Influence of Faculty Management Practices on Training of Quality Graduates in the Universities in Kenya

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Abstract

Training of quality graduates depends on how management practices in faculty management among other factors are addressed by each university. The researcher recognizes that there are different management practices applied at different levels in universities with a view to training quality graduates. However, this study focused on management practices applied by universities to support faculty in the training of quality graduates. The study followed the descriptive design in presenting the literature on faculty management practices. The data collection was based on a questionnaire developed to determine the influence of identified faculty management practices on the training of quality graduates in the universities. The participants were 120 university faculty members chosen from different universities in Kenya. Results were statistically analyzed using SPSS. The study established that there are significant differences across universities in adopting faculty managements practices in supporting faculty management practices that promote training and development across the Universities. Universities were noted to lack commitment to conduct regular training to meet the pedagogical needs of the faculty and also provide inadequate opportunities for career growth. Similarly, it was observed that most universities lacked comprehensive motivation and reward systems. This led to diminishing faculty commitment, high staff turnover, and relatively demotivated faculty.

Key terms: *Faculty Management Practices, Training, Quality Graduates*

1.0 Introduction

Universities are key players in training a qualified workforce to stimulate and sustain the economic growth of any country. Universities, therefore, are entities mandated to prepare graduates to serve individual and societal needs. This study identified management practices that universities need to embrace to support faculty members in the process of training quality graduates. Among other practices, this study focused on performance management, training and development practices, motivation and rewards systems, and coaching and mentorship practices.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Largely universities provide appropriate sites for training quality graduates. According to CUE (2014), universities are mandated to offer programs of study in various discipline areas.

Universities are considered to have put up appropriate curricula, resources both human and physical, qualified students, governance and management structures, and application of appropriate management practices. The fact that universities are accredited is subsumed they have met minimum requirements to train graduates who have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet the developmental needs of society. However, available literature indicates there are significant differences in the level of graduate preparedness. This is attributed to, among other factors, inadequate establishment, and application of faculty management practices that support the training of quality graduates.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

Ho: There are no significant differences in applying faculty management practices across the universities in the training of quality graduates.

2.0 Literature Review

Effective teaching and learning happen when there is effective faculty management. Faculty management may be perceived to include a set of qualifications and experience required to enable the teaching staff to effectively discharge their duties and responsibilities in promoting learning (Bloom & Reenen, 2010). Universities have to take care of highly qualified faculty and support staff by clearly defining their responsibility and evaluating their performance regularly and using adequate appraisal systems, IUCEA Vol.2 Road to Quality 2010 (IUCEA 2014). Birasnav (2014) posits that the performance of staff must be periodically evaluated, with outstanding performance recognized and support provided for improvement where required. Effective, fair, and transparent processes must be available for the resolution of conflicts and disputes involving faculty (Henk &Robert, 2011).

A study by Bogt and Scapens (2012) recommends that effective faculty management has to include practices such as performance management- to reinforce and sustain the enthusiasm among workers, performance management to assist the organization to develop workers with skills that align with the organization's change goals and to determine employee skills deficits that require development and strengthening. According to Bloom and Reenen (2010), this involves 1) creating individual development plans - identifying a combination of developmental activities to assist affected employees in developing designated competencies and knowledge. 2) training and education whereby organizations implement on-the-job training, mentoring, and classroom or computer-based training strategies to improve competencies and encourage professional development by setting aside part of the budget for training. A study by Bogt and Scapens (2012) showed that although the essential component of achieving the desired outcome is appropriately skilled employees; the success depends on employee performance, qualification, and training. This calls for close monitoring of the employees' performance.

McCathy (2015) suggests that organizations need to embed a culture that motivates staff to perform by; developing employee performance plans that align with the institutional goals, assigning quantifiable and measurable objectives for employee performance that support the goal; and, recognizing and rewarding positive approaches and performance in the process. Without drawing a demarcation, the contemporary organizations and institutions of higher learning similarly operate more when managing the workforce. The universities' main objective for example is to train quality graduates who are holistically prepared to meet individual and social needs. To do this, universities use faculty to facilitate students to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes, and work values in their respective disciplines of study. Therefore, there is a dire need to manage faculty effectively to be able to achieve this noble

task. Thus, faculty need to understand what they need to do, be enabled to do it, and be supported in doing it by appropriate, policies, guidelines, work plans, incentives, and rewards (Bogt & Scapens, 2012). This is possible by clearly defining goals, setting targets, and monitoring progress to ensure alignment.

