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Abstract

Research has become a core function of universities all over the world. Quality and effective research is fundamental to any country aspiring to attain economic progressivity as well as accelerated economic growth and development. In Kenya, the quest for university education research has received a tremendous attention which has led to its immense progression, resulting to globalization, population growth and continued day to day human development. Governments are funding universities to generate and share knowledge through research. The study sought to establish university research uptake on public policy development in Kenya using Research knowledge sharing, capacity of engaging with stake holders and research uptake as study variables. Further the study was anchored in the Theory of change. The study employed Descriptive research design and targeted 5 public universities in Kenya and public policy development formed the unit of analysis. The study findings established a positive significant relationship between Research knowledge sharing, capacity of engaging with stake holders and uptake and public policy development indicated by the p-value of p -value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 the significance value. The study recommended that there should be an improved system of sharing of research knowledge, increase the capacity in conducting the research and also ensure proper research knowledge uptake by all stake holders in the public sector. There is also need to improve partnership between research institutions and public policy developers in their operations in order to utilize the research findings from research institutions in policy adoption. This paper discusses the capacities needed to increase the impact of research based policies.

Key words; *Accelerated research, research up-take, public policy development, informed policy*

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1.0 Background

The debate on fabrication of scientific knowledge and its use on public policy process have been on for quite a long time both in Kenya, Africa and the entire globalized world. The issue has gained momentum in the recent days following the gradual globalization in the world calling for scientific interventions in innovations that have been contextualized in various policies and systems. The background of the debate dates back to 20th century in the field of public policy and thus formation of political science as a discipline in social sciences and its approaches as applied to various fields of knowledge. Public policy analysis emerged particularly in United States of America as a science of action, a contribution by experts to Government decision making processes and gradual expansion of democratic governance to the people .The main aim of public policy was to direct research in such a way as to be relevant, useful for action (Newton & Burgess, 2016). This trend was extremely strong in USA in the 1960 and 1970 that led to production of practical knowledge.

This was however challenged sparkling interest in other concerns more fundamental to the debate making it possible to break out the vicious circle that threatened to confine public policy analysis to the function of decision making aid. This confusion between research and operations approach led to a differentiation of functions between researchers and policy makers Almeida, Celia and Bascolo (2018).Currently, African countries have embraced University Education as a significant factor and indicator influencing national growth and regional development (Bailey *et al.,* (2012). More emphasis has been on research and knowledge based production through scientific innovation. (Obamba 2013; Rosca, *et al.,* 2018; Smart *et al.,* 2019).

Most developing countries have dedicated large amounts of money in research based institutions in a view of discovering the underlying reasons behind their poor economies, but this has not yet born fruits. This is due to lack of good will from their policy makers to put the evidence of research into practice (Stiggelbout, *et al.,* 2015; Head, 2016). Moreover, from studies, it is difficult to ascertain the number of policymakers willing and consider keenly the evidence of research findings in their decision-making. The willingness is accelerated through demands for accountability and its impacts from current development programs embraced by civil society in developing countries, however this has increased scrutiny in spending on development by government, donors and funders. In circumstances of willing policymakers to incorporate evidence in decision-making, however these face challenge in finding where to find such actionable evidence, since most such outcomes are either presented at published in academic journals and research conferences and university websites (Huey & Ricciardelli, 2016; Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2017). When they do find rigorous evidence, policymakers may have difficulty interpreting it because it is mostly written for academic audiences in technical language (Delmon, 2017). Moreover, the challenge of synthesizing evidence is also faced which draws lessons from different research studies previously conducted in different contexts with different years, and sometimes shows conflicting results due to differing research objectives and contexts. This makes researchers with an objective maximize their outcome to attract the attention of policymakers by convincing them based on their innovated ideas based on certain policies which are more advanced than existing policies and which can foster their developmental agenda (Ashraf, 2012)

According to Rogers (2013), researchers together with policy makers have different values of operation, time-flames, languages, professional ties and reward systems differentiating them in world spheres. This leads to a research based evidence focusing only on minor factors where policies formulated based on development and practices. At times public policies are implemented nationally without piloting or prior-evaluation. Furthermore, University researcher's report and study findings have structural barriers and encumbrances in engaging in translation of knowledge which might be of significance to practice and policy formulation (Harris, 2015; Hoidn, 2018).

