

Effects of selected human resource management practices on levels of faculty performance in Kenyan Private Universities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of selected human resource management practices on levels of faculty performance in Kenyan private Universities. The study was guided by Human Capital Theory advanced by Theodore Schultz. This study employed a convergent parallel design. Data was collected from 118 respondents from academic and administrative staff members in four selected Universities. The respondents were sampled using probability and non-probability sampling procedures. Questionnaires and interview guide were used to collect primary data. A pilot test was conducted to assess validity of the research instruments whereas Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to determine reliability of the research instruments. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics namely, frequency distribution, percentages and measures of central tendencies were used while statistical significance of relationships among selected variables was determined using regression analysis. From this study, it was found out that compensation, career management practices and work-life balance have a positive effect and relationship on performance of faculty in private universities in Kenya. When all these HRM practices are used, the performance of the faculty improves to a greater extent in terms of revenue generated, quality of service offered, and quality of research supervision, absenteeism and research productivity levels among faculty staff members. The study recommends that Kenyan private Universities should design effective policies for HRM practices that are in accordance with the quality assurance standards of higher institutions, labour regulations and market standards.

Keywords Career Management Practices, *Compensation*, Job performance and Work-Life Balance

1. Introduction

An employee is the most valuable asset to any given organization. The increasing interest in human resources is due to the assumption that employees and the way they are managed is critical to the success of an organization and can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Omolo et al. 2013). Human resource management practices is a more innovative view of work place management than the previous traditional approach, this is because its techniques force the managers of enterprises to express their goals with specificity so that they are understood and undertaken by the workforce adequately (Becker and Gerhat, 2011). HRM practices when strategically implemented will be the key components that will drive and spur the creation of competitive value in any given organization.

According to Katou and Gachunga (2014), HRM practices can be grouped in two HRM systems, namely the HRM practices aiming at attracting and developing human resources and those aiming at retaining human resources. Among the HRM practices aimed at attracting and developing employees are recruitment and selection; training and development; and those aiming at retaining employees are performance appraisals, reward and compensation systems. Such activities have been linked to organizational competitiveness, increased productivity, higher quality of work life and greater profitability (Chew and Chan, 2011). HRM practices such as workforce planning; job analysis; training and development; recruitment and selection; compensation and reward; performance appraisal; career management; human resource information system; and quality of work-life affect the performance of a firm (Alnaqbi, 2011). Organizations face continuous challenges ranging from heightened national consciousness, employment and labor law requirements not to mention the need to ensure maximum utilization of their resources to their own advantage; thus there is need to align various HRM practices to the laws of the state (Kipyegon and Cheruiyot, 2012). The current disposition of HRM is largely associated with drastic expansion of businesses globally, technological innovations and fierce competition that characterizes the environment in which businesses operate today, and Kenyan business environment is not an exception to this global development.

Other HRM best practices include collecting performance feedback where provision of constructive feedback from all other employees could be employed as a tool to improve individual employee and organizational performance. In order to improve the organization, Khan (2012) asserted that government departments have been engaged in effective HRM practices. Khan adds that there are three key directions that have been identified to assist government in managing the workforce changes. The directions are building the organization's potential, strengthening its competitiveness and renewing its workforce. This therefore means that, when workforce and strategic objectives are aligned, they guarantee the delivery of quality programmes and services to the public since the effective HRM practices would essentially assist in positioning the public service for the future.

As most developed countries are collaborating with developing countries in business developments there is a need to adopt a new dimension to the study of HRM. Studies need to factor in the perspective of other economies, especially those in Africa since others in Asia and Latin America have been given ample attention (Mukanzi, 2013). Relationships between human resource management and productivity have been studied and still need to be studied from different perspectives.

Unfortunately according to recent reports Kenyan county governments have proved to be unable to adequately manage their human resources thereby leading to underperformance among them. Kumar (2012) inferred that, HRM practices can enhance performance of a firm. According to their findings, the scholars recommended that firms ought to develop and document strategies for human resource management practices with the objective of enhancing both employee and organizational performance which is contrary to most of the Kenyan Universities. The fundamental importance of HRM practices to the organization's performance has been underscored; and little has been studied in the same in the context of Kenya's private Universities.