In the same vein, Lipman (2015)indicates that universities' administrators have a responsibility to ensure faculty are empowered by setting a tone that students are the top priority, promoting and financing faculty development, providing resources and technology conducive to learning, making institutional structures flexible for innovative teaching, facilitating communication between the faculty and other organs of the institution, aligning all the areas of the institution toward supporting student learning, including enrollment, development, finance, student life, incentivizing and financing innovative programme and initiatives designed to promote student learning, and rewarding and empowering teachers who undertake efforts to improve student learning.

Universities must establish work plans and evaluate activities to encourage students, faculty members, and other personnel to be conscientious in their thoughts and speech. The University must enhance the professional ethics of its faculty members and other personnel. Hattie and Yates (2013) recommend that managers of the universities need to set performance measures for the faculty. Performance areas give direction to managers and enable them to achieve higher results. Continuous review of past performance and learning from the same helps identification of organizational, functional, and individual goals which lead to evolving an action plan indicating what needs to be done by whom, how, and when. Performance of the faculty in the university could be measured on three levels, according to Bruce and Calhoun (2015), these include, teaching and learning, research, and community extension services. Performance management helps to set out recruitment and selection criteria, set up clear job descriptions, set out a target, and provide work procedures. Training and development plans are one of the most critical practices in faculty management. Universities need to design professional development plans that put the responsibility of implementing the curriculum on the able faculty. Bruce and Calhoun (2015) observed that the traditional approaches to performance such as goal setting and inspection may be ineffective. These new approaches may include building-based coaching, mentoring, and tailoring training needs to the needs of the curriculum.

Lipman (2015) provides motivational strategies that would increase faculty desire to perform better in promoting learning. He argues that employees must understand what types of monetary rewards (for example merit-based pay, excellence bonus, among others) they can receive for exemplary performance. Evaluations must be standardized and communicated across managers and departments to ensure credibility and reliability. Accordingly, Bull and Anstey (2010b) suggest that coaching and mentorship programmes in universities need to be implemented as a means of professional development. The programmes are designed to be facilitated through a peer relationship and offer problem-focused, contextualized opportunities for faculty and students to collaborate, thus making the learning experiences and outcomes more meaningful.

Further, Lipman (2015) suggests that universities have to develop policies that support coaching and mentorship programmes that result in career development and retaining of the faculty as well as helping students to feel more connected and engaged on campus, which can ultimately improve student learning outcomes. The concepts of coaching and mentorship are also important components of faculty management as observed by (Bruce & Calhoun, 2015). On the other hand, Bruce and Calhoun (2015) underscore the importance of employee participation in the decision-making process. Hattie and Yates (2013) provide four crucial

elements that would support decision-making among university managers: strengthening the collegial foundations of decision making, shaping the consultative framework, increasing the availability of information, and facilitating group deliberation. Articulation of a set of shared values and goals is central to strengthening the collegial foundations of decision-making in higher education. The universities need to promote an environment in which decision-making is made consultatively by the administrators and the academic fraternity.

3.0 Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used to collect perceptions of the faculty on the extent to which they felt supported by the university in the process of training quality graduates. Six (6) universities formed the sample which included Kenyatta University (A), University of Nairobi (B), African Nazarene University (C) Kenya Methodist University (D), Meru University of Science, and Technology (E), and Strathmore University (F). A total of 120 faculty members were included in the study. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data. Analysis of variance was done to establish whether significant differences exist in adopting faculty management practices across the universities. Where differences exist, Duncan multiple range tests (DMRT) were conducted to determine where differences are.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Faculty management was taken to mean the facilitative effort of the university management to empower and support faculty staff in carrying out the core business of the university which includes teaching, research, and selfless services to the community. The literature reviewed had suggested management practices that the universities need to embrace to effectively manage the faculty. This was measured by the use of parameters; performance management, training and development plans, motivation/reward strategies, coaching and mentorship programmes, and employee participation in the decision-making process. Faculty staff from the sampled universities was presented with a questionnaire to indicate the extent to which they agree that their respective universities adopted effective management practices in faculty management with a view to training quality graduates.

