

Framework for the Study of Innovativeness of Academic Staff

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Abstract. Employee Innovativeness is considered to be one of the key factors that influence the long-term success of organizations today. This paper identified organizational culture as potential stimulant or restraint to employee innovativeness. It was conceived as part of a study on the Innovativeness of Academic Staff (IAS) in universities in Uganda. The purpose of this study was to highlight the influence of organizational cultural dimensions on innovativeness of academic staff in Kyambogo University. The study suggests a model for studying innovativeness of academic staff. Using concurrent mixed method research design the paper assessed the role of organizational culture on innovativeness of academic staff. Four departments at Kyambogo University were involved and in total 8 administrators and 186 academic staff participated. Using Key Informants' Interviews (KII), unstructured questionnaires and documentary review for qualitative data, and survey questionnaire for quantitative data, the study found out that organizational culture has significant influence on innovativeness of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

Key words: Innovativeness, Organizational culture, Academic staff.

This study sought to establish how organizational culture of Uncertainty acceptance (UA), Power Distance (PD) and Collectivism had an influence on innovativeness of academic staff in Kyambogo University. Descriptive analysis was done using percentages means while and content analysis. It can be defined as engagement in innovative behaviors, which includes behaviors related to the innovation process, i.e. idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization, with the aim of producing innovations Kanter(1988), Scott & Bruce (1994), Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slattery & Sardesai(2005), Parzefall et al, (2008). However, the most inclusive of those definitions is that of Jereon- De Jong et al (2007), Parzefall(2008) et al and Vincent (2017) who conceptualized employee innovativeness as the generation and implementation of significant new ideas, products, processes which are not assigned to task. Jereon- De Jong et al (2007) further distinguished four dimensions of employee innovativeness as reflected in Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), and label them as; opportunity exploration, idea generation, idea championing, and idea implementation. Opportunity Exploration (OE) dimension denotes ways to improve products, processes and services and looking for ways to improve them. Idea Generation (IG) dimension refers to searching out new methods and solutions to identified problems. Idea championing refers to finding support, building coalition by encouraging new organization members to be enthusiastic of new innovative ideas. Idea Implementation (II) denotes systematic introduction of new ideas into work. Thus it can be concluded from the above definitions that employee innovativeness is engaging in innovative

work behavior of; opportunity exploration, idea generation, idea championing and idea implementation/ application.

Importance of employee innovativeness. Employee innovativeness has been referred to as the internal force that keeps the person going when the challenges are successfully overcome: it is a positive tension, perseverance and desire to excel (Shalley & Gilson 2004). To this end, scholars (Oinas 2005, Himanen 2007) have witnessed a mushrooming of conferences, courses, publications and journals devoted to uncovering the sources of innovativeness at work with a focus on unearthing factors that support or inhibit employee innovativeness. Thus, studying employee innovativeness is said to advance understanding of how best one can support and foster innovative efforts in the work place while job-related factors cover the contextual characteristics of the everyday work that influence an employee's innovativeness. Consequently, need absorptive capacity and solution absorptive capacity are formed and interoperate to affect employee innovativeness. Tim, Schweisfurth and Raaschb (2018) observed that need absorptive capacity is theoretically and empirically distinct from solution absorptive capacity, and that both are positively associated with employee innovativeness. Factors such as leadership style, job autonomy, and organizational culture, among others, will change the extent to which employees can use the absorbed external knowledge for innovation, and will therefore moderate the relationship between individual absorptive capacity and employee innovativeness. This paper focused on organizational culture influence on Innovativeness of Academic Staff (IAS).

Studies on employee innovativeness. Despite a plethora of literature on organizational climate for innovation and the persuasive arguments establishing its link to employee innovativeness, few studies hitherto have explored innovative work behavior of academic staff. Specifically, limited attention has been paid to explaining how organizational culture is crucial for stimulating innovativeness of academic staff. As an emerging field of study, models and frameworks come from a range of disciplines such as Industrial Management, Organization Development (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007) Business and Innovation (Walley et al., 2017), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems (Hwang, 2014) and (Rogers, 2003).