Apparently, the performance of faculty members in Kenyan Universities is likely to be negated unless the current situation changes. Following the deteriorating conditions in public universities and changing trends in admission criteria to both public and private universities. The performance of employees and more especially faculty staff members in key in organization performance of Kenyan Universities, the ministry of education through the Commission for University Education has come up with an initiative which involves auditing of Universities countrywide to establish their performance and adherence to set standards. Despite this initiative, there has not been much improvement in the performance of the academic faculty staff; hence there is a knowledge gap. Therefore, the study was conducted to establish the effect of selected human resource management practices on levels of faculty performance in Kenyan private Universities.

Research Questions

1. What is effect of compensation on employee performance in private Universities?
2. How do career management practices influence employee performance in private universities?
3. What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in private Universities?

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between compensation and employee performance.

H02: There is no significant relationship between career management practices and employee performance.

H03: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and employee performance.

2. Theoretical Background

This study was guided by Human Capital Theory advanced by an economist Theodore Schultz (1960). This theory argues that the concept of human capital recognizes that not all labour is equal and that the quality of employees can be improved by investing in them. Theodore believed that human capital could be invested in through education, training, and enhanced benefits that will lead to an improvement in the quality and level of production. The theory further asserts that, education, experiences and abilities of an employee have an economic value for employers and for the economy as a whole.

In this theory, it is asserted that, recent challenges such as globalization, a knowledge based economy and technological evolution have obliged many countries and organizations to seek new ways of maintaining competitive advantage (Milman and Ricci, 2013). He adds that the standard approach in labour economics views human capital as a set of skills or characteristics that enhance a worker's productivity, and that human capital simply refers to the stock of productive knowledge and skills possessed by workers. (Mutua and Namusonge, 2012) adds that the concept of human capital is semantically the mixture of human and capital. In tandem with the meaning of human capital in the economic perspective, human is the subject to take charge of all economic activities such as production, consumption and transaction. On the establishment of the aforementioned concepts, it can be recognized that, human capital means one of the production elements which can generate added values through inputting it.

Human capital expansively includes the meaning of "human as a creator" who frames knowledge, skills, competency and experience originated by continuously connecting between "self" and "environment". Many empirical literatures show that human capital affects various social components. Wambui, (2013) contends that, the investment of human capital is more effective than that of physical capital. Throughout the investment of human capital, an individual who has acquired knowledge and skills can easily transfer the same to certain goods and services. Considering that the accumulation of knowledge and skills enables an employee to take charge of important roles in an organization, there is a widespread belief that learning is the core factor to increase the human capital (Opu, 2011).

In relation to this study, human resource management practices of a given organization need to be enhanced in order to improve employees' performance. The theory of human capital can therefore be employed to emphasize on the rationale of attracting and retaining workforce with requisite knowledge, skills and competencies. The said knowledge, skills and competencies can

simply be enhanced through competitive compensation, career management practices, work-life balance measures and employee engagement among others.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopted mixed research method approach. Utilizing the convergent parallel design the purpose of a convergent of Parallel mixed methods design was to simultaneously collect both qualitative and quantitative data, merge the data and use the results to understand a research problem. Mixed method approach not only allows the researchers to be more confident in the results of the study but also provides a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of the study (Jick 1979; Thurmond 2001; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner 2007). More specifically, by combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study sought to not only bring out the major trends (patterns) and practices in faculty performance but also to elicit specific voices from lecturers and academic managers. Utilizing mixed methods is not without limitations. For instance, it makes replication exceedingly difficult (Jick 1979; Thurmond 2001).

