Research competence among academics at a private higher education institution in South Africa

Eugene Lee Davids
Varsity College, Independent Institute of Education, Cape Town, South Africa, email address: edavids@varsitycollege.co.za

Abstract: The divide between private and public higher education in South Africa has shed light on the unknown contributions of private higher education institutions to national research production. Many private higher education institutions are changing toward becoming research-intensive to meet the demands and contributions toward knowledge generation and dissemination. The shift toward becoming research-intensive means the role of academic staff is rapidly evolving. The current study aimed to determine how academic staff at a private higher education institution in South Africa identified their competence as researchers, particularly due to the changing landscape from a teaching and learning-intensive to a research-intensive institution. Using a survey design, the study included 124 academic staff at a private higher education institution. The results suggest that most academic staff identified their research competence as being emerging researchers (71.77%). Furthermore, when examining the factors academic staff provide as reasons for their research competence, being motivated by students and classroom-based activities, yearning to belong and being part of a research culture as well as research competency booster emerged as relevant factors. The results provide an initial opportunity for reflection and outlines recommendations for practice that could assist private and public higher education institutions in the change toward a research-intensive institution.

Keywords: Academia, higher education, private higher education, research, research competence.

https://doi.org/10.24193/JRHE.2022.1.2

Introduction

The South African Higher Education landscape is faced with many challenges. One of these challenges has been the low research output among academics (Council of Higher Education, 2016, 9). The higher education landscape in South Africa sees a scarcity of research examining private higher education. Tankou epse Nukunah, Bezuidenhout and Furtak (2019) have alluded to the critical need for research examining the contributions of private higher education in South Africa. Addressing the research gap which exists between private and public higher education both in South Africa and abroad would provide valuable lessons which would promote the harmonious goal of higher education i.e., to develop skills, foster knowledge and critical thinking as well as advance lives.

The demand for higher education has increased globally. More and more students leaving the schooling system are seeking opportunities by pursuing higher education. The increase in the number of students entering higher education places a strain on many public higher education institutions. Globally, this has seen an increase in the provision of private higher education. The introduction of private higher education provides the opportunity for increased competition within the education sector and leads to an increase in programme quality, which provides students with higher education that is timeous to the global market and workforce demands. However, the increase in the demand and availability of private higher education has also brought about concerns around the quality of education, government and regulatory body concerns, equity in the access to education in low-income settings as well as funding in higher education – particularly for research and research output (Teixeira et al., 2017).

The divide between private and public higher education in South Africa brought into spotlight the research contributions and productions of private higher education institutions when the Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2009: 48) outlined that 'private higher education institutions contribute little to the national research production'. In 2009, it was estimated that only two private higher education institutions in South Africa were paving the way for knowledge generation, research production and dissemination

(Deacon, van Vuuren & Augustyn, 2014). Research, research culture and research production in private higher education is considered a sector which is not fully understood – which could emerge as a dark horse to the production of research and knowledge dissemination in the country. Deacon and colleagues (2014) highlight that little is known about research in private higher education in South Africa. Understanding the landscape of research in private higher education could provide outcomes for South Africa as a country but also for the broader higher education sector.

Through an examination of research in the South African higher education landscape, it is evident that there is mounting pressure for engagement in research activity and generation to act as a vehicle toward knowledge generation and dissemination (Rath, 2009; Hay, 2000; Coetzee, 2019). The drive toward knowledge generation and dissemination would bring about locally relevant, timeous, and innovative perspectives toward evidence-informed decision-making. For many teaching-led institutions in South Africa, little focus has been on being a research-intensive institution. The need for evidence-informed decision-making, as well as knowledge generation and dissemination, has meant that many higher education institutions are in the process of changing gears. The change is focused on moving from a teaching and learning intensive institution toward a research-intensive one. These developments and changes are more evident in private higher education institutions, where little is known about research, research culture and dissemination. Understanding research development is largely neglected in both private and public higher education institutions alike (Akerlind, 2008). The changing of gears in private higher education, specifically, means that staff roles are rapidly evolving where considerations for capacity, skill, resources, and accountability are evident. De Jager et al. (2017) and Coetzee (2019) have alluded to the many challenges associated with the developmental change. However, central to the change are academic staff and their role. The current study attempts to provide an initial perspective to understand the change seen in private higher education institutions and the dearth which exists in studies examining research development. The aim of the study was to determine how academic staff at a private higher education institution in South Africa identify their competence as researchers, particularly due to the changing