Scholars have explored innovativeness in relation to adoption decisions (Rogers, 2003). Overall, however, research has found that innovativeness is normally distributed across faculty and reflects innovativeness studied in outside fields (Zayim, Yildirim, & Saka, 2006; Sahin & Thompson, 2007; Forrer, Wyant, & Gordin, 2014). Apparently, symptoms of lack of innovativeness in education was noticed in schools and universities characterized by conservative institutions slow to adopt new practices and technology, less responsive to actual needs of society and absorptive use of textbook contents tended to be the measure of educational research (UNESCO IITE, 2004).

Review of literature on organizational culture revealed a number of studies that have been conducted to analyze the impact of organizational culture on organizational innovativeness (Kenny and Reedy 2006; Martins and Terblanche 2003; Roberts, Watson, and Oliver 1989; Russell 1989, Deal and Kennedy, 1982). However, none of them relates organizational culture to employee innovativeness (EI). Moreover, Ellis and Levy(2008) adduces that findings of any study without a firm theoretical /conceptual foundation are more of accidental luck than scholarly work and hence make little or no contribution to the pertinent body of knowledge. This study endeavored to narrow this theoretical/conceptual gap by use of Hofstede's (2011) typology of organizational culture as a framework to explain the role of organizational culture in enhancing innovativeness of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

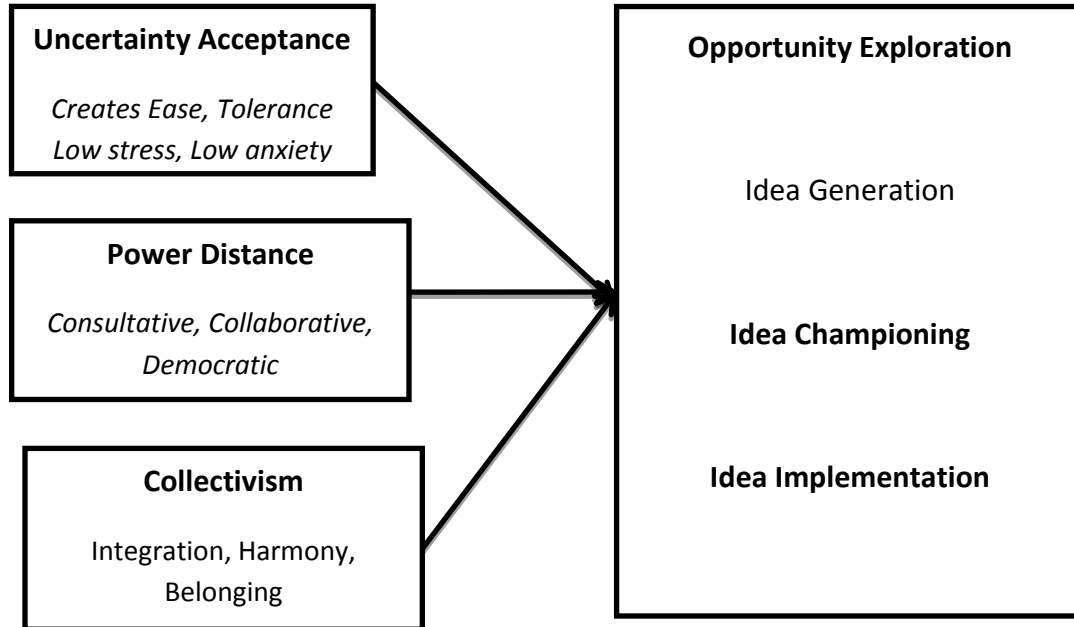
2. Theoretical Perspective.

This study was anchored on Hofstede's (2011) organizational cultural model based on three key dimensions of organizational culture that have greater influence on employee innovativeness (Omersal et al; 2016) namely; Low Power Distance, Uncertainty Acceptance, and Collectivism. Application of Hofstede's framework for this study was deemed appropriate as it has provided the theoretical foundation upon which much cultural context research has been based (Blodgett, Bakir& Rose, 2008). Hofstede's dimensions provided " a lens for looking at different cultures" ,Blanton &Barbuto (2005), and his pioneering work in bringing the concept of culture to the forefront of the various behavioral science disciplines (Blodgett, Bakir and Rose 2008), hence the reason for its choice to underpin the study.

