

Institutional Planning in the Context of Higher Education: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

This study delved into the challenges and prospects of institutional planning at Makerere University in Uganda with the aim of identifying the major challenges and prospects of planning at the institution. It was prompted by the persistent complaints from stakeholders over the Institution's failure to meet its set goals and objectives despite the numerous attempts to plan its growth and development. The study took the interpretive and narrative design in which data were collected through literature search and desk study methods. Study results revealed: first that the challenges facing institutional planning at Makerere University emanate from both within and without the Institution. Second, due to the developments within and outside the University, the future prospects for undertaking effective planning in the University are high. It was thus concluded that despite the myriads of challenges that the University faces, it will still be possible to effectively plan for the Institution since there are means for circumventing more or less all the hurdles to institutional planning at the University. Therefore, the author recommends that University managers and planners must remain prudent and innovative in formulating and implementing the Institution's strategic plans.

Keywords: challenges, institutional planning, higher education, prospects, university

1. Introduction

To many, the development of a nation requires successful families. Because many peaceful and prosperous homesteads make up a successful nation. In the same vein, the development of a successful education system rests on the presence of many successful educational institutions. As a result, the planning of education does not necessarily need to be approached from the system's level (or top-down), but also from the institutions themselves (or what is commonly referred to as bottom-up planning). This is what prompted E.W. Esanklin to say that "Institutional planning is the milestone in the journey towards the improvement of education" (Naik, 1968, 5) because he believed in the notion that the success of an education system depends, to a large extent, on the presence of many well-planned and developed individual schools and institutions. However in practice, only a few educational institutions world over seem to have the capacity to successfully plan their individual growth and development. The case of several higher education institutions in developing countries,

Uganda inclusive, is not any exception. This paper examines the challenges and prospects of institutional planning at Makerere University in Uganda with the aim of identifying the major challenges and prospects of planning at the University. In this section, the author presents the background to the study, the study objectives and guiding research questions.

Historically, the practice of planning education is not new. Its origin can be traced way back to the times when western education was first introduced in ancient Greece. But Phillips Coombs, the founding Director of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in Paris, re-counts better the history of educational planning. According to Coombs (1970), "Today's educational planning can claim an unbroken ancestry running back to ancient times" (p. 17). In his "*What is educational planning?*" published in 1970, Coombs reveals that:

Xenophon tells (in the *Lacedaemonian Constitution*) how the Spartans, some 2,500 years ago, planned their education to fit their well-defined military, social and economic objectives. Plato in his *Republic* offered an education plan to serve the leadership needs and political purposes of Athens. China during the Han Dynasties and Peru of the Incas planned their education to fit their particular public purposes. (p. 17)

These early examples validate when and where educational planning began and emphasize, as Coombs (1970) candidly puts it, "the important function of educational planning in linking a society's educational system to its goals, whatever these goals may be" (p. 17).

However, even though educational planning began together with modern-day education systems, the practice was never widespread and neither were its methodologies, scope and goals as streamlined as they are today. In fact, Coombs (1970) observes that:

The earliest modern attempt to employ educational planning to help realize a 'new society' was, of course, the First Five-Year Plan of the young Soviet Union in 1923. Though its initial methodologies were crude by today's standards, it was the start of a continuous and comprehensive planning process which eventually helped transform in less than fifty years-a nation which began two-thirds illiterate into one of the world's most educationally developed nations. (p. 18)

In that regard, though the initial methodologies were crude by today's standards, the planning by the Soviet Union laid the foundation for today's planning of education across the world. However, the planning of education in most parts of the world has not been without a challenge. This was what prompted the author to investigate the challenges and prospects of institutional planning at Makerere University. The study was prompted by the persistent complaints from stakeholders over the Institution's failure to meet its set goals and objectives despite the numerous attempts to plan its growth and development.

