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Adaptive Leadership in Public Universities in Uganda: A Systematic Literature Review

George Wilson Kasule^{1*}

¹ Kyambogo University, P. O. Box 1, Kyambogo, Kampala, Uganda.

* Author's ORCID ID; <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-8806-4050>; Email: gwkasule@kyu.ac.ug

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*Adaptive Leadership,
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This study through a systematic literature review explored adaptive leadership status, the rationale for adaptive leadership, and the challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda. The literature search process consisted of inclusion and exclusion criteria and the development of a search strategy. Fourteen (14) articles were found to have relevant information on adaptive leadership status, the rationale for adaptive leadership, and challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in higher educational institutions in Uganda. The findings reveal that adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda is almost non-existent. This is buttressed by the fact that these universities have perpetually failed to solve most of the challenges they face, let alone demonstrating high levels of ineffectiveness in their operations. The study findings also divulge that the rationale for embracing adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda includes but is not limited to: addressing complexity and uncertainty; enhancing institutional effectiveness; fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity; and developing capacity for sustainability and resilience. The study further discloses that some of the notable challenges encumbering embracing of adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda comprise: limited financial, human and, material resources; excessive bureaucratic structures; and resistance to change by employees. The paper concludes, thus, that the absence of adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda is worrying, hence, urgent mitigation measures need to be taken owing to the fact that adaptive leadership is critical to help public universities have the ability to cope with change in their operations almost on the daily basis. The study recommends that university leaders and managers make deliberate efforts to familiarise themselves with adaptive leadership principles through relevant professional development programmes. Institutionalise adaptive leadership as well as adopting appropriate administrative structures that ensure: clear lines of authority and decision-making; effective communication and collaboration across units; efficient resource allocation and management; strong governance and accountability; and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and priorities.

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INTRODUCTION

Universities across the globe are expected to equip people with knowledge and skills that enable them to live a high quality of life as well as significantly contribute to socio-economic development in their respective countries (Al-Youbi et al., 2021). Countries that have universities which have embraced contemporary management and leadership approaches such as adaptive leadership are appropriately coping with the rapid changes that are happening in the world (Muhammad et al., 2023). However, the aforesaid can be said to be true for most of the countries in the Sub-Sahara Africa Region. For instance, Uganda has nine public universities, namely; Makerere, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Gulu, Busitema, Kabale, Mountains of the Moon, Muni, Lira, and Soroti (National Council for Higher Education, 2024). Apparently, it is undeniable that all the aforementioned nine public universities in one way or another are characterised by low levels of organisational effectiveness (Turyahikayo et al., 2024a).

The preceding affirmation is bolstered by Rwakenda (2019) who points out that in Uganda, particularly business owners have identified that the majority of graduates from higher education institutions lack adequate knowledge and competence to meet job expectations. This paints the picture that, to a significant extent, there is a

mismatch between university education being provided vis-a-vis the required job knowledge and competence required in the labour sector. This is calamitous calling for immediate mitigation measures if the Government of Uganda is to profoundly improve the quality of life of the citizenry as well as enable the country to realise sustainable national development. Accordingly, there is a need for deliberate efforts to be made to identify what the public universities and other higher educational institutions in Uganda are failing to do right. Thus, there is a need to develop pragmatic mitigation measures to curb the low levels of organizational effectiveness in Ugandan higher education institutions.

Public universities in Uganda have numerous quality assurance issues they have to address some of which include but are not limited to: low-quality instruction; low-quality research; lack of adequate appropriate instructional materials; lack of adequate suitable university facilities and equipment; and ineffective university administration, management, and leadership (Rwakenda, 2016; Kanaabi et al., 2022; Kasule, 2019). It is indisputable that leadership is key for an educational institution to run meritoriously e.g. see the work of Mckimm et al. (2023). Writers such as Sani et al. (2023) and Jerab & Mabrouk (2023) concur that strong and appropriate leadership is one of the most significant factors that can cause things to be done differently

in an educational institution. Hence, it is paramount for one to be in the know of the appropriate type of leadership that can enable him or her to proficiently manage an educational institution's operations and exceed the stakeholder's expectations.