Data for this study was collected from 100 lecturers, 10 heads of department, 4 deans of faculties and 4 human resource managers. Making a total of 118 respondents. The selection of lecturers was conducted through probability sampling procedures that is simple random sampling and stratified random sampling to select 25 lecturers from each of the four sampled private University. The heads of departments, deans and human resource managers were selected through purposive sampling procedures as key informants. To supplement data collected from the primary respondents document analysis guide was used to collect secondary data from University official documents such as student enrollment, graduation rates, completion rates, performance records and examination records.

Data analysis occurred in two stages. The first stage involved the processing quantitative data from the questionnaire administered to the primary respondents of the study. During this stage, descriptive statistics especially frequency distributions, percentages and, where applicable, means were computed and utilized to display data patterns; that is, to construct a descriptive profile of the study sample and to depict the patterns in the influence of policies and practices targeted by the study. The regression model that was used is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y = Faculty Performance in selected private universities

β_0 = Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Coefficients of determination

X1 = Compensation

X2 = Career management practices

X3 = Work-life balance

ε = Error term

The second stage in the data management and analysis process involved the transcribing of in-depth interview guide and document analysis guide. These were transcribed and categorized by research questions. Patterns from these sources of data constituted a basis for the cross-validation of results (patterns) obtained from the qualitative data. Interpretation was based on themes which emerged from the data and were supported by selected quotes.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Effect of Compensation on Employee Performance in private universities

Compensation was measured based on both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards or pay and benefits. It is not only in the form of money, but also in non-cash form. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to statements relating to HRM practices undertaken by their University on a five-point likert scale (1=strongly agree - 5=strongly disagree). The results of the responses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Effect of Compensation on Employee Performance in private universities

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std. Dev
The salary I receive is commensurate with my responsibilities and to the market standards.	21%	37%	24%	12%	6%	2.45	1.139
The non-monetary benefits such as vacation time and medical insurance I receive are commensurate to the market standards.	44%	30%	16%	5%	5%	1.71	.793

The compensation offered by my University leads to increase in job performance.	43%	35%	16%	4%	2%	1.81	1.039
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From the table 1, the mean scores for the responses suggest respondents’ agreement to the statements on compensation by private Universities. It appears respondents had knowledge on how employees of other universities besides private universities were compensated. The mean of 2.45 implies that employees agreed with the statement “The salary I receive is commensurate with my responsibilities and to the market standards”. Also the mean of 1.80 means that the respondents agreed to the statement “The compensation offered leads to increase in job performance”.

The responses gathered from the interviewees (HR officers) reaffirmed the findings regarding compensation. One human resource manager said;

Academic staff of private university receive some fringe benefits such as commuter allowance, medical insurance, part time claims and leave allowance however they do not have a pension plan from their employer.”

The HR officers cordially confirmed that compensation offered influenced employee performance; one dean said;

“In case of salary delays, some employees tend to absent themselves in order to find other ways of making ends meet.”

Therefore, there is positive relationship between the human resource management practices and employee performance in private universities in Kenya.

H01: There is no significant relationship between compensation and employee performance in private universities

Table 2 Model Summary Showing the Relationship between Compensation and Employee Performance in private universities

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.462 ^a	.214	.211	.69025

a. Predictors: (Constant), Compensation

From the table above, an R squared of 21.1% was obtained. This implies that the simple linear model with compensation as the independent variable explains 21.1% of the variations in performance. This means that when compensation was used the performance of the private universities changed by 21.1%.

Table 3 ANOVA Results Showing the Relationship between Compensation and Employee Performance in private universities
ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.439	1	40.439	84.876	.000 ^b
	Residual	148.652	312	.476		
	Total	189.091	313			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Compensation

From the analysis above, a p-value of less than 0.05 (p-value=0.000) was obtained. This implies that the simple linear model with compensation earned as independent variable is significant. Therefore as compensation is used the performance of private universities improves.

Table 4 Coefficient Results Showing the Relationship between Compensation and Employee Performance
Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.964	.159		6.053	.000
	Compensation	.593	.064	.462	9.213	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

Data in Table 4 further shows correlations coefficients show that compensation earned (X1) is significant (p-value = 0.000) in influencing employee performance (Y). The results of the analysis when fitted to model will be;

$$Y = 0.964 + 0.593X1$$

Hypothesis tests results suggest that compensation has a positive effect on employee performance. This finding indicates that the higher the compensation provided by private universities the higher the performance will be among the employees. Therefore the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

How Career Management Practices influence Employee Performance in private universities

Career management practices was measured based on training and career development. The responses to the statements are shown in the table 5.

