

A Comparative Analysis of Administrative Politics Between a Public and Private University in the Eastern Region of Uganda

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Abstract

The study made a comparative analysis of administrative politics between a public and a private university in the Eastern Region of Uganda. Two specific objectives guided the study: 1) to compare information management politics in a public and a private university in the Eastern Region of Uganda; and 2) to compare coalition-building politics in a public and a private university in the Eastern Region of Uganda. The study was guided by the theory of Reasoned Action developed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1967. An ex post facto design was adopted with a positivist philosophy and quantitative approach. A population of 220 academic staff and a sample of 213 were selected using simple random sampling and a lottery technique. A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data, and data were analyzed using means and standard deviations for descriptive statistics, as well as an independent-samples t-test for inferential analysis. Findings indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in information management politics between a public ($M = 2.5711$) and a private university ($M = 3.1037$); $t(201) = -8.142$, $p = .000$. There was also a statistically significant difference in coalition-building politics between a public ($M = 2.8686$) and a private university ($M = 3.1012$); $t(201) = -3.855$, $p = .000$. The difference is reflected in the level of politics (rigid for public as opposed to flexible for private), purpose of the politics (protective in public as opposed to promotional in private), as well as the source of authority and control (government for public as opposed to owners for private). This implies that politics is prevalent in both public and private universities but varies significantly. Conclusively, the leaders and those who are led have to embrace the political gimmick and handle information and coalitions carefully, as they may have adverse effects and influence on the administration and execution of tasks in the university. Key recommendations are to make information management and coalition building a procedural issue as well as making proper communication to make the two aspects a preserve of each stakeholder in the universities rather than administrators only.

Keywords: *Politics, Administrative Politics, Information Management, Coalition Building*

Introduction

Higher learning institutions, especially universities, are no longer just centres for teaching, learning, research and community outreach. They have now evolved into more complex and highly political institutions. Historically, it is noted that higher education was a preserve of public institutions which were funded and fully regulated by the state (MacKinnon, 1960). However, the global rise of the privatization and democratization movement in education has created a dual system where both public and private universities are housed (Benveniste, 1985). These studies speak to the historical perspective of administrative politics to draw a proper understanding of the historical lens through which administrative politics. Notably, the structural duality has witnessed a shift from exhibiting power, authority, and influence, to collective execution of operations known as administrative politics (Liu, 2020).

Administrative politics within a university setting involves both the covert and overt issues among key internal and external stakeholders all intended to control processes like decision-making, effective resource allocation, and appropriate policy direction within the universities (Nicholson-Crotty & Meier, 2003). The nature of such politics depends heavily on institutional ownership and control mechanisms applicable (Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2017), while the influence of the politics on the two forms of institutions will also differ. The aspect of politics in the study is defined more by the way a practice is handled than its structural setting.

Public institutions usually operate as arms of the government or state. Administrative politics in such institutions are dictated by bureaucracy within the state, government mandates, public accountability, and labor unions that are usually strong (Angiola et al, 2018). Power in these public institutions is often decentralized across different committees, faculty boards, departmental committees, and student leadership structures. This provides a background for a highly democratic, heavily bureaucratic, and highly politicized administrative environments, though the democracy is quite slow (Arunima, 2017).

Private institutions on the other hand, operate on entrepreneurial market-driven or corporate models (Khan et al, 2018). Power in these institutions is usually highly centralized within trustee boards, direct proprietors or owners, and religious foundation bodies in some cases (Kamran et al, 2025). Administrative politics in private institutions are driven by strong market competition, financial sustainability against all odds, customer satisfaction levels, especially among students and executive management systems. The structure is designed and meant for fast decision-making but, in the long run, suppresses cohesion and synergy while limiting the input of employees in governance (Rosenbloom et al, 2022).

Extensive research exists on university management in general and administrative politics in particular. However, there is a critical gap in comparative literature that examines the day-to-day political practices, in terms of information management and coalition-building politics that occur within public as opposed to private administrative structures in universities. Understanding differences in information management and coalition building politics is critical. It helps to identify how academic staff in those universities perceive administrative politics and convert the positive administrative politics into strategies for realizing a highly competitive global landscape while avoiding negative administrative politics in the process.

