

The Influence of Career Development Practices on Academic Staff Performance in Kenyan Public Universities in Coast Region

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of career development practices on academic staff in Kenyan Public Universities in Coast region. The objectives of the study were to assess the influence of career planning, career advancement and training and development on academic staff in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The research hypotheses were then formulated from the literature review. The study involved the three public universities with main campuses in the Coast region which are Taita-Taveta University, Technical University of Mombasa and Pwani University. The theoretical background of career development was analyzed to identify its relevance to the study. The conceptual framework was illustrated and the research variables discussed in depth. The empirical review of career development was analyzed to identify research gaps which the study sought to fill. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design of which the target population was the full time academic staff in the three public universities in Coast region totaling 577. The study adopted stratified random sampling after which purposive sampling was used to arrive at the sample size of 173. A Five Point Likert Type Scale questionnaire was used to collect primary data for the study. The questionnaires were then coded and responses analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between career development practices and academic staff performance. Analyzed data was then presented in tables, graphs and pie-charts. The study found out that career planning had a positive significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. Further, the universities under study had programs that developed their academic staff for future positions, formulated self-assessment tools that helped their academic staff understand their career aspirations and had career succession plans. Career advancement had a positive significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. Career advancement was based on competencies of academic staff, equity and merit. Training and development had a positive significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. Further, the universities conducted training needs analysis to identify skill gaps, established training plans for their academic staff and supported training and development of their academic staff through awarding of study leaves and sponsorship. The current study looked at career development practices of training and development, career planning and career advancement; however there is need for further studies to identify other factors like succession planning and career guidance that affect career development in an organization.

Keywords: Career Planning, Training and Development, Career Advancement, Academic Staff Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Career development practices continue to face a myriad of challenges in this era of dynamic business environment. Previous studies (Cartwright, 2005; Dessler, 2008; Obwaya, 2012) affirm that in the current century, organizations have adopted flatter structures so as to be cost-effective. The studies posited that the introduction of flatter structures has eroded the traditional career advancement plan of job promotions that employees were used to. Cartwright (2005) further

asserted that the flattening of organization structure has resulted to a negative employee perception towards the organization because they feel that the organization has caused the mismatch between individual and organization career goals. Consequently, this has led to dwindling employee performance and massive labor turnover resulting to poor productivity. Career development practices and employee performance have continuously become a challenge for many Human Resource Management practitioners in the developing countries especially Sub-Saharan Africa (Hayes, 2015). The study postulated that Sub-Saharan African countries are in a crisis because of the poor employee performance and massive labor turnover attributed to the ineffective link between training and development, career planning and career advancement. Hence, employees leave these organizations in Sub-Saharan countries for other organizations in the developed countries leading to poor organization performance.

The inadequacies experienced in career development practices, have prompted the need to rethink career development practices in Kenya especially in institutions of higher learning (Obwaya, 2012). Previous studies (Kadenyi *et al.*, 2009; Kalai, 2009; Manyasi *et al.*, 2012) found out that academic staff in Kenyan public universities are unable to meet their ultimate career goals because of poor working conditions which revolve around heavy administrative workloads. Further, the clashing administrative and academic roles have made it difficult for academic staff to meet both individual and university career goals. A study by (Manyasi *et al.*, 2012) asserted that this has compromised the need to have a highly developed academic staff to promote the socio-economic development of the country. Most of the previous studies (Hemmings & Kay, 2010; Arokiasamy, 2011; Gina, 2016) however, have concentrated on career development and academic staff performance in the developed countries. As such the study findings cannot be generalized to provide inference to Sub-Saharan Africa especially the local Kenyan context. In Kenya, the link between career development practices and employee performance has been explored more in non-academic institutions (Felix, 2012; Kakui & Gachunga 2016; Muite, 2014). Further, Obwaya (2012) suggested that there is need to extend the studies to institutions of higher learning especially among academic staff. This is so because these institutions have experienced a lot of brain drain in recent years. A few studies (Manyasi *et al.*, 2012; Oduma & Were 2014; Nyambura & Kamara, 2016) have focused on career development and academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities. However none of the studies have been carried out in institutions based in Coast region. This therefore creates knowledge and contextual gap. Hence the current study sought to fill the above gaps by analyzing the influence of career development practices on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities based in Coast region.

a. Objectives of the Study:

- i. To establish the influence of career planning on performance of academic staff in Kenyan public universities in Coast region.
- ii. To assess the influence of career advancement on performance of academic staff in Kenyan public universities in Coast region
- iii. To analyze the influence of training and development on performance of academic staff in Kenyan public universities in Coast region

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Theoretical Framework:

I. Theory of Work Adjustment:

This theory was developed in the 1950s by University of Minnesota work adjustment project (Dawis, 2005). Brown (2003) argued that the theory was one of the most advanced for career development with it being suitable for valuation tools. The theory of work adjustment gives a model for hypothesizing the networking of people and work environment and it is regarded as a person-environment network model which is a reciprocal relationship (Swanson & Schneider, 2013). The study posited that the focus of theory of work adjustment is on individual competencies and the environmental skill requirements. Further, the theory is about the person searching for work environments that would meet his/her needs and in response the environment searches for people who can meet the demands of the organization. Therefore, career development is hypothesized as a continuous process of work adjustment brought about by dissatisfaction of both parties (Dawis, 2005).

In modern times, theory of work adjustment has been linked to positive psychology because of its concern for satisfaction (Swanson & Schneider, 2013). Satisfaction promotes employee well being and prevents work stress. Dawis (2005) posited that aside from career choice, the theory of work adjustment is also concerned with actual job performance. The researcher argued that the matching of personal needs to the work environment increases job satisfaction for an employee leading to improved work performance. Henceforth, there has to be a coherent adjustment of academic staff needs to their work environment for them to perform effectively at their roles. This involves correct career choices, training and development to enable a great fit between them and their work environment. Felix (2012) argued that career planning, training and development and career advancement assist the organizations in the placing of employees in jobs that match their individual career preferences, needs and goals which is the main idea of the theory of work adjustment. Further, academic staff need to be flexible in all aspects of their job and develop reactivity to adapt to changing roles of their careers (Dawis, 2005).

II. Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities in Work Environment:

Nauta (2013) postulated that Holland's theory provides a comprehensive theoretical model on career interests and environments which can easily be used for career development. From its origin by Holland in the 1980s, vocational interest depends on personality of individuals which were categorized into six namely Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. These typologies were arranged in a hexagon as RIASEC and the networking between them after comparison is exhibited by the distance between corresponding types in the hexagon (Spokane, 2005). Further, the researchers posited that the idea of consistency was used to measure consistency of a person's type scores. RIASEC enables the rating of jobs in respect to the occurrence of activities, values and perceptions (Nauta, 2013). In addition, the model suggests that the matching of the personality type and work type is also an indicator of job satisfaction. Nauta (2013) asserted that Holland's theory is helpful in times of unstable work environment as RIASEC codes provide a wide array of jobs for clients to choose from.

The change of roles from academic to administrative roles is common in universities. These clashing roles require different personalities for there to be a fit with the work environment. Nauta (2013) found out that teaching/lecturing roles require sociability since they involve interacting with students and fellow lecturers, attending seminars and offering training to corporate staff. Further, administrative roles require conventional personalities which are characterized by stringent rules and regulations while seeking order in their work environment. It is therefore significant for universities and academic staff to thoroughly scrutinize individual personalities to determine their congruence to the work environment of academic and administrative roles. Further, Holland's theory argues that once an organization understands the personality type of its employees, career planning, career advancement and training and development should be adopted to help match their personality types to the work environments (Nauta, 2013). Henceforth, career development can be achieved when the personality type of employees match with the job requirement which will enable them to have specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound career goals.

III. Self-Concept Theory:

This theory argues that career choice and development involves improving and effecting an individual's self-concept (Savickas, 2002). Further, the building of a career is primarily based on improving and implementing vocational self-concepts in job roles. As developed in the works of Super in the 1990s, self-concept is the major aspect of the theory and effecting of one's likes, values and competencies in a work role is vital to achievement of job satisfaction (Leung, 2007). The researcher further posited that in order to gain maximum self-fulfillment and approval by the society, an individual has to negotiate with the environment to find out the most suitable solutions and options. In addition, career choice and development is not a straight process of effecting self-concept but involves conciliation and compromises in which the individual and environment have to come to terms.

Self-concept is a basic component of career development theory and practice and is responsible for individuals matching their personal attributes to job requirements (Leung, 2007). Further, the theory asserts that identification of an individual's career interests paves way for career planning, career advancement and training and development to help effect the individual's self-concept towards achievement of ultimate career development. Henceforth, the theory of self-concept is significant to academic staff since it helps them to make rational career choices that match their personal attributes and enjoy career growth in academic and administrative roles.

