

## Abstract

The study evaluated the relationship between public participation and performance of chartered public Universities in Kenya. The study was anchored on social network theory. To achieve the objective, the study was based on a pragmatic philosophy and mixed research method with a target population of 31 chartered public Universities. Census approach was used with 234 respondents who were university top managers. Primary data was collected using a 5 point Likert type questionnaire. The instrument was validated by research experts and yielded a Cronbach's reliability alpha of  $\alpha = 0.806$ . Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that public participation had statistical significant influence on performance of chartered public universities in Kenya. Regression analysis results showed that public participation alone accounted for 24.9 % of the variation of performance of chartered public Universities (PP) ( $R^2 = 0.249$ ,  $t = 14.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This study concluded that public participation is an essential strategy Universities can use in their endeavour to improve on their performance. It was recommended that managers of universities should promote participatory management practice to enhance high morale, commitment and enthusiasm among staff in the pursuit and attainment of institutional goals and objectives. Further, the results present important implications to University top managers, other corporate entities, policy makers, and stakeholders in the University education sector in Kenya and across the world.