Problem Statement

Ideally, university administration should maintain a stable, transparent, and collaborative political environment to enhance operations (Pusser & Ordorika, 2001). This environment must prioritize excellence in academics, finances, and strategic growth, regardless of whether it is public or private. However, many universities, both public and private, are deeply embroiled in distinct forms of administrative politics (Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2017). Administrative politics in public universities are often characterized by external political issues coupled with rigid government bureaucracies and aggressive faculty structures (Jacob, 2020). Meanwhile, private universities are a hub of centralized power, dominance of the owner or founder, and a rigid focus on profitability over academic progress (Nurunnabi, 2016). While both public and private universities contend with politics in varying forms and depths (Kamran et al, 2025; Khan et al, 2018; Obadara, 2012), there is a dearth of comparative research profiling how the contrasting administrative politics manifest in institutional governance. Existing literature does not indicate how political behavior among top administrators differs within state-controlled and market-

driven contexts. Consequently, there is a lack of evidence-based strategies employed by top administrators in public and private universities. If left unaddressed, private universities risk compromising proper educational and academic standards for commercial gain and survival (Kamran et al, 2025). In contrast, public universities may continue to struggle with bureaucratic red tape and rampant leadership issues. Ultimately, this lack of comparative understanding may affect the development of sector-specific governance models that are effective in bringing about global competitiveness of the higher education sector, especially in a country like Uganda.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To compare the information management politics in a public and private university in the Eastern Region of Uganda
2. To compare the coalition building politics in a public and private university in the Eastern Region of Uganda

The study hypothesized that: H01: There is no statistically significant difference in information management politics between a public and private university in the Eastern Region of Uganda, and H02: There is no statistically significant difference in coalition building politics between a public and private university in the Eastern Region of Uganda

Literature Review

Since Clarke et al (2017) argue that theory occupies a central place in research, the study alluded to the theory of reasoned action by Fishbein and Ajzen (1967). The theory of reasoned action describes how attitudes relate to behaviours, thereby predicting actions based on attitudes and intentions. The theory also focuses on an “individual's voluntary behaviour by examining the underlying motivation to perform an action” (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). The theory also indicates that “the intention to perform a behavior comes before the actual action” (Fisher, 1997). The key aspects of the theory are behavior, attitudes, behavioral beliefs, evaluation of outcomes, subjective norms, normative beliefs, and motivation to comply. The theory informs the aspect of administrative politics in universities as it indicates that administrators will handle information management as well as coalition building as part of a reasoned action intended to control the system without the employees being aware of the same.

As far as the study is concerned, tenets of theory of reasoned action inform the constructs of the study in the following ways: attitudes of administrators will determine the nature of information released to staff as well as the coalitions made with or against staff. Subjective norms imply that information management will be devoid of objectivity but intended purpose whether appropriate or not while the coalitions built are also likely to be informed by subjective feelings and interests of the administrators than value of the coalition. Behavioral intentions would require managing information to influence the way staff behave while coalitions will also built to behave in a way approved by the administrators.

Literature on administrative politics has been made focusing on information management politics and coalition building politics. Studies have explored the nature of information management politics, though with varying approaches, perspectives, and outcomes as per each authority in the shape of Alzghoul et al (2023), Teh & Sun (2012), Davison et al (2020), and Sun et al (2018). Some of the studies focus on information usage in organizations (Davison et al, 2020), employee personal information management (Sun et al, 2018), human resource information management (Alzghoul et al, 2023), interpersonal communication management (Hermawan & Susanti, 2022), as well as employees' knowledge sharing behaviour in organizations (Teh & Sun, 2012). Although the studies point to the relevance of information of all sorts to an organization, they do not consider contextual realities in different institutions. The current study, therefore, was more concerned with information management politics relating to academic staff in universities.

Research on coalition building politics has not been so specific but quite related in some ways. The key forms of coalition building appearing in literature are reflective of informal social pressures among employees (Bolino & Turnley, 2003), indirect influences of coalitions (Podsakoff, 2000), leadership coalition practices and leadership modelling behavior (Bolino & Turnley, 2003), dominant coalitions in organizations (Bowler, 2006), as well as interpersonal helping structures (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002). The studies truly indicate that the way interactions and coalitions take shape within an organization may determine the level of organizational behaviours and practices of employees. This can go beyond the formal structures in the organization, like rules and regulations, the way supervision and monitoring are done, and the nature of reinforcements (e.g., sanctions & rewards).

