are caused by a different set of factors and in other institutions, the differences are also caused by another set of factors. It is also not coming out clearly whether the gender differences in research productivity in different contexts are caused by similar factors. If this can be achieved, then there will be clarity on the gender productivity question.

Some other participants had views pointing to a natural direction, suggesting that it is nature to blame for the dominance of men in research productivity. This is in line with what participant four (P4) said;

“The only explanation I have as to why male staff are more productive in research than female is, if first of all, we look at the genetic make-up of a man, he is wired to do much more than a lady in various aspects and to go a mile ahead so this does not deter him to go ahead a mile even in research and he does not have limitations that ladies have, for instance, we all know how women are their emotional shift and all that but a man is able to stick to the plans stick to the game and whatever emotional tremor or whatever emotional shift is going through, he will make sure that he completes whatever research he is assigned to.”

This view sounded much interesting to researchers in this gender diversity field. If it is true that men are wired to do more than women, the question of why men are more productive than women, would have been answered. Whereas this looks a convincing reasoning, still other factors are provided as a reason limiting women’s productivity. There is need for more scientific proof on whether the physical and biological structures of a man make him superior to a woman in productivity.

Discussion of the findings

The findings indicated that gender diversity did not have a significant relationship with academic staff overall productivity ($t = 0.6520$; $p = 0.515$). However, gender diversity had a significant effect on research productivity ($t = 2.0270$; $p = 0.043$), where the male staff were found to be more productive ($\bar{x}_m = 2.89$) compared to their female counterparts ($\bar{x}_f = 2.75$). These results imply that, gender diversity may not seem to be a significant predictor for productivity of academic staff, when all productivity measures are aggregated. However, when the productivity index is split into its three measures (teaching productivity, research productivity and community service productivity), we find out that gender becomes a significant predictor of research productivity. Aggregating the productivity measures makes it difficult to study the predictive strength of gender diversity. The disaggregated results revealed that male academic staff are more productive in research as compared to female academic staff. Thus, gender is a more significant predictor of research related activities than teaching and community service-related activities.

These findings to some extent agree with those of Anumaka and Ssemugenyi (2013), who revealed that, there was a significant difference in research productivity of academic staff, with male staff proving to be slightly more productive than female staff. Like it was revealed in this study, Anumaka and Ssemugenyi’s (2013) study was also in conformity with the fact that gender diversity is not a significant predictor of the general productivity index of academic staff. Still the two studies agree that where there are slight differences in productivity levels, male staff slightly dominate, especially on the three common measures of teaching, research and community service. What accounts for the slight differences in favour of male staff and what accounts for the no significant differences in other productivity measures has not been agreed upon by the researchers on this topic. In other words, the revelations differ and the justifications given also differ. For example, Nathan (2000, in Anumaka and Ssemugenyi, 2013) explained that the differences in productivity favour female staff, with a justification that they are more consistent and committed at work than male staff.

The justification for why males is less committed are yet to be revealed. On the other hand, researchers (e.g. Ndawula, 2002, in Anumaka and Ssemugenyi, 2013) who revealed that male staff are more productive than female staff, contend that men are more vigilant and ambitious compared to women and they are more determined to achieve the goals at all costs, unlike women who give up quickly. In addition, the assertions of Kayindu (2017) are

seemingly supported by the findings of this study as he claimed that in Africa South of the Sahara where women have, until recently been perceived as being under men, women in some circles still have the inferiority complex. Those in managerial posts tend to show superiority complex sometimes without producing tangible results, leave alone sacking those they perceive to be undermining them.

Several other studies presented results alluding to the fact that gender is a predictor of staff productivity (Xie & Shauman, 1998; van den Besselaar & Sandström, 2017; Hong, 2021; (Asmita, 2015; (Dahlin, Weingart & Hinds, 2018; Asiimwe & Steyn, 2013, Asiimwe & Steyn 2014; Asiimwe & Zuena, 2023). Like it was found out in this study, among the evidences produced to this subject of debate, most of them point to the direction that gender differences in productivity exist and have been there for a long time (Xie & Shauman, 1998). However, as time goes many of such differences have diminished. But as regards some elements of productivity, such differences still exist mainly in research productivity at somewhat significant levels (Xie & Shauman, 1998). These differences have been attributed to a number of factors and these factors have been also changing over time. For example, Xie and Shauman (1998) indicated that most of the observed sex differences in research productivity can be attributed to sex differences in personal characteristics, structural positions, and marital status (As cited in Musisi, 2016; (Asmita, 2015; (Dahlin, Weingart & Hinds, 2018; Asiimwe & Steyn, 2013, Asiimwe & Steyn 2014; Asiimwe & Zuena, 2023).. (Asmita, 2015; (Dahlin, Weingart & Hinds, 2018; Asiimwe & Steyn, 2013, Asiimwe & Steyn 2014; Asiimwe & Zuena, 2023). In this old research publication, it is indicated that among the many studies on this subject, no single study has fully accounted for the differences in research productivity between male and female academic staff. In many of the reviewed researches on gender diversity impacts on productivity, it was revealed that females publish less than males, even among the doctoral graduates, where publishing is almost mandatory for graduation and promotion. It is possible that controlling for other causes of gender differences in research productivity may help to solve this puzzle. However, the causes of differences are multiple (e.g. research funding, collaboration opportunities, access to teaching opportunities, research training exposure and access to further studies, and so on) and researchers have not fully isolated them (Hong, 2021). So even in this study, the net contribution of gender in differences of research productivity remains a puzzle.

Conclusion and recommendation

Gender diversity does not significantly affect academic staff productivity, when productivity is aggregated. But when it (productivity) is analysed in a disaggregated format, gender diversity significantly affects research productivity, with the male staff being more productive as compared to females. Gender as a natural characteristic does not determine more productive and the less productive academic staff in private universities. The differences seen in research productivity between male and female academic staff are environmentally caused than being natural. This study found out that, while gender diversity does not significantly affect academic staff aggregated productivity, it has a significant effect on research productivity, where the male staff are more productive than the females. Based on this, the researcher recommends that, since the differences seen in research productivity can be attributed to community setting and not necessarily natural, the management of organizations and policy makers should draft research policies with particular affirmative action for female staff, to boost their research productivity. Such research policies may include but not limited to, ensuring that every research team or project involves a female staff. Rewards for research outputs may be put up to boost research productivity but with extra incentives for female staff.

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