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Research Paper

Recruitment Practices And Staff Performance In Public Universities: A Case Study of Masinde Muliro University of Science And Technology, Kenya

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ABSTRACT: *Recruitment, as a human resource management function, is one of the activities that impact most critically on the performance of any organization irrespective of its size and location. Public Universities, known to train professionals that exhibit transformative leadership and successfully run blue-chip companies have equally suffered from rampart industrial unrest and human resource malpractices across Kenya. Could it be a unique trend of organizational deviance that could be reflecting absence of a well executed staff recruitment practice? While it is understood and accepted that poor recruitment decisions continue to affect organizational performance and limit goal achievement, knowledge about this aspect in Public Universities remains scanty. The aim of this study was to address this gap by evaluating how recruitment practices affect performance of administrative staff in Public Universities using Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya as a case reference. A cross-sectional survey design was employed while sampling strategy was a blend of multiphase, stratified and purposive sampling. A sample size of 124 out of 1150 comprised mainly of administrative staff was used and that a questionnaire was the principal tool of data collection. Results were analyzed using frequency tables, mean, standard deviation and simple linear regression. The study found that a recruitment policy existed at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya and that both external and internal recruitment practices were used to recruit employees at the University. However, it was noted that most of the university employees are recruited through media advert, internal advertisement, through transfers and promotions. The results of the regression indicated that recruitment practices are a significant predictor of employee performance, which was explained by 32% of variance and a moderate relationship captured by beta weight value of 0.57. On effectiveness of the recruitment policy, only 30% rated it as effective while 62% were indifferent and 8% rated it ineffective. The study concluded that although a significant relationship between recruitment practices and employee performance existed, it's effectiveness and therefore positive impact on employee performance depended on employees' positive perception and rating. It's recommended that the Universities should avoid biasness in the recruitment process as this will negatively impact on employee performance.*
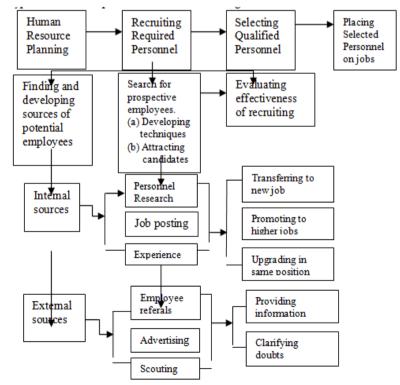*Key words: Recruitment, Practices, Staff Performance, Public Universities*

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective recruitment and selection strategies result in improved organization outcome, hence the more effectively organizations recruit and select candidates, the more likely they are to hire and retain satisfied employees. Recruitment is the process of finding and attracting capable applicants for employment. Being one of the core areas of human resource management, recruitment practices' success or failure has a significant impact on the organization's growth and the process (Armstrong, 2010; Ahmad *et al.*, 2002). As posited by Ryan *et al.* (2005) and Armstrong (2010), recruitment decisions are amongst the most important of all decisions that managers have to make because they are a prerequisite to the development of an effective workforce and organizational effectiveness. Public Universities have been in media and negatively reported as experiencing high rate of staff turnover, mismanagement of resources and poor working environment among others. Could it be that recruitment practices are part of the contributory factors? Whereas several studies have interrogated

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impact of recruitment practices on staff performance, scant studies exist on university staff. For instance, in Kenya, Wandurua (2008) focused on Middle Level Colleges, Khator (2010) focused on banking sector, and Lagat (2006) focused on state corporations. The study was an attempt to shed some empirical light towards this dilemma given that it's here where competent personnel that drive the industry are trained and even referred for further training. People and their collective skills, abilities and experience, coupled with their ability to deploy these in the interests of the employing organization, are now recognized as making a significant contribution to organizational success and also constitute a significant source of competitive advantage (Armstrong & Boron 2002). Recruitment process aid in identifying what is most valuable and has mechanisms of protecting recruited staff from being poached by competitors. For instance, organizations which recruit and retain exceptional individuals have the capability of generating human capital advantage and as averred by Catano *et al.* (2010), employers must aspire to hire applicant who possess the knowledge, skills abilities or other attributes (KSAOs) required to successfully perform the job most effectively. As far as employee performance is concerned, focus is usually on the job related activities expected of a worker and how well those activities were executed on an annual or quarterly basis in order to help them identify suggested areas for improvement (Armstrong 2010). Since recruitment policy specifies the objectives of recruitment and provides a framework for the implementation of the recruitment process, whenever it is in place, it represents the organizational code of conduct in this area of activity (Cole, 2011).