The construct of administrative politics has been examined from various approaches and levels of analysis. Prior research has mainly focused on two key areas. One area that researchers have empirically explored is staff perceptions of administrative politics (POP), while the other concerns political behaviours. POP was proposed by Cheng et al (2024) as a valuable measure of the general political climate within organisations and as a significant aspect of individuals' perception of their work environment. Individuals respond to the situation and behaviour based on these perceptions (Ferris et al., 2000).

Politics in the workplace, including its nature, antecedents, and impact on work outcomes, has become a stimulating field of study for management scholars. OP is often seen as dysfunctional to an organisation because it can disrupt the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness. A workplace filled with politics is stressful to work in, does not promote positive job attitudes, and is likely to lead to high employee turnover (Chang et al., 2009). Vigoda-Gadot (2007) stated that OP can be more damaging for public administration than for private organisations.

In the local context, Kisaka (2023) examined the influence of organizational politics on institutional productivity in selected public universities in Uganda with a view that the declining productivity in their key mandates of teaching, research, and community outreach could be attributed to the politics. Julius and Kazaara (2025) argued that teaching quality in Ugandan universities is affected by internal political gimmicks as well as external political interference. Ssentongo(2020) opines that politics of academic promotion in Ugandan universities has become a predicament of African publication outlets as focus is put on specific journals thus affecting growth of both individuals and information.

Nevertheless, studies do not bring out a clear picture within the public and private university setting yet many settings are quite different. The current study focused on the coalitions built in universities by top administration to control academic staff and guide processes in the universities. There is a clear case of declining productivity of universities in the key mandates of teaching, research, and community outreach which is usually attributed to financial capacity, human resources and limited external support while undermining the possible role of inherent politics. The paper addressed this gap by bringing out the prevalent politics in the public and private universities in the shape of information management and coalition building. Once

confirmed as existent, such politics can be the factor behind poor performance of the universities ahead of other presumed factors.

Methods

Design and Sampling

The study adopted an ex post facto research design since there was no intention to manipulate the variables under study, as recommended by Cohen et al (2018) and De Vos et al (2005) when dealing with respondents sharing the same characteristics. The design was guided by a positivist philosophy in which knowledge is considered objective and singular while being measured statistically (Saunders et al., 2023) and adhering to a quantitative approach which targets measurable aspects of a phenomenon. Since the study was not intending to manipulate the variable of administrative politics and its constructs of information management and coalition building politics, the design was considered appropriate. The unit of analysis was academic staff who served as a unit of inquiry as well. The inclusion criteria were being a full-time academic staff while the exclusion criteria were being on leave. As per statistics obtained from the two universities, the population of academic staff in the public university was 134, while that of the private university was 86, making a total population of 220 respondents. The sample size was 203, with 121 from the public university and 82 from the private university, selected using the table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The figures were taken from each faculty in the two universities than a general sample size. The academic staff selection was subjected to simple random sampling using a lottery technique to ensure equal chance. To cater for attrition, 10 more questionnaires were considered making a total of 213 respondent academic staff. The 10 questionnaires were added to cater for attrition which resultantly may affect realization of sample size and representation of the target population.

Data Collection and Analysis

A self-designed closed-ended questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale and 41 items was used to collect data from academic staff in a public and a private university. Independent expert judgment was adopted to determine the validity of the research instruments, where a CVI of .91 was obtained. The instrument was pilot tested on a representative sample of 32 academic staff in a university with close characteristics to the public and private universities but otherwise not part of the study, leading to a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of .85. Descriptive analysis was

through frequencies and percentages for demographic characteristics, while means and standard deviation were adopted for measuring constructs of the study. To test the hypotheses, an independent samples t-test was conducted, which measures the statistical difference between two groups (public & private universities). Ethical principles of informed consent, autonomy of respondents, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence were upheld in the study.