C. Conceptual Framework:

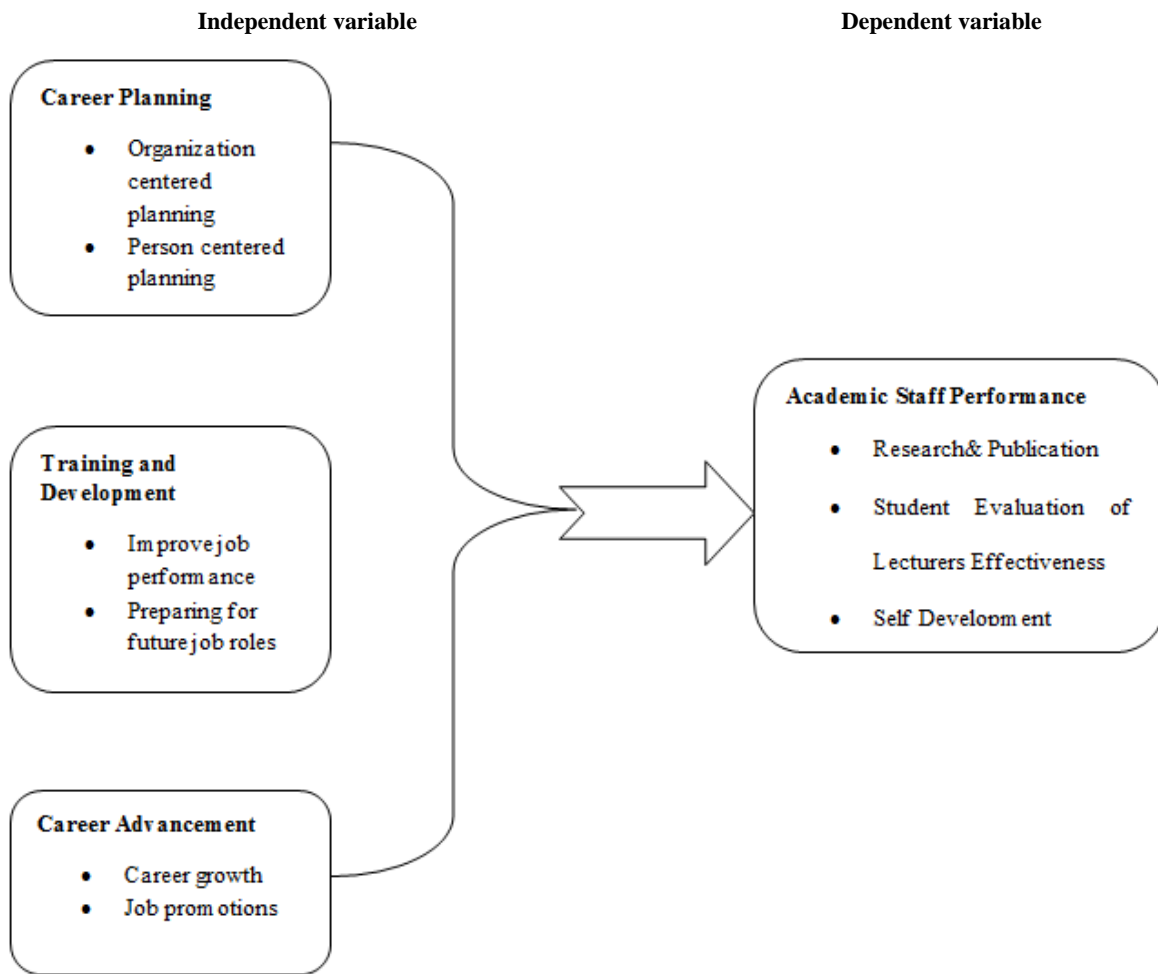


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

I. Career Planning:

Dessler (2008) posited that career planning is the intentional process where an organization or individual gets to know of personal competencies and focuses on plans to achieve specific career goals. It aims to discover the goals for a person’s career and undertaking manpower programs to support that career (Antoniou, 2013). The researcher argued that career planning leads to the matching of individual and organizational career goals. Further, he postulated that to achieve this career counseling activities should be embraced and provided to the employees. This would be done by professionals with psychological training who are well versed with both individual and organizational needs. Manolescu (2003) asserted that there are mainly two approaches to career planning namely the organization centered planning system and the person centered planning system. The researcher further posited that organization centered career planning primarily focuses on the development of manpower while the person centered planning system aims at discovering the competencies and interests of an individual. Henceforth, career planning lays down the roles of the two parties- the individual and the organization.