A few scholars have already investigated the challenges and prospects of educational planning in different countries and contexts. Teferra and Altbach (2004) for instance investigated several aspects of the African higher education systems. They observed that the challenges facing most higher education institutions in Africa are embedded in their history. According to the two scholars, the colonialists who founded higher education in Africa designed the institutions to take in only a students who would be taught in foreign languages and pursue academic programmes that were not necessarily linked to the needs of the local society. As a result, as the demand for higher education been rising, it has put undue pressure on these institutions - thereby causing resource constraints as well as difficulty to plan to meet the needs of the students as well as that of other stakeholders. However, while Teferra and Altbach (2004) highlight some challenges facing Makerere University their paper titled: "*African higher education: Challenges for the 21st century*", their investigation not specifically focused at planning in the University – a gap which this study intended to fill. Nonetheless, there were also attempts by a few other scholars to study the happenings at Makerere

University itself. For instance, Nakanyike and Muwanga (2003), and Mamdani (2007) investigated the planned and unplanned changes that occurred at Makerere University over relatively longer periods of time. Nakanyike and Muwanga for instance looked at the period between 1993 and 2000 while Mandani studied the period between 1989 and 2005. But even when these scholars alluded to the weak planning that occurred at Makerere University and the challenges the Institution faced, did not specifically focus on the challenges and prospects of institutional planning at the University. This knowledge gap prompted the need for this investigation.

In this study, there were three key concepts, namely: institutional planning, challenges and prospects. According to Maquiso (1983), institutional planning is the process of thinking, deciding and willing so that an institution becomes a model institution according to its purpose. In that regard, thinking requires the use of superior intelligence; deciding requires judicious judgment of what needs to be done and how it would be done; and willing requires force, a determined force that propels the action chosen towards specific direction selected by an institution. But, a more direct and widely agreed definition of institutional planning is probably that of M. B. Buch. According to Buch (cited in Mishra & Pundir, 2011),

Institutional planning is a programme of development and improvement prepared by an educational institution on the basis of its felt needs and the resources available or likely to be available, with a view to improving the school programme and school practices. It is based on the principle of optimum utilisation of the resources available in the school and the community.”(p.239)

In this study, the author borrowed Buch’s definition of institutional planning. As a result, institutional planning was looked in terms of the programmes of development and improvement prepared by Makerere University on the basis of its felt needs and the resources available or likely to be available, with a view to improving the institution’s programmes and practices. Specifically, planning was characterised by the different strategic plans Makerere University has formulated over the years.

The second concept in the study was challenges. The term challenges has several meanings. Ordinarily, a challenge is a task or situation that tests someone’s abilities. According to the Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners, a challenge is something that needs a lot of skill, energy, and determination to deal with or achieve especially something you have never done before and will enjoy doing (Macmillan Education, 2002). It is therefore not necessarily a problem, which is a matter or situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome. However, a problem can be regarded a challenge if the problem demands more attention, skill and resources to tackle. In this study, the concept challenges of institutional planning, was looked at in terms of the things (or factors) which the different stakeholders involved in institutional planning find difficulty in doing or accomplishing.

Finally, the third concept in the study was prospects. In the Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners, the term prospects refers to the possibility that something good might happen in the future or the possibility or likelihood of some future event occurring (Macmillan Education, 2002). In the context of institutional planning, prospects referred to the possibility that effective institutional planning can happen if the current hurdles to institutional planning were eliminated or reduced. In this study, the prospects of institutional planning were looked at in terms of the opportunities that the University has which enhance its planning.

Contextually, this study examined the challenges and prospects of institutional planning at Makerere University. Makerere University is one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Africa having been established way back in 1922 - first as a technical school (Makerere University, 2016). Through planning, the institution has been able to evolve from a humble technical school, through college, to a centre for higher education by 1937, and finally, into a fully-fledged national

university by 1970. Historically, the University opened with only 14 day students who were studying carpentry, building and mechanics; but soon, began offering various other courses in medical care, agriculture, veterinary sciences and teacher training. Today, the University offers not only day but also evening and external study programmes to a student body of about 35,000 undergraduates and 3,000 postgraduate students drawn from within and without the country (Makerere University, 2016). It is also a very active centre for research. But despite this robust picture, the institution seems to be experiencing a repertoire of challenges especially in planning its programmes and improvement at both institution-wide as well as unit levels.

According to the Uganda's National Council for Higher Education [NCHE] (2008), the body responsible for regulating higher education institutions in the country, higher education institutions in Uganda including Makerere University, are not effectively planning their growth and development. The Council cites the seemingly unplanned enrolment of students *vis-à-vis* the state of educational facilities as well as staff in these institutions as an indicator of failure to effectively plan institutional programmes and development. It also counsels that due to a myriad of challenges and forces working against higher education institutions, there is need for meticulous planning at institution-level in order to bolster these institutions against seemingly negative forces including globalization, increase use of new technologies in higher education institutions, massification of access to higher education, and the entrance of market forces in higher education delivery (NCHE, 2008). However, according to Nakanyike and Muwanga (2003), Makerere University faces several planning challenges including limited funding, conservative approaches to handling its affairs as well as challenges arising from external factors. But these claims by Nakanyike and Muwanga were raised over a decade ago. Could these challenges still be facing the University? And if it were true, then it would not augur well for the future of the institution and that of the country at large. This was partly what prompted this investigation.