Research- based policies can enhance best practices in changing a people's lives (Meier *et al* 2018). A good example is America's Obama care policy which has greatly transformed the American health sector in which the household surveys were conducted on best practices on having a universal health cover for all people (Lugova, & Wallis, 2017). Another Example was the Decentralized Livestock services in Eastern Regions of Indonesia project (DFID), in which a careful combination of pilot field-level projects institutional research and proactive communication contributed to 250% increase in farmer satisfaction with livestock services (Uscanga, *et al.*,2017).

Kenya universities have emerged as Africa's key growth centers with sound economic policies in place for future improvements (Diarietou, 2015). However, like many other countries, there are wide gaps between research, policy and practice. There has been efforts between research, policy and practice in support of collaboration between researchers and policy makers and other stakeholders as a strategy of closing these gaps, but has not been extensively solved (De Souza ,2015).

Research Universities in Kenya a great role of providing knowledge based evidence in formulating, implementing and evaluating social, Economic and political based policies geared towards acceleration of development in Kenya. The research community requires advanced understanding the engagement between research practitioners and policymakers running from their perceptions, definitions of research, quality and relevance of these research. Also preferred modes of communication is necessary. All these indicates the forces behind the research mission. Social Policy Report by Aletha Huston 2005, and 2008 SRCD Presidential Address, calls for more applicable research. There is always need to move transform from research findings to applicability and practice or to policy oriented. These approaches seems to be one-way street, while neglecting the need to move an understanding important of policy to research which is applicable. Existing approaches focus on practice more than policy, which is producer-push models (Nutley, *et al.*, 2007). The logistic underlying these approaches is that researchers should produce advanced research, which makes it accessible and understandable, and can be applied by practitioners in their work.

1.1 Problem statement

Universities in the world have scaled up their regard for research from being a core function together with teaching to becoming dominant for university prestige (Musiige, 2014). The issue of research has enhanced a competitive environment for research where all students in the institutions in all disciplines are involved in substantive research for them to graduate. This trend has brought about a world of more supply than demand in research in that the immense research conducted by

universities is not fully utilized in informing policy decision in Kenya. Secondly, there is evidence of lack of proper collaborations between policy makers and researchers in that the academic justification in policy decision is not factored. Studies in the past have cited financial constraints as a major challenge towards research in Kenya, but recent studies have cited mass financial input, with focus on the use of university based research in influencing policy decision (Reich *et al.*, 2016; Vaidya, 2018). This is geared towards developing best practice in policy decision in line with the Academic pillar in the Vision 2030. The general objective of the study was on the establishing the effect of Research uptake on public policy development practice in Kenya.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Theoretical and empirical literature

Theory of change (TOC)

Theory of change (TOC) has increasing become applicable in research projects designing, plan for evaluating the impact on research undertakings. It draws an expected pathways and linkage between a project's undertakings and its intended impact, considering different contextual areas and factors which may influence change. This process encourages strategic planning for research impact from the beginning of the research cycle, and ongoing reflection and critical thinking about how change happens. TOC is appropriate in this research since it's based on the principle of the process through which companies plan, participates and evaluates their operations in order to achieve the desired direction. It elaborates the process how research findings can be uptake communicated and applied by different stakeholders in different contexts and countries or as a whole research process with an objective of maximizing its prospects and impact which is an objective of this study. This theory is applicable in this study since it explores the processes the research knowledge is being conducted and shared with the relevant stakeholders in policy formulations.

University research uptake by policy makers has been discussed based on available literatures. (Harris,2016). Highlighted the significant finding users of research findings as the initial key factor in research establishment. Research community makes it the basis of broad-based calls influencing the practice of policy without specifying the nature of decision-makers it's meant for. One way of research user's identification is through the decisions researchers seek to take and address, and then work backward towards the decision-makers and organizations staff who play key roles in decision making. This study was supported by (Head, 2016; Greenhalgh, *et al.*, 2016) they highlighted that most research update Government agencies, policymakers and frontline practitioners, however fail to consider mid-level stakeholders and organizations who are better positioned to draw on research to shape policy lines. Which includes state and local departments like the ministries county offices, independent commissions' regional offices, county governments and Legislature, that is parliament, senate and county assemblies.

