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Influence of Management of Human Resources on the Quality of Education in Selected Private Universities in Kenya

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Abstract:

The main purpose of this study was to assess the influence of management of human resources on the quality of education in selected private universities in Kenya. The study aimed to investigate the perceptions of the deans of schools, heads of departments, and lecturers towards the management of human resources and the quality of education in private universities in Kenya. The study used two research instruments: lecturers' questionnaires and deans of schools and departmental heads' interview guides. Data were analyzed using mixed methods involving qualitative and quantitative techniques. The study revealed that most of the respondents disagreed that there were adequate human resources, which affected the quality of education at selected private universities in Kenya. Further, there was a significant positive correlation between the management of human resources and the quality of education in private universities. The study recommends that the management of private universities must prioritize recruiting additional lecturers, remunerating lecturers competitively, and implementing motivational strategies, which are crucial for fostering a conducive work environment and enhancing human resources' satisfaction.

Keywords: Management, human resources, quality of education, private universities, Kenya

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

Education positively empowers students and improves their character traits and physical ability. According to UNESCO (2015), education is considered the procedure through which all societies deliberately convey skills besides values from generation to generation. This has raised the need for education, which, sequentially, has seen the proliferation of many private universities to meet students' demands for higher education. To meet this demand, private universities adopt management of institutional resources strategies, which include the management of curriculum support materials, human resources, time resources, and physical resources.

According to Rasinki, Homan and Biggs (2015), management of institutional resources is a set of approaches designed to effectively make decisions about private university activities and achieve higher educational objectives. Rasinki et al. (2015) further posit that the management of resources entails a university undertaking decision-making with regard to the employment of qualified staff and enrollment of students, setting up and reconditioning facilities, time management and improving private university services, among others.

Kenya is no exception, with an increased number of private universities catering to the ever-increasing desire to access higher education. According to Njoroge (2014), the primary objective of the Commission for University Education Act (2014) in Kenya is to ensure that every student accesses higher education, independent of social status, sex, nationality, or physical or intellectual impairment. The objective of the policy was to improve the pathway to attaining higher education by requiring private university management to provide physical facilities, human resources, curriculum support materials and time resources (Lucas & Mbiti, 2014).

According to Kwamboka (2014), inadequate human resources, inadequate curriculum support materials, physical facilities, and time resources constitute the major challenges that bedevil Kenyan higher education. In the same vein, an evaluation by the Task Force on Affordable Higher Education (Ministry of Education, 2012) pointed out that, despite the growth in the number of students and private universities, a corresponding rise in the supply of necessary prerequisites has been unsatisfactory to match the desirable improved quality of higher education.

1.2. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of management of human resources on the quality of education in selected private universities in Kenya. The study had three-fold objectives:

- To establish the perceptions that lecturers hold towards the management of human resources on the quality of education in selected private universities in Kenya.
- To determine the perceptions that deans of schools have towards management of human resources on the quality of education in selected private universities in Kenya.
- To find out the perceptions that heads of departments hold towards management of human resources on the quality of education in selected private universities in Kenya.

2. Literature Review

Human resources are crucial in the realization of educational objectives and the optimization of staff deployment in order to achieve a systemic balance. Ivancevich (2014) observes that the output of lecturers has been a global problem, especially in developing countries. To alleviate these challenges, successful private universities constantly recognize that several practices are attributable to the achievement of lecturers (Mello, 2014). Human resources are thus the foremost component of any private university, and it plays a key role in attaining economic benefits and improving the output of lecturers.

According to research done by Chan and Kuok (2015) in the Netherlands, the practice of human management of institutional resources is defined largely as the accepted norms or actions laid to direct private universities to attain goals in accordance with how they are presented in mission. They further found that, in the current information selection, rewards, recruitment, compensation, orientation besides orientation, private universities where worth is tied to leaders of performance evaluation, training and development, and the workforce, as well as the finest human management and institutional resource practices, can ensure labor relations.

Boxall, Ang, and Bartram (2014), in their investigation done in India, showed that human management practices of institutional resources are effective in enhancing the performance of lecturers in any university. In a study done among 12 institutions of higher education in Kuala Lumpur, Boselie, Dietz, and Boon (2015) agree with the argument that the commonest practices in human management of institutional resources entail performance management, teaching, development, and reward, as does pay.

Boselie et al. (2015) investigated how policies on the management of human resource practices affect university output and discovered that these actions significantly affect the overall outcome. These verdicts agree that appropriate human management of institutional resource principles is certain to offer a number of returns, including competency, commitment, and flexibility, enhanced lecturers' and students' internal achievement, and nationwide tests because both the ends and the means are yet to be explained in some functioning way.