This study delved into the challenges and prospects of institutional planning at Makerere University. Specifically, it was aimed at: (i) identifying and discussing the major challenges, and (ii) examining the future prospects of institutional planning at Makerere University. It was guided by two research questions, namely: (i) what are the major challenges of planning at Makerere University? (ii) What are the future prospects of institutional planning at Makerere University?

2. Literature

2.1 Theoretical Review

The issue of theory of educational planning is one of controversy because some observers have claimed that educational planning is a practice without a theory, while others argue that it is a practice with implicit and unexamined theory. However, this study was modelled on the systems theory of educational management. This theory owes its origin to the general systems theory developed by the biologist, Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1936. However, it was Chester Barnard who was the first person to have applied the systems approach to management. The theory is centred on the concept of system. According to Immegart and Pilecki (1973), a system is an entity composed of: (i) a number of parts, (ii) the relationship of these parts, and (iii) the attributes of both parts and the relationships. But Banghart (1969) defines a system as an integrated assembly of interacting elements designed to carry out co-operatively a predetermined function – though it is possible to quarrel with the use of the word pre-determined – because it is not always the case. This implies that a system is an assembly of component parts that have to work together for the system to function as a single whole for some purpose.

According to the system theory, there are two types of systems, namely: closed and open

systems. A closed system is self-contained and is capable of having a clear boundary placed around it, whereas an open system is a system that continually gives up matter to the outer world and takes in matter from it, but which maintains itself in this continuous exchange in a steady state (Banghart, 1969). As such, an open system is one which interacts with the environment trading energy and raw materials for goods and services produced by the system. Therefore, to effectively plan for such a system, one needs to take care of the inputs, transformation process, output as well as the feedback the system from the external environment (Owolabi, 1987).

In this study, the systems theory was preferred because education, and particularly an educational institution such as Makerere University, can best be looked at as a system. Based on system thinking, Owolabi (1987) counsels that the planning of education at both system's and institutional levels should focus on the inputs of human resources (student's time, teacher and non-teacher resources), material resources (school plant and school supplies) and symbolic resources (course contents or syllabus, etc.) as well as the process of transformation that occurs within the institution (teaching and learning) itself. According to him (Owolabi), basing planning on systems thinking would aid environmental scanning and result in formulating institutional plans that are bolstered against unfavourable environmental factors. This was one of the reasons why the system theory of educational management was opted for in this study.

2.2 Gaps in Related Literature

A few scholars have already investigated issues surrounding educational planning, and particularly, institutional planning. Most studies of institutional planning end up highlighting the challenges institutions face and the prospects they have in undertaking effective institutional planning. For instance, Morshidi (2010) in a study of the Malaysian higher education system discovered that government interference in the governance of higher education institutions is a critical challenge in the planning of the institutions. This is because, the relationship between the state and the institutions determine the flow of resources, information, personnel and the kind of ideology the institutions will hold. Morshidi (2010) however argued that the state and the universities are two entities with two different systems that often work in tension. This implies that the relationship between the state and higher education institutions is fragile, and if not well-handled, can be a challenge to institutional planning in higher education. This scenario seems not be any different in Uganda and with Makerere University in particular. However, according to Salmi (2000), the major challenges to institutional planning in higher education appears to arise out of economic globalization, the growing role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and many such factors that result into radical changes in training needs and cause new forms of competition and modes of operation for higher education institutions. Such challenges are not far-fetched for an institution like Makerere University.

In a study conducted by Godschalk and Lacy in 2001 in the U.S, it was established that the status and application of ICTs is a key challenge in planning distance education. The study established that planners of educational programmes were slow in adapting to new technologies that could enhance the effective delivery of higher education services. Such a finding could be relevant to a university in a developing country like Uganda.

According to Grauwe and Naidoo (2004), another key challenge to institutional planning is the existence of weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The two scholars revealed that many schools and institutions in Asia do not have the capacity to monitor and evaluate themselves; and this weakens their capacity to effectively plan their programmes and improvements. At Makerere University, a study conducted by Nakanyike and Muwanga between 1993 and 2000 established that while the University has several opportunities including the rising demand for university education, a

progressive policy environment, a growing economy and the good-will from development partners (donors) towards Uganda and Makerere, the University was still faced with a myriad of challenges that could undermine its strategic plans (Nakanyike & Muwanga, 2003). This particular study focused on validating some of these challenges and proposing the way forward.