To this end, adaptive leadership is progressively being seen as a remedy for the gross ineffectiveness and inefficiency in educational institutions, especially in the era of budget cuts amidst increased demand from the public, political pressures, very high internal and external competition and epidemic outbreaks e.g. Covid-19 etc., which make the operation environment: Vulnerable, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) (Abukalusa & Oosthuizen, 2023). Adaptive leadership to some is conceived as strategies and practices that help people adapt to complex environments, overcome obstacles, and accomplish meaningful change (Hernandez-Santiago, 2023). Meanwhile, in the minds of Heifetz et al., (2009) adaptive leadership is conceptualised as a deliberate effort of mobilising stakeholders to do their best and ensure that the institution achieves its desired goals and objectives. Scholars such as Elmanisar et al. (2024); Maulana et al. (2024) attest that adaptive leadership is gradually being acknowledged as a panacea to solve problems facing educational institutions. Subsequently, it is fair to construe that adaptive leadership is critical for the success of not only public universities in Uganda but also other similar institutions. This study therefore set out to establish adaptive leadership status, rationale for adaptive leadership, and challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Status of Adaptive Leadership in Public Universities in Uganda

Inequitable governance, favouritism and negligence of duty by a majority of staff are some of the protruding depravities that need to be addressed in Uganda's higher education institutions (Kasozi,

2017; Ssempebwa et al., 2019; Mugizi et al., 2022). That said, Bileti et al., (2024a) attest that universities in Uganda have issues e.g. inadequate appropriate teaching infrastructure, student accommodation facilities, sports, leisure and recreational facilities among other things. The foregoing observation tends to suggest that there is limited and/or no application of adaptive leadership in the Ugandan public universities' operations.

Voluminous research shows that effective leadership is essential for the success of higher education institutions. For example, researchers such as Lakomski (2001) advance that the prime mover of change in an educational institution is the educational leader who transforms the current stagnating culture into a productive one. Mallillin (2022) sustains that leadership is crucial in ensuring that an institution achieves its strategic plan. Naim (2024) advances that in the era of disruption of the different aspects of life and organisational operations, every leader must manage and lead his or her team with flexibility, through application leadership adaptive. Besides, we have to learn to live with the VUCA environment which has become the norm of the day (Lakomski, 2001), hence, public universities in Uganda ought to transform themselves into learning organisations so that they might meet all unexpected challenges. This is buttressed by Kakungulu (2024) who avows that educational institutions in Uganda, public universities being no exception are struggling to meet the demands of the 21st century. This therefore calls us to seriously think of contemporary leadership approaches and practices that can enable educational institutions in Uganda and similar contexts to thrive while others merely strive to survive.

The foregoing observation accentuates the need for adaptive leadership in Ugandan public universities as it promotes flexibility, responsiveness, and empowering individuals to solve challenges (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Apparently, absence of water and electricity cost reduction measures,

decrepit university physical infrastructure e.g. roads, lecture rooms, sports facilities, university compounds, students' halls of residence etc. This is a bare manifestation that in most public universities in Uganda, there is limited and/or no responsiveness, and empowerment of individuals to solve challenges faced by the public universities as adaptive leadership tends to prescribe. Consequently, it is hereby espoused that any educational institution regardless of context that negates embracing of adaptive leadership do so at its own peril.

If adaptive leadership is espoused in Ugandan public universities, the setting of pragmatic strategic plans can be possible (Rwakenda, 2019). Also, there is a need for public universities in Uganda to soundly collaborate with other institutions, industries, and stakeholders in order to enhance the quality of university education and research (Tagulwa et al., 2023). Adaptive leadership also needs to be embraced because it enables the leader to create a culture of organisational learning, where team members can learn from each other, and thus, adapt to changing circumstances (Lakomski, 2001; Naim, 2024). It is not farfetched to say that if adaptive leadership is implemented it can be a panacea for the numerous challenges facing public universities in Uganda e.g. the low adoption of ICT for teaching and learning, inadequate ICT infrastructure etc. However, it is vital to note that the VUCA environment which the educational institutions are going through demands that they acquire dynamic staff both at the superordinate and subordinate levels (Mukaram et al., 2021; Abukalusa & Oosthuizen, 2023).