Contemporary hindrances facing the research functions together with its environment runs from quality of research, equity in distribution of research resources, ownership, relevance, and international networking (Dar & Khan, 2015) a number of nations of varying size and the manner or priority in developing their knowledge base research and innovation through higher education, and how they commit resources necessary towards this objective. all regions in recent past have shared success stories of economic advancement as result this research and development,

characterized by Innovative policies in higher education, well as research in Science and Technology and Innovation (STI), which has improved and made high profile and necessary infrastructure in universities together with efforts to and attract, train and retain highly-skilled human capital (HC).
Currently many universities in the world have registered an increase of investment towards research and development in institutions of higher learning leading to establishment of formal bodies to facilitate an infrastructure appropriate for monitoring systems for research and knowledge which helps to organize national expertise in this field which has been replicated in Kenya (Johnson, *et al*.,2016; Kivati, 2017). This include: National commission for science and technology (NACOSTI), National research fund (NRF) and Commission for University Education With this developments in the field, the capacity of research production has been enormous. These entities have drawn clear guidelines on research but have failed to create policies guiding research uptake for informing policies in the country.

Newman and Head (2016) highlight various advantages of integration of policy users with research experts from the beginning of a programme. Professionals in Policy making body would be internalizing the study objectives, and therefore would be more eager to be a part of the programme. Furthermore, with stakeholder tools of mapping, the necessary assessment is conducted by stakeholders to find the effectiveness of this policy done. Likewise, initial engagement of the policy makers will warrant those officials to be morally obliged to support the project through participating in trainings, sharing opinions, dissemination events, policy briefs and forwarding of final reports thus making advocacy for policy easier for intervention. Regular collaboration with researchers and research uptake officials will guarantee different processes and reflections during the programme implementation would be well documented and shared with the variety of audiences hence therefore building interest about the programme. However, not most of the target policy consumers always welcome researchers to undertake research with them to underscore the research goals.

There are also weaknesses and reluctance in laying down proper mechanisms for sharing data (Majumder, *et al.,* 2016). Universities often fail to engage policy makers in the initial stages of research which creates a vacuum in the uptake process. Accessibility of data needs to be made to policy makers, in format not just understood by academics but also presented in conferences in academic exhibitions and competitions in Kenya, but demonstrating local resolutions in a manner that local stakeholders can understand. Research should not just be disseminated but the communication of data should also be tailored to the politics and context of the where academics are working.

3.0 Methodology

Current studies employed a descriptive research design to collect quantitative data employed to address a research problem. Descriptive research design refers to a body of techniques for collecting data and obtaining responses from individuals to a set of prepared questions Kothari (2006). The research design enabled this study to obtain information on how employee in-service training relates to service delivery in the public service.

The study targeted all heads of departments' research centers in each institution, and five lecturers from each institution. The target population was 60 respondents drawn from 5 selected universities in Kenya from which 11 lectures will be selected for the study and one head of research form each university will be included in the study. This formed a total population of 60 respondents.

Furthermore, this research study employed the use of structured questionnaires anchored on design nature of these research tools which presents each item with a set of choice answers and is also economical in terms of time and money (Andaleeb & Hasan, 2016). The rate of response desired was achieved by register record of administered questionnaires which was drop and pick which facilitates their tracking. The data was analyzed using SPSS software

Data was analyzed by making use of Pearson r to test the relationship between variables and the researcher made use of multiple linear regression to test to what extent each one of the predictor contributed to the outcome results from this analysis are presented in themes guided by the objectives of the current study. Information from the study was summarized by employing frequencies and percentages. The analysis was explained using the following multi-regression model

3.1 Model Summary

$Y = \alpha + \beta_0 R + \beta_1 C + \beta_2 U + e$ Where E-Error of precision, $\beta_0 \beta_1 \beta_2 S$ Coefficients of independent variables where Y- public policy development R- Sharing Research knowledge, C-Capacity of research institution U-Uptake rate

Quantitative data collected from the respondents was cleaned and coded according to various variables and organized for computer analysis using SPSS. Analysis of quantitative data included running of descriptive statistics such as mean, frequencies and percentages and presented using tables, pie charts and bar graphs. Regression was also conducted to check the relations as well as one way ANOVA. Qualitative data derived from open-ended questions and interviews was cleaned, coded to generate categories and themes basing on the research questions.