Some earlier scholars have also looked at the prospects of institutional planning in different contexts. According to Siemiatycki (2012), one of the key prospects of institutional planning is the emergence of planning scholarship where a number of academic programmes geared at training people in the field of educational planning and policy studies in higher education have been introduced in many institutions. Such programmes, Siemiatycki (2012) says, give opportunities for individuals to be trained in institutional planning thereby giving a chance to the planning departments in higher education institutions to be equipped with highly knowledgeable staff that can undertake the planning function. At Makerere University, this prospect is in place following the launch in 2004 of the Master degree programme in educational policy and planning in higher education. However, there are several other prospects that higher education institutions have for improving their institutional planning. Some of these prospects were what this study aimed to further interrogate with the use of Makerere University as a case study.

3. Methodology

This study took the interpretive and narrative design in which data were collected through literature search and desk study methods. These methods were preferred because most of information regarding planning are often recorded and kept in different documents including policy documents, university reports, and strategic plans. The researcher opted to analyse such documents qualitatively and to appropriately interpret the findings so as to answer the research questions. Specifically, the study looked at Makerere University as case study in order to gain a deeper insight into the issues pertaining to institutional planning at the Institution. It was hoped overall, that the study methodology used would provide a systematic and scientific approach to the understanding of the challenges and prospects of institutional planning in the context of higher education.

4. Results

The findings of the study have been presented in this section in accordance with the two research questions.

4.1. Research Question One

The first question that this study aimed to answer was stated as “What are the major challenges of planning at Makerere University?” However, before delving into the challenges, the trends of institutional planning at Makerere University were analysed. Study results revealed that in its 94 years of existence, planning responsibility at Makerere University has changed hands depending on the policy environment in the country. According to Eisemon et al. (1993),

In 1970 when Makerere attained university status, there was a formal system of higher education planning in place. The University prepared plans that were coordinated with the national development plans. The plan was submitted to a University Grants Committee that had functions similar to the committee which carried out triennial planning for the constituent colleges of the University of East Africa. Until the late 1970s, the Committee analyzed and reviewed the University's plans and budget requests and made recommendations to Government based on the projected growth of the University and the capacity of the country to fund and absorb this growth. (p. 16)

However, from the early 1980s, the responsibility of institutional planning at the University was moved to the office of the University Secretary where a planning and development committee was established as the overseer. Eisemon et al. (1993) again report that “The Planning and Development Committee, an advisory body to the University Council has the responsibility for appraising proposals from faculties, schools, institutes and other departments as well as for preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of plans and projects” (p. 16). But even this arrangement was later altered.

According to the current Makerere’s Planning and Development Department [PPD] (now a directorate) (2016), in 1989, a specific unit within the University Secretary’s office was established to undertake institutional planning at the University. In 1992, this unit eventually evolved into a fully-fledged department called the Planning and Development Department (PDD) with the overall mandate to coordinate the formulation of the University’s strategic plans. This Department is now headed by a director and it comprises of two sections to handle the respective functions of planning and development (PPD, 2016). Since its inception in 1989, the planning unit has been able to coordinate the formulation of over three University strategic plans including the plans covering the periods between 1994/1995 to 1999/2000, 2000/2001 to 2005/2006, and 2007/2008 to 2017/2018. However, all these plans have been formulated and implemented amidst a myriad of challenges.

According to the PPD (2008; 2001), there are several challenges it faces in planning for the Institution. Some of these challenges include having: (i) Inadequate means to collect and manage data needed to support strategic and operational decision-making and/or policy analysis; (ii) A weak monitoring and evaluation mechanism to gauge the effectiveness of the planning initiatives and development support interventions (This is sometimes worsened by absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms altogether); (iii) Limited participation in academic planning; that is, the Department has not been effective in providing input to the designing and introduction of new programmes through comprehensive market surveys and review of academic programmes; (iv) Inadequate integration between planning, programme/service delivery and budgeting; thus, rendering weak the realisation of goals of planned activities in the University; (v) An unstructured University’s reporting mechanisms and formats for the various stakeholders; and (vi) Inadequate information-sharing in the University that is sometimes coupled with communication gaps between different University units.