Rationale for Adaptive Leadership in Public Universities in Uganda

Scholars such as Senge (2014) aver that adaptive leadership enables a leader to engage with his/her team, promote collaboration, and foster innovative problem-solving approaches in an institution. Hence, educational institutions in the VUCA environment that do not embrace adaptive

leadership do so at their own risk. The rapidly changing higher education landscape without any reasonable doubt calls for embracing adaptive leadership. It is irrefutable that public universities in Uganda face numerous challenges, including funding constraints, increasing student numbers, and evolving technological advancements. (Ssengendo, nd; Muhwezi-Murari, nd). Adaptive leadership helps leaders navigate complexities and uncertainties, making informed decisions that drive institutional success (Sani et al., 2023).

Enhancing institutional effectiveness is another advantage public universities can accrue from embracing adaptive leadership as it promotes collaborative decision-making, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered, and decisions are well-informed (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Furthermore, adaptive leadership leads to enhanced innovation and entrepreneurship. It is widely acknowledged that adaptive leaders promote a culture of innovation, encouraging experimentation, calculated risk-taking, and creativity (Abukalusa & Oosthuizen, 2023). Adaptive leadership if employed regardless of context leads to better resource allocation among other things. This is premised on the fact that adaptive leadership helps leaders optimize resource allocation, ensuring that limited resources are utilized efficiently and effectively (Mukaram et al., 2021). This is supported by Namutala and Wandiga's (2024) study finding which confirms that adaptive leadership positively influence the performance of an institution.

Adaptive leadership is key in fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity as well as promoting stakeholder engagement. Adaptive leaders should be great team players and should be resolute in building trust, fostering collaboration, and driving institutional success. It is through adaptive leadership that educational institutions in Uganda can promote a culture of inclusivity, respect, and empathy, ensuring that all stakeholders feel valued and empowered (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). This is

because adaptive leadership involves transparent planning systems and implementation strategies and adequately employs the 360-degree feedback method to improve institutional performance (Rogers & Macfarlan, 2020).

Adaptive leadership is fundamental in developing a capacity for sustainability and resilience in an institution in the face of crises (Nyandika, 2024). Adaptive leadership can greatly help public universities in Uganda develop the capacity to withstand and respond to internal and external challenges. Moreover, adaptive leadership is momentous in effectively addressing perennial problems within an unremittingly mutable educational environment (Sani et al., 2023). In addition, adaptive leadership is key to fostering a culture of continuous improvement. As such, public universities must desire to have Adaptive leaders who promote a culture of unending learning, reflection, and improvement, ensuring that institutions remain adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances (Abukalusa & Oosthuizen, 2023).

Challenges Facing Adaptive Leadership in Ugandan Public Universities

One of the remarkable challenges impeding the implementation of adaptive leadership in Ugandan public universities is limited resources (The State of Higher Education and Training in Uganda 2020/21 Report). The aforementioned report indicates that public universities in Uganda have failed to diversify sources of funding but rather depend on tuition fees as a major source of income. This is buttressed by Kyaligonza (2015) who asserted that public universities in Uganda face significant funding constraints which limit their ability to invest in infrastructure, staff development, and research. However, this paper wishes to mention that adaptive leadership in its own right has the ability to overcome the challenge of limited resources. For example, if public universities in Uganda adopt adaptive leadership, unnecessary expenditures would be avoided and also viable

income-generating projects would be undertaken to alleviate and/or eliminate the challenge of limited resources (Kanaabi et al., 2022).

Apparently, the organisational structure of public universities in Uganda is bureaucratic in nature (Kasule, 2019). Accordingly, this impairs the ability of administrators, managers and leaders to respond quickly to changing circumstances. To this end, public universities in Uganda must adapt to environmental changes, and embrace diversity, equity, inclusion and appropriate leadership styles (Tibenderana, 2024). This concurs with Turyahikayo et al. (2024a) who argues that university managers must promote shared responsibility, objectives, and staff participation in decision-making in all university operations. Hence, the flat organisational structure is preferred in the context of public universities in Uganda. This can act as a fertile ground for adaptive leadership to flourish.

Resistance to Change is another notable challenge that hampers the espousal of adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda. It is not disputable that adaptive leadership requires a willingness to challenge the status quo and implement changes by dynamic people (Abukalusa & Oosthuizen, 2023). However, this can be met with resistance from staff and students who may be uncomfortable with change. Accordingly, due effort should be made to let the key stakeholders especially the staff and the students in public universities appreciate the fact that adaptive leadership is effective in addressing persistent challenges within a constantly evolving educational environment for the betterment of all the stakeholders (Sani et al., 2023).

