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Work Environment and Perception of Institutional Policies as Correlates of Lecturers' Productivity in Uganda Christian University

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Abstract. This study sought to establish the relationship between each of work environment and perception of institutional policies and lecturers' productivity in Uganda Christian University. It involved 94 lecturers who responded to a self administered questionnaire. Data analysis was based on percents and means at the descriptive level while Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to correlate the independent variables with productivity. The results revealed that there was no significant relationship between work environment and the productivity of lecturers, hence the recommendation that other than work environment, the University should prioritize factors such as qualification, experience, remuneration and training. The results revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between perception of institutional policies and productivity, hence the recommendation that the University embraces favourable policies that balance institutional and individual needs.

Keywords: Job performance; Job related factors; Uganda Christian University

1 Introduction

Productivity of lecturers is a key factor for the success of any university. Universities with productive lecturers compete favourably in achieving their set goals. Competition demands that universities have to offer best quality services by fully utilizing talents of the available lecturers. A university with productive lecturers is likely to embrace effective teaching, research and community service. Thus studies geared towards isolating factors positively relating with productivity of lecturers are important. According to Systems Theory (von Bertallanffy cited in Mullins, 2002), any product or outcome of interest is a result of several components working together. Basing on Systems Theory, in

this study it was proposed that productivity of lecturers is a result of interplay of several factors among which are work environment and perception of institutional policies. The purpose of this study was to establish the validity of the above thesis. The specific objectives of the study were to find out the relationship between each of work environment and perception of institutional policies and productivity of lecturers.

2 Related Literature

2.1 Work Environment and Productivity of Staff

Work environment is defined as the place in which people work including all the physical conditions (Macmillan, 2002). For this study, work environment was looked at in terms of availability of lighting facilities, telephone facilities, lecture rooms and offices. Handy (1997) theorizes that output increases as a result of provision of conducive work environment. Elton Mayo, in his Hawthorn experiment on the effect of working conditions of employees, established the importance of lighting on productivity of workers. According to Mayo, necessary conditions for maintaining quality performance from employees are to provide them with adequate needs including lighting, good working relationship and instilling confidence in workers. This study assumed that if lecturers were provided with a conducive environment such as lighting and communication facilities, space, library facilities and reading materials and good relationship with co workers, productivity of lecturers is likely to be high. Several studies have been carried out in an attempt to relate work environment with staff productivity. For instance, Okumbe (1992)'s study in Kenya established that work environment provides personal comfort and facilitates efficiency at work among graduate teachers in secondary schools in Siaga District and Kisumu Town. Ryan and Hurley (2007) in a research conducted in New Zealand and Ireland revealed that organizational environment leads to quality research performance. Srivastava (2008) in China established that employees who perceived their work environment to be adequate and favourable performed better.

2.2 Perception of Institutional Policies and Productivity of Staff

An institutional policy can be defined as a plan of action to be taken by an institution (Macmillan, 2002). Basing on the above definition, perception of institutional policies refers to the attitude a member of staff holds towards the institutional set policies. For this study, perception of institutional policies included lecturers' perception of compensation, promotion, supervision and

opportunity for advancement. Mullins (2002) stresses the importance of clear and flexible rules and regulations which apply to all and suitable for real life situation, friendly terms and conditions of service contribute to increased productivity of workers. They point out that managers would reduce discontentment among their workers if the institutional policies were perceived by workers as being reasonable, fair and applied to all. Ivancevich (1997) observes that if workers are not satisfied with the company's policies, they get involved in behaviours which disrupt team spirit and productivity of other employees. Studies relating perception of institutional policies and productivity of staff exist. For example Tizikara (1998)'s study on job satisfaction and management styles in selected tertiary institutions in Uganda revealed that low emoluments have a negative effect on staff productivity. Basekanakyo (2006)'s study revealed that bureaucratic policy in Busoga University negatively affected productivity of staff. Barasa (2004)'s study revealed that the colonial housing policy de-motivated academic staff to perform at Makerere University.

2.3 Hypotheses

This research sought to test the validity of the following hypotheses:
1. Work environment is positively related to productivity.
2. Perception of institutional policies is positively related to productivity.

3 Methodology

Using a quantitative approach, and correlational design, data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire with constructs on the independent variables, namely work environment and perception of institutional policies. The questionnaire had constructs on the dependent variable, namely teaching, research and community service. Table 1 gives the numbers of items per construct, and the corresponding measure of reliability.

