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INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSITY INCENTIVES FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT ON LECTURERS' PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the effect of university incentives on lecturers' performance in public universities in Kenya. This was based on the Psychological Contract Theory that holds that employees expect reciprocal relationship and obligation from their employers when they offer superior service. When looked at from a career development perspective, lecturers expect to be given incentives that will encourage them to undertake further training and development programmes that will assist them to advance in their careers, improve their performance and embrace additional responsibilities. The study utilized the Descriptive Survey Design. Data was collected from 328 teaching staff in all the seven public universities in Kenya who had been selected through stratified and random sampling. Document analysis was also used in triangulating the study. The data was then qualitatively analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations and quantitatively using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Test. The study found out that university incentives for career development positively affected lecturers performance in public universities ($r=0.430$, $p=0.000$). The study recommends that public universities should improve the incentives given to lecturers in order to encourage them to undertake career development programmes.

KEYWORDS

Career Development, Incentives, Lecturers' performance.

INTRODUCTION

Increased competition in the globalised business environment has augmented the demand for skilled, innovative and qualified human resources, capable of giving firms a competitive advantage. According to Baruch (2004), it has become imperative for organizations to seriously examine how they manage their employees as well as planning and managing their careers. This concern has arisen from the need to curb staff turnover by talented employees as well as distinguish the firm as a caring employer in an effort to gain and maintain a competitive edge.

Career development has been identified as a means of helping organizations to tap into their wealth of in-house talent for staffing and promotion by matching the skills, experience and aspirations of individuals to the needs of the organization (Kapel and Shepherd, 2004; Kaye, 2005). Extensive research has been carried out in a bid to unearth the extent to which an organization can support career development initiatives for its employees. Such research has focused on the extent to which such practices foster organizational effectiveness (Appelbaum, *et al*, 2002) and result in job satisfaction among employees. Other scholars have focused on the extent to which such practices encourage employee commitment (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2007).

The focus with which an organization puts a premium on career development has tended to differ from one organization to another. Whereas Career development results in the organization attracting and retaining talented employees, creation of a human capital pool that will create value (Katono, 2010; Lee and Bruvold, 2003) and ensure a competitive advantage as well as long term organizational growth (Thite, 2001; Kulivasachana, 2006), organizations differ in the manner in which they support such initiatives. In the higher education sector, career development has been a major theme in most strategic plans of various universities in the world.

Because higher education is of paramount importance for economic and social development of any nation, considerable interest has been generated in analyzing the extent to which graduates of universities are equipped with knowledge and skills required for positions of responsibilities in government, business and professions (World Bank, 1994). The quality of the graduates depends on various factors such as availability of teaching and learning resources, duration and content of courses undertaken and qualification and experience of lecturers among other factors. Of these determinants of quality university education, the qualifications and experience possessed by the lecturers as resource persons is of paramount importance (Chacha, 2004, Kadenyi, Onsongo and Njuguna, 2010). In an effort to improve the quality of their teaching staff, universities have designed human resource development policies that have incorporated career development as one of the pillars of creating and sustaining a competitive human resource pool. In Kenya, most public Universities have career development programmes as part of their plans and mandate (Chacha, 2004). With the realization that most teaching staff do not have a PhD degree compared to many sub-Saharan countries (Lewa, 2009), these Kenyan Public Universities have encouraged their members of the teaching staff to undertake further studies as well as other career development initiatives. Some universities do finance such initiatives (Kinyanjui, 2007). In this study, the term lecturer was used to connect all teaching staff in the universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Psychological Contract Theory, employees have expectations that the employer will reciprocate by giving them fair treatment and meeting other commitments when they offer superior service (Armstrong, 2006). This unwritten expectations, though not part of a formal employment contract plays a major role in determining employee turnover intentions as well as their perception of the work environment (Rousseau, 2001, Dabos and Rousseau, 2004)

From a career development perspective, they expect that the employer will avail career development programmes as well as finance these career development initiatives. They will therefore give superior service to the employer if they feel the employer is making an effort towards meeting such expectations. According to Bartlett (2001), employees view career development as a benefit that accrues to them from their employment relationship. In return, they will offer the employer loyalty, commitment and requisite effort needed to attain organizational goals.