landscape from a teaching and learning-intensive to a research-intensive institution. The study, furthermore, reflects on the factors academic staff provide as the reasons for their research competence. Since research is synonymous with the higher education landscape, and private higher education in South Africa remains an unknown counterpart, competitor and contributor to knowledge generation and dissemination, the current study becomes a pilot to spark critical discussion and reflection.

Methodology

Design

The study employed an online survey design to determine how academic staff at a private higher education institution in South Africa would identify their competence as researchers using descriptive statistics and the factors academic staff provided as the reasons for their research competence.

Recruitment and participants

Participants were academic staff from a private higher education institution in South Africa. All academic staff were sent an electronic invitation to the online survey, informing them about the nature of the study and the type of questions that would be asked. The electronic invitation contained a link that directed participants to a secure online platform where the data were collected.

The final sample included 124 participants, representing 72.94% of the total sample of 170 academic staff at the private higher education institution. The sample of 124 participants were made up of academic staff who largely worked within the higher education sector for more than 5 years (59.70%), with the least amount of experience being less than 1 year (1.49%; see Figure 1).

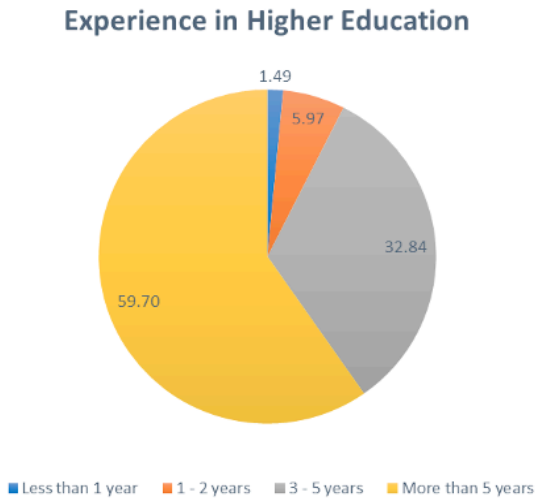

Figure 1. Participant experience working in higher education

Data generation

When participants agreed to participating freely and voluntarily, they were presented with the online survey. The online survey consisted of three sections, namely (i) a brief demographic section (asking about province and years of experience working in higher education), (ii) research competency section (where participants had to select one of the identifying categories from the research competency section that best described them), and (iii) a reflective question section (asking participants about the factors that shaped their research competence). The data generation method employed in the current study was adapted from a previously published study by Davids et al (2019).

Data analysis

The secure, online survey was used to collect the data. Using Microsoft Excel, the quantitative data were analysed for descriptive statistics (namely, frequencies and percentages). The qualitative data were analysed using manual coding informed by the steps of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Ethical considerations

The study received ethical approval from the Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Ethics Committee (Reference R.15529). To ensure that the ethical principles and standards were upheld, in the study, the following ethical considerations were employed: Participation was voluntary while electronic, written, informed consent was provided before partaking in the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout, by not collecting any identifiable data as well as disabling cookies and IP (Internet Protocol) address collectors so that participants could not be tracked while the data was being collected online. Furthermore, the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, justice, and non-maleficence were maintained throughout the study.

Results

Participants were asked to identify their research competence using five pre-defined categories (see Table 1 for category definitions). The results suggest that participants selected advanced beginner researcher (35.48%; n= 44) as the most prevalent research competency category, followed by novice researcher (29.03%; n= 36), while the least prevalent research categories were non-researcher (7.26%; n= 9) and expert researcher (7.26%; n= 9; see Figure 2).