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of the Instrument

Variable	Construct	Number of items	Alpha
Independent Variables	Work environment	5	0.662
	Perception of institutional policies	4	0.762
Dependent Variable	Teaching	5	0.843
	Research	5	0.770
	Community service	4	0.730

According to Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1971) the instrument was reliable since all coefficients were above 0.5. Using the questionnaire, data were

collected from a sample of 94 randomly selected academic staff from all schools/ faculties/ institutes as illustrated in Table 2:

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Unit

Unit	Number	Number in sample	Sample as % of population
Education & Arts	48	18	37.5
Social Sciences	43	23	53.5
Business & Administration	62	32	51.6
Law	39	15	38.5
Science & Technology	40	02	05.0
Divinity & Theology	22	02	09.1
Honours College	00*	00*	00.0*
Global South Institute	09	02	22.2
Total	263	94	60.65

** Honours College relies on lecturers from other schools/ faculties/ institutes*

Data analysis was based on percents and means at descriptive level, while Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to correlate the respective concepts of job satisfaction with productivity.

4 Findings

4.1 Background of Respondents

According to faculty, Faculty of Business and Administration dominated the sample by contributing 34% of the respondents which suggested that this Faculty has a bigger number of lecturers in the University. It was followed by the Faculty of Social Science with 24.5%, Faculty of Education and Arts with 19.1%, Faculty of Law with 16.1%. Faculty of Science and Technology (2.1%), Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology (2.1%) and Global South Institute (2.1%). Honours College was not represented at all, as it does not have own staff. In terms of gender, males were the majority (63%) in the sample while the female contributed only 37%, suggesting that majority of lecturers in Uganda Christian University, Mukono are males. Respondents had a mean age of 31.89 with a confidence interval of 30.6 to 33.19 at 95% level and a median age of 29, suggesting that these respondents were mature enough to lecture. Regarding tenure, the category of respondents who had taught for "less than five years" dominated the sample contributing to almost 68.5%, which suggested that majority of lecturers have just joined the University, followed by the category that had taught "between five years but below 10 years" contributing 28.3% and only 3.3% had taught for "over 10 years".

With regard to highest academic qualification, Masters holders dominated the sample contributing to over 51.1% of the respondents, followed by those with Bachelor's degrees (43.5%), postgraduate diploma (4.3%) and only 1.1% had a doctorate degree. The sizeable number of Bachelors degree holders (43.5%) suggested that the University still has a challenge of upgrading its staff, since the minimum requirement for teaching in a university, according to the National Council for Higher Education is a Masters. In terms of academic rank, lecturers dominated the sample contributing 47.9%, followed by assistant lecturers (42.6%). Senior lecturers and "associate professor and above" were least represented contributing only 6.4% and 3.2% respectively. This suggested that the academic staffs of the University are "bottom-heavy", meaning that bottom ranks are full while top ones are empty. On the question of administrative responsibility, as expected, majority (73.4 %) of the respondents had no administrative responsibility, followed by the responsibility of research coordinator (14.9%), head of department (9.6%) and very few deans (2.1%).

4.2 Productivity of Lecturers

The dependent variable, productivity of lecturers was conceptualized as teaching, research and community service.

4.2.1 Teaching

Teaching in the study was conceptualized using five quantitative items, responses to each of which was Likert scaled ranging from one which represented very rarely, two represented rarely, three represented neither rarely nor regularly, four represented regularly and five represented very regularly. Resulting frequency counts and means are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Teaching

Indicator	Very rarely	Rarely	Neither rarely nor regularly	Regularly	Very regularly	Mean	Remark
Lesson preparation	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)	0 (0%)	45 (47%)	47 (50%)	4.45	Good
Content delivery	1 (1.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.1%)	31 (33%)	61 (64.9%)	4.61	Very Good
Course coverage	0 (0%)	1 (1.1%)	6 (6.4%)	24 (25%)	63 (67%)	4.59	Very Good
Evaluation	0 (0%)	1 (1.1%)	4 (4.3%)	50 (53%)	38 (40.4%)	4.32	Good
Record keeping	0 (00%)	1 (1.1%)	10 (10.6%)	30 (31%)	53 (56.4%)	4.44	Good

On all items in Table 3, the cumulative percentage of "regularly" and "very regularly" greatly outnumbered the corresponding cumulative percentages of

"very rarely" and "rarely". In other words, on all items respondents rated themselves as at least "good" on their execution of their role of teaching. This is supported by means which are all above "4" which on the rating scale used corresponds to "good" or "very good", as indeed the overall index ("Teach" on all items in Table 3), which had a mean of 4.48, and a 95% confidence estimate of 4.37 to 4.59.