To ascertain whether the data had no outliers, a boxplot was run, and the results indicate that there were no outliers, which could cause misrepresentation of the regression coefficient estimates and lead to unreliable results. Results of the normality test indicate that data points were quite clustered along the straight diagonal line, which signals normal distribution of data. This implies that the data was symmetrically distributed with no skew. With this in mind, all assumptions of the study could be taken further. To confirm whether the means, variances and responses are evenly distributed before running an independent samples T test, Levene's test was conducted. Based on the test results, the means and variances were found to be constant and not skewed. The Levene's test reflected a p-value of .532 for information management politics and .95 for coalition building politics. Since the values of $p > .05$ were obtained, the implication is that the test met the assumption for further tests and analysis as guided by Pallant (2020). Accordingly, the responses can lead to the rightful conclusions without too much variation.

Results

Regarding the response rate, out of the 213 questionnaires distributed among academic staff, 205 were returned, while 203 of these were complete and entered for analysis. The frequencies are therefore based on the 203 questionnaires returned by respondents when fully completed. Meanwhile, demographic characteristics of academic staff in the study covered university of affiliation, faculty attachment, academic qualification, and duration of service in the university. According to Kothari (2004), demographic characteristics help determine whether respondents are suitable for making responses to the study variables. The demographic characteristics were utilized to interpret findings. The results of the demographic analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=203)

Characteristic	Description	f	%
University of Affiliation	Public University	121	59.6
	Private University	82	40.4

Faculty of Attachment	Science & Education	50	24.6
	Health Sciences	45	22.2
	Engineering & Technology	26	12.8
	Education	30	14.8
	Arts & Social Sciences	28	13.8
	Management Studies	24	11.8
Respondents' Academic Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	4	2.0
	Master's Degree	127	62.6
	Doctor of Philosophy	72	35.5
Respondents' Duration of Service in the University	5 Years & Below	50	24.6
	6-10 Years	63	31.0
	11-15 Years	50	24.6
	16 Years & Above	40	19.7

As per Table 1, the highest number of respondents, 121 (59.6%), was from the public university as opposed to 82 (40.4%) from the private university. Usually, public institutions command higher numbers of academic staff as opposed to a private institution. The study also established the faculty of attachment for the respondents. The results in Table 1 indicate that the highest number of respondents to the questionnaire came from the faculty of science and education at the public university (50 representing 24.6%), while the lowest number came from the faculty of management studies at the private university (24 representing 11.8%). The educational qualifications of the respondents were probed equally. Table 1 shows that the highest category was that of master's degree holders (127 representing 62.6%), while the lowest came from those with a bachelor's degree (04 representing 2%). It can expressly be argued that universities had staff fitting within the minimum educational qualification. Table 1 also captures findings relating to duration of service of the academic staff who participated in the study. The highest category had served in their respective universities for 6-10 years (63 representing 31%), while those with the lowest duration of service were those of 16 years and above (40 representing 19.7%). This indicates that the respondents had served their universities for a considerable amount of time. The relevance of the demographic characteristics is captured in the discussion section.

Objective One: To Compare the Information Management Politics in a Public and Private University in Eastern Region of Uganda

Information management politics was measured with 10 items seeking to determine how academic staffs in both a public and private university view their administrators in terms of playing with information to manage the universities. The analysis was based on means and standard deviations, and results are presented in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2: *Information Management Politics*

Descriptive Statistics				
Elements of Information Management	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
The techniques used by administrators to spread information enhance their formal position in the university (prompts: manipulation, deception)	203	2.9458	.88554	
Administrators release only information with full impact on organizational performance	203	2.9015	.78359	
Administrators never communicate their position on information in the organization before getting crucial details	203	2.6108	.85091	
Administrators release information in a way that increases others' dependence on them	203	2.7094	.80177	
Administrators communicate information in a way that builds their own reputation and authority	203	2.8276	.89267	
Administrators release information through channels which offer them more benefit and protection (prompts: direct, electronic, writing)	203	2.8571	.76059	
Administrators release information through other individuals as a way of determining reactions before taking action	203	2.7586	.87646	
Administrators release different forms of information to hide specificity and clarity to individuals	203	2.6305	.93154	
Administrators manage information in a way that they can detect sources of leakage in case it happens	203	2.6601	.78206	
Administrators keep sensitive information out of the reach of other unauthorized Individuals	203	2.9606	.80741	
Valid N (listwise)	203			
		<i>Average</i>	<i>2.7862</i>	<i>.837254</i>

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Table 2 shows that the highest response was on the item “administrators keep sensitive information out of the reach of other unauthorized individuals,” which triggered a mean of

2.9606, which is moderate, and a standard deviation of .80741, which reflects moderate variability. The lowest response item was “administrators never communicate their position on information in the organization before getting crucial details” with a mean of 2.6108, which signifies moderate performance in terms of the item, while the standard deviation of .85091 signifies moderate variability on the item. The average score for information management politics was 2.7862, which represents moderate performance on the item, while the average standard deviation is .837254, which signifies moderate variability. This moderate variability indicates that respondents' views differed, but the responses were quite close. This could be attributed to some of the demographic characteristics that create normal differences in perception and understanding.

Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis tested was as follows: *H01: There is no statistically significant difference in information management politics between a public and private university in the eastern region of Uganda.* To compare the levels of information management politics between the public and private university in the study, an independent sample t-test was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Information Management Politics Between a Public and Private University

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Information Management Politics	Equal variances assumed	.392	.532	-8.142	201	.000	-.53258	.06541	-.66157	-.40360
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.395	190.644	.000	-.53258	.06344	-.65772	-.40745

According to Table 3, the independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the levels of information management politics between a public and a private university. Before examining the differences between the two groups (universities), it was necessary to run a Levene's test for equality of variances to reveal whether the information management politics scores for both universities were evenly spread out. Accordingly, the Levene's test reflected a p-value of .532. Therefore, the value of $p > .05$ implies that the test met the assumption for further tests and analysis as recommended by Pallant (2020). An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in information management politics based on university affiliation. There was a significant difference in information management politics for a public university ($M = 2.5711$) and a private university ($M = 3.1037$); $t(201) = -8.142$, $p = .000$. The significance level of $p < .05$ highlighted that there was a significant difference in the information management politics scores between a public and a private university. Since the mean for a public university is 2.5711 while that of the private university is 3.1037 with a mean difference of .5326, it signifies that there is more information management politics in a private university than in a public university, though also prevalent in the public. Consequently, the null hypothesis H_{01} set earlier in the study was rejected. To calculate the effect size (magnitude of the difference) of the independent sample t-test for information management politics the researcher employed the Eta squared formula as recommended by Pallant (2020) for studies in the field of education. The Eta square value obtained was 0.060, which is a moderate effect size as per Cohen et al. (2018). These results imply that the difference in the information management politics scores of a private and a public university has moderate practical significance but worth noting.

Objective Two: To Compare the Coalition Building Politics in a Public and Private University in Eastern Region of Uganda

Coalition building politics was measured using 10 items seeking to understand how academic staff in each form of university view their administrators in terms of managing coalitions in the universities. The analysis was subjected to means and standard deviations as presented in Table 4 as follows:

Table 4: Coalition Building Politics

Descriptive Statistics

Elements of Coalition Building	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Administrators are effective at encouraging staff to form teams along common interests	203	2.8719	.79188
Administrators use strong teams/coalitions to promote university interests	203	3.0739	.76395
Administrators at times use strong teams/coalitions to promote personal interests	203	2.9557	.82234
Administrators endeavor to understand the interests of different categories of staff	203	2.9409	.80003
Administrators use groups of individuals/committees to reach decisions	203	2.9163	.76939
Administrators monitor different teams in the university to track progress and possible changes	203	2.9754	.65581
Administrators use teams to fend off pressure and interests of individuals or other groups in the university	203	3.0640	.85065
Administrators always dismantle teams seen not to share a common vision expected of them	203	2.8966	.85835
Administrators use teams to make evaluations of one another depending on circumstances	203	2.8916	.70926
Administrators join some of the teams to share institutional perspectives	203	3.0394	.73013
Valid N (listwise)	203		
<i>Average</i>		2.96257	.773179

Source: Primary Data (2026)

As per Table 4, the highest response was on the item “administrators use strong teams/coalitions to promote university interests” with a mean of 3.0739, which represents a high level of performance on the item, while a standard deviation of .76395 also signifies moderate variability. The lowest response was on the item “administrators are effective at encouraging staff to form teams along common interests,” triggering a mean of 2.8719, which is a moderate performance level with a standard deviation of .79188, which is also a moderate variability level. The aggregate score for coalition building is 2.96257, which is moderate, whereas the average standard deviation is .773179, which is moderate variability. The implication here could be that views of respondents did not differ so much from one another despite the many demographic

characteristics involved, like university affiliation, faculty attachment, age level, academic qualification, and duration of service.

Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis tested in this regard was as follows: “*H02: There is no statistically significant difference in coalition building politics between a public and private university in the eastern region of Uganda*”. To determine whether there is a significant difference in coalition building politics between a public and private university in the eastern region of Uganda, an independent samples t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis, and results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Coalition Building Politics Between a Public and Private University
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
										Lower Upper
Coalition Building Politics	Equal variances assumed	2.817	.095	-3.855	201	.000	-.23262	.06034	-.35161	-.11364
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.803	165.623	.000	-.23262	.06117	-.35340	-.11185

According to Table 5, the independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the levels of coalition building politics between the public and a private university. Before examining the differences between the two groups of universities, it was necessary to run a Levene’s test for equality of variances to reveal whether the coalition building politics scores for both universities were spread out evenly. Accordingly, the Levene's test reflected a p-value of .95. Therefore, the value of $p > .05$ implies that the test meets the assumption for further testing and analysis based

on the view of Pallant (2020). An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in coalition-building politics based on university affiliation. There was a significant difference in coalition-building politics for a public university ($M = 2.8686$) and a private university ($M = 3.1012$); $t(201) = -3.855$, $p = .000$. The significance level of $p < .05$ highlights that there is a significant difference in the coalition-building politics scores between a public and a private university. The mean for a public university was lower than that of the private university, with a mean difference of .2326; this signifies that coalition-building politics is more pronounced in a private university than in a public university, much as it exists in the public university as well. Consequently, the null hypothesis H_{02} set earlier in the study was rejected. To calculate the effect size (magnitude of the difference) of the independent samples t-test for coalition building politics, the researcher employed the Eta squared formula recommended by Pallant (2020) for studies that fall in the field of education. The eta squared value obtained was 0.0074, which is a very small effect size based on the guidance of Cohen et al. (2018). Therefore, private universities have more coalition building politics but with minimal practical significance. However, the difference is worth noting.

Discussion

The study found it necessary to establish the University of Affiliation of the respondents as a way of drawing on differences in views relating to organizational citizenship behaviour and administrative politics from the perspective of a public and private university setting. University/school affiliation is found to correlate positively with informal interactions with industry, such as knowledge exchange (Boardman, 2008). The faculties were probed since the administrative politics may affect each differently, while the way academic staff professes organizational citizenship behaviour is also bound to differ. Indeed, faculty attachment matters in terms of approach to work-related issues and overall productivity (Long et al, 2009). Uma (2000) argued that “it is important in social investigation research to involve people that have attained an acceptable level of literacy and numeracy to be in a position to understand and interpret the content in a questionnaire”. The master’s degree holders could be trusted to provide realistic information about organizational citizenship behaviour and administrative politics. Results on duration of service indicate that the respondents had served their universities for a considerable amount of time. Ellis and Morrison (1998) contend that “a respondent’s duration in a given area guarantees their level of understandability of the circumstances in that area”.

For objective one, the study compared information management politics in the public and private universities. The average score for information management politics was 2.7862, which represents moderate performance on the item, while the average standard deviation is .837254, which signifies moderate variability. Regarding the hypothesis tested, the significance level of $p < .05$ value highlighted that there was a significant difference in the information management politics scores between the public and a private university. There is more information management politics in a private university than the public though also prevalent. Farid et al (2013) also found significant differences in information-seeking behaviors of medical faculty working in government (dwelling on library sources) and private-run medical colleges (focusing on online sources). Also, the government colleges depend on written information, while the private colleges are more updated via social media. Devi et al (2009) also argue that information management in public universities is more open to all key stakeholders, while in the private system it is more closed and controlled.

Nevertheless, information management politics is more prevalent in the private university than the public. Information management politics in private universities are quite high due to centralized ownership structures, weak policies, growth of clicks, financial survival pressures, regulatory friction, and founder interests which may border on religious sentiment. Since the theory of reasoned action argues that “the intention to perform a behavior comes before the actual action” as per Fisher (1997), there is a strong connection between the theory and findings of the study. The study established that many coalitions are built with a clear intention of them serving interests of the administrators in the universities. This implies that the interest to build a coalition would precede the coalition itself.