The importance of recruitment practices is derived from the reality that they serve as the means by which an organization establishes contact with potential candidates, provide them necessary information and encourage them to apply for jobs (Gupta 2001). Various methods exist and they can be classified into: direct methods, indirect methods and third party methods. Such sources of recruitment may be further classified into two broad categories namely internal and external recruitment. Internal sources of recruitment are a situation where the organization recruits its present employees to fill vacancies which are within while external sources of recruitment lie outside the organization (Armstrong 2010; Gupta 2001). For instance, newspaper advertising and the use of employment agencies are regarded as formal recruitment methods, while word-of-mouth and referrals are regarded as informal recruitment methods. Researchers have shown a positive relationship between the size of an organization and the likelihood of recruiting graduates together with recruitment methods differing with the type of position that needs to be filled. As for recruitment needs of an organization, Torrington *et al.* (2005) averred that there exists three types namely: planned needs which arises from changes in the agency and recruitment policy, anticipated needs which arises from personnel movements which an agency can predict by studying trends in internal and external environment, and unexpected needs which may arise due to resignation, deaths, illness. This study sought to know how recruitment practices in studied area take cognizance of these needs. A typical recruitment process is shown below in figure1.

Figure1. The recruitment process; source Gupta (2001: 2)

Theoretical Framework

This study was founded on the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm and human capital theory. The former postulates that competitive advantages generated by the firms in this case, public Universities, are derived from its unique set of resources that propels it into performing better than their competitors in the same industry (Mensah, 2013; Kraaijenbrink *et al*., 2010; Beard & Sumner, 2004; Runyan *et al*., 2006). As for the human capital theory, it underlines that people possess innate abilities, behavior and personal energy and these elements make up the human capital they bring to their work. It considers people as assets and stresses that investment in people by organizations will bring worthwhile returns (Armstrong & Boron 2002). Theoretically, the problem under study relates effects of recruitment to work performance for university non-teaching staff using Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) as a case reference. In this study, administrative staff's performance is viewed to be influenced by recruitment as one the HR strategies. Hence, the independent variable will be recruitment practices while the dependent variable will be administrative staff work performance. The framework takes cognizance of contextual factors that moderate the relationship between recruitment practices and administrative staff's work performance.

II. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

According to Selamat *et al*. (2005) and Sin (2010) age affects the level of motivation to perform any function in an organization by the employee. The researchers were keen to establish age of their respondents. As indicated in Table 1, minority respondents at 21% were in the age range of 35 years and above. The results further revealed that those in the age brackets of 20-24 years constituted 3%, those in the age brackets of 25-29 years constituted 31%, while those in the age brackets of 30-34 years constituted 45%. It can be deduced that, majority of the respondents (79%) were in the age bracket of below 35 years. This is a youthful workforce that is very sensitive to human resource practices, recruitment inclusive.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age bracket	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-24	4	3.3	3.3
25-29	38	31.1	31.1
30-34	55	45.1	45.1
35-39	19	15.6	15.6
40-44	6	4.9	4.9
Total	122	100.0	100.0

Source: Research data, 2014

The study further sought to find out formal educational levels of respondents in one of the questions. This was to determine whether the respondents were in a position to read, understand and fill the questionnaires besides deciphering right education to be in university employment. The results are captured in Table 2, indicating that 26% had diplomas, 54% had degrees and 20% had masters' degrees. The findings indicate that majority of the respondents had adequate education and therefore have good understanding of recruitment practices used by the University. The level of education was also important to this study because it showed whether the respondents have adequate level of education to understand the concept of the study.