4.2.2 Research

Research in the study was conceptualized using five items, responses to each of which were based on a Likert scale ranging from one which represented very rarely, two represented rarely, three represented neither rarely nor regularly, four represented regularly and five represented very regularly. Table 4 gives pertinent frequency counts and means.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Research

Indicator	Very rarely	Rarely	Neither rarely nor regularly	Regularly	Very regularly	Mean	Remark
Carry out research	1 (1.1%)	7 (7.5%)	7 (7.5%)	52 (55%)	26 (28%)	4.02	Good
Supervise research	4 (4%)	4 (4.5%)	20 (22.5%)	43 (48%)	18 (20%)	3.72	Good
Write books	21 (24%)	31 (35.6%)	23 (26.4%)	8 (9%)	4 (4.6%)	2.34	Poor
Conference presentation	4 (4%)	21 (22.6%)	24 (25.8%)	35 (37%)	9 (9.7%)	3.26	Fair
Write journal articles	17 (18%)	33 (35.5%)	26 (28%)	10 (10%)	7 (7.5%)	2.54	Fair

Except for the first and second items, where the scores were "good", Table 4 reveals that respondents were not "good" at executing the research function. Means tell the same story, as indeed the overall index ("Res" from all items in Table 4) which had a mean 3.17, with a confidence interval of 3.01 and 3.34 at the 95% confidence level.

4.2.3 Community Service

Community services were conceptualized using four items. Responses to the quantitative items were based on a Likert scale ranging from one which represented very rarely, two represented rarely, three represented neither rarely nor regularly, four represented regularly and five represented very regularly. Resulting frequency counts and means are as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on Community Service

Indicator	Very rarely	Rarely	Neither rarely nor regularly	Regularly	Very regularly	Mean	Remark
Advocacy	0 (0%)	5 (5.4%)	13 (14.1%)	48 (52%)	26 (28%)	4.03	Good
Leadership	5 (5.4%)	5 (5.4%)	17 (18.3%)	49 (52%)	17 (18%)	3.73	Good
Consultation	3 (3.3%)	9 (9.8%)	29 (31.5%)	34 (37%)	17 (18%)	3.58	Good
Participation in community projects	2 (2.2%)	7 (7.5%)	28 (30.1%)	33 (35%)	23 (24%)	3.73	Good

On all items in Table 5, the cumulative percentage of "regularly" and "very regularly" greatly outnumbered the corresponding cumulative percentages of "very rarely" and "rarely". In other words, on all items respondents rated themselves as "good" on their execution of the community service role. This is supported by means which were all about "4" which on the rating scale used corresponded to "good". Indeed the overall index ("Cserv") on all items in Table 5 had a mean of 3.76, and a 95% confidence estimate of 3.61 to 3.91, which corresponded to "good". An overall average index ("Lproduct" on labour productivity), was computed from the three tables (Tables 3, 4 and 5) had a mean = 3.8 with a confidence interval between 3.70 to 3.90 at the 95% confidence level which suggested a relatively high productivity.

4.3 Testing Hypotheses

4.3.1 Hypothesis One

Hypothesis One postulated that "work environment was positively related to productivity". Work environment was conceptualized using five quantitative items, responses to each of which were based on a Likert scale ranging from one which represented strongly disagree, two represented disagree, three represented neither disagree nor agree, four represent agree and five represented strongly agree. Except for the second item, where the score was only "fair", Table 6 reveals that respondents rated their work environment as "good". Means tell the same story. The overall index ("Env" from all items in Table 6) had a mean 3.6, with a confidence interval of 3.47 and 3.74 at the 95% confidence level, which also suggested a "good" environment. Pearson's linear correlation of the two indices ("Envt" from Table 6 and "Lproduct" from Tables 3, 4 and 5) turned out to be $r = 0.154$, $p = 0.182$ which suggested a positive ($r > 0$) but insignificant ($p > 0.05$) correlation at the five percent level,

suggesting that productivity of lecturers was not significantly correlated to work environment.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics on Work Environment

