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Professional Development Practices and Teaching Service Delivery of Academic Staff at Kyambogo University, Uganda

By

Kulthum Nabunya, Hilary Tusiime Mukwenda, Robert Kyaligonza

Abstract

The study explored the relationship between Professional Development Practices and teaching Service Delivery of Academic staff in Kyambogo University because of the low academic staff service delivery manifested in low innovativeness of teaching in the university. Informed by Suzan Dorling's Theory of Customer Service Delivery and the Human Capital Theory Developed by Adam Smith, the insights of the study were gathered through a survey method that involved the use of self-administered questionnaire and an interview guide a total of 291 respondents were involved in the study and data was analyzed using simple linear regression. Findings from Kyambogo University revealed a significant relationship between professional development practices and academic staff teaching service delivery among academic staff in Kyambogo University. This implied that as academic staff were professionally developed through training, seminars, workshops, conferences, study leaves, mentoring and monitoring, their competencies in effective teaching service delivery improved. These findings support the Human Capital Theory that states that for human beings in the society to be more productive, they must fully be developed through training. Furthermore, from these findings, the article offers insight into how professional development practices significantly relate with academic staff service delivery in Kyambogo University. It concludes further that the more professional development practices are offered to academic staff, the more teaching service delivery enhances in Kyambogo University. Thus professional development practices significantly relate with teaching service delivery of academic staff. It was recommended that if teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University is to be improved, policy makers in Kyambogo University particularly University Council should come up with policies favouring provision of professional development opportunities to academic staff to enhance their teaching service delivery.

Key words: Professional Development Practices, Service Delivery, Training, Teaching service

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Introduction

Globally, service delivery of academic staff has been recognized as essential in the realization of university core objectives (Amadi, 2016). Traditionally, universities have defined the role of academic staff to include the domains of teaching, research and service to the society (Luzucky and Badger, 2009). This implies that effectiveness of academic staff is predominantly framed in terms of delivering on the teaching, research and community services. Academic staff service delivery was judged upon these fundamental pillars. Isolation of one pillar suggests that academic staff were not fully serving as expected in universities. Such is that academic staff are expected to be effective in teaching students' content relevant to market demands, preparing before teaching, using appropriate teaching methods assessing learners with specific resources and research.

In light of the above, the performance of academic staff in Sub Saharan African universities has been affected by several challenges including inadequate government funding, lack of competent personnel and failure to evaluate individual works. For instance, Akpoiroro and Okon (2015) in a study about students' satisfaction with service delivery in federal universities in South-South geo political zone in Nigeria showed that students were satisfied with academic staff service delivery in terms of teaching. Furthermore, Khan, Khan and Khan (2011) studied impact of training and development on organizational performance and with use of a comprehensive literature review, they established that training and development significantly affect organizational performance and postulate that once academic staff are developed through training their teaching service performance would be enhanced.

According to Suzan Dorling's Theory of Customer Service Delivery (Dorling, 2000), service delivery in organizations is directed towards meeting customer's needs. The theory further states that an organization is expected to aim at consistently delivering high standards of service to retain customer loyalty by meeting and exceeding expectations. This implies that while at work academic staff should be conscious of the students' needs and acknowledge as the guiding principle in whatever they do. Thus, they ought to further embrace professional development to update their teaching skills to match with the competitive market demands. Likewise, in a university environment like that of Kyambogo University, academic staff should be devoted to high quality teaching to satisfy their primary customers (students). If professional development practices were offered to academic staff in consideration of their students' needs, there was a possibility that academic staff would acquire competencies required for their jobs. Consequently, their teaching service delivery would be enhanced especially in regard to effective teaching which would enable academic staff prepare relevant programmes matching with global students' needs.

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However, given the setting of this study, failure to observe the theory's demand that customer needs (students and lecturers needs) must be satisfied through offering professional development opportunities, would imply low academic staff service delivery in terms of teaching leading to loss of students and reputation of the institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Academic staff are expected to support and maintain institutional, national and international reputation through excellence in their service delivery in teaching (Crowford, 2009). However, it is generally observed that, there are service delivery gaps in the domains of teaching at Kyambogo University. At Kyambogo University, low academic staff service delivery was manifested in low innovativeness of teaching, inadequate supervision and limited engagement in community outreaches (Kasule, Wesselink, Naroozi & Mulder, 2016; The Auditor General, 2015). This was also in agreement with Tumuhimbise (2017) who indicated that over 60% of the academic staff in Kyambogo University failed to meet performance expectations and targets. Although several factors like rewards, policies at work place and work environment were found to be related to academic staff service delivery in earlier studies, gaps in academic staff service delivery were still recurring. This study sought to make a contribution by establishing how professional development practices related with academic staff service delivery in Kyambogo University

Professional development practices

Professional development practices are defined as the process of improving and increasing capacities of staff through access to education and training opportunities inside or outside the workplace (Ofojebe and Chukwuma, 2015). In education, professional development has been used to mean a wider variety of specialized training, formal education or advanced learning intended to help employees improve professional knowledge, skills and effectiveness (McGregor, 2007). Professional development also refers to the systematic maintenance improvement and broadening of knowledge, skills and the development of personal qualities necessary for execution of professional and technical duties throughout the individuals working life (Crowford, 2009).