Objective two of the study compared coalition building politics between the public and private universities. The average score for coalition building was 2.96257, which is moderate, whereas the average standard deviation is .773179, which is moderate variability. As per the hypothesis tested, the significance level of $p < .05$ value highlighted that there was a significant difference in the coalition building politics scores between the public and private universities. It was established that coalition building politics are more pronounced in a private university, much as they exist in the public university as well. Equally, Literte (2020) found differences in coalition building and identity formation among students of color at a public and a private university.

Those in a public university usually build coalitions along cultural dimensions, while those in a private university usually build coalitions around opportunity networking. Meanwhile, Jungblut (2017) contends that coalitions in European higher education indicate that government systems always determine coalitions in public institutions of higher learning as opposed to private institutions, where there is some level of freedom in building coalitions.

Notably, coalition-building politics is more evident in the private university compared to the public university. Coalition building politics in private universities outweigh public universities due to limited authority given to administrators, rampant internal and external competition, resource competition, diverse student populations, profit motives and limited staff commitment. The theory of reasoned action indicates that “the intention to perform a behavior comes before the actual action” (Fisher, 1997). The findings have indicated that administrators release information only when they feel it will yield the required results within the interests of the administrator communicating. This indicates a clear connection between the theory of reasoned action and the outcomes of the study. This implies that the behavior of designing an information piece comes before information management itself.

The differences in administrative politics between the public and private university can be explained in terms of governance models (in public institutions there are governing councils while in the private there is only personal control), stakeholder accountability where in the public institutions there is corporate social responsibility while in the private there is limited stakeholder involvement. The institutions also differ in terms of funding structures (state budget for public & tuition reliance for private), bureaucracy and control where in public institutions there is slow multi-layered decision making as opposed to the fast direct top-down influence. Also, the institutions differ in terms of strategic goals where in public it is long-term access goals while in private it is market demand goals.

Generally, power in public institutions is decentralized across different leadership structures (Angiola et al, 2018), which provides a background for a highly democratic environment; though the democracy is quite slow (Arunima, 2017). Power in private institutions is usually highly centralized within Trustees, proprietors/owners, and religious bodies (Kamran et al, 2025). Administrative politics in private institutions are driven by strong market competition and management systems (Khan et al, 2018). The study contributes a formal and empirical

understanding of the prevalence of information management as well as coalition-building politics among both public and private universities in the eastern region of Uganda based on views of academic staff in the respective universities. The study is original in a sense that it has indicated a clear distinction between information management and coalition-building politics between a public and private university while indicating that administrative politics can both be positive and negative depending on how an administrator approaches the same.

Conclusions

From the study, it can be concluded that information management politics is a fact of administration in both public and private universities, with the magnitude varying. This implies that the leaders and those who are led have to embrace the political gimmick and handle information carefully in terms of providing and receiving it, as it may have adverse effects and influence on the administration and execution of tasks in the university. It can also be concluded that coalitions built in the public and private universities have both administrative and professional meaning. This calls for a proper understanding of one's stand, as the coalition may be politically motivated and therefore have negative connotations; yet when handled at a different level, the coalitions may have a performance motivation behind. The conclusion is made based on the two institutions investigated in this paper with limited generalizability. Moreover, all conclusions in the paper are made holding any other assumptions and factors instant.

Recommendations

The study recommends that information management should be handled as a procedural issue rather than a political move, and all key information should be shared without looking into how it benefits the top administration since it may benefit other levels in the university than the top administration. The other key recommendation is that coalition building should be made part and parcel of the university systems and enabled at all levels and for all individuals rather than being a prerogative of the top administration. The study also recommends that information and coalitions should be communicated to all key stakeholders in the universities. Generally, a mixed methods approach is also recommended to bring out underlying perspectives to the quantitative findings obtained. Further studies can also make comparisons based on more than one public and one private university to improve on generalizability of findings

Future Trends

Research in university management has to reflect on administrative strategies and practices that create mixed reactions among staff members based on interpretation and perception. The processes in universities are sometimes positive and can cause transformation of systems but the way they are handled changes the narrative and how staff receive them. When interpreted as negative, the practices can be a destructive influence on the staff. Research can therefore help in redefining practices and operations by interpreting the meaning behind such practices to avoid abstract thinking and perception.

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