Table 2 Educational level of Respondents

level of education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Undergraduate	66	54	54.1
Diploma	32	26	80.3
Masters	24	20	100.0
Total	122	100	

Source: Research data 2014

With regard to evidence of formal recruitment policy in the university, the following results were established as per Table 3.

Table3. Ratings on existence of Recruitment Policy

Existence of Recruitment Policy	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	114	93.4	93.4
No	8	6.6	100.0
Total	122	100.0	

Source: Research data 2014

From the results in Table 4.6 above, 93.4% are in agreement that the policy is in place while the remaining 6.6% are of the negative opinion that the policy is not there. Majority of the respondents are sure there is a policy. Respondents were further asked to evaluate how effective the recruitment process was at their organization. On the rating of a five (5) point Likert scale ranging from 1= bad, 2= Not Effective, 3= Indifferent, 4= Good, 5= Very Effective, their responses were as captured in Table4.

Table 4. Effectiveness of the recruitment practices as rated by respondents

Ratings	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not effective	10	8	8.2
Indifferent	76	62	70.5
Good	20	17	86.9
Very effective	16	13	100.0
Total	122	100.0	

Source: Research data 2014

Based on the results as shown in Table4, 8% of the respondents indicated out rightly that the recruitment practice was not effective while 62% felt indifferent. However, 17% felt recruitment practice was good while the remaining 13% felt it was very effective. With only 30% on aggregate returning a positive rating of good and very effective, there are possibilities that all is not well with regard to recruitment practices at the university studied. To get a conclusive picture, a simple regression was done to establish how significant recruitment practices affected performance of administrative staff at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya. To achieve this end, simple regression analysis beta (β), equivalent to the Karl Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used. The test of the effect of recruitment practice on performance of administrative staff was done at 0.05 % significance level, with 95% confidence, which is acceptable in non – clinical research works. The results are as captured in Table5.

Table 5: Regression of recruitment practices against performance of staff

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	0.568a	0.322	0.310	0.57937

Predictors: (Constant), Recruitment practices

ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	17.075	2	8.537	25.434	.000b
	Residual	35.916	107	.336		
	Total	52.991	109			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Recruitment practices

Coefficientsa

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	1.628	.848		1.920	.057
	recruitment practices	.029	.041	.568	.717	.475

Dependent Variable: Employee performance
Significance level =0.05

The effect of recruitment practices on employee performance can either be positive, negative or no effect depending on the beta values, that is, a negative beta value means the effect is negative and vice versa. As indicated in Table 5, R2 a d j was 0.32, F = 25.43, p< 0.05; beta weight = 0.57. The results of the regression indicated that recruitment practices is a significant predictor of University employees' performance, which explained by 32% of the variance. The result suggests existence of other variables that explain the remaining 67% of the variation in University employees' performance. By examining the beta weight in Table 5, it is evident that the variance in University employees' performance was significantly accounted for by recruitment practices as one of the critical aspects of good human resource management. The beta weight value reveals a moderate relationship that is within the decision criterion of coefficient range 0.3 to 0.7. From the results, the beta value is 0.57, which is a positive value. This therefore implies that there is a positive effect of recruitment practices on employee performance. The results indicate that 32.2% of employee performance can be explained by how the recruitment practice was done ($r^2 = 0.322$). It is evident that recruitment practices have a positive

significant relationship with University employees' performance. This finding is corroborated by earlier studies on recruitment practices which underscored the need for friendly recruitment practices or techniques to put employees' performance and motivation on upward trend and sustain effective workforce and organizational effectiveness (Ryan *et al*., 2005; Wandurua, 2008).

III.   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that although a significant relationship between recruitment practices and employee performance existed, it's effectiveness and therefore positive impact on employee performance depended on employees' positive perception and rating. Failure to observe good recruitment practices could cost the organization immensely, including poor hiring decisions, wasted investment in training, low productivity and even the need to carry out dismissal procedures. It's recommended that the Universities should avoid biasness in the recruitment process and blend staff as much as possible on the basis of gender, age and education as this will boost motivation and leverage on employee performance.

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