Zlate (2004) defined individual centered career planning as all the systematic procedures of self-assessment, researching of opportunities and setting goals which are intended to assist the individual to make suitable changes about his/her career. The researcher further argued that the action is quite demanding and requires careful judgment in setting of both short and long term career objectives. A study by (CIPD, 2005) found out that the individual’s perspective on career is greatly influenced by the state of professional and personal life, age, family situations, financial and lifestyle desires. The study asserted that appropriate individual career goals can only be established when an individual fully understands his/her interests and personality.

Baruch (2006) defined organizational centered planning as all the integrative approaches undertaken by an organization which are aimed at achieving its career goals. It involves the organization’s preparations for future employee job roles.

The researcher argued that organizational centered career planning is the basis of an organization's career development practices. It focuses on the career needs of the organizations and establishes action plans to achieve them (Manolescu, 2003). However, the traditional career path characterized by upward job mobility has continuously diminished making organizations to plan for job rotations and the development of a multi-skilled workforce (Neveanu, 2003). This has been attributed to the reduction of jobs and fewer promotion opportunities in organizations.

Developing and effecting a career planning system is vital to organizations in finding employee development needs and linking them to corporate needs (Antoniou, 2013). The researcher argued that the organization should put in place a good career planning system which will lead to heightened professional satisfaction because it helps to develop positions which match their individual needs. Further, career planning reduces the required period to fill a job vacancy, assists in succession planning and ensures all employees have the opportunity to develop career objectives and subsequent action plans to achieve them. Cranshaw (2006) asserted that there should be integration of organization centered and person centered career planning in public universities so as to achieve both organizational and academic staff career goals. Public universities should provide career planning workshops to advice academic staff to make appropriate career decisions. In addition, academic staff in public universities should conduct thorough self-assessments to enable them make suitable changes in their careers between administrative and academic roles.

II. Training and Development:

Training and development is the process that entails the absorption of knowledge, skills and altering of attitudes to improve performance of employees and prepare them for future roles (Aneeq, 2013). Hutchings *et al.*, (2009) posited that training and development leads to the motivation and retention of highly skilled manpower within an organization. Devi (2012) found out that training and development is a core practice in the high performance work systems that leads to the unlocking of future growth and development opportunities which lead to achievement of a competitive edge. Training and development aids in filling the gap between what employees know and do and what they should know and do. This is because knowledge, skills and attitudes erode from time to time making them obsolete occasionally. Thus, to be able to stand out in this modern era of dynamic business environment, organizations need to polish the competencies of their employees. An effective training and development program shall change an employee's working leading to improved employee performance.

Galanou (2009) argued that training and development process is one of the most important for improvement of employee productivity and aligning individual goals to corporate goals. Further, clear training and development policies have led to the success of many organizations because employees gain more competencies leading to improved productivity (Hamid, 2011). For this to happen, training and development programs should be designed to meet individual employee needs (Steven, 2009). A study by Hutchings *et al.*, (2009) revealed that training and development practices increase an employee's technical and interpersonal abilities while enhancing their job satisfaction.

In this era of dynamic business environment, organizations have realized the need to develop employees who can not only adapt to changes but also act as change managers (Hwang & Rauen, 2015). The study asserted that organizations need to instill the drive in employees by providing a challenging work environment in order to develop a leadership mindset. This can be done by providing early exposure to future roles (Fernandez-Araoz, 2014). The study asserted that early exposure to future roles enables employees to develop self-efficacy prior to the actual assumption of duty. This will enable them to make tough decisions in an uncertain business environment and easily adapt to changes in their careers. Nevertheless, organizations should identify and select employees who are highly disciplined and results oriented to work well in their future roles.

Undoubtedly, modern organizations require manpower that is able to perform today's jobs and are receptive to ever changing needs (Salas, 2012). The researcher argued that what an organization needs is to be fully aware of how to utilize training in order to develop a competent workforce. In addition, understanding the trainee's expectations is very vital in making training and development a success (Salas, 2012). Nevertheless, training and development process requires pulled efforts of both individuals and the organization. The individual has his/her own career goals which require him/her to polish his/her competencies. The organization on the other hand has to provide T&D programs to individuals which will ensure matching of the personal career goals to the corporate career goals. Henceforth, public universities should ensure the creation of learning organization as well as provide seminars and workshops to academic staff. This will lead to gaining of competencies which will lead to improvement in their work performance as well as prepare them for future career and role changes (Cranshaw, 2006).