Career development programmes differ from one profession to another. Whereas some may require long periods of academic and professional learning leading to academic or professional qualifications, others involve participants in a given field regularly meeting to exchange ideas on how to tackle challenges they face in performing their duties in various industries. The expected result of such initiatives is improvement in employees' performance. Scholars have advanced different measures to connote employee performance. There are those who view it in terms of one's achievements in relation to objectives, level of competence or employees' day to day effectiveness (Armstrong 2006; Compton, 2005). Others such as Cole (2002) and Kiriri and Gathuthi (2010) view it in terms of quality of work, meeting organizational objectives, regular attendance, knowledge of work and leadership among others. There is however agreement on the positive effect of career development on employee performance (Kamoche *et al*, 2004; Baniya, 2004; Maher, 2009).

University Lecturers are expected to undertake training and development programmes to enhance their relevance and boost their effectiveness in research, teaching and execution of responsibilities. Research shows that continuous and systematic training and development enables one to perform present and future duties and responsibilities in a better manner (Olaniyan and Ojo, 2008; Kibet *et al*, 2010). Lecturers' performance in Public Universities can be measured in terms of effectively teaching allocated work loads, attendance of learned conferences, publication of books and journal articles, furtherance of academic and professional qualifications as well as monitoring students (Kiriri and Gathuthi, 2010).

Just like for other employees, various factors will determine the extent to which the lecturers will undertake career development initiatives. Some of these include availability of time, resources and institutions to offer such initiatives, willingness of employees to engage in the exercise, institutional support for the exercise, benefits expected to accrue from undertaking such an exercise among others.

Incentives given to lecturers to undertake career development programmes can be monetary or non monetary in nature. Monetary incentives include expectations of salary increases, payment of partial of full fees for the studies to be undertaken, payment of subsistence expenses during the career development exercises among others. Non monetary incentives includes expectations of promotion challenging work, increased responsibility, enhanced status or autonomy. Research by Kim (2005) and Benson (2006) shows that internal promotion given after successful completion of career development programmes such as advanced training results in enhanced loyalty, commitment and extra effort by employee since he/she feels appreciated. Monetary rewards also improve one's performance of duty (Dessler, 2005). However, it is unclear which type of incentives, whether monetary on non monetary, leads to the greatest push for career advancement among public university lecturers. This study therefore sought to examine this phenomenon.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Kenyan Public Universities have encouraged their teaching staff to undertake further studies, participate in conferences as well as conduct research and publish their findings in refereed journals. This has been done to ensure that their lecturers, as generators and disseminators of knowledge are skilled, competent and prized reservoirs of knowledge that will give them a competitive advantage.

Despite this effort, studies show that research, conference presentations and publishing by Kenyan Public Universities' lecturers have been dropping (Chacha, 2004). According to Lewa (2009), most of them do not also have a PhD degree as their highest academic qualification yet they are meant to be the leaders and mentors of others. This scenario has been attributed to various factors such as increased student enrolment hence higher workload, low teaching staff levels and insufficient funding for career development and research due to low budgetary funding by the Government (Kiriri and Gathuthi, 2010; Kinyanjui, 2007). This is despite the fact that funding for career development plays a major role in motivating employees to undertake career development programmes.

This paper therefore sought to establish the influence of university incentives for career development on lecturers' performance in public universities in Kenya.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- (i) Establish the various incentives given to lecturers to encourage them to undertake career development programmes.
- (ii) Identify the career development programmes undertaken by lecturers in public universities in Kenya.
- (iii) Examine the influence of university incentives for career development on lecturers' performance in Public Universities in Kenya.

STUDY HYPOTHESES

Ho1 There is no relationship between monetary incentives for career development and lecturers' performance in public universities.

Ho2 There is no relationship between non monetary incentives for career development and lecturers' performance in public universities.

Ho3 There is no relationship between university incentives for career development and lecturers' performance in public universities.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out using the descriptive survey design. Data was collected from all Public Universities in Kenya where a sample of 351 lecturers was chosen to participate in the survey. The sample was chosen through stratified and random sampling to ensure each cadre of the university teaching staff was represented in the sample. Questionnaires were the main data collection tool although document analysis of the universities' strategic plans and human resource management policies were also analysed to triangulate the study. The questionnaires were subjected to reliability and validity tests where Cronbach Alpha coefficient tests were done as we as expert opinion on the constructs, was sought. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.885 for the items showed high reliability of the instrument. The data was then qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed using means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient tests.

