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Professional Development Practices and Service Delivery of Academic Staff in Kampala International and Kyambogo Universities in Uganda

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between professional development practices and service delivery of academic staff in Kampala International and Kyambogo universities. Specifically, the study examined the relationship between professional development practices on teaching, research and community service delivery of academic staff. The study was guided by correlational and cross-sectional designs. A total of 478 respondents were involved in the study. These included 187 from KIU and 291 from Kyambogo University. Academic staff were sampled using stratified sampling techniques while administrative staff were sampled using purposive sampling. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire for academic staff and interview guide for administrative staff. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics which included student's-test, ANOVA, correlation and simple linear regression analyses. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis method. The main findings of the study were that professional development practices were significantly related with teaching service delivery of academic staff, while it (PDPs) insignificantly related with research service delivery and community service delivery of academic staff. It was therefore concluded that PDPs significantly relates with academic staff service delivery. It was also concluded that PDPs insignificantly related with research service delivery and community service delivery of academic staff in the two universities. Thus, it was recommended that to enhance service delivery of academic staff, the university management in the two universities should provide PDPs like training seminars, workshops, study conferences, coaching, supervision and mentoring to boost teaching service delivery of academic staff. However, it was recommended that PDPs offering staff opportunities for training, coaching, seminars inductions, study leaves, mentoring and guidance while at work should not be over emphasised as a tool to enhance Research Service Delivery (RSD) and Community Service Delivery (CSD) but rather consider other factors that can relate with research and community service delivery.

Keywords: Academic staff; Service Delivery; Professional Development practices

Background

Traditionally, universities have defined the role of academic staff to include the domains of teaching, research and service to the society (Luzeky & Badger, 2009). This implies that effectiveness of academic staff is predominantly framed in terms of delivering on teaching, research and community services. Globally, service delivery of academic staff has been recognized as essential in the realization of university core objectives. Academic staff are expected to be effective in teaching relevant content to market demands, preparing before

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teaching, using appropriate teaching methods assessing learners with specific resources and research (Walters & Openjuru, 2016).

In Uganda, service delivery of academic staff has been worsening in public universities. Lecturers are associated with use of the same lecture materials repeatedly; some lecturers do not attend lectures regularly and send notes for photocopying, come late for lectures and not teaching the entire courses (Mamdani, 2007). In addition, Kyaligonza (2010) observe that the decline of research in public higher education institutions in Uganda started in 1971 when General Idi Amin plunged Uganda into dictatorship, economic ruin and degradation. In this period Uganda tertiary institutions experienced expulsion of the British, Americans and other whites in 1972 who were cadre researchers. The resultant effect was that staff and students were isolated from international scholarship. Kagaari and Munene (2010) revealed that academic staff performance in public universities is still a serious challenge with cases of poor teaching and low publication rates registered. For this study, Kasule and Neema (2014) showed that Kyambogo University does not have a coherent staff development system, faces challenges such as lack of training and staff development.

Over 70% of academic staff in Kyambogo University possess, master's degrees with limited focus on professional training a situation which might impact negatively on academic staff service delivery (Kasule and Neema, 2014). Auditor General (2015) observed that Kyambogo University is facing performance challenges of academic staff especially in the areas of teaching, research and community outreaches. In private universities this scenario is not any different. Kasozi (2009) for instance identified that there were issues related with the way academic staff discharge their responsibilities in the areas of teaching, research and community outreaches in Uganda's private institutions. In particular, Edabu and Anumaka (2014) also noted that Kampala International University service delivery performance was low. Some academic staff have not assessed learners effectively, have neglected responsibilities especially those related with teaching, research and outreaches, and have exhibited a slow pace of modernization of teaching and learning. A similar scenario was reported by National Council for Higher Education Report (2017) that academic staff service delivery at Kampala International University was poor. Several factors may be responsible for this poor service delivery but this study was interested in finding out how professional development practices in Kampala International University and Kyambogo University are responsible for the low service delivery of academic staff since there are no conclusive results between the two. In the next section literature related to the study is given.

Professional Development Practices and Teaching Service Delivery

Imo, Oswald and Ingang (2013) in a study about staff development programs and secondary school teachers on performance in Nigeria empirically revealed that teachers who participated in staff development programs were more effective in their job performance than those who did not in terms of knowledge of job performance than those in terms of knowledge of subject matter, classroom management, the methods and evaluation of students work. However this study was focusing on subject matter and knowledge acquired. It did not lay emphasis on other elements of

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teaching like lecture presentations, actual teaching and regularity which will be a concern in this study. Amadi and Promise (2013). In a study about Professional development and teachers' academic performance in secondary schools in ETCHE Local Government area observed that in service training brings about curriculum change, innovation in teaching methodologies and provision of quality professional growth and development. The previous review was not an empirical study while the intended study was an empirical.

