Influence of institutional leadership on talent management in public universities in Kenya

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Attracting, developing and retaining employees, which is referred to as talent management is essential for success of any organization (Lavania et al., 2011). Prior studies revealed that being the producers of knowledge, institutions of high learning are expected to be at the forefront in talent management. This is however not so as the private sectors have taken a lead in the same (Riccio, 2010; Olson, 2008; and Mac Millan, 2008). This study endeavours to find out the influence of institutional leadership on talent management in public universities in Kenya. To achieve this objective, a sample of 249 was selected using stratified random sampling from public universities in Kenya. Data was analysed using SPSS to get statistical values to determine the relationship. Q-Q plot, Factor analysis, Bartlett’s test, Cronbach alpha coefficient, and regression analysis were carried out. The analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between institutional leadership and talent management. The paper recommends more openness in leadership to enhance motivation of employees and high productivity in the institutions.

Keywords: Recruitment, training and development, motivation, succession plan, employees retention.

INTRODUCTION

Attracting, developing and retaining employees, which is referred to as talent management is essential for success of any organization (Lavania et al., 2011). Nevertheless, literature reveals that higher institutions of learning lack talent management: Riccio (2010) observed that education field which is knowledge intensive is the least engaged in enlightened talent management practices and do not invest in understanding these practices as compared to other industries; Olson (2008) observed that there is no system for attracting, training and supporting the best people for the jobs in the field of education. Ringo et al. (2008) further acknowledged that compared to other sectors, education sector underperforms the most in its talent management practices especially in the areas such as; attracting and retaining talent, motivating and developing workers and transforming and sustaining the workforce. (MacMillan, 2008 and Wellins et al., 2009) argued that private sector has taken a much more aggressive talent management approach than the field of education.

Mihyo (2007) asserts that the most critical element to be given utmost attention in academic institutions is human capital which includes academic, administrative and technical staff resources; however all developed countries are engaged in a struggle to attract talent and reduce the migration of their skilled professionals to other countries.

Eurydice (2008) concludes that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have acquired more autonomy for managing the academic staff. The main talent management activities undertaken by the HEIs are however limited to selection, recruitment, employment contracts, and career advancement. Mostly, the HEIs are also guided by supervisory bodies mainly composed of external stakeholders making it quite controversial in terms of institutional autonomy. Often there is a clash with the traditional collegiate management style particularly when the institution and its professoriate have only limited or indirect influence on this high level governance body. Almost all higher institutions of learning have a collegiate academic body (senate, academic council or academic board); the academic body was traditionally the collegial decision-making body of the university under the direction of the State; however...
Eurydice (2008) revealed that more than half the countries studied had the academic bodies having a relatively limited decision-making role and do not hold direct responsibility for institutional policies, orientation, or strategic development.

Owino (2011) noted that good governance should be characterized by partnership and participation; devolving power to make decisions to operational units (faculties, institutes, and departments). These operational units should be strengthened to enable them to discharge their functions effectively. In addition, the recruitment of deans, directors of institutes, heads of departments, administrators, and managers for the operational units should be done competitively at all levels and remuneration be pegged to competence and performance.

Ramsden (1998) argued that academic leadership model is characterized by factors such as teaching leadership which refers to bringing new ideas about teaching; research leadership; strategic vision and networking; collaborative and motivational leadership which include among others honesty, integrity and openness. Fair and efficient management is evidenced by delegation, highly organized working of the department and getting things done with little resistance. Developing and recognition of performance includes aspects such as praising and sustaining success of the staff and providing feedback. Interpersonal skills refer to communicating well and having concern for others.

Bryman (2007) also identified facets of leadership at both departmental and institutional levels as: providing direction; creating a structure to support the direction; fostering a supportive and collaborative environment; establishing trustworthiness as a leader; having personal integrity; having credibility to act as a role model; facilitating participation in decision-making; consultation; providing communication about developments; representing the department/institution to advance its cause(s) and networking on its behalf; respecting existing culture while seeking to instill values through a vision for the department/institution and protecting staff autonomy. Gappa, Austin and Trice; Hartfield, (2006) argue that these are key elements for a truly collegial environment and the absence of these characteristics and feelings of isolation from faculty peers are potential signs of an environment with a lack of collegiality.