Table 1. Research competence categories

Research competence category	Definition
Expert researcher	*Engaged in research, published and wanting to advance their research trajectory.*
Intermediate or Competent Researcher	*Engaged in a research project but need to nurture and develop skills.*
Advanced Beginner Researcher	*Some research experience, and wanting to collaborate and learn more.*
Novice Researcher	*No research experience, but excited to learn.*

Research competence category	Definition
Non-Researcher	*No interest in research, but pioneering and making a difference in the teaching and learning space.*

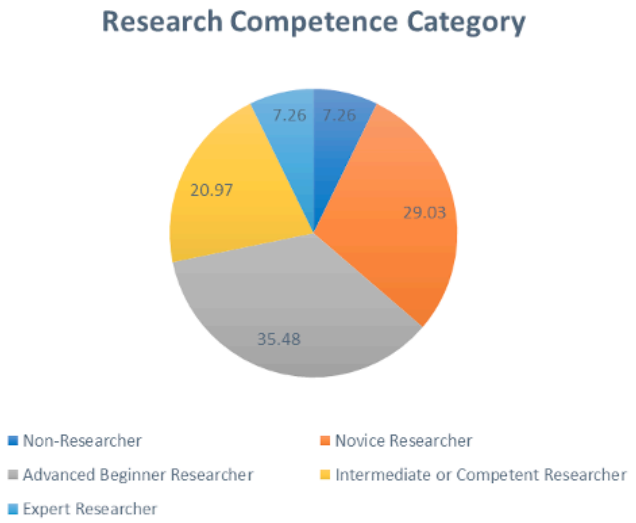

Figure 2. Participant research competence categories

When examining the descriptive statistics, the results suggest that a large proportion of the academic staff at the private higher education institution fell into one of the categories which represents emerging researchers (71.77%; namely, constituting advanced beginner researcher = 35.48%; novice researcher = 29.03%; and non-researcher =7.26%). Since little is known about research development and dissemination among private higher education institutions in South Africa, the study aimed to understand the factors which shaped the reasons for academic staff's research competence. These factors, which were deemed the reasons for academic staff's identified research competence, were themed to provide a rich description and understanding of the factors academic staff provided as the reasons for their research competence among the emerging researchers at the private higher education institution in South Africa.

Theme 1: Motivated by students and classroom-based activities: Focussing on teaching and learning

When engaging with participants who identified as being a non-researcher it was found that these participants placed more of their time and energy into teaching and learning which is common in many private higher education institutions in South Africa; the theme which emerged was motivated by students and classroom-based activities. The theme of being motivated by students and classroom-based activities among the academic staff who identified as being non-researchers provided a deeper understanding when three of the participants expressed the following:

> "I love learning through teaching and learning, I believe always in the practical aspects of life." (Participant A, 3-5 years' experience in higher education)

> "Was a toss-up between non-researcher and novice research, I have done research before as part of my MBA so would be wrong to say "no research experience" that said I did my MBA more than 10 years ago. I do see myself as a teaching and learning hero and honestly believe I add value to my students and my [research methods course name] backs that. After all of this I'm not opposed to learning and venturing out into the research realm." (Participant B, 5+ years' experience in higher education)

> "A lot of time spent on development of assessment and review of assessments" (Participant C, 5+ years' experience in higher education)

Theme 2: Yearning to belong and being part of a research culture: Novice and Advanced beginner researchers

When trying to understand the factors which led to academic staff identifying as being novice or advanced beginner researchers it became clear that the factors that informed their research competence were hampered as a result of research output and development as well as motivation and yearning to belong in a research setting and culture.

The rich descriptions were themed together as yearning to belong and being part of a research culture.