Barifaijo, Kreyeja, Namara, Kyohairwe and Ssentamu (2015) in a study about workload policy and its intricacies in academic profession revealed that workload policy had serious negative implications on research output and quality of research delivery. In this regard research is deemed as not a process but a product. It involves field research, library research and writing. The product of original research published books and journal articles become teaching tools and extend a university's mission beyond campus. All this is only realized through the role of academic staff who serves as an engine in ensuring that academic staff role of serving as a guide in researches and leading research projects in a university. Similarly, Kasozi (2009) argued that the major role of the professoriate in teaching is creating, disseminating knowledge and public service. Besides involvement in teaching, doing research and community service, academic staff are called upon to advice students, manage projects involving personnel and budgets, chair departments, serve important committee and task forces, raise funds, recruit students, represent Universities in various fora engage in local and international debates as well as acting as role models. The extent to which these are influenced by professional development opportunities is not yet empirically established which this study did the context of Kampala International and Kyambogo Universities.

Kyaligonza (2010) found out that public universities in Uganda are failing to fulfill the functions of higher education as they lag behind in research while emphasizing teaching. Kasule, Wesselike and Molder (2016) in a study about professional development status of teaching in a Ugandan public university revealed that accredited University education training symposia and community development activities were perceived to be important in improving teaching staff job performance. The above review suggests gaps in the way that most of it was carried out in western contexts and in either primary or secondary school settings. Some of the literature was not directly relating professional development practices on service delivery of academic staff which calls for a need to undertake this study to do so.

Hypothesis 1: Professional development practices is positively related with teaching service delivery of academic staff

Professional Development Practices and Research service delivery.

Idak, Ugwanyi and Eunice (2016) in a study about mentoring as a professional development of librarians revealed that informal mentoring strategy is the main strategy for professional development of librarians in Universities. Consequently, if it is not done research and publication are hindered. Additionally, Pay master Lyndon and Etale (2014) in a study about the impact of human resource development practices on the performance of academic staff in Nigerian

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universities revealed that human resource training had a significant positive relationship with academic staff performance in the areas of research and publication.

Supouitz and Tuner (2000) showed that professional development practices quality leads to an investigative inquiry that deepens a centre of research among teachers. However, it was not indicated whether scientific techniques like regression analysis and Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient which this study will use were applied in the previous review. Aslam (2013) found out that professional development programs offered to teachers are not so effective in building a high sense of performance in research. This was based on the promise that such programs are characterized with inflexible curriculum which ignores teacher's research needs.

Furthermore, Nakimuli and Turyahebwa (2015) in a study about Institutional Efficiency in selected Universities in Uganda noted that research is crucial for Africa and African Universities should be in the forefront in undertaking it. In this case the universities where the study was done were Makerere University and Kampala International University research. However, although the study was in one of our study scopes that is KIU, it was not conducted Kyambogo and didn't do much with professional development practices but rather much effort was put on institutional efficiency.

Hypothesis 2: Professional development practices is related associated with research service delivery of academic staff

Professional Development Practices and Community Outreach Service Delivery

Aslam, Javad, Nokandha, Jalahan and Lodhi (2012) noted that professional development was a continuous process of acquiring disseminating and executing knowledge to build more capable students and improving on society. Meanwhile, Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2016) in a study about academic staff development and outcomes in state Universities in South Nigeria revealed that a significant relationship exists between staff development and service delivery of academic staff in terms of community service. As academic staff in service training and attendance of conference, workshops influence positively on output of academic staff.

Mushemeza (2016) argued that another core function of academic staff was to make contribution to community outreach. Modern universities are supposed to be leaders in economic development of their communities and nations. It is therefore important for academic staff to design programmes and projects that focus on community needs and aspirations. Additionally, Kasule (2015) has reported that Ugandan private universities hardly engage in community development activities. However, it was not indicated whether professional development is partly responsible for the same low engagement of academic staff in the community development activities.