Table 5. How Career management Practices influence Employee Performance in private universities

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std. Dev
I have received sufficient training to enable me do my job effectively.	43%	32%	16%	7%	3%	1.94	1.047
There are opportunities for me to advance my career.	45%	24%	6%	20%	5%	2.16	1.313
Career management practices lead to increase in job performance.	25%	50%	18%	7%	0%	2.06	.842

From the table above, with the mean scores of 1.94, 2.16 and 2.06 respectively, the respondents agreed to the statements “I have received sufficient training to enable me do my job effectively”, “There are opportunities for me to advance my career” and to whether career management practices lead to increase in job performance.

The responses gathered from the interviewees reaffirmed the findings regarding career management practices. The HR officers, deans and head of departments confirmed that there were opportunities for employees to advance their careers. One of HR officers quoted that;

“The University does sponsor employees wish to advance their careers. Training is conducted but not adequately because the responsible managers do not even conduct training need analysis before conducting the training. But all the same training is essential because it enables employees to comply with rules and regulations of work place and also fulfill what is expected of them.”

H02: There is no significant relationship between Career Management Practices and employee performance.

Table 6. Model Summary Showing the Relationship between Career Management Practices and Employee Performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.579 ^a	.336	.334	.63453

a. Predictors: (Constant), Career management practices

From the table above, an R squared of 33.4% was obtained in the above analysis. This implies that the simple linear model with career management practices as the independent variable explains 33.4% of the variations in performance. This means that when career management practices were used the performance of private universities changed by 33.4%.

Table 7. ANOVA Results Showing the Relationship between Career Management Practices and Employee Performance

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	63.470	1	63.470	157.636	.000 ^b
	Residual	125.621	312	.403		
	Total	189.091	313			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Career management practices

From the analysis above, a p-value of less than 0.05(p-value=0.000) was obtained. This implies that the simple linear model with training and career management practices as independent variables is significant. Therefore as career management practices facility is enhanced the performance of private universities improves.

Table 8. Coefficient Results Showing the Relationship between Career Management Practices and Employee Performance Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.672	.141		4.760	.000
1 Career management practices	.837	.067	.579	12.55	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

From the table above, correlations coefficients show that career management practices offered (X2) is significant (p-value = 0.000) in influencing employee performance (Y). The fitted model from this analysis is shown below:

$$Y = 0.672 + 0.837X_2$$

Hypothesis tests results suggest that career management practices have a positive impact to employee performance. This finding indicates that the higher the career management practices provided by private universities the higher the performance will be among the employees. Therefore the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance in private universities

Work-life balance was measured in terms of flexible work schedules such as part time working, ability among the employees to fulfill other responsibilities outside work and working from home. The results of the responses pertaining to this are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std. Dev
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disagree							
My university offers flexibility as to when to start and end the day's work.	12%	38%	31%	14%	5%	2.60	1.01968
Once I notify my supervisor, I am sometimes allowed to work from home.	22%	42%	15%	18%	3%	2.51	.96006
I have the time and energy to fulfill my responsibilities outside work.	25%	48%	21%	1%	6%	2.37	1.09224
Work-life balance leads to increase in job performance.	23%	53%	14%	10%	0%	2.03	.74491

From the above table, respondents agreed with the statements “I have the time and energy to fulfill my responsibilities outside work” and “Work-life balance leads to increase in job performance”; mean = 2.37 and 2.03 respectively. However as to whether my university offers flexibility as to when to start and end the day's work there was neutrality (Mean= 2.60). Equally the statement “Once I notify my supervisor, I am sometimes allowed to work from home” had a neutrality (2.51) Meaning the employees were oblivious of work-life balance in private Universities.