From the facets provided above there was a clear indication that there is the need for a leader to create an environment or context for academics and others to fulfill their potential and interest in their work. There is also the need to foster a collegial climate of mutual supportiveness and the maintenance of autonomy in the academic context. Bryman (2007) identified the causes of damage to an institution to be: failure to consult; non-existence values; actions that undermine collegiality; failure to promote the interests of those for whom the leader is responsible; lack of involvement in the life of the department/institution and undermining autonomy. It was noted that a very significant feature of the expectations of academic staff in particular include: the maintenance of autonomy; consultation over important decisions; the fostering of collegiality and mutual cooperativeness. Sathyé (2004) noted that academic leadership poses problems that are unique; therefore academic leaders need to stay close to teaching, learning, research and scholarship to bring out the best among academics.

Himanshu et al. (2011) noted that more than 80 percent of employees leave because of the push factors related to poor management practices or toxic cultures, a sense of professional isolation, including lack of supportive and friendly colleagues. Gwavuya (2011) affirms that incompetent leadership results in poor employee performance, high stress, low job commitment, low job satisfaction and turnover intent. Riccio (2010) asserts that the key differentiators identified as the talent management practices believed to be successful in the work environment included the incorporation of organizational and leadership competencies.

Talent management is possible in a conducive environment and its provision is a responsibility of institutional leadership. Public universities in Kenya like any other universities in the world are operating in highly competitive environment locally and globally and this calls for management styles that enhance staff retention in order to gain competitive advantage (Ngethe et al., 2012). Responsibility and accountability for retaining talent need to move out to the front lines and into the hands of leaders. Leaders and their skill in building a climate of retention, a culture that speaks to employees in a way that encourages them to stay, will be an organization’s best defense against unwanted turnover. Leaders are therefore the secret weapon in keeping valued talent longer. Voelck’s study of managers of university as highlighted by Bryman (2007) found that adoption of a democratic, consensus-building approach entails building relationships and collective decision-making. Muindi (2011) established that leadership style, specifically lack of involvement in decision making and inadequate communication were some of the issues that caused dissatisfaction of academic staff.

From the previous studies conducted none linked leadership directly to talent management hence the need to fill this gap. In the context of this study the institutional leadership is used interchangeably with the higher educational governance with a particular focus on managerial self governance. In this study the factors representing the institutional governance are based on Bryman (2007) facets of leadership.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
A survey research design was adopted using triangulation approach on data, analyst, theories and methodologies. Using stratified random sampling, 251 academic staff were sampled out of 5673 from all the
public universities in Kenya. Questionnaires were dropped and picked as tools of data collection. The response rate was 99.2%. SPSS was used to analyse the collected data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
Effect of Institutional Leadership on talent management was investigated under seven items namely: Participation of faculty in decision making; faculty training and development; transparency and accountability in leadership; working environment is conducive; familiarity with institutional policies and practices; availability of funds for research; and collaboration on strategic matters. Table 1 shows the respondents’ rates for each indicator and the average rating for the independent variable (institutional leadership).

Management concern for staff training and development
From the findings, majority of the respondents indicated that the management had a concern for staff training and development with a 71.5% rating. The respondents who indicated that the management had no concern had a 10.4% respondent rate. In support of these findings, Kipketub (2010) noted that although public universities lack funds to support employees for external training, employees have been awarded tuition waiver to study within their universities; however the main problem of training activities as Kipketub (2010) further found out lack of training needs analysis hence employees end up enrolling for courses that were not relevant for promotion purpose. This indicates that although there is concern for training and Development Training Needs Analysis was not conducted appropriately hence there is a likelihood of failing to meet the training needs and therefore compromising talent management practice.

Management encourages collaboration on matters of strategic importance
The findings indicated that management encourages collaboration with a majority of the respondents represented by 79%, compared to 4% of the respondents who negated to this factor. Mihyo (2007) acknowledges that there exist a symbiotic relationship between IHEs and the private sector; however universities need to adopt a more positive outlook in order to benefit more in areas which the private sector support or willing to support; these areas include endowment funds; loans and grants; donations in form of equipments; corporate programs; joint research programs and funding sabbaticals. Furthermore, Schulze (2008) found out that universities recognize research as a communal activity; however a lack of emphasis on group research as a mitigating factor against quality research was reported, there was also uncertainty on the issue of co-authorship with students. These results indicate that institutions have a role to play not only of encouraging but also supporting the members of academic staff to collaborate within and outside the institutions.