III. Career Advancement:

Career advancement is the process of progressing of an individual’s career (Chanin, 2012). The researcher asserted that career advancement is measured in terms of job accomplished through the efforts of the employee in pursuit of personal career goals. A Study by (Weng *et al.*, 2012) found out that career advancement entails two main dimensions namely career growth and job promotions. The study postulated that individual career advancement included the acquiring of new competencies which are worthwhile to the organization and employees in meeting future career needs. Career advancement was also found to indicate an increase in job security for the employees. Further, the study found out that there existed a positive relationship between career advancement and employee performance. Okurame (2005) argued that employees occasionally hope to progress in their jobs and to attain a notable career. That expectation for career advancement, that is, promotion and enjoying of career growth results to an increase in individual effort and a passionate undertaking of organizational activities (Lieberman, 2003).

Career growth is viewed as a key element in the psychological contract (Weng *et al.*, 2012). The study asserted that career growth enhances organizational commitment for employees. This is because of the notion that employees risk career growth opportunities in the organization when they leave to other organizations. Henceforth, career growth dimensions such as professional ability development and remuneration growth lead to increased employee retention and an increase in employee productivity (Weng *et al.*, 2012). This is attributed to the fact that the employees feel that the organization has implemented its role in the psychological contract and thus have to better their performance. Career growth opportunities in an organization also attract skilled employees who wish to progress in their careers. When given a chance, these employees get to exploit their full potential which leads overall organizational success. Gupta (2011) defined promotion as the progress of an employee to a higher position which involves a higher status, increased responsibilities and increased salaries. It is one of the sources of internal recruitment. Henceforth, it is governed by a set of organizational promotion policies. The promotion policies stipulate the promotion procedures and who should be in charge of promotions. Usually, the promotion decision is initiated by the Human Resource department and is implemented by the respective line managers (Gupta, 2011). The study asserted that promotion policies ensure the objectivity of promotion procedures, that is, promotion should be based on merit irrespective of ethnicity, race, gender, marital status or religion. Gupta (2011) argued that employees tend to work harder when there are promotion opportunities. Further, promotions provide a good sense of motivation leading to improved employee performance.

A Study by (Avey, 2010) found out that career advancement leads to job effectiveness and greater employee retention. Further, career advancement leads to employees being more receptive to change and are up to date with their job activities. Employees who perceive their organization as attaching great significance to their career growth and promotions have improved work effectiveness and efficiency (Savickas, 2012). The Commission for University Education established criteria for career advancement of academic staff in Kenyan public universities. CUE (2014) outlined research and publication, administration and responsibilities, quality of teaching, community engagement and contribution as metrics to be used in career growth and promotions of academic staff in Kenyan public universities. Further, the commission established weighting points which are used to gauge the career progression of academic staff.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to accurately analyze and bring solutions to the research problem, the study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey research design is used to exhibit a correct profile of persons and events of situations (Hair, 2003). Descriptive research design was the most appropriate for the study because it enabled easy gathering of quantifiable information that can be used for statistical inference through data analysis. This assisted in measuring the study characteristics in the research hypothesis. The study entailed both the permanent and contractual academic staff Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The academic staff in Kenyan public universities in Coast region were classified according to their job titles as suggested by (CUE, 2014) as shown in table 1 below.

Table I. Stratification of University Academic Staff

Job Title	Number
Teaching Assistant	112
Assistant Lecturer/Tutorial Fellow	288
Lecturer	98
Senior Lecturer	48
Associate Professor	15
Full Professor	16
Total	577

From table 1 above, the total population of academic staff in the three Kenyan public universities in Coast Region is 268+157+152=577 as at 31st January 2017. Borg (2003) argued that 30% of a population is representative enough for a sample size in a study. This study adopted the 30% rule of the sub-population in each stratum. Table 3.4 below presents the sample size of the study.