Analysis of variance yielded $P<0.05$. This indicated a significant difference in the implementation of management practices in faculty management to produce quality graduates across universities. Further analysis of DRMT results revealed some universities were comparably lagging in embracing faculty management practices.

The study sought to determine the extent to which universities embraced performance management practices to ensure quality faculty. The practices included recruitment and selection that is based on academic qualification and experience, well-articulated job descriptions, well-articulated targets, work procedures, well-defined systems of measuring faculty accomplishment, and availability of feedback mechanisms. Analysis of variance resulted in $P>0.05$. This allowed the researcher to conclude there were no significant differences in the way Universities handled performance management across the Universities. To understand why this was similar across the universities the researcher analyzed indicators that expounded on the performance management. The analysis of variance results is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Performance Management Practices

Practice	P Value	Interpretation
Recruitment and selection are based on academic qualification and experience in the relevant discipline	P>0.05	No significant differences in recruitment and selection criteria across the Universities.
Job descriptions are well articulated stipulating roles and responsibilities of the faculty	P>0.05	No significant differences in articulating the roles and responsibilities of the lecturers across the Universities.
Targets are well articulated and communicated to the faculty	P>0.05	No significant differences. Articulation of targets was similar throughout the Universities.
Work procedures are provided to facilitate improved performance	P>0.05	No significant differences. Work procedures were similar across the Universities.
Systems for measuring faculty accomplishment are in place	P>0.05	No significant differences. Systems for measuring faculty accomplishment were similar across the Universities.
Feedback mechanisms are in place	P>0.05	No significant differences. Feedback mechanisms were similar across the Universities.

Based on the results in Table 1 the researcher concluded that there were no significant differences in the way universities handled performance management practices. Comparatively, Universities were similar in supporting performance management or inerrably had inadequate systems which could have influenced the faculty members to respond in a certain way to protect their tenure. This requires further investigation to establish the effectiveness of performance management systems in the universities.

The researcher further sought to establish the extent to which universities implemented practices that support training and development. Analysis of variance yielded $P<0.05$. This allowed the researcher to conclude there were significant differences in supporting training and development across the Universities. DMRT results revealed that some universities were comparably performing poorly in supporting training and development. On the other hand, others were very supportive of adopting leading practices that support training and development plans that support effective faculty management. These practices included INSET training based on diagnosed staff needs, adequate funds to support training and development, regular training sessions for the faculty staff, and opportunities for professional and career growth through the provision of resources. Analysis of variance for each practice was analyzed and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Training and Development Practices

Parameters	P-Value	Conclusion
University organizes for INSET to determine and support faculty needs	P>0.05	No significant differences in organizing for INSET across the Universities.
Availability of adequate funds to support training and development programmes for the faculty	P>0.05	No significant differences in the provision of funds to support the training of faculty across the Universities.
University organizes and conducts regular training to meet the faculty day to day needs	P<0.05	There were significant differences. The conduct of training was different across the Universities.
University provides an opportunity for professional and career growth by providing resources required to the faculty	P<0.05	There were significant differences. Universities provided resources for professional and career growth differently across the Universities.

The results show that there are no significant differences in the way Universities conducted diagnostic training (INSET) to establish faculty needs across the Universities. Additionally, there was no significant difference in the provision of funds to support training across the Universities. However, a significant difference was noted in organizing regular training and provision of opportunities for professional and career growth across the Universities. Lipman (2015) indicates that successful Universities need to make financing faculty development a priority. Faculty development ensures continuous improvement of faculty skills to handle the needs of the discipline areas in a changing environment. This in return empowers faculty to successfully undertake efforts to improve student learning. DMRT results revealed where the differences existed across the universities. Some universities were relatively performing poorly in organizing regular training for the faculty to enhance their professional development. It was noted that some universities ensured that the workload policy and timetabling policy took into account career growth where faculty were allowed some time off to engage in further studies and research. Some universities had strong consultancy offices where the junior faculty worked with the senior faculty. Consequently, the junior faculty were mentored.