The following were cited as factors that have hampered academic staff members' research development through the changing of gears process:

> "I have never been engaged in research due to time constraints and workload." (Participant F, 5+ years' experience in higher education)

> "I did my masters three years ago and I am feeling a bit rusty" (Participant J, 3-5 years' experience in higher education)

However, even though the academic staff identified themselves as being novice or advanced beginner, they were excited about the research journey and collaborating with other academics to nurture and develop their skills. These feelings were expressed by the following participants which were central to belonging and embracing a research culture:

> "I do not have research experience but I am willing to learn and produce research in the future" (Participant E, >1 year experience in higher education)

> "[I] never conducted research before except for my qualification. However, I would like to collaborate." (Participant D, 3-5 years' experience in higher education)

> "Completed a short dissertation at honours level - using secondary data. Currently registered for a M.A. in Psychology full research dissertation. Therefore, I have a lot to learn." (Participant G, 3-5 years' experience in higher education)

> "I have a bit of experience with research. However, I do not have published work. There is great room for improvement and development." (Participant H, 5+ years' experience in higher education)

> "I am currently completing my masters degree and surely learning new aspects of research each day but more than willing to engage

> more with academics to learn much more" (Participant K, 3-5 years' experience in higher education)
>
> "[I] plan on producing an article. I would like to collaborate more with fellow researchers" (Participant M, 3-5 years' experience in higher education)

Theme 3: Research competency booster

Among most of the emerging researchers, it became clear that in the private higher education institution they felt the need to have their confidence boosted or rather that their research competency needed to be boosted when it came to research skills and their application. The following reflections by participants have displayed the need for research competency to be improved:

> "I do have a masters degree, I've written an article before but because I don't do research on a regular basis I am not absolutely confident in it." (Participant I, 3-5 years' experience in higher education)
>
> "Have complete my Masters but this was in 2012. I have not engaged in much research since then, so feel "out-of-date"." (Participant J, 5+ years' experience in higher education)
>
> "With more opportunities to do research, I will be an expert" (Participant L, 3-5 years' experience in higher education)

Discussion

Deacon, van Vuuren and Augustyn (2014) examined research among private higher education institutions both in South Africa and internationally. They found that less research emanates from private higher education institutions, than what is seen among public institutions. The divide between the number of research output could reflect the research culture as well as competencies of academic staff in private higher education institutions. The results in the current study suggest that a large proportion of academic staff at the private higher education institution identified their research competency at the level of emerging researcher. Given that many emerging researchers

highlight research capacity building as a need (de Luca, Tuchin, & Bonello, 2015), understanding the factors which act as the motivational drivers and challenges for the development and retention of emerging researchers becomes more evident (de Luca, Tuchin, & Bonello, 2015). The themes which emerged in the study provide an understanding of the motivational factors and challenges that emerging researchers at a private higher education institution in South Africa experience.

On the African continent, the increase in private higher education has seen many challenges. These challenges include the absence of research production and dissemination (Jegede, 2012). Research production and dissemination is an activity synonymous with higher education (Jegede, 2012; Subotzky, 2003). Therefore, it is not surprising that a considerable part of the academic staff at the private higher education institution in the current study identified their research competency as fitting into the broad category of being an emerging researcher. Research in private higher education, particularly in South Africa and the African continent is a relatively new strategic focus area. With that being said, it is not to say that research has not been, and is not being conducted at private higher education institutions. In South Africa, only a third of all private higher education institutions were engaged in research production and dissemination (Deacon, van Vuuren & Augustyn, 2014). The volume and intensity of research production and dissemination is hampered by insufficient research funding and subsidies, limited to no postgraduate courses to generate research outputs, as well as academic staff having limited engagement with research (Davids & Waghid, 2019; Stander & Herman, 2017).