METHODS

A qualitative approach employing a systematic literature review was used to analyse and synthesise research on adaptive leadership status, the rationale for adaptive leadership, and challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda. The systematic literature review is

considered apt in social science research because it is a replicable and transparent procedure for determining what is presently known about a certain occurrence (Kumar, 2011). The literature search process consisted of two stages (Creswell, 2002). Firstly, the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were as follows: relevance of each publication i.e. each publication should be about adaptive leadership status, the rationale for adaptive leadership, and challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in higher educational institutions in Uganda with a particular emphasis on public universities; only articles written in English were considered as the author could only read and understand one international language i.e. English; the literature search time span principally considered the period between 2019 to 2024. This is because in this period it is undeniable that the Covid-19 pandemic forced institutions to adopt agile leadership behaviours (Nissim & Simon, 2021). This made it possible to get a rich insight into the recent research on adaptive leadership status, the rationale for adaptive leadership, and the challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in higher educational institutions in Uganda. Articles reporting on other issues other than the phenomena under investigation were excluded from this systematic literature review.

The second phase of the literature search process was the development of a search strategy. In order to get a search strategy that would yield rich information about, adaptive leadership status, rationale for adaptive leadership, and challenges facing embracing of adaptive leadership in higher educational institutions in Uganda. The ensuing search descriptors were used: “adaptive leadership status”; “rationale for adaptive leadership”; and “challenges facing embracing of adaptive

leadership in higher educational institutions in Uganda”. The exploration scheme concentrated on the title, abstract, and keywords so as to get articles with a clear focus on adaptive leadership status, the rationale for adaptive leadership, and the challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in higher educational institutions in Uganda.

Regarding the identification of relevant articles, four databases were searched i.e. the Web of Science® (WoS), Scopus, Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and Google Scholar. The abstracts of the articles from the search strategy were screened to determine whether they were within the scope of the study. If the abstract contained inadequate information, then the full text was read to determine whether or not the article was in accord with the inclusion criteria. Thus, fourteen (14) articles [Kyaligonza et al (2015); Rwakenda (2016); Rwakenda (2019); Kasule (2019); NCHE Report (2021); Kanaabi et al., (2022); Mugizi et al (2022); Tagulwa et al (2023); Bileti et al (2024a); Bileti et al (2024b); Tibenderana (2024); Turyahikayo et al (2024a); Turyahikayo et al (2024b); and Kakungulu (2024)] were found to have relevant information on adaptive leadership status, the rationale for adaptive leadership, and the challenges facing embracing of adaptive leadership in higher educational institutions Uganda, public universities in Uganda inclusive. The results are presented in the ensuing section.

RESULTS

The findings showing adaptive leadership status, the rationale for adaptive leadership, and the challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda are presented in the ensuing Tables.

Table 1: Adaptive Leadership Status in Public Universities in Uganda

Adaptive leadership status in public universities in Uganda	Findings	Source
	... public universities need to improve the state of their service infrastructure ...	Bileti et al (2024a). Service infrastructure and curriculum implementation in public universities in northern Uganda.
	... public universities in Northern Uganda improve the management...	Bileti et al (2024b). Didactic Infrastructure Management and Curriculum Implementation in Public Universities in Northern Uganda.
	... Kyambogo must do all it takes to improve leadership competence ...	Kasule (2019). Leadership Development Schemes for Middle-level Academics in Merged Universities: The Case of Kyambogo University.
	... educational institutions in Uganda strive to meet the demands of the 21st century ...	Kakungulu (2024). Transformational Leadership in Educational Institutions. Transformational Leadership in Educational Institutions.
	... higher education institutions reported less research output...	National Council for Higher Education (2021). The State of Higher Education and Training in Uganda 2020/21 Report).
	... higher education institutions ignore office space/working space for the teaching staff...	
	... e-resources are still wanting in higher education ...	
	... we need leaders with clear vision...	Rwakenda (2019). Leadership in Public and Private Higher Institutions of Learning in Uganda: A Case Study of the Eastern Region.
	...universities are struggling to get appropriate adequate lecture space...	Tibenderana (2024). Challenges and Opportunities in Leadership within the Realm of Higher Education.
	... outdated curricula, inadequate teaching resources, and lack of adequate qualified staff ...	