Table II. Sample Size

Title	Number (N)	Sample Size (30 % OF N)
Graduate Assistants	112	34
Assistant Lecturer	288	86
Lecturer	98	29
Senior Lecturer	48	14
Associate Professor	15	5
Professor	16	5
Total	577	173

As indicated in the table II above, the study involved 34 Graduate Assistants, 86 Assistant Lecturers, 29 Lecturers, 14 Senior Lecturers, 5 Assistant Professor and 5 Professor giving a total of 173 respondents. The researcher then used purposive sampling to select the respondents whom the research instrument were administered to.

The study used both primary and secondary data of which primary data was collected through self-administered five point likert type scale questionnaires. The questionnaires were coded and responses analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To effectively determine the relationship between career development and academic staff performance, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used. An Y value greater than 0 to +1 indicates a high correlation between the variables while an Y value less than 0 to -1 indicates low correlation (Field, 2009). The data was then presented in graphs and tables for easy reading and understanding by the readers of this study.

4. RESULTS

a. Response Rate and Reliability tests:

The researcher distributed 173 questionnaires to the respondents. Out of the 173 questionnaires, 148 of them were dully filled and returned by the respondents; giving a response rate of 85.5%. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, cronbach alpha correlation coefficient was computed. The findings from table 4.1 below present the reliability results of the study variables. Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient was found to be 0.844, which meant that the study questionnaire had a stable internal consistency 84.4%. Field (2009) posited that a questionnaire having α of 0.8 and above is considered reliable. Therefore, this study finding implied that the study questionnaire was reliable.

b. Hypothesis Testing:

The study sought to establish the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study. To effectively determine the relationship between career development and academic staff performance, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed at 95 percent confidence interval (error margin of 0.05) to test the study hypotheses. The findings are illustrated in table III below:

Table III: Correlation Matrix

		Career Planning	Career Advancement	Training and Development	Academic Staff performance
Career Planning	Pearson Correlation	1	.835**	.799**	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	148	148	148	148
Career Advancement	Pearson Correlation	.835**	1	.767**	.698**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	148	148	148	148
Training and Development	Pearson Correlation	.799**	.767**	1	.804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	148	148	148	148
Academic Staff performance	Pearson Correlation	.642**	.698**	.804**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	148	148	148	148

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

H₀: Career planning does not have a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region

H₁: Career planning has a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region

As shown on Table III above, the p-value for career planning was found to be 0.000 which is less than the significant level of 0.05, ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, the study concluded that Career planning has a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The result indicated that Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.642, which represented a strong, positive relationship between career planning and academic staff performance.

H₀: Career advancement does not have a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region

H₁: Career advancement has a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region

As shown on Table III above, the p-value for career advancement was found to be 0.000 which is less than the significant level of 0.05, ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, the study concluded that Career advancement has a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The result indicated that Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.698, which represented a strong, positive relationship between career advancement and academic staff performance.

H₀: Training and development does not have a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region

H₁: Training and development has a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region

As shown on Table III above, the p-value for training and development was found to be 0.000 which is less than the significant level of 0.05, ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, the study concluded that Training and development has a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The result indicated that Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.804, which represented a strong, positive relationship between Training and development and academic staff performance.

5. DISCUSSION

a. Career Planning and Academic Staff Performance:

The study sought to establish the influence of career planning on performance of academic staff in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The findings of the study showed that majority of the respondents 70.4% stated that they had personal career plan which they reviewed annually with specific plans, steps and timelines in mind, 72.8% of them agreed that the universities had both internal and external programs that develop its academic staff for future positions, 75.8% of them agreed that the universities had a self-assessment tool that helped its academic staff understand their aspirations, desires, likes and dislikes and 70% of the them agreed that the universities had a career succession plan for its academic staff. However, only 49.4 percent of them agreed that the universities they served in provided career advisory services that determine competencies and interests of its academic staff and only 47.8 percent of them agreed that the universities they served in had a career development plan for its academic staff in place.

On hypothesis testing, the p-value for career planning was found to be 0.000 which is less than the significant level of 0.05, ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, the study concluded that Career planning has a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The result indicated that Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r-value) of 0.642, which represented a strong, positive relationship between career planning and academic staff performance.