Although there seems to be no agreed upon definition of organizational culture in the literature (Barney, 1986; Abu-Jarad et al., 2010), Hofstede(2011), defined Organizational Culture as collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one group or category of people from others. Similarly, Schein (1990) defined organizational culture as a pattern of basic assumptions that a group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.

3. Conceptual Framework

Organizational cultureInnovativeness of Academic Staff (IAS)



Source: Primary

In Figure 1, depicts influence of Organizational Culture on innovativeness of academic staff.

Conceptual Framework of Innovativeness of Academic staff. The concept of Employee Innovativeness (EI) has over the years undergone conceptual evolution. Consequently, there is a proliferation of similar terms around the concept of EI. According to Rogers (2003), Employee Innovativeness (EI) refers to the degree to which an individual is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than other members in a system. Contrary to this view, De Jong and den Hartog (2007), Parzefall, Marjo-Riitta, Seeck, Hannele and Leppänen, Anneli (2008) distinguished four dimensions of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), and labeled them as; opportunity exploration, idea generation, idea championing, and idea implementation. Whereas previous scholars operationalized innovativeness with one dimensional measure with limited items using self-reported data (Bharadwaj&Menon 2000, Ramamoorthy et al.2005), some through manager evaluations (Thamhain 2003, Miron et al. 2004), some as new products (Damanpour 1991), some as new processes (Damanpour, 1991; Baer and Frese, 2003) and others as patent applications (Kivimäki, Lämsä, Elovainio, Heikkilä, Lindström, Harisalo, Sipilä&Puolimatka 2000, Bunce& West, 1995; Spreitzer, 1995; Basu& Green, 1997; Scott & Bruce, 1998), in this paper, employee innovativeness was operationalized as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of, opportunity exploration, idea generation, idea championing

and idea application (Parzefall et al., 2008). Incidentally, few scholars have correlated organizational culture and employee innovativeness. Hence, this study was undertaken to fill this gap. Specifically, the construct of innovativeness was empirically studied in the field of higher education to examine how organizational culture influences Innovativeness of Academic Staff.

Accordingly, this framework associated academic staff innovativeness with organizational cultural dimensions of; uncertainty acceptance, low power distance and collectivism. From Hofstede's perspective, uncertainty acceptance creates ease, lower stress, low anxiety and tolerance for deviant behavior. Low power distance creates consultative, collaborative academic staff, while Collectivism inculcates a 'We' spirit, as related to the integration of individuals into primary groups, giving them belonging, harmony, in-group opinion and shared feeling of achievement (Szymura-Tyc & Kucia, 2016). Accordingly, the goal of this study was to investigate how organizational culture dimensions influence innovativeness of academic staff.

4 Research problem

Ideally, academics engage in three activities: teaching, research and community outreach, where teaching remains at the heart of their role in HEIs (Elton, 1992). However, due to massification and diversification pressure on HE system (Mohamedbhai 2011), academic staff has been overloaded with many extra duties demanding novel modes of knowledge production, new professional development and new forms of teaching and learning practices (McNaughton Billot, 2016). A study revealed that teacher performance in the role of innovating; knowledge society facilitating; collaborating and networking; higher education designing and developing; and entrepreneurship, was found to be low (Kasule, Wesselink, Noroozi, & Mulder, 2015). This was attested by academic staff's low propensity to; seek out new technique, recommend new strategies to achieve goals, apply new work methods, and procure support and resources to implement novel ideas or products across the whole university (Axtell et. al., 2000). In addition, (Kagaari et. al, 2010), observed that the number of publications, spearheaded research in Agriculture, new ventures in Engineering and innovative ways of solving community problems are conspicuously lacking. Incidentally, although organizational cultural dimensions of; Uncertainty Acceptance, Low Power Distance and Collectivism have been found crucial in facilitating innovativeness among employees, their influence on innovativeness of academic staff in Uganda has not been investigated. Unearthing their influence on innovativeness of academic staff is crucial to realizing their innovativeness. This will illuminate the collaborative role of policy makers and academic staff in eradicating the problem of low innovativeness of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

5.0 Object of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore influence of organizational culture on innovativeness of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

6. Related literature

Uncertainty Acceptance as determinant of employee innovativeness (IWB).