The earlier conceptualisations are limited in that the nature of professional development practices such as study leaves, mentoring, coaching, workshops, seminars, conferences and in-service training courses which impact on academic staff service delivery were not fully studied in a university environment. In this study, professional development was defined as a process of improving both the instructor's academic standing as well as acquisition of greater competence and efficiency in discharging of professional obligations in and outside the university working environment. From the above conceptualisation, professional development practices in Kyambogo University involved senior academic staff mentoring, monitoring, inductions, coaching junior academic staff. It further meant offering professional learning, conferences, seminars and orientations to junior academic staff in Kyambogo University.

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Service delivery

Service delivery defined as transferring or handling of something from one party to another (Heery & Noon, 2001). Webster (2006) further defined service delivery as the act of performing duties. In the context of this study, service delivery was used in specific reference to academic staff's discharge of professional duties including teaching, research and community service delivery in Kyambogo University. Teaching service delivery of academic staff in this study was defined as preparing teaching, student assessment, update of teaching programmes, offering guidance to students, giving students feedback, providing students with study materials, regularity at work, compensating for lost time and setting course works in time. Service delivery of academic staff at Kyambogo University was showed to be low with over 70% of the academic staff showing low performance (Edabu & Anuka 2014; Kasule, Wesselink, Naroozi & Mulder, 2016) respectively. Teaching was revealed to be low within the different departments or faculties, there was low course development and innovation, low lecturer preparation, lecturers were neither conducting seminars nor tutorials and they were not selecting appropriate teaching and evaluation strategies. Likewise, The Auditor General (2015) revealed the service delivery dilemmas in Kyambogo University with more weakness in teacher preparations as well as in use of teaching method. Some academic staff were identified as lacking competencies to supervise students' research projects and community outreaches.

Likewise, Tumuhimbise (2017) observed that over 60% academic staff performance in Kyambogo University had declined in the past years despite having leaders. There were performance failures to complete targets like setting exams, marking and grading of students on time. In the same direction, Rwothumio, Musaaazi and Orodho (2016), showed that academic staff performance in Kyambogo University has been generally low and has been manifested in form of staff absenteeism, low morale and poor delivery of lectures. Bunoti (2011) showed that lecturers lack practical pedagogical skills to facilitate the development of higher order thinking skills through appropriate methodology. Consequently, students are not empowered to apply and to transfer knowledge so as to transform themselves and society as is their wish.

Professional Development Practices and Teaching Service Delivery.

High quality teaching is a key requisite for high education quality and training. It is the duty of institutions to provide staff with competencies and skills needed to adapt to globalized and complex environments where innovation, creativity, initiative and commitment to continuous learning are important in knowledge dissemination and transmission is favourable (Caena, 2011). Continuing staff development is vital to suit the changing work environment which renders absolute some of their original professional skills and knowledge. Such competences acquired in professional trainings include work planning, classroom practices, classroom management and personal view points (Dawo and Enose, 2012).

In their study about staff development programs and secondary school teachers on performance in Nigeria, Imo, Oswald and Ingang (2013), empirically revealed that teachers who participated in staff development programs were more effective in their job performance in terms of knowledge of job performance, knowledge of subject matter, classroom management,

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teaching method, assessment and evaluation of students' work than those who did not. However, this study focused on subject matter and knowledge acquired without emphasis on other elements of teaching like lecture preparations, actual teaching and regularity which were concerns in this study.

Amadi (2016) observed that in-service training brings about curriculum change, innovation in teaching methodologies and provision of quality professional growth and development. It is worth observing that Amadi (2016)'s study was not empirical with field findings which created a gap to cover with findings. Besides, Dawo, Enose and Tonny (2012) identified that in-service training courses are vital to halt the changing environment which renders absolute some of their original professional skills and knowledge. They help to build competences such as work planning, curriculum practices, curriculum management and personal view points which help to improve on performance in teaching processes. However, analysis of the extent to which professional development opportunities have improved service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University using regression analysis had not been studied which this study did.

Khan and Tajoddin (2012) indicated 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. The applicability of this theoretical view was established through undertaking this study which ascertained how professional development programmes offered to academic staff improved their selection of content, teaching methods, lecturing skills and students' evaluation. Moreover, Khan and Tajoddin (2012)'s review was not from the case of a developing country like Uganda where universities selected for the study are found which warranted the study to be carried on. Similarly, Guskey (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. However, these were on primary teacher's context and not in a university environment rendering it worthy to undertake this study on academic staff in Kyambogo University.