The limitations which are seen in private higher education when it comes to research is further perpetuated by the research capacity of academic staff, largely categorised as emerging researchers (either novice or advance beginner researchers), who still need support to nurture and develop their own research skills. The research competencies of academic staff at private higher education institutions as being emerging researchers means that there is little capacity or leadership for the management and promotion of research production and dissemination (Stander & Herman, 2017). What this means is that fostering a research culture for emerging researchers is essential in order to develop the next generation of researchers who could act as mentors for newer researchers or academics entering private higher

education. Through the promotion of the initial academic staff to move from emerging researchers to competent or advanced researchers would create the academic leaders who would pioneer research development and dissemination within private higher education institutions. Evidence of this is seen in the emerging themes in the current study, where academic staff have outlined their motivation toward becoming more competent to catapult their research trajectory as one participant stated: "[w]ith more opportunities to do research, I will be an expert." This suggests the willingness of academic staff who consider themselves as emerging researchers who would like to nurture and develop their skills to become more competent in their research capabilities. The eagerness can be seen when participants have eloquently outlined that they are "willing to learn and produce research in the future" and "...willing to engage more with academics to learn much more," which speaks to academic staff's willingness to changing the gears.

The change, particularly among private higher education institutions requires a systemic mechanism that would see the emerging academics and researchers nurture and develop their skills to respond to competing demands of the higher education system and the scientific community through the development of research, research culture and knowledge dissemination which is timeous. The public higher education sector saw the development and implementation of the New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) as a vehicle to drive and support early-career academics in the Staffing South African's University Framework of the Department of Higher Education and Training (Hlengwa, 2019). Many new academic or emerging researchers experience similar challenges, as outlined within the themes of the current study. The challenges or needs of emerging researchers include: balancing "time constraints and workload"; "willing[ness] to engage more with academics to learn"; "to collaborate more with fellow researchers"; "not engaged in much research ... so feel "out-of-date". These challenges are similar for emerging academics who are entering public higher education institutions and are further supported through government funding initiatives and grants, such as the nGAP programme. The shift that often is required, in addition to skill development, is from teaching and learning-intensive institution toward a research-intensive one. A wealth of programmes exist and

have been examined within the literature focusing on supporting the transition of emerging academics and researchers within public higher education institutions (Teferra, 2016; Reddy et al., 2016; Hlengwa, 2019), yet a scarcity exists for private higher education institutions who face unique challenges in the promotion of research development and dissemination.

The nGAP programme, which exists within public higher education institutions, sees the first four years of the programme developing a culture of research within the academic staff member's department. The first three years of the programme see 80% of the time dedicated toward research, while the fourth year has a 50%-time dedication toward research. Academic staff found the dedicated research time as being important in developing a culture of research and developing research skills as outlined in Hlengwa's (2019) study. The dedicated focus toward research might be able to help academic staff within the private higher education space to accelerate and promote research, research culture and dissemination. The dedicated focus could be one way in which the 'changing of gears' and the shift toward becoming research-intensive and the promotion of research competence among academic staff might help within private higher education institutions. However, even though this promotion toward research is a way of addressing the 'unknown' as alluded to by the CHE, it should not be forgotten that part of an academic career is finding the balance between teaching and learning, community engagement and research. The question which remains, however, is the following: How are private higher education institutions in South Africa, as well as rural universities who are dealing with similar challenges related to the shift from a teaching and learning institution to one that is research-intensive, able to make the change of gears? It could be recommended that the changing of gears from a teaching and learning institution to a research-intensive institution as well as nurturing research competence could be achieved using a milieu of programmes and interventions using an adapted ecological model as initially outlined by Davids et al. (2019; see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Adapted ecological model to develop emerging researchers in private higher education institutions

The adapted ecological model outlines potential programme or intervention foci for various levels within private higher education institutions that would assist in attending to the needs of emerging researchers which promotes their development. The first level in the ecological model focuses on the intrapersonal level, which is concerned with providing initial support for academic staff within the private higher education institution who currently are involved in driving research development and dissemination within the institution. It is at this level where the support shown could be through establishing the needs of academics who are already driving the research agenda and to address their individual needs as pioneers of research. The second level in the ecological model focuses on the interpersonal level, it is here where academic staff at the private higher education institution examine their current roles and responsibilities and establish where research could be added as a component to enhance their daily operations which are aligned with the research agenda and priorities of the institution. The intervention at this level sees personal ownership taken by the academic staff to incorporate research into their practice. One example which has been seen in a private higher education

institution was the provision of 10% of work time set out to nurture and develop academic staff's research skills and outputs as the initial step toward driving research and research competence in the private higher education institution. The third level in the model focuses on the institutional or organisational level, it is at this level that private higher education institutions could learn from and adapt a model very similar to the nGAP programme. The adapted programme should address the needs of academic staff and/or those who identify as emerging researchers, and by doing so, the programme could act as a vehicle to address their needs and promote research development and dissemination. In the current study, the findings suggest that the needs of the emerging researchers within the private higher education institution that needed to be addressed were:

- Dedicating time for research;
- Balancing teaching and learning responsibilities together with research dissemination;
- More opportunities to learn, develop and advance research skillset;
- Providing opportunities to academic staff to work collaboratively on research projects;
- Ensuring mentoring programmes and support initiatives which are targeted at all researchers at various levels of their trajectory to aid their development toward becoming more competent and confident researchers;
- Promoting opportunities to do and engage in research in all areas of the operations of the private higher education institution;
- Making coaching opportunities available to help with the confidence and skill development of all researchers regardless of their level of competency.

The fourth level of the adapted model outlines the community context. The community context, which is referred to here, could be the individual academic departments, faculties, or the overall private higher education institutional environment. After the needs have been established at the third level of the model, it is here where attention is given to the needs of the academic staff to drive their research, research

culture and dissemination. Driving research development and dissemination becomes possible at this level of the model when the needs outlined in the third level are being addressed on a micro level within the institution. Here tailor-made interventions to tend to the needs of the department, faculty or the institution overall are provided. Starting from the needs of academic staff as identified in the current study, the following programmes or interventions could be provided at the micro-level in the community context (see Table 2):

Table 2. Community context programmes/interventions in private higher education institutions to drive research, research culture and dissemination

Identified need	**Potential programme/intervention**
Dedicating time to research	• Department, faculty or institution writing retreats. • Dedicate research / writing days for academic staff. • Research leave to make provision for dedicated, uninterrupted research time.
Balancing teaching and learning responsibilities together with research dissemination	• Buy-out teaching and learning time, so that more time is freed up for reserach-related activities. • Reduce the teaching and learning load of emerging researchers who want to drive research, research culture and dissemination.
More opportunities to learn, develop and advance research skillset	• Have institution-wide research training initiatives that target both beginner, advanced beginner and novice researchers to develop their research skill set.

Identified need	**Potential programme/intervention**
	• Establish an academic journal club that promotes critical thinking, intellectual discussion and debate as well as fostering a culture of research.
Providing opportunities to academic staff to work collaboratively on research projects	• Develop research groups among emerging researchers, so that they learn to work as part of a team but also where collaborative learning and support happens. • Thematically developed research groups for emerging academics to work together on a similar topic or research focus.
Ensuring mentoring programmes and support initiatives which is tageted to all researchers at various levels of their trajectory to aid their development toward becoming come competent and confident researchers.	• Promoting mentoring initiatives where more senior researchers within the institution mentor and support the research trajectory and development of more novice researchers within the institution.
Promoting opportunities to do and engage in research in all areas of the operations of the private higher education institution.	• Get staff to develop research ideas based on the work they are currently engaged in. Using the tasks that academic staff are engaged in would support and promote evidence-based decision-making. Academic staff could make use of research projects to better

Identified need	Potential programme/intervention
	understand their daily operations and use the findings to promote and inform improvements which are backed by evidence.
Making coaching opportunities available to help with the confidence and skill development of all researchers regardless of their level of competency.	• Providing peer supportive, non-threatening environments where emerging researchers and academic staff can share their experiences related to developing research, building a research culture and working on research dissemination with a senior researcher who takes on the role of coach and helps with the development of skills, promoting competency but also affording a community of practice within the institution.