4.0 Findings

1. Organizational Demographical Profiles

A. Gender Distribution

The study ensured a fair and balance of gender participation. Table 1 indicates that majority were male represented by 68.3% while female were 31.7%.

Table 1 Gender Distribution

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	41	68.3	68.3	68.3
	Female	19	31.7	31.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author computations (2019)

B. Age Distribution

The study also establish the age of the respondents, table 2 indicates that the results most of the respondents were between age of 30-39 representing 28.3% of the total respondents, while the age between 20-29 was the least representing 23.3%, 40-49 were 26.7% and above 50 were 26.7%.

Table 2 Age Distribution

Age bracket					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-29 years	14	23.3	23.3	23.3
	30-39 years	17	28.3	28.3	51.7
	40-49 years	13	21.7	21.7	73.3
	50 and above years	16	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: the author (2019)

C. Level of education distribution

The study also established the distributions of level of education. Table 3 indicate the education levels of the respondents of which the majority represented by 56% were have a doctoral degree, while postdoctoral degree were 28% of the total respondents and the least were master's degree holders comprising of 16%. This implies that most of the respondents were holding a doctoral degree.

Table 3: Level of Education of the Respondents

Highest educational level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Master's Degree	15	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Doctoral Degree	32	53.3	53.3	78.3
	Post-doctoral Degree	13	21.7	21.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: the author (2019)

D. Department of work distribution

In establishing the distribution according to department, table 4 indicates that distributions was almost equal apart from Faculty of arts and social sciences with highest distribution of 18.3% followed by Faculty of pure and applied science department with 13.3 %, Faculty of commerce and Office of the Registrar Research and Extension were both represented by 11.7% .

Table 4: The department the respondent serves

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Faculty of education	5	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Faculty of arts and social sciences	11	18.3	18.3	26.7
	Faculty of commerce	7	11.7	11.7	38.3
	Faculty of law	5	8.3	8.3	46.7
	Faculty of pure and applied science	8	13.3	13.3	60.0
	Faculty of agriculture	4	6.7	6.7	66.7
	School of medicine	5	8.3	8.3	75.0
	Faculty of information, science and technology	5	8.3	8.3	83.3
	Office of the Registrar Research and Extension	7	11.7	11.7	95.0
	Office of the Registrar Academic Affairs	3	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author computations (2019)

2. Descriptive Analysis

A. University share research knowledge with stakeholder and share knowledge.

Table 5 Descriptive in research knowledge sharing

Crosstab

			University sharing research knowledge with stakeholder and share knowledge					Total
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Public policy development	Strongly agree	Count	2	17	4	1	0	24
	Agree	Count	2	7	2	1	2	14
	Neutral	Count	3	11	1	0	0	15
	Disagree	Count	0	2	1	2	0	5
	Strongly disagree	Count	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total		Count	7	38	8	5	2	60

B. Descriptive Analysis on university has capacity conducting research.

Table 6: Respondents' Opinion on Descriptive Analysis capacity conducting research

Crosstab

			Descriptive Analysis university has capacity conducting research					Total
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Public policy development	Strongly agree	Count	4	14	3	2	1	24
	Agree	Count	2	6	3	3	0	14
	Neutral	Count	2	9	2	1	1	15
	Disagree	Count	0	3	0	2	0	5
	Strongly disagree	Count	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total		Count	8	34	8	8	2	60

C. Descriptive Analysis on uptake of university and stake holders on research findings.

Table 7: Respondents' Uptake University and stakeholder's engagement

Crosstab

			uptake of university and stake holders on research findings					Total
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Public policy development	Strongly agree	Count	5	11	5	2	1	24
	Agree	Count	7	1	2	3	1	14
	Neutral	Count	4	2	4	3	2	15
	Disagree	Count	2	1	2	0	0	5
	Strongly disagree	Count	1	0	1	0	0	2
Total		Count	19	15	14	8	4	60

3. Regression Analysis

The following Hypothesis were tested

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between Research knowledge sharing and public policy practice

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between capacity in engagement with stakeholder and public policy practices

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between Research knowledge uptake and public policy practices

$\boldsymbol{Y = \alpha + \beta_0 R + \beta_1 C + \beta_2 U + e}$ was subjected to testing using linear regression to establish whether Research knowledge sharing, capacity in engagement with stake holders and research knowledge uptake were best predictors for public policy practices.