The responses gathered from the interviewees reaffirmed the findings regarding career management practices. One HR officer alluded the following;

“There is some level of flexibility among the employees at work, employees report to work at 8am and break for 1 hour lunch break at 1pm, then leave for home at 5 pm daily. All employees are allowed time for offs, annual leaves, maternity leaves and paternity leaves whenever they are rightly demanded.”

It was found out from document analysis that employees were sometimes allowed to work from home. The officers also confirmed that employees would easily take time off to attend to

emergencies at home once they notified their respective supervisors. The HR officers, heads of department and deans cordially confirmed that work-life balance does influence employee performance.

H03: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in private universities.

Table 10. Model Summary Showing the Relationship between Work-life Balance and Employee Performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.309 ^a	.095	.092	.74049

a. Predictors: (Constant), Work-life balance

From the table above, an R squared of 9.2% was obtained in the above analysis. This implies that the simple linear model with work-life balance as the independent variable explains 9.2% of the variations in performance. This means that when work-life balance was enhanced the performance of private university changed by 9.2%.

Table 11. ANOVA Results Showing the Relationship between Work-life Balance and Employee Performance

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.013	1	18.013	32.851	.000 ^b
	Residual	171.078	312	.548		
	Total	189.91	313			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Work-life balance

From the analysis above, a p-value of less than 0.05 (p-value=0.000) was obtained. This implies that the simple linear model with work-life balance as independent variables is significant. Therefore as work-life balance is enhanced the performance of private university improves.

Table 12. Coefficient Results Showing the Relationship between Work-life Balance and Employee Performance

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	1.505	.159		9.443	.000
1	Job flexibility	.377	.066	.309	5.732	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Work-life balance and employee performance

From the table above, correlations coefficient show that work-life balance (X3) is significant (p-value = 0.000) in influencing employee performance (Y). The fitted model from this analysis is shown below:

$$Y = 1.505 + 0.377X3$$

The hypothesis tests results suggest that work-life balance relates positively to employee performance. This finding indicates that the higher the work-life balance provided by private Universities the higher the performance will be among the employees. Therefore the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations of the Study

Conclusions

Among all of the three factors, career management practice is a highly significant factor which influences employee performance. Work-life balance is the second highly influential factor which influences employee performance and then employee participation which was found to be the least significant factor which influences employee participation.

From this study it is concluded that human resource management practices have a significant positive relationship with the employee performance of private Universities. When all these practices (compensation, career management practices and work-life balance) were used, it was found that there was a great significant variance in employee performance in Kenyan private Universities.

However, based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that a set of HRM practices will not necessarily have a direct impact on the performance of all employees in private Universities in Kenya. It is therefore, necessary to use HRM practices tactfully and link them to the goals of an organization in order to gain a sustained competitive advantage. The findings of this study suggest that, strategic programs, if properly implemented, can facilitate and nature the desired

capabilities and induce better performance among the employees in private Universities in the country.

The study concludes that private universities in Kenya have implemented a set of HRM practices but not to the required standards. There is need for each private University in Kenya to put more effort in enhancing more strategic HRM practices that will enable the Universities gain strategic organizational outcomes in terms of flexibility, research productivity and quality customer service to the University fraternity.

Recommendations of the Study

Private universities in Kenya should design effective compensation policies that are in accordance with quality assurance practices, labour regulations and the market standards. The compensation practices of private Universities should always be in accordance with the compensation guidelines of the ministry of labour. There is also a need for the universities to organize and initiate pension plans for their employees,

There is need for Universities to conduct a more strategic human resources management training programmes including total quality management training programs. The private Universities should ensure that training need analysis is conducted regularly in order to establish the training needs of the employee. The training should be done to academic and administrative staff at all levels and should also expand to include training in other areas in readiness for other jobs in the future.

There is need for the Kenyan private universities to put in place adequate policies which address work-life balance among their employees. Childcare services should be introduced at work places to enable the female employees worry less about their infants while at work. This way they will be able to concentrate at work thereby boosting the performance of job.

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