The findings of the study are consistent with the findings of Dessler (2008) posited that career planning is the intentional process where an organization or individual gets to know of personal competencies and focuses on plans to achieve specific career goals. It aims to discover the goals for a person's career and undertaking manpower programs to support that career (Antoniou, 2013). Manolescu (2003) asserted that there are mainly two approaches to career planning namely the organization centered planning system and the person centered planning system. The researcher further posited that organization centered career planning primarily focuses on the development of manpower while the person centered planning system aims at discovering the competencies and interests of an individual.

b. Career Advancement and Academic Performance of Staff:

The study sought to assess the influence of career advancement on performance of academic staff in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The findings indicated that 53.2% of the respondents agreed career advancement in the universities under study was based on competencies of academic staff, 63% of them agreed that the universities supported career development through provision of scholarships to its academic staff, 86% of them agreed that the universities had a well-structured career progression plan guided on equity and merit and 90.4% agreed that the universities had a career progression guideline which stipulates conditions for promotion.

On hypothesis testing, the p-value for career advancement was found to be 0.000 which is less than the significant level of 0.05, ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, the study concluded that Career advancement has a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The result indicated that Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.698, which represented a strong, positive relationship between career advancement and academic staff performance.

The findings of the study have been supported by the findings of (Weng *et al.*, 2012) found out that career advancement entails four dimensions namely career goal growth, professional ability advancement, pace of promotion and reward growth. The study found out that there existed a positive relationship between career advancement and employee performance. Obwaya (2012) found out that employee career development influences employee performance. Further, career progression involves providing opportunities for people to advance and develop their careers.

C. Training and Development and Academic Performance of Staff:

The study sought to analyze the influence of training and development on performance of academic staff in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The findings showed that 90.4% of the respondents agreed that the universities supported training and development of its academic staff through awarding of study leaves, 76% of them agreed that the universities had a well established training plan for its academic staff. 60% of them agreed that the universities conducted Training Needs Analysis to identify skill gaps in academic staff while only 49% of the respondents agreed that their universities had a performance appraisal system that determined attainment of set goals.

On hypothesis testing, the p-value for career advancement was found to be 0.000 which is less than the significant level of 0.05, ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, the study concluded that Training and development has a significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The result indicated that Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.804, which represented a strong, positive relationship between Training and development and academic staff performance.

The findings of the study are in agreement with the findings of Hutchings *et al.*, (2009) that posited that training and development leads to the motivation and retention of highly skilled manpower within an organization. Further studies by Devi (2012), found out that training and development is a core practice in the high performance work systems that leads to the unlocking of future growth and development opportunities which lead to achievement of a competitive edge. Training and development aids in filling the gap between what employees know and do and what they should know and do. This is because knowledge, skills and attitudes erode from time to time making them obsolete occasionally.

Galanou (2009) argued that training and development process is one of the most important for improvement of employee productivity and aligning individual goals to corporate goals. Further, clear training and development policies have led to the success of many organizations because employees gain more competencies leading to improved productivity (Hamid, 2011). For this to happen, training and development programs should be designed to meet individual employee needs (Steven, 2009).

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that career planning has a positive significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. Universities under study had both internal and external programs that develop its academic staff for future positions, a self-assessment tool that helped its academic staff understand their aspirations, desires, likes and dislikes and a career succession plan for its academic staff. However, they did not provide adequate career advisory services that determine competencies and interests of its academic staff and they had no adequate career development plan for its academic staff. Career advancement has a positive significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. Career progression among the universities under studies was guided by specific criteria. The universities also provided scholarships to its academic staff to support their career development goals. However, fewer respondents agreed that career advancement was based on competencies of academic staff, equity and merit. Training and development has a positive significant influence on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in Coast region. The universities conducted training needs analysis to identify skill gaps, they had had well established training plan for its academic staff and they supported training and development of its academic staff through awarding of study leaves. However, the universities under study may not have proper performance appraisal system that determined attainment of set goals.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that universities should provide adequate career advisory services to its academic staff as well as have adequate and proper career development plan for its academic staff to improve on their overall performance. This will also help them in reconciling of academic and administrative roles. In addition, to improve the performance of academic staff in the universities, career advancement should based on competencies of academic staff, equity and merit and more scholarships should be awarded to the academic staff to enable them advance career-wise. Further, universities should have proper performance appraisal system that can be used to determine attainment of set goals like training needs and career needs of their academic staff among others.

7. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was conducted in the Technical University of Mombasa, Taita-Taveta University and Pwani University. Therefore, the sample size was limited to the three Kenyan public universities in Coast region. Henceforth, generalizations cannot adequately extend to other public universities outside the region. Based on this fact, further research should be conducted covering all regions in the country to establish the influence of career development practices on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities. Further, research should be conducted to find out the influence of other career development practices such as succession planning and career guidance on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities.

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