FINDINGS

Out of the 351 questionnaires that were administered to lecturers in public universities, 328 were filled and returned, representing a 91.9% response rate. From the responses, a majority of the respondents were male (65.5%) aged between 30 and 40 years (49.9%) and held the position of either Assistant lecturer or tutorial fellow (35.7%). Most of them had a Masters degree as their highest academic qualification as seen in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Characteristics	N = 328	Frequency	%	
University	Kenyatta	50	15.24	
	Masinde Muliro	40	12.70	
	Moi	49	14.90	
	Nairobi	50	15.24	
	Maseno	46	14.02	
	Jomo Kenyatta	44	13.41	
	Egerton	49	14.94	100
Gender	Male	216	65.9	
	Female	112	34.1	
Age	Below 30 years	76	23.2	
	30 – 40 years	162	49.4	
	41 0 50 years	61	18.6	
	Above 50 yers	29	8.8	100
Highest Academic qualification (Degree)	Bachelors	64	19.5	
	Masters	170	51.8	
	PhD	94	28.7	100
University Teaching Experience	Below 5 years	158	48.2	
	6 – 10 years	95	29	
	11 – 15 years	47	14.3	
	Above 15 years	28	8.5	100
Designation	Graduate Assistant	42	12.8	
	Assistant lecturers/ Tutorial fellow	117	35.7	
	Lecturer	107	32.6	
	Associate Professor	30	11.9	
	Professor	16	4.9	
		7	2.1	100

Source: Research study, 2012

The study also found out that lecturers in Public Universities are encouraged to undertake further studies and other career development initiatives. Among the career development programmes that were embraced by these institutions for their teaching staff included pursuit of higher academic qualifications, attendance of conferences, workshops and seminars, presentation of research findings in such conferences, workshops and seminars, publication of books or papers in refereed journals and engaging in consultancy services in their fields of specialization.

The study also found out that Public Universities had human resource policies that encouraged academic staff to undertake career development initiatives. A majority of the respondents were in agreement that both monetary and non monetary incentives are given by the institutions to encourage the lecturers to undertake career development programmes. This was confirmed by 133 (40.5%) and 106 (32.3%) of the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the statement on the issue as seen in Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2 RESPONSES BY LECTURERS TO STATEMENTS ON MONETARY AND NON MONETARY INCENTIVES GIVEN FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT BY PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

STATEMENT	SA f (%)	A f (%)	FA f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)	Mean	S.D
1. Monetary							
*Academic staff of my university who successfully undertake further studies are given salary increment.	133 (40.5)	106 (32.3)	34 (10.4)	39 (11.9)	16 (4.9)	3.92	1.192
*Money for subsistence to lecturers attending conference, workshops and seminars	118 (36)	174 (53)	17 (5.2)	15 (4.6)	4 (1.2)	4.18	0.844
* The scheme of service for academic staff has monetary incentives for attainment of higher academic qualifications	74 (22.6)	187 (57)	35 (10.7)	22 (6.7)	10 (3)	3.89	0.931
My university pays fees (partial/full) for those undertaking further studies.	150 (45.7)	159 (48.5)	04 (1.2)	15 (4.0)	0 (0)	4.35	0.727
2. Non-Monetary Incentives							
* Academic staff who successfully undertake career development programmes are given additional responsibilities eg. Head of Department	97 (29.6)	125 (38.1)	64 (19.5)	28 (8.5)	14 (4.3)	3.80	1.087
* Academic staff in my university who successfully complete further studies are promoted to the next grade.	90 (27.4)	145 (44.2)	44 (13.4)	44 (13.4)	5 (1.5)	3.83	1.027
* My university prioritizes internal appointments & promotion based of successful completion of career development programmes.	99 (30.2)	162 (49.4)	45 (13.7)	22 (6.7)	0 (0)	4.03	0.842
* My university gives opportunities to members of academic staff to be on leave when undertaking career development programmes.	81 (24.7)	157 (47.9)	50 (15.2)	35 (10.7)	5 (1.5)	3.84	0.969

Source: Research study 2012

According to the findings of the study, additional responsibilities and promotions given to academic staff are also primarily pegged on successful completion of career development programmes. This was confirmed by 90 (27.4%) and 145 (44.2%) of the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed respectively with statements on the issue.

In general, the study identified salary increments, scholarships, partial fee payment and subsistence allowances as the monetary incentives given to lecturers who undertake career development programmes. It also identified promotions, additional responsibilities and opportunities to be on leave or off duty when undertaking these programmes as the non monetary incentives given for those undertaking career development.