In addition, the PPD (2008) reveals that some of its challenges also include: (i) Inability to undertake institutional research - mostly due to funding and staff shortages; (ii) Interference from external forces especially from the Government of Uganda and development partners; (iii) The sudden upsurge of private universities that seems to be reducing the number of new applicants to Makerere University; (iv) Inadequate financial resources allocated to the Department to execute its mandate; and (v) Uncompetitive terms of service to attract and retain qualified staff both in the PPD and other units of the University. As it can be noticed, some of these challenges emanate from within the University while others originate from outside the Institution.

4.1 Research Question Two

The second question that this study answered was stated as “What are the future prospects of institutional planning at Makerere University?” Again, this question was majorly answered based on what the Planning and Development Department (PPD) of the University says. According to the University’ strategic plans for 2000/2001 to 2005/2006 and 2007/2008 to 2017/2018, and the accompanying policy documents, the University has several prospects of institutional planning. First, the PPD (2001) reveals that since Makerere University is a government-owned institution, Government support for it is inevitable. The Department therefore is expectant that “The University

as a public University has the larger percentage of university funding derived from government” (PPD, 2001, p. 8). Therefore, there is hope that funding challenges may reduce when government funding is raised.

Second, despite the difficulty the University and the PPD itself face in attracting and retaining skilled personnel, the University still boasts of having a team of committed and good quality staff. According to the PPD (2001), “There is a very high concentration and large number of staff in various fields enabling Makerere to offer expertise in many areas to meet societal needs through teaching research and extension services” (p. 8). This means that the prospects for attracting and retaining qualified educational planners as well as other staff to implement University strategic plans are high.

Third, the innovations being made at Makerere University in management, teaching, research and different areas offer opportunity for undertaking effective institutional planning in the near future. According to the PPD (2001), “Makerere is undergoing a slow and quiet revolution anchored on innovations in financing, management, academic programmes and gender mainstreaming” (p. 9). These innovations will reduce the myriads of challenges the Institution is undergoing - thereby enhancing institutional planning at the University.

Fourth, the University has also been able to introduce a wide variety of quality academic/professional programmes. This “increase in number of academic and professional programmes offered makes Makerere very competitive” (PPD, 2001, p. 9) and capable of supplying skilled personnel including in the area of educational planning and management.

Fifth, the good reputation that Makerere University has is a key prospect for the success of the Institution including in its planning. According to the PPD (2001), “The good reputation built over the last seven decades continues to interest good students, academicians, and administrative staff to wish to join the institution” (p. 9). This means that the challenge of having inadequate personnel in the PPD itself and in other units of the University will be ameliorated in future.

The challenge of inadequate funding is also being dealt with through the generation of local revenue. According to the PPD (2001), “Ability to generate income reduces institutional financial constraints” (p. 9); thereby empowering the Institution to carry on its activities, including institutional planning, effectively and efficiently. Again, with the sustained economic growth in the country, there is hope that the financial situation at Makerere University will improve. In fact, according to the PPD (2008) itself,

The position of positive economic growth in Uganda’s economy embraces the possibility for increased funding for Makerere University by the private sector. However, the growth rate of only 5% is just moderate and may not lead to a dramatic increase in higher education funding in real terms given that the population growth rate is around 3.4% per annum and inflation is in the region of 6%. (p. 10)

The fact that Makerere is operating in a globalized world is equally a good opportunity for its institutional planning. This is because:

As a globalization framework, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) creates borderless market opportunities for higher education. Since it allows for academic programmes to be offered across international boundaries through student, programme, and/or institutional mobility, this trend affords Makerere University the opportunity to franchise her programmes, enter joint ventures with other universities and organizations, and even open branch campuses in other countries. This also provides the opportunity for building capacity for outsourcing. (PPD, 2008, p. 10)

Finally, over the years the information communication technology (ICT) situation has significantly improved both at Makerere and across the country. This is healthy for strengthening institutional planning at the University in many ways. According to the PPD (2008),

The Information Communication Technology (ICT) revolution has radically changed the mode of acquiring, storing, transmitting, and applying knowledge; instructional processes and intellectual inquiry. ICT has now become a vehicle for teaching and learning, research, innovations and distance education delivery to the extent that universities can reach out to as many learners as possible in spite of spatial and temporal differences. (p.10)

This advancement and the anticipated coming on-line of several initiatives offer Makerere University an opportunity to leverage the power of ICT including in improving its planning.