The study sought to establish the extent to which the Universities embrace motivational reward strategies practices. Analysis of variance produced P<0.05. This suggested a high level of significant differences in implementing motivational practices in the Universities. ANOVA results in Table 3 confirmed variance existed across the universities.

Table 3: Motivation and Reward Practices

Parameters	P Value	Interpretation
Promotion criteria are clearly articulated and communicated to the faculty on appointment.	P>0.05	This allowed the researcher to conclude that there were no significant differences in the promotion criteria across the Universities. This is attributed to the availability of CUE harmonized criteria for recruitment and promotion of academic staff in the Universities.
Promotion is based on qualification and merit	P<0.05	This signified significant differences in the extent to which promotion was based on qualification and merit across the Universities.
Reward systems are known to the faculty	P<0.05	This suggested significant differences in communicating rewards to the faculty across the Universities.
Faculty are rewarded/recognized for exemplary performance in facilitating learning	P<0.05	This suggested significant differences in rewarding faculty based on performance across the Universities.
Policies have sanctions for non-compliance	P>0.05	This indicated no significant differences in the provision of policies that sanctioned non-compliance across the Universities.

The results show significant differences, P<0.05, in the promotion criteria based on qualification and merit, explicit rewards, and rewards based on exemplary performance across the Universities. Most of the universities indicated that reward systems were not explicit to the faculty and they also felt that rewards were not based on outstanding performance. DRMT results showed that some universities were particularly very lowly-rated in ensuring the promotion of the faculty that was supported by qualifications and merit. Faculty also expressed concern about the effectiveness of appraisal systems noting that they did not have well-structured rewards mechanisms to match performance. Hence appraisal systems were perceived as a source of demotivation among faculty.

The study sought to establish the availability of coaching and mentorship programmes for faculty. This was considered key in ensuring capacity development and enhancement, especially for the junior faculty of the university. Key indicators that support coaching and mentorship programmes were rated. These indicators were; the availability and operationalization of coaching and mentorship policy in the University and also provision and support for coaching and mentorship in the Universities. The ANOVA yielded P>0.05. This implied no significant difference in the embracing of coaching and mentorship practices across the Universities. Coaching and mentorship in some universities were done through team teaching, joint supervision, consultancy groups, and senior faculty regularly presented topics that would enhance the skills of the junior faculty. Also, it was noted that policies on coaching and mentorship programmes did not exist in some universities.

The researcher sought to find out the extent to which faculty was involved in the decision-making process. Three indicators to measure the extent to which the Universities embraced this practice were provided for rating. This included the availability of flexible management structures, seeking faculty views in decision-making processes, and the extent to which universities practiced shared leadership. Analysis of variance yielded $P>0.05$. This allowed the researcher to conclude there were no significant differences in faculty involvement in the decision-making process. Although university management highly valued and implemented recommendations from the departments to improve academics in their respective schools and departments, it was observed that faculty views did not count in resource allocation and implementation. Most of the universities practiced a top-down model of management, where decisions were made by senior management and trickled down to the staff. This was limiting because some faculty felt they had a better understanding of issues that affected their schools and departments and could offer better solutions/remedies to them as compared to recommendations of the top management.

5.0 Conclusion

The findings on faculty management showed that there existed significant differences in the implementation of faculty management practices across the universities with a $P<0.05$. Results indicated that Universities were similar in embracing performance management. However, there were differences in supporting practices that promote training and development across the Universities<0.05, which included a lack of commitment of universities to conduct regular training to meet the pedagogical needs of the faculty and a lack of opportunities for career growth. Similarly, it was observed that most of the universities lacked comprehensive motivation and reward systems, the $P<0.05$. This led to diminishing faculty commitment, high staff turnover, and relatively demotivated faculty.

6.0 Recommendations

Policies on training and development especially on pedagogy should be considered by universities. Universities need to keep their faculty updated on the evolving methods of learning. Universities also need to make a deliberate effort to support coaching and mentorship programmes. This would ensure that junior faculty are continually supported to grow in the teaching profession with appropriate knowledge, skills, and competencies to deliver the curriculum.

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