Mathew, Kumar and Perumal(2011) carried out a study on Role of Knowledge Management

Initiatives in Organizational Innovativeness 84 professionals from 20 Bangalore-based IT organizations selected using both purposive and stratified random sampling and data collected using both interviews and questionnaire. The variables were subjected to correlation analysis and factor analysis. A multiple regression analysis was done to identify the influence of knowledge management initiatives on organizational innovativeness. They found out that the initiatives taken by companies to enhance their knowledge assets fall into the organizational culture and were highly correlated. Gaps left behind are that it leaves behind a temporal gap in that from 2011 to present is quite a long time; contextually the study gives the experience of Bangalore particularly the role of Knowledge Management initiatives in Organizational Innovativeness and not focused on innovativeness of academic staff an academic institution.; methodologically, the study was a quantitative a new study can take a mixed method approach.

Power Distance as determinant of IWB(innovativeness of academic staff).

MajaSzymura-Tyc, MichałKucia(2016) carried out an explorative quantitative research study on Organizational Culture and Firms' Internationalization, Innovativeness and Networking Behaviour: Hofstede Approach of firms in Poland. Out of 743 employees the study used 93 employees from small and medium-sized firms who were interviewed and data analyzed. Results alluded to the fact that high power distance may lead to low innovativeness while low power distance may lead to high innovativeness. Descriptive statistics were used to depict the features of the organizational culture of the firms differing in behavior in the three fields. The study found out that higher power distance is conducive for firms' internationalization and innovativeness. This study leaves gap; for instance methodologically, the study used quantitative methods and a new study can use qualitative method to paint a picture of the role of low power distance on employee innovativeness. Contextually, the study was conducted in Turkey and this leaves a gap for a similar study to be carried out in Uganda. Moreover, the unit of analysis used to provide a link between low power distance and innovativeness was 'firms', a new study could focus on academic staff.

Individualism/Collectivism and innovativeness of academic staff.

Srite(1999) conducted a study on the Influence of National Culture on the Acceptance and Use of Information Technologies in Florida State University. The study used a convenient sample of 68 foreign students from over twenty national cultures at an international student orientation week who filled either an on-line or e-mailed questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Structural

Equation Modeling (SEM). He found out that the individualism/collectivism dimension can affect willingness to innovate. People from individualistic cultures also tended to be more non-conformist than people from collectivistic cultures. Nonconformity could lead to innovation. The opposite would hold true for people from collectivistic cultures, the desire for conformity to societal norms would lower personal innovativeness. Gaps left behind are that it leaves behind a temporal gap in that from 1999 to present is a long period ; contextually, the study gives the experience of USA students, particularly, the Acceptance and Use of Information Technologies in Florida State University and not focused on academic staff as unit of analysis.; methodologically the study used a quantitative method and a new study can use a mixed method approach.

Buske (2018) examined the correlation between collective innovativeness of the teaching staff and the principal's leadership style as well as additional school structure characteristics. The construct of collective innovativeness was examined as a precondition of successful school improvement processes driven by the teaching staff. Based on theoretical interdisciplinary analyses and empirical findings, the examined hypothesis was that the principal's leadership directly and positively influences the collective innovativeness of the teaching staff. The results of the structural equation modeling (partial least squares regression) indicate that the principal's leadership style is the strongest predictor of teachers' collective innovativeness. The study leaves a contextual gap in which it focused on the lowest institutional level of the educational system in Germany and aspects of principals' leadership styles that can encourage collective innovativeness among teachers. Similar study could focus on university education system in Uganda and the administrators' role in encouraging innovativeness of academic staff.

7. Methodology

Design. The study employed a concurrent mixed survey based on correlational cross –sectional design. Concurrent mixed method sampling involved the selection of units of analysis for the study through the simultaneous use of both probability and purposive sampling (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). Quantitative data was collected using self-administered survey questionnaire to lecturers to investigate the influence of organizational culture on their level of innovativeness. Qualitative data was collected using Key Informant Interviews (Hoidn&Kärkkäinen, 2014) administered to Deans and Heads of Departments (HoD) who were purposively selected.