The fifth level of the adapted model examines policies and macro-environmental changes. The fifth level takes into consideration the information gathered on both the third level of the model, where the needs of researchers are established within the organisation and where micro level programmes or interventions are implemented on a macro level within the departments or faculties. It is at this level that the needs and overarching agenda as well as the priorities of the organisation are taken into consideration. It is at this level that the change to promote and drive research development and dissemination within private higher education institutions are put into place through the development and implementation of policy changes and recommendations. Private higher education institutions can at this stage learn valuable lessons from change management when looking to drive the changing gears of research in private higher education institutions. One model, which could inform the changing of gears to

develop research, research culture, and dissemination among private higher education institutions using the institutions in the current study as an example and the findings of the present study, would be Kotter's (1996) model of change. Kotter's model provides 8 steps that are important for organisational change. One way in which private higher education institutions could bring about the changing of gears is through policy and environmental change.

The 8 steps are outlined below (Cameron & Green, 2009; Kotter, 1996) with some examples of what could take place at each of these steps toward changing the gears among private higher education in the promotion of research, research culture and dissemination:

The first step is focused on determining the sense of urgency for which the change toward becoming research-intensive and promoting research competence is needed. Thus, one of the key tasks that should happen during the change from a teaching and learning only institution to one that also prioritises research should be to help academic staff understand and see the need for the shift. The reason for the shift can be multidimensional with one such dimension being the contribution toward the national research production of private higher education institutions. After a sense of urgency for the change has been established, the next step aims to establish a guiding coalition group that will drive and influence change (Cameron & Green, 2009). It is in this step that a group is recruited to assist with influencing and leading the change that is needed. In the example of the private higher education institution, this step could involve the recruitment of senior researchers to drive academic staff's research skill development and changing the perspectives of the staff to understand the value and importance of research, research culture and dissemination within the higher education setting. The third step in the change management model that would apply to driving research, research culture and dissemination in private higher education institutions would be to clearly outline the vision of the changing of gears toward a research-intensive institution as well as the strategy that will be put in place to assist in the drive and transition (Kotter, 1996). Helping academic and support staff to become aware of both the vision and strategy would ensure that all staff are aware of where the institution is going with the change and what the change would look like in detailed steps. The step which follows is focused on ensuring that the entire organisation

understands and knows the change in the vision and strategy. The step thereafter is about promoting members within the organisation to act on the vision. A possible implementation strategy for the private higher education institution could be to round up a group of enthusiastic academic staff who would assist in changing the research efforts related to the change as well as to explore how to achieve the overall goal of the transition with the enthusiastic academics. The sixth stage in the model makes provision for a platform and vehicle to celebrate the short-term wins that the institution makes toward achieving the changing of gears (Cameron & Green, 2009). It is here where recognition is given to the small wins and an evaluation of how far the staff within the institution have come since the initial step is undertaken. The next step in the model is focused on creating the momentum for change by adding on to programmes and implementation plans which were successful and continue to develop and celebrate the change. The eighth and final stage of the model is about assisting in linking the organisation before, during and after the successful change to see why the change was worthwhile (Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo & Shafiq, 2012).

Limitations

Even though the current study provides initial reflections for private higher education in the change toward becoming research-intensive and the promotion of research competence among academics, a few limitations exist. One of the limitations in the current study can be attributed to the study sample that only includes one private higher education institution. The study provides an initial exploration of the landscape of the change from teaching and learning to research-intensive private higher education institutions as well as developing researcher competence. Furthermore, the research competencies that academic staff used to identify their competence were pre-defined, and a qualitative examination of research competence might be valuable for future research.

Conclusions

The study makes an initial theoretical and practical contribution. The theoretical contribution relates to current debates and sheds light

on the 'unknown' research activities and contributions of private higher education institutions. Furthermore, the practical contributions aim to provide programmes or interventions that may assist predominantly teaching and learning private higher education institutions toward the change of becoming research-intensive that would address academic staff's research competence, retention, skill development, and progress within the institutions to promote research development and dissemination which would add to the overall evidence-based decision-making and research production for a knowledge-based economy.

References

Akerlind, G.S. (2008). Growing and developing as a university researcher. *Higher Education*, 55, 241-254.