Empirically, studies like that of Supowitz and Turner (2000) about the effects of professional development on science teaching practices and classroom culture revealed that the quality of professional development in which teachers participated was strongly linked with both subject based teaching practices and investigative classroom culture. This meant that professional development enhance teaching in a positive direction. However, this study was carried on science teacher's professional development and service delivery while this study was on both science and humanities academic staff in Kyambogo University.

Biggs (2012) provided compelling evidence of the value of teacher development that is concrete and classroom based. When development takes place in classroom, teachers develop practical skills both during initial teacher education and in course of continuing professional development. At times teachers are able to benefit in engaging in professional development activities that help to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Effective changes in teaching

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have been recorded for teachers who engage in professional development experiences. However, this study was not on the academic staff of Kyambogo University thus creating a contextual gap that this study addressed.

Knight (2014) in a study about professional development meant for faculty and staff in Ras Al Khaimah's higher education institutions in Toronto Canada revealed that professional development of teachers in higher education has generic importance such as improving teaching/learning processes that enables exchanging and sharing of ideas. It also enables higher education institutions to fulfill their mission of teaching learning research and service to society. Teacher professional development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining various teaching systematically. Professional development includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops, professional meetings mentioning's) informal experiences (such as reading professional publications; watching television documentaries related to academic disciplines (Villegas-Reimers, 2010). However, these were studies carried out very in very far areas in developed countries not developing countries like Uganda with different social, political and economic setups with different levels of funding which created a contextual gap that this study addressed.

Ddungu (2014) identified that the level of professional development, empowerment is reflected by the scale of efforts put to design teachers capacity enhancement policies and the degree to which these policies are implemented to create an environment that enables teachers to engage in activities that enhance their teaching, research, innovative abilities, skills, knowledge, expertise and attitude. Ddungu (2014) further accentuated that professional development is used to enable teachers realise and utilise their experience, initiative, knowledge and wisdom. The process involves actions and programs which build teachers' capacity to improve their own proficiency and outcomes as well as efficiency and effectiveness of their institutions at large. Such programs include training through internal workshops, tutorials, case studies, seminars and apprenticeship. However, Ddungu (2014)'s study did not broadly investigate the impact of professional development practices on academic staff teaching effectiveness which this study covered.

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, Wesselik and Molder (2016) in a study about professional development status of teaching in Uganda 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 to service delivery of academic staff which called for a need to undertake this study.

Meanwhile, Azikuru, Onen and Ezati (2017) established university managers should invest more resources in training and developing staff to ensure that academic staff perform as expected. Further, the aforementioned study revealed that university staffing significantly relates with the quality of teaching in Uganda's universities. The above study was on many universities

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in Uganda not specific on Kyambogo University. Whereas Kraft, Blazar and Hogen (2017) studied the effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement using a meta- analysis revealed that coaching significantly affects effectiveness of teaching. Besides this study concentrated on coaching ignoring the impact of other professional development dimensions, workshops, seminars, study leaves and other forms of training which were considered in this current study.

Turk (2016) studied performance management of academic staff and its effectiveness to teaching and research based Estorian Universities and revealed that performance manage training help to achieve higher results in the area of teaching. As academic staff performance was monitored, there are high chances of improvement in the teaching approaches applied by academic staff. However, this reviewed study used document review method and qualitative analysis differing from the current study which applied simple linear regression and Pearson's correlation.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between professional development practices and service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University. Specifically, the objective of this study was to establish the relationship between professional development practices and teaching service delivery of academic staff of Kyambogo University.

Research Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

H1: There is a positive relationship between professional development practices and teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

H0: There is no relationship between professional development practices and teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

Methodology

The study was majorly guided by Auguste Comte post-positivism philosophy, which ontologically argues that the nature of reality about professional development practices and academic staff service delivery is objective. Objective reality demands use of quantitative techniques of data collection and analysis in order to arrive at truth and epistemologically, one has to use objective methods to arrive at the truth. Thus, the study was majorly quantitative in approach with embedded qualitative approaches for triangulation purposes. It was guided by both the Cross Sectional and Correlational survey designs. The use of Cross-Sectional Survey meant that data was collected from the target population at one point in time. The survey method allowed generalization of the study findings to the rest of the study population. Hence, the survey allowed handling a wide population of academic staff from Kyambogo University within a limited time frame.