Population The target population consisted of ; university administrators (Deans and Heads of Departments) and academic staff from four faculties, namely; Faculty of Science, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, and Faculty of Vocational Studies. Concurrent mixed method sampling will be used involving the selection of units of analysis through the simultaneous use of both probability for quantitative data and purposive sampling for qualitative (Teddlie and Yu,2007). The sample size for quantitative data will be determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970)'s table of sample size determination while sample size for qualitative data will be determined by the level of saturation of data collected. Stratified random sampling will be

used for quantitative sample from the population of academic staff from four faculties. Out of 358 target population of academic staff, a sample of 186 respondents will be selected for this study from the four faculties while out of 25 target population of administrative staff 8 will be purposively selected. From these, key result themes and dimensions will be identified.

Method. A mixed method was adopted in order to achieve comprehensive understanding by using both qualitative and quantitative methods, each complementing the weaknesses of the other.

Instruments. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaire surveys while qualitative data will be collected using open ended(unstructured) questionnaire and Key Informant Interviews (Hoidn&Kärkkäinen,2014). Constant comparison was performed to analyze the transcribed interview data. The questionnaire will be pre-tested using four academics in order to ensure that the survey content and measurement scales are clear, valid and appropriate. (Cho & Trent, 2006). Content Validity Index (CVI) for quantitative data will used for quality control by ensuring the validity and reliability of the instruments to be used. Internal consistency of the instruments will measured using Cronbach's alpha to establish causality of innovativeness.

Analysis. First, descriptive statistics for each item were analyzed. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS statistical package while Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify all data that related to the already classified patterns. These identified patterns were then be expounded on. The data was then used to develop themes which gave meaning to the qualitative data. For quantitative data analysis SPSS statistical package was used and apredictive data analysis was done to establish whether there is a strong relationship between Organizational culture dimensions and innovativeness of academic staff. Content analysis was done to gauge how they augment the figures of quantitative data.

Ethical considerations

The research was propelled by the guiding principles of ethical concern in social science research(Muatas,2010).The major ethical issues that the researcher faced included; informed consent and confidentiality. Accordingly, the researcher observed the principles of harm to participants, informed consent, beneficence, justice and invasion of privacy and deception(Bryman, 2008). Following the principle of informed consent, the researcher explained to the participants that their role was voluntary. Confidentiality, anonymity and safety was assured to the participants. They were informed that the research was purely for academic

purposes. To maintain anonymity, respondents were not required to write their names or fill any consent form.

8. Discussion

The study had four IVs, namely, uncertainty acceptance (UA) power distance (PD) and collectivism(CC). Uncertainty acceptance(creates ease, lowers stress and tolerates deviant behavior) had the mean of 2.42 which corresponds to 'low' suggests that although the frequency showed high for 'Very Important', overall average was low indicating that culture had not been internalized in their profession. The study did not uphold the stipulation that organizational culture

On Power Distance culture,(that is consultative, collaborative & democratic work culture) the average mean of 3.0 which corresponds to high, suggests that organizational culture of power distance had strong influence on innovativeness of academic staff.

Organizational Culture of Collectivism (reflected in; Integration, In-group opinion & Knowledge sharing), the average mean of 3.0 which corresponds to high, suggests that organizational culture of collectivism had strong influence on innovativeness of academic staff.

On whether the four meanings of innovativeness are relevant to the work of academic staff showed:

On opportunity exploration, majority (79.1%) stated that it was relevant as compared to minority (20.9%) who said opportunity exploration was not relevant. On idea generation, majority 85.3% stated that it was relevant as compared to minority 14.5 who said idea generation was not relevant. On idea championing, majority (76.8) stated that it was relevant as compared to minority (23.2%) who said idea championing was not relevant. On idea implementation, majority (73.2%) stated that it was relevant as compared to minority (26.9%) who said idea implementation was not relevant.

Regarding information on assessment of individual innovativeness of academic staff, the mean of 3.34 corresponded to very high frequently on innovativeness. The results suggested that majority of academic staff were highly innovative compared to the lowest mean of 2.32. representing low innovativeness.