Wright, Gardener and Moynihan (2016) established that any given human supervision of institutional resources actions selected by a private university would function nearly immediately and have anticipated outcomes on lecturers' behaviours and attitudes found private university work relatively soon and get the required results on lecturers' actions and attitudes when lecturers view them in the anticipated way. Therefore, effectively implementing initiatives to improve working conditions has the likely effect of making the lecturers see the employer-lecturer interaction as a gainful exchange and consequently feel indebted to develop a bond with the university, thus increasing the chances of the students performing better in the university. This has, however, continued to be a difficult duty for most governments to surmount.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This study used a mixed methodology involving quantitative and qualitative methods. A report by Commission for University Education (2024) shows that Kenya has 34 registered private universities. The target population for this study comprised 173 deans of schools, 510 heads of departments (15 departments from each private university) and 1156 lecturers in the sampled departments, totalling 1839 participants. The researcher employed Yamane's Method to determine the study sample and to compute the size of the sample for the study, where 297 respondents formed the sample size selected using purposive sampling. The study tools that were engaged to collect data included: Questionnaires (Questionnaires were adopted by researchers to gather information from lecturers) and

An interview guide (Researchers employed open-ended questions in structured interviews to gather qualitative data from deans of schools and departmental heads with respect to a number of questions on the research objectives).

Data analysis began by identifying common themes. Using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, quantitative data were analyzed. Inferential analysis was also undertaken using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis for all the four study objectives by applying the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 23) software.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The research established how private universities manage human resources and how it influences the quality of education. Data were gathered from lecturers and recorded in table 1.

	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Lecturers are well-remunerated	39.8	18.6	4.1	29.3	8.2
Frequently promote lecturers	35.1	17.7	4.5	37.6	5.1
Lecturers undergo proficiency training	31.6	10.9	3.2	49.8	4.5
Insurance medical scheme for all staff	25.5	5.0	3.6	55.0	10.9
24-hour internet connectivity	29.3	7.3	5.5	68.4	9.9
Re-training for all lecturers annually	25.9	7.8	5.7	48.3	12.3
Offer scholarships to staff	23.5	6.9	5.1	50.7	13.8

Table 1: Management of Human Resources in Private Universities

Table 1 reveals that 39.8% of the lecturers agreed strongly that, in private universities, lecturers are well-remunerated as per the government guidelines, while 29.3% disagreed. On the other hand, 18.6% were in agreement. Only 8.2% strongly disagreed, while 4.1% were not decided. The study found that 35.1% of the lecturers strongly agreed that private universities frequently promote lecturers, whereas 37.6% disagreed, 17.7% agreed, 5.1% strongly disagreed, and 4.5% were undecided. During the interviews, the Deans of Schools and Heads of Departments also stated that there is fair remuneration for lecturers as a way of motivating them to effectively undertake their duties. On their part, Heads of Departments stated that private universities always pay their lecturers very well, though there could be limited resources.

These findings align with Mahmood's (2016) findings, which found that human resource management has a duty to provide and sustain a workplace setting in Pakistan which is appropriate for attaining desirable academic results. It involves identifying and addressing workforce demands ranging from remunerations and improved job conditions to career progression. This indicates that the success of lecturers in providing quality education in private universities is based on how well they are remunerated and motivated through material incentives. In other words, the motivation of lecturers through proper remuneration forms a key pillar for the realization of quality education offered to students in private universities.

The study revealed that 49.8% of the lecturers disagreed that, in private universities, many lecturers frequently undergo proficiency training, whereas 31.6% strongly agreed and 10.9% agreed. However, 4.5% strongly disagreed, while 3.2% were not decided. On their part, the interviewees also responded in favour of the view that training and conferences on professional development activities are often undertaken in private universities. Dean of School, DoS10, noted:

In my university, we always conduct regular training and regular capacity building of staff to equip them with up-to-date pedagogical skills. This is done every semester. Lecturers are also often advised to upgrade themselves professionally.

Heads of Departments also noted that they have often conducted regular proficiency training for their staff. These findings align with the findings of a study carried out in Mexico in which Rivkin, Eric and Hanushek (2016) established that training teaching staff is key to enhancing their proficiency, and thus, upgrading skills should be continuous. According to Rivkin et al. (2016), on-the-job training of educators, even though debatably a significant tool to raise competency levels and keep lecturers updated on current development in educational goals, still holds an unassertive place in educational training schedules.

These findings also agree with the claims of Mohanty (2017) that pre-service training aims at grasping subject content and usually disregards the informative and practical realities of instruction in private universities. These findings suggest that, though not a regular practice by the management of private universities, proficiency training of lecturers is crucial since it equips them with up-to-date pedagogical skills. This further points to the fact that the quality of education in many private universities depends on the regular training of lecturers.