Hypothesis 3: Professional development practices is positively related with community outreach service delivery of academic staff

Research Methodology

Participants and procedure

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Regarding respondent's university of work, the model percentage (56.7) was from Kyambogo University as opposed to (43.3%) from Kampala International University. The results of the on gender of academic staff showed that the larger percentage (81%) were females with (19%) being male. This suggested that gender imbalances in higher education are reducing. The results of the third low on respondents' employment status revealed that the biggest percentage were full time staff (72.1%) as opposed to (27.9%) part-time staff implying that since they were full time lecturers they were more likely to deliver as expected on the job. The results on respondent's length of service revealed that the model percentage (53.4%) were of 5-10 years' experience, followed by lecturers with 10 years and above experience (25.1%) and academic staff with experience 10 years and above (21.5%) were of less than 5 years had least experience. Cumulatively, those with experience 5-10 years and above constituted the biggest number of respondents.

The data on employment status in their universities showed that the model percentage (59.9%) was from humanities as opposed to (40.1%) from sciences. This suggests that majority of the academic staff in the universities studied were from humanities. The results of the sixth row regarding qualification of respondents, the model percentage (80.6%) were master's degree holders, followed by those with doctoral degree (10.9%). The results suggested that in the two universities academic staff have qualifications that can allow them competently deliver. The data on academic staff rank showed that model percentage (46.6%) were assistant lecturers, followed by those (27.1%) lecturers. The results suggests that majority of the academic staff who participated in the study were of lower academic ranks.

Respondents' were sampled using simple and purposive random sampling. Academic staff were requested to fill a self-administered questionnaire while administrative staff were directly interviewed within scheduled times. The self-administered questionnaire had a five point scale where 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = Not sure, 4 = Agree and 5 = strongly Agree. While interview questions were derived from an interview guide from the three study objectives. The items of the self-administered questionnaire were derived from instruments with established reliabilities that were above 0.7. However after the confirmatory factor analysis instruments showed reliability values as follows. For the independent variable academic staff service delivery ASSD the reliabilities were as follows; teaching service delivery (11 items $\alpha = 0.880$), research service delivery (10 items $\alpha = 0.904$) community service delivery (5 items $\alpha = 0.921$). Thus the instruments were highly internally consistent to measure professional development practices and academic staff service delivery.

Data analysis at univariate level, the data analysis was done basing on percentages from the frequency tables and means and standard deviation at descriptive statistics. At the bivariate level, using Student's t Test and ANOVA, comparisons were between the independent variable (PDP) and the respondents' categorical background variables. At the bivariate level, Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient indices and three simple linear regression models were run, for purposes of testing the study hypotheses with each regressing the PDP on a particular variable of academic staff service delivery. Qualitative analysis was done with use thematic analysis method.

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Research Findings

At the confirmatory level, there was need to establish whether service delivery characteristics were predicted by professional development practices PDP, that is to test hypothesis $H_1 - H_3$ Hence each of the dependent variables, teaching service delivery (TSD), research service delivery (RSD) and community service delivery (CSD), the results are given in Tables 4.14, 4.15 and 4.16:

Hypothesis one: PDP significantly relates with academic staff teaching service delivery

Table 4.14: Regression of Teaching Service Delivery and Professional Development Practices

Model	Standardized co-efficient	Significance
PDP TSD	0.183	0.004

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.030$
F = 8.456, p = 0.004

Results in Table 4.14 showed that PDP explained 3% of the variation in TSD (adjusted $R^2 = 0.030$.) This means that 97% of the variation was accounted for by extraneous variables that is other factors not considered in the study. The regression model was good F = 8.456 p = 0.004 < 0.05. This implied that TSD was highly predicted by PDP. Hence the research hypothesis was accepted that professional development practices had a positive significant relationship on teaching service delivery

Hypothesis two PDP

Table 4.15: Regression Analysis Between Research Service Delivery and Professional Development Practices

Model	Standardized co-efficient	Significance
PDP RSD	-0.083	0.193

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.003$
F = 1.703, P = 0.193

Table 4.15 showed that research service delivery explained 0.3% of the variation in professional development practices (PDP), adjusted $R^2 = 0.003 = 0.3\%$. This means that 99.7% of the variation is accounted for other factors not considered in the study. The regression model was poor F = 1.703, P = 0.193 > 0.05. This suggested that research service delivery was insignificantly predicted by professional development practices. Hence the research hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative null hypothesis that professional development practices have no relationship on research service delivery

Hypothesis three PDP

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Table 4.16: Regression Analysis Between Community Service Delivery and Professional Development Practices

Model	Standardized co-efficient	Significance
PDP CSD	-0.009	0.888

Adjusted $R^2 = -0.004$
F = 1.020 p = 0.888

Table 4.16 showed that community service delivery explained -0.4% of the variation in professional development practices (PDP), adjusted $R^2 = -0.004$. This means that over 100% of the variation is accounted for other factors not considered in the study. The regression model was poor F = 1.020, p = 0.888 > 0.05. This indicated that community serviced delivery insignificantly related with professional development practices. Hence the research hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative null hypothesis that professional development practices have no relationship on community service delivery of academic staff.