Concerning Validity and Reliability on the Meaning of Innovativeness,all the four items namely Opportunity Exploration, Idea Generation, Idea Championing and Idea Implementation were valid measures of the meaning of innovativeness.The reliability (Cronbach alpha) ($\alpha = 0.65$), meant that the items were reliable measures of meaning of innovativeness. According to (Lee et al, 2009) even Cronbach alpha.($\alpha=0.423$) is still acceptable as it exceeds 0.35. The reliability of the only six valid items(Cronbach alpha) was $\alpha = 0.801$ which meant that only the six items were reliable measures of Individual Innovativeness of Academic Staff (IIAS).

Respondents rated themselves on IAS. The average for IAS was computed ($IAS = IAS1 + IAS2 + IAS3 + IAS4 + IAS5 + IAS11 / 6$). This gave the mean of 0.801 which corresponds to the code 3 that stood for “relevant” meant that respondents conceptualized innovativeness to be relevant to them.

On leadership influence on innovative work behavior of academic staff, the average mean of 3.0 which corresponds to high, suggests that leadership had strong influence on innovative work behavior of academic staff. This was in tandem with responses from interviews which affirmed that the university provided psychological support (through creating a culture of ease, tolerance and less stress) to the staff’s innovative efforts. However, HOD2 & HOD4 observed that academic staff expressed their fear of loss of image should the innovations fail.

Concerning the correlation (IAS) DV and (Organizational Culture) IV, Uncertainty Acceptance (UAC) positively relates to Academic Staff Innovativeness (ASII); Power Distance (PD) positively relates to academic staff innovativeness (ASII) and Collectivism positively relates to academic staff innovativeness. (ASII)

Regression of DV (IAS) on IV Organizational Culture (OC), the F test, that is, the significance of the regression model was $F=2.58$ compared to the p value (Sig) level 0.85. Where F value 2.58 is larger than P value 0.85, we deduce that the computed or observed F is large enough. Since the Sig or P value 0.85 was greater than 0.05, then at 5% level of significance, we deduced that the computed or observed F was small hence we accepted the null hypothesis and rejected the research or alternative hypothesis. Hence we inferred that the score on innovativeness of academic staff could be predicted from the uncertainty acceptance UAC

On whether leadership enhances innovative work behavior of academic staff showed that leadership was important as indicated by an average of 37% ‘Always’ relative to 8.4% for never. Considering the mean which corresponds to important, the results suggested that leadership psychological and moral support enhanced innovativeness of academic staff to high level. The mean of 3.15 which corresponds to the code 3 which stood for “relevant” meant that respondents conceptualized Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior to be relevant to them in terms of busting their morale for innovative endeavors. This corroborated with voices of participants which echoed that DEANs and HODs have a vital role to play in encouraging innovativeness of academic staff in Kyambogo University. However, there were other academic staff who were self-driven and didn’t need any push from faculty leaders to engage in innovative activities.

9. Conclusion

This paper reviewed literature on employee innovativeness at conceptual, theoretical and empirical levels. This study found out that innovativeness of academic staff in Kyambogo University was at its emerging stage. However, transition from the conservative direct compliant sense of innovativeness of academic staff to the engagement paradigm was hesitant due to disempowering organizational culture. Fundamental precepts may need to be made in the university to facilitate in internalizing organizational culture for development innovativeness of academic staff.

Recommendations

The University should recognize the urgent need to allocate significant amount of time and funding to boost academic staff innovativeness. University should recognize and reward innovativeness of academic staff as a motivational gesture to encourage innovativeness of academic staff.

Fundamental precepts may need to be made in the university to facilitate in internalizing organizational culture for development innovativeness of academic staff.

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Hab'Imana John Baptist

Title: Innovation, Technology, Quality and Inclusiveness in ODC

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Biography

I am a Ugandan by birth from Kisoro District. I am happily married with children. My profession is a lecturer, currently teaching at Gulu University. The area of my specialty is Education Management . I am currently pursuing PhD degree at Makerere University, in my final year.

My academic area of specialty is Innovation in higher education.

The topic my Doctoral studies is “ Organizational Culture and Innovativeness of Academic Staff in Kyambogo University”. My future plan is to expand my research and disseminate knowledge on the concept of individual innovativeness with special reference to higher education institutions.



“ God will makeaway where there seem to be no way.)