Involvement of staff members in decision making
The results showed that management involves staff in decision making; a total of 24% of the respondents agreed while 19.6% disagreed. However these findings contradicted Torrington et al. (2008) where turnover of academic staff was found to be a problem attributable to lack of participation in decision making and effective management systems. Similarly, Muindi (2011) established that leadership style, specifically lack of involvement in decision making and inadequate communication were some of the issues that caused dissatisfaction of academic staff. In addition, Owino (2011), paraphrasing Kinyanjui noted that good governance should be characterized by partnership and participation and devolving power to make decisions to the operational units such as faculties, institutes and departments.

Management support staff members on research matters
On whether management supports staff members on research matters, majority of the respondents; 34.2% said that they get support while 18% said they do not get support. This corroborates Research Policy (2006) and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Factors related to institutional leadership</th>
<th>HA(5)</th>
<th>A(4)</th>
<th>N(3)</th>
<th>D(2)</th>
<th>HD(1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IL1</td>
<td>The management is concerned with staff training and development</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL2</td>
<td>Management encourages collaboration with other institutions/organizations on matters of strategic importance</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL3</td>
<td>Involves the staff members in decision making</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL4</td>
<td>Management Provide information on current state of affairs in the institutions</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL5</td>
<td>I have been familiarized with the policies and practices of the institution</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL6</td>
<td>Management support staff members on research matters</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL7</td>
<td>There is transparency and accountability in the leadership</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL8</td>
<td>Management provide a conducive work environment</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averages</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.79</td>
<td>34.66</td>
<td>27.93</td>
<td>11.59</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional Research Plan (2007) report on the type of resources and support provided by the higher institutions of learning which included; financial support, infrastructure, time, collaboration and training. Similarly, Goransson and Brundenius (2011) indicated that Universities recognize the relevance and urgency of university research. In addition Schulze (2008) found that the institutions recognize the importance of graduate training for research knowledge and that there was high quality of the mentoring that facilitated research. At the same time, Schulze (2008) indicated that researchers expressed lack of uninterrupted time as one of the main problems explained by teaching commitments and administrative overload. These results shows that institutions of higher education are not doing justice to the economies and without research outputs knowledge management (creation, transfer and exchange of information) will only be in theory hence affect economic development.

**Familiarized with the policies and practices of the institution when i was first employed**

Results indicate that the leaders undertake orientation of employees hence the reason for familiarization with the policies and practices of the institutions; 72.3% of the academic staff responded that they were familiarized with the policies and practices of the institution. These findings were supported by Schwartz et al. (2009) who found that policies and practices were known, understood, and accepted by trustees, administrators, and the faculty. Further to this Schwartz et al. (2009) noted that universities conduct orientation programs for new faculty; included review of the roles and responsibilities of faculty in institutional governance as well as opportunities for faculty participation.

**There is transparency and accountability in the leadership**

When asked whether there was transparency and accountability, majority (42.1%) of respondent agreed to this statement, while 36.9% of the respondents disagreed. Leveille (2006) confirmed transparency and accountability in place in universities can be associated with the increasing scrutiny by the public and governments on higher education systems with respect to what they do, how they do it and at what cost. Formalized accountability exercises have also been implemented on the basis of performance indicators; hence institutions management can not compromise the images of their institutions. There is an indication that most of the institutions are doing well in transparency and accountability this is attributable to the external forces.

**Work environment is conducive**

The results revealed that employees appreciate that leaders create an environment for academics to fulfill their potential and interest in their work; with 54.2% of the respondents agreeing that the environment was conducive, while 22.1% said otherwise. This corroborates Schwartz, Skinner and Bowen (2009) that governance works well in most institutions and that relationships are relatively healthy. Himanshu et al. (2011), observed that more than 80 percent of employees leave because of the push factors related to poor management practices or toxic cultures, a sense of professional isolation, including a lack of supportive and friendly colleagues. This means that universities are focused on retaining their employees.

**Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)**

As indicated on table 2, institutional leadership was found to have a KMO value of .737 this value falls within the recommended range of 0.6 or above (Pallant, 2005). The data was significant (0.000) thus p< 0.05. This showed some relationships between the items and therefore the correlation matrix of institutional leadership was not an identity matrix. Therefore factor analysis was therefore appropriate for institutional leadership.