Indicator	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Remark
University provides me with adequate lighting facilities	5 (5.3%)	7 (7.4%)	32 (34%)	22 (23%)	28 (29%)	3.65	Good
University provides me with adequate telephone facilities	14 (15%)	13(14%)	40 (43%)	16 (17%)	10 (10%)	2.95	Fair
University provides me with enough space to meet my students	1 (1%)	3 (3.2%)	12 (12%)	61 (64%)	17 (18%)	3.96	Good
University provides me with enough space to keep my academic resources	3 (3.2%)	5 (5.3%)	9 (9.6%)	64 (68%)	13 (13%)	3.84	Good
University provides me with enough space for my private reading	5 (5.3%)	9 (9.6%)	17 (18%)	48 (51%)	15 (16%)	3.63	Good

Note: *SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neither disagree nor agree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree*

4.3.2 Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis Two posited that "perception of institutional policies was positively related to productivity of lecturers". Perception of institutional policies was conceptualized using four quantitative items, responses to each of which were based on a Likert scale ranging from one which represented strongly disagree, two represented disagree, three represented neither disagree nor agree, four represented agree and five represented strongly agree. Table 7 gives pertinent counts and means.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Perception of Institutional Policies

Indicator	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Remark
Compensation university gives me is adequate.	2 (2.1%)	16 (17%)	34 (36.2%)	38 (40.4%)	4 (4.3%)	3.28	Fair
Accessing promotion in my department is easy	9 (9.7%)	19(20.4%)	43 (46.2%)	16 (17.2%)	6 (6.5%)	2.90	Fair
Supervision in my department is supportive	3 (3.2%)	1 (1.1%)	15 (16.1%)	56 (60.2%)	18 (19%)	3.91	Good
I am given opportunities for development	6 (6.4%)	4 (4.3%)	12 (12.8%)	51 (54.3%)	21 (22%)	3.82	Good

Note: *SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neither disagree nor agree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree*

For the first two items in Table 7, the scores were only "fair", while for the latter two items in Table 7, the scores were "good". Means tell the same story. The overall index ("Policies" from all items in Table 7) had a mean 3.48, with a confidence interval of 3.33 and 3.63 at the 95% confidence level, which also suggested that perceptions of policies ranged from "fair" to "good". Pearson's linear correlation of the two indices ("Policies" and "Lproduct" from Tables 3, 4 and 5) turned out to be $r = 0.306$, $p = 0.002$, which suggested a positive ($r > 0$) and significant ($p < 0.01$) correlation between lecturers' perception of institutional policies and productivity at the one percent level.

5 Discussion

5.1 Work Environment and Productivity of Lecturers

Hypothesis One postulated that "work environment was positively related to productivity of lecturers". Pearson's correlation coefficient revealed that the relationship was not significant at the five percent significance level. This finding contrasted those by Okumbe (1992)'s study on the level of job satisfaction among graduate teachers in secondary schools in Siaya and Kisumu towns which established that work environment provides personal comfort and facilitates efficiency at work. It was also in disagreement with Ryan and Hurley (2007)'s study on empirical examination of the relationship between scientists' work environment and research performance in Massey University and Dublin city University Business School who found out that organizational environment leads to quality research performance. The finding also differed from Srivastava (2008)'s study on effects of perceived work environment on employees job behaviour and organizational effectiveness in China that revealed that employees who perceived their work environment to be adequate and favourable performed better. The study finding in the meantime however, led to the conclusion that productivity of lecturers is not positively related to work environment in Uganda Christian University, Mukono.

5.2 Perception of Institutional Policies and Productivity of Lecturers

Hypothesis Two stated that "perception of institutional policies is positively related to productivity of lecturers". Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that the relationship was significant at one percent level. The finding is supported by different researchers such as Tizikara (1998) in a study on job satisfaction and management styles in selected tertiary institutions in Uganda,

who established that low emoluments has a negative impact on staff productivity. The study also agrees with Basekanakyo (2006)'s study on relationship between bureaucracy and staff productivity in institutions of high learning in Busoga University that revealed that bureaucratic policies do not bring about productivity of staff. Barasa (2004)'s study on investigation into the academic staff housing policy and its effects on job performance of lecturers at Makerere University that established a significant positive correlation between institutions' conditions of service and academic staff performance. Basing on the study finding, it was concluded that perception of institutional policies was highly positively related to productivity of lecturers in Uganda Christian University, Mukono.

6 Conclusion

The study revealed that there was no significant relationship between work environment and productivity of lecturers, hence the recommendation that other than work environment, the University should prioritize other factors such as qualification, experience remuneration and training that affect productivity of lecturers. The results revealed that there was a high positive significant relationship between perception of institutional policies and productivity of lecturers, hence the recommendation that the University should embrace favourable and flexible institutional policies that balance institutional needs and individual needs to enhance productivity of lecturers.

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