In this study, Y was the dependent variable (public policy practices), β0 was the constant and β1 was the coefficient of the independent variable and ε was the error term. Table 8 presents the regression model on knowledge sharing, capacity in engagement with stakeholders and research uptake versus public policy development results. As presented in the table 6, the coefficient of determination that is R square is 0.252 while R is 0.229[a] at 0.05 significance level. Thus the coefficient of determination which is 20.02 percent of the variation on knowledge sharing, capacity in engagement with stakeholders and research uptake influenced public policy development. This implies that there exists a positive significant relationship between knowledge sharing, capacity in engagement with stakeholders and research uptake on public policy development.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.229[a]	.252	.2002	23.74595

ANOVA

The Analysis of variance (ANOVA) results indicated in table 9 also confirms fitness and appropriateness of the model to the study for this data. Further p -value of 0.000 the value less than 0.05 confirms so as well. Implying there is positive significant relationship between knowledge sharing, capacity in engagement with stakeholders and research uptake and public policy uptake.

Table 9: Anova

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1746.614	3	58.205	10.33	.002[b]
	Residual	3156.720	56	56.870		
	Total	336.333	59			

Further, coefficient results indicates that research knowledge sharing, and research knowledge uptake have positive and significant effects on public policy development as shown in table 10. However, capacity in engagement with stakeholders indicated a negative significant effect on the public policy development. The fitted model Y= 0.3214+1.646β_1-2.962β_2+1.555β_3. Implies that a unit change in research knowledge sharing will increase public policy development by the rate of 1.646 while that of research knowledge uptake will increase public policy development by 1.555. From the results the effect of capacity to share knowledge indicated a negative result of -2.962. This further implies that even if the three function are not in place still public policy development indicated a positive value of 0.3214.

Table 10: Coefficient of Determination

Co-efficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.3214	6.258		5.137	.000
	Research knowledge sharing	1.646	1.828	.118	.900	.372
	capacity in engagement with stakeholders	-2.962	2.402	-.161	-1.233	.223
	research uptake	1.555	1.973	.103	.788	.434

a. Dependent Variable: Questionnaire number

In significance and associations found between the independent variables that is research knowledge uptake, capacity in engagement with stakeholders and research knowledge uptake and dependent variable that's is public policy development in relation to tested samples the following conclusion can be made; the hypothesis, "There is no significant relationship between research knowledge sharing and public policy practice" was rejected and alternative hypothesis "the is a significant relationship between research knowledge sharing and public policy practice" was accepted also on the hypothesis that "There is no significant relationship between capacity of engagement with stakeholder and public policy practices" was accepted and the hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between research uptake and public policy practices" was rejected

and thus accepted the hypothesis that "There is significant relationship between research knowledge uptake and public policy practices" this results collaborates with the results by

5.0 Discussion

From regression analysis, R-squared was found to be 0.252 indication that 25.2% variation in research knowledge sharing, capacity of engaging with stake holders and uptake was explained by public policy uptake. This implies that predictors which are Research knowledge sharing, capacity of engaging with stake holders and research uptake explained 25.2 percent of the total variations in the public policy development in public institution in Kenya. This findings agrees with those of (Newman, *et al* 2017, Clark, *et al* 2016) which reported positive and significant association between research knowledge sharing, capacity of engaging with stake holders and uptake was explained by public policy development.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study sought to establish the effect of Research knowledge sharing, capacity of engaging with stake holders and the level of research uptake on public policy development. The research was founded by the theory of change. The study used a Descriptive research design and targeted 5 public universities in Kenya. Public policy development formed the unit of analysis. The study findings established a positive significant relationship between Research knowledge sharing, capacity of engaging with stake holders and the rate of research uptake on public policy development. The study recommended that there should be an improved system of sharing of research knowledge, increase the capacity in conducting the research and also ensure proper research knowledge uptake by all stake holders in the public sector. There is also need to improve partnership between research institutions and public policy developers in their operations in order to utilize the research findings from research institutions for policy adoption.

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