**Factor analysis**

Table 3 shows the loadings of each of the items on the component extracted. All had a loading of above 0.4 and therefore no item on institutional leadership was eliminated.

**Reliability test**

The Cronbach’s alpha for the 8 items under institutional leadership was higher 0.726. Higher alpha coefficient values means that scales are more reliable hence the 8 items were consistent.

**Pearson correlation - Institutional leadership and talent management**

Table 4 shows there is a strong positive relationship
### Table 4: Pearson Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Institutional Leadership</th>
<th>Talent Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: Model Fitness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td>4.61220176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6: Determining the Regression Equation for the institutional leadership and talent management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>B 6.913</td>
<td>Std. Error 1.148</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Leadership</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>Beta .673</td>
<td>14.295</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship between institutional leadership and talent management score. This means that if the value of institutional leadership increases, the value of talent management also increases and vice versa.

### Goodness of fit model

Table 5 shows the overall model; R squared indicates the coefficient of determination. This explains how much of dependent variable (talent management) can be explained by independent variable Institutional leadership. In this case 45.3% of the total variation in talent management can be explained by the linear relationship between institutional leadership and talent management. The correlation coefficient (R) indicates there is a strong positive relationship between institutional leadership and talent management.

### Regression analysis

The relationship between leadership and talent management was determined by use of regression equation; \( y = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 x_1 + e \) where \( y \) is talent management, \( x_1 \) is the variable leadership and \( \beta_1 \) is coefficient of correlation, \( e \) is the residual. Table 6 shows the coefficients explaining the relationship on the model.

From the regression model \( y = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 x_1 + e \); \( \alpha_1 \) is the constant represented by 6.913, \( \beta \) is represented by 1.000 and it indicates the steepness of the regression line or how much the predicted value of the dependent variable (talent management) increases when the value of the independent (institutional leadership) variable increases. The coefficient for institutional leadership is 1, meaning that for a one unit increase in institutional leadership; there will be a one unit increase in talent management.

The regression equation takes the form; predicted variable \( (talent \ management) = intercept + slope \times institutional \ leadership \). According to Field, (2005) the slope indicates how steep the regression line is; the intercept is where the regression line strikes Y axis. Therefore; \( Talent \ Management = 6.913+1\times(Institutional \ Leadership) \). For each institutional leadership value substituted and the Talent Management that results provides an ordered pair that falls on the regression line.

To test whether the regression coefficient for institutional leadership was significantly different from zero, the null hypothesis tested was; \( H_0: \beta \) is equal to 0, \( H_1: \beta \) is not equal to 0. The coefficient Table 6 signifies the calculated t-value for institutional leadership equals 14.295, and is statistically significant at p-value 0.000; \( t_{crit} = t_{247} (0.975) = 1.960 \); the null hypothesis is rejected and the conclusion was that institutional leadership has a significant positive effect on talent management.

### Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The null hypothesis tested was that the regression model was not statistically fit to predict the outcome variable. Table 7 shows that the F-test is statistically significant at \( p < 0.05 \). Regression model is statistically fit at \( p < 0.05 \), \( F = 204.3 \) with a 95% level of confidence. The regression model can predict the outcome variable significantly at 0.001 hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The
Conclusion was that institutional leadership can predict the outcome variable (talent management) at $p = 0.001$ level of significant.

**How does Institutional Leadership influence talent management?**

To answer this question the relationship between leadership and talent management was determined by use of regression equation: $y = \alpha_i + \beta_i x_i + e$ where $y$ is talent management, $x_i$ is the variable leadership and $\beta_i$ is coefficient of correlation, $e$ is the residual. **Figure 1** shows a linear relationship between institutional leadership and talent management. It represents the regression line graphically. The line is diagonal reflecting a positive linear relationship between talent management and institutional leadership; this suggests a positively sloped regression line, hence satisfying the assumption of linearity in a simple regression model.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The study concluded that institutional leadership has a role to play in ensuring talent management practices take place in their institutions. This is through staff participation in decision making; training and development; transparency and accountability in leadership; fostering conducive working environment; ensuring familiarization with institutional policies and
practices; availing funds for research; and enabling collaboration on strategic matters. The study recommends more openness in leadership to enhance motivation of employees and thus attain the talent management much yearned for. Right policies, checks and balances have to be put in place for both organizational and personal goals satisfaction which will enable high productivity while enriching motivation.

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