Findings in Table 1 reveal that public universities in Uganda grossly fall short of meeting the expectations of the stakeholders. Accordingly, it is fair to deduce that public universities in Uganda have not embraced adaptive leadership. Put

succinctly, these universities lack strategies and practices that can help their staff adapt to the VUCA environment, overcome obstacles, and provide excellent services and products to the clientele.

Table 2: Rationale for Adaptive Leadership in Public Universities in Uganda

Rationale for adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda	Findings	Source
	... effective leadership in a university is a catalyst for high-quality teaching...	Kasule (2019). Leadership Development Schemes for Middle-level Academics in Merged Universities: The Case of Kyambogo University.
	... research is grossly underfunded	Kyaligonza et al (2015). Funding of Academic Staff's Research in Public Universities in Uganda: Challenges and Opportunities.
	... making necessary efforts to improve the quality of leadership...	Rwakenda (2019). Leadership in Public and Private Higher Institutions of Learning in Uganda: A Case Study of the Eastern Region.
	... avoid producing half-baked graduates who cannot be employed because they do not fit with the needs of society ...	
	... Kyambogo University should develop collaboration and partnerships with local industries to do research ...	Tagulwa et al (2023). Students and Employers Perceptions of Employability Skills in Uganda.
	... Higher education institutions must adapt to environmental changes...	Tibenderana (2024). Challenges and Opportunities in Leadership within the Realm of Higher Education.
	... Universities need to renew their sense of purpose...	
	... Keeping abreast with rapid technological advancement...	
	... create an inclusive and diverse Campus environment ...	
	... engage in International partnerships and collaborations ...	
	... strengthen relationships with local communities and businesses...	
	... promote espoused beliefs and values ... participation in decision-making ...	Turyahikayo et al (2024a). The Influence of Institutional Culture on Organisational Effectiveness in Selected Public Universities in Uganda.
	... university leaders should ... improve organisational communication ...	Turyahikayo et al (2024b). Leadership styles and organizational communication in selected public universities in Uganda.
	... universities should implement game-changing talent attraction strategies...	Mugizi et al (2022). Talent management: The game changer for work engagement of non-teaching workforce at Kyambogo University, Uganda.

Table 2 findings disclose that adaptive leadership is the panacea to the numerous obstacles hampering public universities from effectively and efficiently delivering their obligations. This is based on the fact

that if adaptive leadership is employed in public universities in Uganda, it can serve as a strong catalyst for fostering efficacious university operations from various perspectives.

Table 3: Challenges Facing Embracing Adaptive Leadership in Public Universities in Uganda

Challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda	FINDINGS	SOURCE
	... achievements of each university mission largely depend on the funding ...	Kyaligonza et al (2015). Funding of Academic Staff's Research in Public Universities in Uganda: Challenges and Opportunities.
	... institutions of higher learning have failed to diversify sources of funding ...	National Council for Higher Education (2021). The State of Higher Education and Training in Uganda 2020/21 Report).
	... some of the challenges include: incompetent leadership; poor infrastructure; and budget constraints ...	Rwakenda (2016). Challenges Faced by Leaders of Institutions of Higher Learning in Uganda: Case Study of Mbale Public and Private Universities.
	... complex administrative structures...	Tibenderana (2024) Challenges and Opportunities in Leadership within the Realm of Higher Education.

The findings in Table 3, unveil that there are numerous challenges impairing the implementation of adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda. These range from inadequate staffing, inappropriate organisational structures, inadequate financial resources, incompetent university leaders and/or managers etc. It is hereby espoused that the aforementioned challenges facing adaptive leadership should be looked at as an opportunity for the leader or manager to demonstrate his/her prowess by working with and through his/her colleagues to turn the situation around for the public university to thrive and not merely struggle to survive.