5. Discussion

This study aimed at investigating the challenges and prospects of institutional planning at Makerere University. Study findings revealed a wide range of challenges and prospects originating from both within and outside the University. The challenge of the University having inadequate funding is not new. According to Nakanyike and Muwanga (2003), and Kassozi (2003), government funding to Makerere University has been dwindling since the 1970s. However, the situation became alarming during the 1980s when the then Government of Uganda started to implement the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund [IMF]. Since then, even though Government funding has increased in actual amounts, it is relatively small compared to the demand for it by the University. This is why the challenge of inadequate funding persists despite Government efforts to increase funding. But according to Teferra and Altbach (2004), this problem has an historical perspective because Makerere University was not designed by its founders, the colonialists, from the beginning to take a large number of students. Yet student enrolment at the University has grown from a paltry 14 day students in 1922 to over 35,000 students today (Makerere University, 2016). However, with improvement in the performance of the Uganda's economy, there is hope that Government funding will increase (PPD, 2008).

The challenge of lacking means to collect and manage data is also an historical problem. In 2003, Nakanyike and Muwanga pointed out that the manual generation and maintenance of data on students, finances and many other aspects of University operation was counter-productive to the Institution. While there has been improvement in the ICT situation at Makerere, the problem of lack of up-to-date records still persists. However, according to the PPD (2008), the ICT situation is expected to further improve; hence, leading to better collection and maintenance of data required for planning and decision making at the University.

The challenge of shortage of skilled personnel in the PPD and in other units of the University has also persisted for a long period of time (Kasozi, 2003). However, with improvement in the working conditions in the University, and the launch of training programmes in the fields of higher education policy and planning in the University, there is hope that the problem of personnel shortage in the University will be overcome (PPD, 2008).

The study also established that institutional planning in Makerere University faces the challenge of interference by government and development partners [donors] (PPD, 2001). This finding is not any different with that of Teferra and Altbach (2004). According to the two authors, political interference itself belongs to the very history of the University. Given that Makerere University was founded by the colonial rulers and has been a public university to-date, it is certainly difficult to do away with government influence, and it is not surprising thus, that the government has a bigger hand in the appointment of top administrative figures of the University. But also given that Makerere University is still heavily dependent on Government for funding, it becomes more difficult to try to eliminate government influence in the planning function of the University. The University should therefore judiciously manage its relationship with Government.

Inadequate means to collect and manage data needed to support strategic and operational decision-making and/or policy analysis was another key challenge to the planning function in Makerere. This challenge is in line with the finding of Grauwe and Naidoo (2004) who found out that data to assess systemic efficiency and evaluation of institutions remain quite inadequate; thus, hindering planning. For the case of Makerere University, the challenge may be attributed to fiscal limitations to assemble the required technology to collect and manage planning data within recommended levels of efficiency. On the other hand, lack of accurate records in most departments from where the required information would be got more often than not jeopardizes this planning endeavour. A policy on information granularity should be put in place so as to improve information flow between university units. Besides, an institutional research office should also be established at the University in order to have institutional intelligence at play.

The study also established that the University faces the challenge of having a weak monitoring and evaluation mechanism to gauge the effectiveness of its planning initiatives and development support interventions. This finding was also in line with that of Grauwe and Naidoo (2004) who discovered that where there is absence of a proper monitoring and evaluation mechanism, the planning function is weakened, since monitoring and evaluation gives direction to the planning function. Perhaps there may be several reasons as to why monitoring and evaluation is weak or sometimes not done at all at Makerere University. Among the challenges that emerged in the study, for example, was shortage of staff due to uncompetitive terms of service. If combined with limited financial and material resources, it is evident that not only the very function of planning will be affected, but also monitoring and evaluation. Whatever the case may be, it is strongly recommended that the University should undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of its initiatives and plans so as to ensure that there is proper plan implementation. The other challenges such as limited participation of the PPD in academic planning has also persisted over a long period of time because of lack of information-sharing and cooperation between the different University units. Such problems need to be dealt with if effective institutional planning is to take place.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study came out with two main findings. First, that Makerere faces several challenges in undertaking its planning originating from both within and outside the University. Second, as a result of the developments taking place within and outside the University, there are many prospects for effective planning at the University. Based on these findings, it was thus concluded that despite the myriads of challenges that the University faces, it will still be possible to effectively plan for the Institution since there are means for circumventing more or less all the hurdles to institutional planning at the University. Therefore, the author recommends that University managers and planners must remain prudent and innovative in formulating and implementing the Institution's strategic plans.

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