Discussion

Professional Development Practices and Teaching Service Delivery

Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient findings on this objective revealed a positive significant relationship between professional development practices and teaching service delivery of academic staff in KIU and Kyambogo Universities. Study findings in this regard showed that academic staff who received both on and off job professional development practices were better positioned to service as expected in the field of teaching. Through mentoring study leaves, coaching, monitoring and other professional development practices academic staff would adequately prepare, teach, examine learners guide and counsel them.

These findings were in line with findings of Imo, Oswald and Ingang (2013) in a study about staff development programs and secondary school teachers on performance in Nigeria empirically revealed that teachers who participated in staff development programs were more effective in their job performance than those who did not in terms of knowledge of job performance than those in terms of knowledge of subject matter, classroom management, the methods and evaluation of student's work. The study findings were in support of Amadi and Promise (2013) who observed that in service training brings about curriculum change, innovation in teaching methodologies and provision of quality professional growth and development. The study findings concurred with Nasreen and Mirza (2012) in a study about faculty training and development in public sector universities in Punjab revealed that training programs was key in improving teacher's skills and attitudes in old Universities as compared with that in new Universities.

Khan and Tajoddin (2012) findings that teacher's professional development programs are of great significance for teachers learning and improvement practices to enhance quality of teaching and learning in schools. Professional development programs attempt to change teachers' beliefs about certain aspects of teaching a particular curriculum or innovation. Similarly, Guskey

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(2010) observed that professional development programs enhance primary teacher's understanding of content of subject matter, knowledge to teach and how students learn that content.

In conclusion of the discussion on the first objective, professional development practices have a highly strong positive significant relationship on teaching service delivery of academic staff.

Professional Development Practices and Research Service Delivery of Academic Staff

Pearson's correlation co-efficient results and regression analysis results on this objective revealed an insignificant relationship between professional development practices and research service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo and KIU. These findings meant that even if developed academic staff research delivery remains constant. These findings disagreed with those of earlier studies like Supowitz and Tuner (2000) who showed that professional development practices quality leads to an investigative inquiry that deepens a centre of research among teachers. However, it was not indicated whether scientific techniques' like regression analysis and Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient this study will use were applied in the previous review. The study findings also differed from Aslam (2013) who found out that professional development programs offered to teachers are not so effective in building a high sense of performance in research. This was based on the promise that such programs are characterized with inflexible curriculum which ignores teacher's research needs. In more less the same way Takbir (2011) disagreed with the study findings that teachers leaning and professional development offers critical skills like those related with reflective practice, action collaborative research which boosts teachers' research skills. In conclusion, professional development practices insignificantly related with research service delivery of academic staff in KIU and Kyambogo Universities. In conclusion, professional development practices insignificantly related with research service delivery of academic staff in KIU and Kyambogo Universities.

Professional Development Practices and Community Service Delivery of Academic Staff

On this objective, Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient findings obtained from the study showed that professional development practices insignificantly related with community service delivery of academic staff. This finding suggested that PDS in form of coaching, monitoring, mentoring, study leaves, among others did not impact at all on community service delivery of academic staff. This finding agreed with earlier works of Kasozi (2009) which basically attributed low research service delivery of academic staff to the low university funds that cannot allow training academic staff to the level that can enable them serve their communities. The study findings that professional development of academic staff are insignificantly related were supported by Kasule (2015) who reported that Ugandan private universities hardly engage in community development activities and that the quality of education provided is relatively low. However, it was not indicated whether professional development is partly responsible for the same low quality higher education.

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The study findings differed from, Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2016) in a study about academic staff development and outcomes in state Universities in South Nigeria revealed that a significant relationship exists between staff development and service delivery of academic staff in terms of community service. As academic staff in service training and attendance of conference, workshops influence positively on output of academic staff. In nutshell, professional development practices insignificantly related with service delivery of academic staff in KIU and Kyambogo University. Hence, academic staff are ought to be provided with professional development practices to enhance their teaching service delivery. However, university administrators should not lay more emphasis on professional development practices hoping to improve on research and community outreach service delivery.

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