DISCUSSION

The study findings divulge that adaptive leadership is pragmatic in nature with a huge potential to enable institutions regardless of context to become effective and efficient, and thus, be able to supersede the expectations of their stakeholders. The first study objective of this study was to establish the status of adaptive leadership in public universities. Findings show that public universities in Uganda have not embraced adaptive leadership, and hence, lack strategies and practices that can enable them to become effective and efficient in the ever-changing VUCA environment. This finding is

buttressed by several scholars such as Kayobyo & Naluwoza (2011); Kasule (2019); Rwakenda (2019); NCHE (2021); Bileti et al., (2024a); Bileti et al., (2024b); Tibenderana (2024) who all attest that the quality of instruction, research and community development engagement by public universities is rated low according to the national and international university rankings. Consequently, due effort must be undertaken to ensure that public universities in Uganda embrace adaptive leadership or else risk becoming more of a liability to the Government and the entire society than being seen as assets to national development and catalysts for improving people's quality of life. However, before this happens, it is vital to address the institutional, cultural, external and technological factors that hamper the adoption of adaptive leadership in Ugandan public universities (Namutala & Wandiga, 2024).

The second objective of this study was to establish the rationale for adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda. Findings depict that there is a myriad of reasons why adaptive leadership should be embraced in public universities in Uganda. It is not disputed that we are in an era where change is happening in the different aspects of our lives due to the knowledge explosion almost on a daily basis. This therefore calls for institutions be it public or

private to have the ability to change their operations almost on a daily basis so that they cope with the changes in the social, economic, political, technological and health dimensions among other things. This concurs with researchers such as Kyaligonza et al (2015); Kasule (2019); Rwakenda (2019); Mugizi et al., (2022); Tagulwa et al., (2023); Tibenderana (2024); Turyahikayo et al., (2024a); Turyahikayo et al (2024b) who advance that embracing adaptive leadership is vital in ensuring that an institution of higher learning functions effectively and efficiently. It is also key to note that the adoption of adaptive leadership should be taken seriously because it is a very powerful tool which can be used to navigate complexity, build resilience, foster innovation, empower others, enhance collaboration, develop adaptive capacity, improve decision making, cultivate a learning culture, enhance agility and achieving sustainable organisational success (Sott & Bender, 2025).

The third objective of this study was to establish the challenges facing embracing adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda. Findings portray that copious challenges hamper the implementation of adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda. Among the notable ones we have: inadequate staffing, inappropriate organisational structures, inadequate financial resources and incompetent university leaders and/or managers e.g. see Kyaligonza et al., (2015); Rwakenda (2016); NCHE (2021); and Tibenderana (2024). This therefore implies that public universities in Uganda must do away with rigid organisational structures, hierarchical cultures, funding constraints and ineffective government policies among others if they want to effectively implement adaptive leadership. This is critical because even when the university says it has adequate financial resources but there are rigid policies, organisational structures, hierarchical cultures etc., adaptive leadership shall be impaired in that kind of environment (Thomas, 2023). However, this paper hastens to add that the aforesaid challenges facing adaptive leadership, should be taken as

opportunities for university leaders or managers to demonstrate their dexterity to solve problems facing their institutions and humanity as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the absence of adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda is worrying. Moreover, no institution and/or individual can effectively and efficiently progress if does not timely adjust to the prevailing circumstances. It is hereby inferred that adaptive leadership is critical to help institutions have the ability to cope with change in their operations almost on a daily basis. Adaptive leadership dictates that a leader or manager instantly make appropriate moves to ensure that the institution's operations are executed in the most economical manner as well as ensuring that the clients' needs and expectations are met. This study also concludes that there are many challenges that hinder the implementation of adaptive leadership in public universities in Uganda but these should be seen as opportunities for university leaders or managers to prove their agility and competence to address these challenges so that institutions of higher learning such as public universities are used as examples in society regarding how to effectively and efficiently respond to the social, economic, technological, health and climatic disruptions challenges facing our today than ever before.

Recommendations

The study recommends that university leaders and managers make deliberate efforts to familiarise themselves with adaptive leadership principles through both formal and informal professional development programmes. There is also a need for the university governing councils to institutionalise adaptive leadership by embedding it in their strategic plans. It is also hereby recommended that public universities in Uganda adopt appropriate administrative structures that ensure: clear lines of authority and decision-making; effective communication and collaboration across units; efficient resource allocation and management;

strong governance and accountability; and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and priorities.

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