The study found out that career development programmes incentives had improved lecturers performance. This performance was seen in terms of effective teaching of allocated work, conference attendance, conference paper presentation and publishing in refereed journals, book publishing and mentoring as shown on Table 4.3.

TABLE 4.3: EFFECT OF INCENTIVES FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT ON LECTURERS' PERFORMANCE

STATEMENT	SA f (%)	A f (%)	FA f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)	Mean	SD
Career development incentives motivate me to teach allocated work leads effectively	192 (58.5)	127 (38.7)	4 (1.2)	3 (0.9)	2 (0.6)	4.54	0.634
I have attended one learned conference / workshop/seminar this year due to university incentives	119 (36.3)	132 (40.2)	16 (4.9)	47 (14.3)	14 (4.3)	3.90	1.167
I have presented a paper at an academic conference this year due to university incentives	102 (31.1)	79 (24.1)	40 (12.2)	92 (28)	15 (4.6)	3.49	1.309
I have had my paper published in a refereed journal this year due to university incentives	77 (23.5)	93 (28.4)	29 (8.8)	98 (29.9)	31 (9.5)	3.27	1.354
I have published a book/book chapter this year due to university incentives	63 (19.2)	53 (16.2)	34 (10.4)	125 (38.1)	53 (16.2)	2.84	1.392

Source: Research study, 2012

Although most of the respondents had attended learned conferences, workshops and seminars and presented papers there, only almost half of them had published papers in refereed journals. Also, only 35.4% of the respondents had been motivated by the monetary and non-monetary incentives to write books or book chapters.

The study then tested the three null hypotheses that had been formulated at the beginning of the study. The results are presented on table 4.4.

TABLE 4.4: RESULTS OF PEARSON'S PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION TESTS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INCENTIVES FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND

LECTURERS' PERFORMANCE			Decision
Lecturers' performance Monetary Incentives	Pearson's correlation	0.345	Reject Ho ₁
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.000	
	N	328	
Non Monetary Incentives	Pearson's correlation	0.410	Reject Ho ₂
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.000	
	N	328	
Incentives for career Development (monetary & non monetary)	Pearson's correlation	0.430	Reject Ho ₃
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.000	
	N	328	

Source: Research study, 2012

Based on the results of the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient tests, all the null hypotheses for the study were rejected. This led the study to conclude that:

1. There is a positive relationship between monetary incentives for career development and lecturers performance in public universities in Kenya ($r = 0.345$).
2. There is a positive relationship between non monetary incentives for career development and lecturers' performance in public universities in Kenya.
3. There is a positive relationship between university incentives for career development and lecturers' performance in Public Universities in Kenya.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study indicate that a majority of the university lecturers' are Masters' degree holders yet the international standards call for them to be PhD degree holders. This necessitates the need for the emphasis on career development initiatives in these institutions. The findings also pointed to a scenario of gender imbalance in the composition of the teaching staff that called for the implementation of affirmative action.

The findings of the study showed that non monetary rewards were more strongly correlated to lecturers' performance ($r = 0.410$) than monetary rewards ($r = 0.345$). This indicated that lecturers put a higher premium on non monetary incentives such as being given additional responsibilities, getting promotions, and being recognized that on just getting a salary increment or other monetary incentives. This is based on the realization that non monetary incentives have more long lasting effects than monetary rewards .Overall, the study found out that university incentives for career development positively influences lecturers' performance in Public Universities in Kenya ($r = 0.430$). The findings of this study are similar to those of earlier studies by Khan, Farook and Ullah (2010) done in the banking sector in Pakistan. These earlier studies concluded that organizational incentives positively influenced employee performance.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that university incentives for career development positively, influenced lecturers' performance in public universities in Kenya. Non monetary incentives that were given to lecturers who successfully undertook career development initiatives had a greater influence on lecturers' performance than monetary incentives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that:

- (i) Universities should avail monetary and non monetary incentives for career development to their teaching staff to encourage superior performance from them.
- (ii) Universities should allocate resources for holding conferences, workshops and funding further studies of its staff to encourage more lecturers to participate in career development programmes.
- (iii) Affirmative action should be undertaken to encourage women to undertake further studies as well as to be employed as teaching staff in public universities.

LIMITATIONS

This study covered only the public universities in Kenya. As a result their findings may not be applicable to private universities or constituent colleges of these public universities. The low value of the correlation between incentives for career development and employee performance shows that there are other factors apart from incentives which influence lecturers' performance.

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