

# A Measurement Model of University Staff Perception Towards Sustainable Leadership Practices in the Universities of the Central Region of Uganda

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is intertwined in two phases. First, it is to examine the four subdimensions of sustainable leadership practices and its meaningful use as professed by staff in six Ugandan universities of the central region. Secondly, it concentrated on testing the appropriateness of the measurement in terms of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The method used to arrive at the needed data was quantitative approach. It was deployed to secure data from a randomly chosen sample of volunteers from the six university studies both public and private. Data was collected through the use of a 25-itemized questionnaire to determine the perception of staff towards sustainable leadership practices. The study investigation tool was directly circulated by the researcher himself and researcher assistants to a randomly chosen sample of volunteers from the six universities involved in the study. The study findings showed that there are four subconstructs of sustainable leadership practiced in Ugandan universities: staff capacity building, diversity leadership, strategic distribution, and conservation. However, due to low values in one of the subdimension AVEs, the model was re-examined, and hence, conservation was removed to meet the requirement of divergent construct validity. The study established that staff perceived sustainable leadership practices to be of great value towards their performance in an era of university change. The study findings are of great importance in education. Secondly, it exposes university leadership and staff to the new management styles that are needed to achieve university mission and improvement of quality practices, and this can be attained through training, development, and attraction staff's efforts towards university effective performance. Lastly, the researcher recommends the study as a source of information and knowledge to future research in the same area.

## KEYWORDS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Effective Performance, Sustainable Leadership, Transformation, University Change

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable leadership is defined as improved preservation and development of an extensive all-round learning for prosperity while catering for achievement of future targets through the use of ways that do not hurt institutional workers but at the same time provide both positive and promising future

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achievements (Hargreaves, 2007). In the era of increased accountability, the knowledge economy poses greater challenges to educational institutions for instance, creation of new knowledge, curriculum change, staff development, preservation of institutional norms, customer care, achievement of institutional mission and vision, performance indicators, and quality services (Davies, 2005). These challenges do not only call for a shift in institutional performance and endurance to new changes, but also require better positioning of higher educational institutions on the world market so as to provide solutions to their societies and preserve the natural world settings. Since leadership plays a pivotal role at the helm of higher educational institutions' performance, thus it is required to be continuous and sustainable in nature and practices so as to drive the staff towards achievement of institutional targets (Cook, 2014). Meanwhile, in the recent past higher education institutions have been experiencing moments of change and transformation. These forces of transformation and change are engineered by the globalisation competition and high demands on the side of customers. This is because institutions of higher learning are seen as hubs for both required human capital and skills towards moving the current generation to the next one (Lambert, 2012a). However, Higher education institutions cannot achieve their best in terms of performance and effective leadership sustainability without proper proven procedures and comfortable routines that enable organisations' staff to take risks and work diligently towards institutional change (Cook, 2014; Davies, 2005; Hargreaves, 2007; Lambert, 2012a). Notwithstanding, it is imperative that higher education institutions get prepared and address the challenges that they are facing, which are "time bombs" within institutions sustainable leadership. This can be done by exposing the future leadership through the nature of work and roles that are needed from individuals and developed for that purpose to take on the next generation of higher education leadership (Brundrett, 2011).

### **1.1. The Nature of Universities Practices Towards Sustainable Leadership**

Today it is well documented that there is no nation or organisation that can grow better without investing in the education and growth of its future leadership. The essence of developing leaders is to help institutions improve on their quality management styles and service products so as to compete favourably on both regional and world markets (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Furthermore, the global challenges today seem to suggest that higher education institutions should comprehend further on their future existence while capitalising on the past and the present situations under which they operate to have a better stand in future market requirements and competition (Rumley, Helms, Peterson, Eds, & Liefde, 2014). Hitherto, to achieve this strategy, educational institutions inform of universities need to lay strategies and plans of identifying staff who are ready to develop and attain vast experience, acquire knowledge and skills which in turn can facilitate them to better them to commit to perform better with patience, diligence, and collaborate with others to foster achievement of institutional goals (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Bolden, Jones, Davis, & Gentle, 2015; Commission, Sustainable, & America, 2011; Henry, Findlay, Sydney & Freeman, 2016). Yet, like any other part of the world, Uganda's higher education sector today is facing challenges of coping with both national and international competency requirements and performance, for instance, these trials range from massification, commodification, customer care, commodification, internationalisation, the lack of serious government funding, moonlighting among staff, employee turnover and retention (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumley, 2009; Altbach, 2013; Ballerini, 2017; De Melo & Zha, 2015; Glenn, 2008; Kwiek, 2001, 2003; Ma, 2010; Mohamedbhai, 2008; Mok & Jiang, 2016; Mok, 2015; Robertson, 2008; Varghes, 2015). These challenges especially have not only impacted on the quality of education given to the young generation rather they have also caused a lot of strikes and staff turnover within the universities (Asiimwe & Steyn, 2013; Ssempebwa & Nakaiza, 2013). Moreover, universities spend the little they have to develop staff capacity and leadership sustainability hence posing greater risks of sustainable leadership development among universities in Uganda (Zeelen, 2012). Universities today are required to prepare sustainable leadership that can cater for students critical thinking, innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship and problem solving skills so as to meet

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