Slightly more than half (55.5%) of the lecturers were in disagreement with the view that private universities have a very friendly insurance medical scheme for all staff, while 25.5% strongly agreed, 10.9% strongly disagreed, 5.0% agreed, with 3.6% undecided. During the interviews, the deans of schools and heads of departments stated that medical insurance coverage exists for all staff and that the payment method is flexible. These findings align with Mahmood (2015) that, to effectively execute their duties, private universities have been taking a more proactive stand by engaging union representatives of unions in identifying key causes of misunderstanding, such as the provision of social welfare and medical insurance schemes as well as areas of compromise, while considering financial and policy-linked limitations.

The study found that the majority (68.4%) of the lecturers disagreed that private universities provide all lecturers with 24-hour internet connectivity, whereas 29.3% strongly agreed. However, 9.9% still strongly disagreed, 7.3% agreed, and 5.5% were undecided. During the interviews, the deans of schools and heads of departments also stated that, though there are commendable efforts by private universities, internet connectivity has yet to permeate all departments for students and lecturers. Heads of Departments also stated that internet connectivity is key for lecturers since they use it to collect new information and do research on contemporary issues to be taught to students.

These findings point to the significant role of lecturers and students in accessing internet connectivity at all times for their academic activities. The study found that the majority (48.3%) of the lecturers disagreed that there are many and frequent refresher courses and re-training for all lecturers annually, while 25.9% strongly agreed. On the other hand, 12.3% strongly disagreed, 7.8% agreed, and 5.7% were undecided. Slightly more than half (50.7%) of the lecturers disagreed that every year, private universities offer scholarships to staff, whereas (23.5%) strongly agreed, 13.8% strongly disagreed, 6.9% agreed, and 5.1% were undecided.

On their part, the interviewees also supported the views expressed by most of the lecturers on the scarcity of scholarships and opportunities for further professional development. UNESCO (2013) asserted that a number of countries

are faced with the challenge of university lecturer morale, which is associated with scarce prospects for professional and career progression. These findings indicate that, though rarely undertaken by many private universities, human resource management is a crucial component in any private university, and it partakes a key role in attaining economic benefit and improving the output of lecturers. This implies that human resource management practices determine how lecturers and other staff members undertake their tasks and improve the quality of education offered in private universities.

4.2. Inferential Statistics

To delve deeper into the correlation between the management of human resources and the quality of education in private universities, the data was run through Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Test Analysis.

		X₃	B	C	D
X₃	Pearson Correlation	1	.826**	.689*	.737**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.019	.010
	N	11	11	11	11
B	Pearson Correlation	.826**	1	.668*	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.025	.006
	N	11	11	11	11
C	Pearson Correlation	.689*	.668*	1	.492
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.025		.125
	N	11	11	11	11
D	Pearson Correlation	.737**	.762**	.492	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.006	.125	
	N	11	11	11	11

Table 2: Relationship between Lecturers' Motivation and Quality of Education

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Key

p – Pearson Correlation value

r – Level of significance

X₃ - How Often Lecturers are Motivated

B – Students Graduating with First-and second-Class Divisions

C – Students' Completion Rates (%)

D – Frequency of Participation in Co-Curricular Activities

Table 2 presents the results of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test Analysis, which generated correlation coefficients (r-strength of co-relation) $r_1 = 0.826$, $r_2 = 0.689$ and $r_3 = 0.737$ with corresponding p-values of 0.002, 0.019 and $0.010 < 0.05$ (p-correlation value and r-strength of co-relation) The level of significance was less than 0.05 respectively, thus showing a significant positive correlation between lecturers' motivation and quality of education in private universities. These results further indicate that human resource management practices are useful in encouraging staff to offer quality education to students in private universities. In other words, in private universities where there is good remuneration of staff, frequent proficiency training and motivation, students are bound to access quality education.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

The study revealed a concerning lack of adequate remuneration for many lecturers within private universities, accompanied by a scarcity of opportunities for staff promotion and proficiency training. Moreover, there is a notable absence of friendly medical insurance coverage and access to essential resources like 24-hour internet connectivity. These deficiencies not only affect the morale and well-being of faculty and staff but also impede their professional growth and effectiveness in delivering quality education. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including revisiting salary structures, implementing robust professional development programs, and providing essential benefits to support the university workforce effectively.

5.2. Recommendations

To effectively address the imbalance in student-lecturer ratios, private university management must prioritize recruiting additional lecturers. Moreover, remunerating lecturers competitively and implementing motivational strategies are crucial for fostering a conducive work environment and enhancing faculty satisfaction. Ensuring regular provision of internet services is essential to support pedagogical activities, facilitating research, communication, and access to educational resources. By investing in these areas, universities can improve teaching quality, promote academic excellence, and ultimately enhance the overall learning experience for students. This concerted effort underscores a commitment to advancing educational standards and supporting the professional development of faculty members.

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