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Findings

Table 1: Pearson’s correlation coefficient index between professional development practices and teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo

		PDP	TSD
PDP	Pearson correlation	1	0.409**
	Sig.2 tailed		0.000
	N	140	138
TSD	Pearson correlation	0.409**	1
	Sig.2 tailed	0.000	
	N	138	138

Source: Field Data 2019

Table 1 shows Pearson’s correlation coefficient index between teaching professional development practices and teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University $r = 0.409^{**}$ sig = 0.000. Since the significance P value 0.000 was greater than the critical significance value of 0.05, it implied that professional development practices were highly and significantly correlated with academic staff teaching service delivery in Kyambogo University. This implied that as professional development aspects coaching mentoring, study leaves are offered the extent to which academic staff effectively teach enhances and the reverse is true. Further, a simple regression analysis on the relationship between professional development practices and teaching service delivery of academic staff was done. Findings from Kyambogo University are offered in Tables 2-4.

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Table 2: Model summary on professional development practice and teaching service delivery in Kyambogo University

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.409 ^a	.167	.161	.67289

a. Predictors: (Constant), TSDKYAMBOGO

Source: Field Data 2019

Table 3: ANOVA on professional development practice and teaching service delivery in Kyambogo University

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	12.340	1	12.340	27.253	.000 ^b
Residual	61.579	136	.453		
Total	73.919	137			

a. Dependent Variable: PDpKY

b. Predictors: (Constant), TSDKYAMBOGO

Source: Field Data 2019

Table 4: Correlation coefficient on professional development practice and teaching service delivery in Kyambogo University

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.136	.425	.409	2.670	.009
TSDKYAMBOGO	.549	.105		5.220	.000

Source: Field Data 2019

a. Dependent Variable: PDpKY

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Table 2 shows the modal summary on the relationship between professional development practices and teaching service delivery, adjusted $r^2 = 0.161$ which meant that professional development practices predicted only 16% of the change in teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University. The ANOVA table showed $F = 27.253$ and a significance P value = 0.000, less than 0.05. Further, the Beta value 0.409 had a significance P value = 0.000 less than 0.05. These results indicated that professional development practiced significantly predicted teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

Discussion

Generally, the findings of this study revealed a significant relationship between professional development practices and academic staff teaching service delivery. These findings were supported by Imo, Oswald and Ingang (2013) in a study about staff development programs and secondary school teachers on performance in Nigeria who 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 of subject matter, classroom management, the methods and evaluation of student's work.

The study findings were in support of Amadi (2016) 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 showed that professional development enhances teaching service delivery of academic staff. This was in line with, Khan and Tajoddin (2012) findings that teachers' 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 (2010) observed that professional development programs enhance primary teachers' understanding of content of subject matter, knowledge to teach and how students learn content. Empirically, Supowitz and Turner (2000) in a study about the effects of professional development on science teaching practices and classroom culture supported the study findings that the quality of professional development in which teachers participate is strongly linked with both subject based teaching practices and investigative classroom culture. In the same vein with the study findings, Ddungu (2014) identified that the level of professional development, empowerment is reflected by the scale of efforts put to design teacher's capacity enhancement policies and the degree to which these policies are implemented to create an environment that enables teachers to engage in activities that enhance their teaching research, innovative abilities skills, knowledge, expertise and attitude.

The findings which revealed a significant positive relationship between professional development practices and teaching service delivery were in agreement with Atwebembeire, Musaaazi, Sentamu and Mulunda (2018) studied performance monitoring and quality of teaching and research in private Universities in Uganda who established that there was a positive contribution of performance monitoring on quality of teaching.

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The study findings were in direct support of Azikuru, Onen and Ezati (2017) revealed that staff training and development had statistically significant influences on the quality of teaching. As staff are trained using formal and informal trainings while on the job, the quality of their teaching enhances. Whereas Kraft, Brazzar and Hogen (2017) in direct agreement with the study finding revealed that coaching significantly affects effectiveness of teaching. In support of the study findings Turk (2016) studied performance management of academic staff and its effectiveness to teaching and research based Estorian Universities and revealed that performance manage training help to achieve higher results in the area of teaching. As academic staff performance was monitored, there are high chances of improvement in the teaching approaches applied by academic staff.

Alternatively, findings of the study which revealed an insignificant relationship between professional development practices and teaching service delivery of academic staff were differing from all the studies referred to in the afore mentioned discussion.

In conclusion, professional development practices impact differently on teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University with a positive significant correlation between professional development practices and teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In Kyambogo University, professional development practices significantly relate with teaching service delivery of academic staff. It concludes further that the more professional development practices are offered to academic staff, the more teaching service delivery enhances in Kyambogo University.

From the study findings and conclusions, it was recommended that if teaching service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University is to be improved, policy makers in Kyambogo University particularly University Council should come up with policies favouring provision of professional development opportunities to academic staff to enhance their teaching service delivery. Such policies include increasing Kyambogo University Budget to enhance their level of engagement in refresher courses like those which equip them with pedagogical and teaching competencies.

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