Appelbaum, S.H., Habashy, S., Malo, J-.L., & Shafiq, H. (2012). Back to the future: Revisiting Kotter's 1996 change model. *Journal of Management Development*, 31(8), 764-782.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Cameron, E., & Green, M. (2009). *Making sense of change management: A complete guide to the models, tools and techniques of organisational change* (2nd Ed). London: Kogan Page.

Coetzee, L.S. (2019). *A framework for enhancing the research culture within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State*. University of Free State: Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Online:https://scholar.ufs.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11660/9959/CoetzeeLS.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1 [Accessed on 19 January 2022].

Council on Higher Education. (2016). *South African Higher Education Reviewed: Two decades of democracy*. Accessed: January 2022. Online:https://che.absol.co.za/media_and_publications/monitoring-and-evaluation/south-african-higher-education-reviewed-two-decad-0

Council on Higher Education. (2009). *The State of Higher Education in South Africa*. Higher Education Monitor No. 8, October. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Davids, E.L., Adams Tucker, L., Wambua, G.N., Fewster, D.L., Schlebusch, L., Karrim, S.B.S., Attia, M., Nyoni, J., Bayouh, F.G., Kuteesa, H., Brahim, T., Hoogenhout, M., Ben Moussa Kahloul, R., Graham-Jearey, N., Gobie, H.B., & Nalugya, J.S. (2019). Child and adolescent mental health in Africa: A qualitative analysis of the perspectives of emerging mental health clinicians and researchers using an online platform. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 31:2, 93-107. DOI: 10.2989/17280583.2019.1659145.

Davids, N., & Waghid, Y. (2019). On the polemic of private higher education in South Africa: Accentuating criticality as a public good. *Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education*, 1(3), 75-93. DOI: 10.3726/ptihe.2019.03.05.

De Jager, P., Frick, L., & Van der Spuy, P. (2017). Developments in the production of economics PhDs at four research intensive universities in South Africa. *South African Journal of Science*. 11393:4, 1-9.

De Luca, K., Tuchin, P., & Bonello, R. (2015). A web-based survey of the motivations and challenges faced by emerging researchers in the chiropractic profession. *Journal of Chiropractic Education*, 29(2), 151-158.

Deacon, R., van Vuuren, R., & Augustyn, D. (2014). Research at private higher education institutions in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, 32(3), 5-21.

Hay, D. (2000). Quality research in South African higher education: Illusions, imperatives and ideals. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 14(1), 53-61.

Hlengwa, A. (2019). How are institutions developing the next generation of university teachers? *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*, 7(1), 1-18. DOI: 10.14426/cristal.v7i1.170.

Jegede, O. (2012). *The Status of Higher Education in Africa.* Address at the Association of African Universities, New York City, 1 February 2012. https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/5e/d0/5ed04cc9-b250-48e5-b9ee-dd97b3f9139a/ccny_speech_2012_status.pdf

Kotter, J.P. (1996). *Leading Change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Rath, J. (2009). A report of a New Zealand-based funding initiative designed to improve a university's research culture. *Journal of Research Administration*, 40(1), 90-100.

Reddy, S., Searle, R.L., Shawa. L.B., & Teferra, D. (2016). A balancing act: Facilitating a university education induction programme for (early career) academics. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(10), 1820-1834.

Stander, E., & Herman, C. (2017). Barriers and challenges private higher education institutions face in the management of quality assurance in South Africa. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 31(5), 206-224. DOI: 10.28535/31-5-1481.

Subotzky, G. (2003). *Private Higher Education and Training*. Human Sciences Research Council Human Resources Development Review. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Tankou epse Nukunah, C.N., Bezuidenhout, A., & Furtak, A. (2019). The contribution of a private higher education institution to the South African higher education landscape. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 33(1), 283-300. DOI: 10.20853/33-1-2689.

Teferra, D. (2016). Early career academics in Africa: Induction into the teaching praxis. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(10), 1735-1740.

Teixeira, P., Kim, S., Landoni, P., & Gilani, P. (2017). *Rethinking the public-private mix in higher education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.