



AN INVESTIGATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE OUTSOURCED ACADEMIC RESOURCE PROVIDER SELECTION ON INSTITUTION MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NYERI AND KIAMBU COUNTIES IN KENYA

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to explore whether provider's selection influenced institutional management efficiency in public universities in Nyeri and Kiambu counties. A hybrid theoretical framework of Resource based theory and Institutional management efficiency theory buttressed the study. Purposeful sampling of 20 deans of schools, 3 human resource managers 122 heads of departments and 415 lecturers was used. The study made use of questionnaires, interview guide and focus group discussions to collect data. The study utilized a Methodological triangulation research design. To ensure the validity of the instruments, the Research objectives were crosschecked with the corresponding items. The spearman's split-half technique of assessing reliability of the instruments was used. Inter-Rater technique was used in this study to measure credibility. Dependability was ascertained by means of triangulation. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient technique was used. A correlation coefficient of 0.73 for the two halves was considered sufficient. Descriptive and inferential statistics to evaluate the dependence of measures of organizational efficiency was used. The study reviewed that, public universities should evaluate academic resource providers in order to produce quality graduates and also to be able to control and reduce operational costs.

Keywords: provider selection, outsourcing, institution management efficiency

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1. Background Information

1.1 Academic Resource Outsourcing

In order to improve efficiencies, educational institutions are lured to outsourcing, as a key to achieve improved financial results. Mehta, (2006) debates the merits of outsourcing education based on the three major challenges that educational institutions face, the fight for talent, benchmarking to global standards and the mismatch between supply and demand. An increasing number of educational institutions are considering allowing external experts to run their vital, but often management-time consuming and resource intensive operations.

In addition to economic advantages, outsourcing also provides operational and strategic benefits for an organization (Huber, 1996). The enterprise will be in a position to react more quickly to changes in market demand. Both the buyer and the supplier of an outsourcing arrangement share an open relationship where they receive support from each other to overcome problems. Gaither in making a decision on how much work must be outsourced. Frazier, (2002) points out that an important aspect of operations strategy is the amount of work that will be outsourced.

As establishments strive to operate more efficiently, they must try to establish the best level of outsourcing in order to achieve their operations and business goals. Due consideration must be given to the fact that outsourcing is a sensitive labour issue for trade unions, because fewer employees will be required as the company engages in more outsourcing. Since outsourcing is an integral part of an institution's supply chain, and better supply chain management has become an important part of an institution's operations strategy, it is vital that the above concerns are adequately addressed. (Frazier, 2002)

A survey published by the National Association of College Auxiliary Services in 1997 captured more than 70 services by institutions of higher education. The survey results support that almost all services are outsourced, within higher education. The survey results showed a high degree of similarity between public and private institutions. However, of the 71 services covered in the survey, public institutions outsourced only two services to a higher degree while private institutions outsourced 23 of the services to a higher degree (an 8% or more difference). It appears that public institutions are more likely to have sufficient human resources or equipment compared to private institutions, and thus decreasing the need to outsource services. The 1997 survey also suggests that the extent to which an institution outsources services is influenced by the size of an institution. Larger institutions tend to perform more

services in-house than smaller institutions, even for specialized services such as waste and hazardous waste removal and textbook publishing. Conversely, larger institutions are more likely than smaller institutions to outsource auxiliary services such as housing facilities, bookstores and athletic concessions.

Good instruction cannot be approached as freelance work. A good educator has to be relentlessly conscious of how learners integrate what they are learning into the rest of their lives. The teller at Target just wants you to "*Expect more. Pay less,*" and get out of the way of the next client.

According to Wendler, former chancellor at Southern Illinois University, the outsourcing of secondary functions may allow a university to focus more strongly on its core teaching mission. However, when universities rely on teachers that they treat as labour-for-hire, they can affect the priorities of the entire faculty. Rather than stewards, they become supplicants. They learn they must not challenge students or administrators or give any offense because they are little valued and easily replaced. Inoffensive educators stop looking to the horizon and start looking at their feet. From that posture, though, how can they prepare students to cross that next ocean or climb that next mountain?

According to Wendler universities need a clear faculty voice that addresses the calling of their profession and its importance to the future of the nation. What we've frequently gotten instead is third-party rehashings of how many credit hours constitute an overload or how to reorganize benefits for the next batch of retirees. Wendler further questions, "*Where are the American Association of University Professors, the National Education Association and other trade associations? First, faculty outsourced their leadership to unions. Now, the faculty itself is being outsourced. Is compensation critical?*" Yes, but only after a mutual understanding of the nature of the work is reached.

Wendler ventures even further to say "*The essence of the university — enlightened and energetic faculty in contact with the student of like mind and disposition — has to be treated differently. Teaching and scholarship are not ancillary services at a good university and cannot be parcelled off to the lowest-price providers. Knowledge work must be treated as a long-term investment, not just a current cost. But what is the value of "efficiency" when the priorities of our universities are "Targeted" to maximize the sale of low-cost, uniformly produced, discrete packets of information distributed by indistinguishable day labourers. Sometimes the lowest price isn't the best deal.*"

According to Gay and Essinger (2000) outsourcing "*is one of the fastest-growing and arguably most important areas of business activity*". Establishments enter into outsourcing arrangements for different reasons. LeFort (1998) founder and Chief

Executive Officer (CEO) of Connexions.net says *“different establishments outsource different services and for different reasons”*. According to LeFort, if a survey were to be conducted of *“Fortune 1000 companies such as Mercedes-Benz, Olympus, JP Morgan Chase, EarthLink, Nextel, and Blue Cross Blue Shield – all of them would have many different outsourcing goals. Some may emphasize flexibility and speed-to-market; others would be seeking cost savings or capital cost avoidance or brand protection. Often, there are multiple goals across the board. However, each is able to maintain its competitive edge and its leadership standing by outsourcing.”*

1.2 Benefits of Outsourcing

D’Agostino (2005) reaffirms Marcella’s view, that institutions can gain benefits from outsourcing selected business processes, provided that the third party refines and evolves the existing systems from start to finish, in order to suit the institutions specific needs. The key problem for many companies is determining exactly what, if anything should be outsourced. Poor management, badly negotiated contracts, hidden costs and political infighting also contribute to the problem. According to Marcella 1995), Outsourcing improves service quality and flexibility as business growth can be accommodated without incurring extra costs and overheads. A fixed-price contract with service-level guarantees ensures that the company does not have to concern itself with any compromise in quality. Valued employees can refocus on more important activities, and some financial capital may be made available through the sale of capital assets to the outsource provider. The foundations of future business success stories are being laid today as an increasing number of companies are allowing external experts to run their vital, but often management-time consuming and resource intensive peripheral operations.

According to OECD (2005) survey of e-learning in tertiary education, ‘e-learning has really revolutionized learning and teaching to date. The world having become a highly competitive globalized economy, knowledge, skills and know-how are key factors for economic success and better living standards. In addition, education empowers individuals to realize their potential and become fully active citizens in a modern society. Education is an essential tool for addressing inequities and overcoming disadvantages, thus providing a solid foundation for social cohesion. It is therefore important to adopt the very best policies to promote excellence, efficiency and equity in education and training. There are many challenges facing education policymakers and hence the need to create the policies that would deliver the best results. Education policies do not function in a vacuum, and it is important to take into account how they

interact with other policies and the overall institutional environment that can reinforce or counter-act their benefits reforms. Lags in investment in training, and re- structuring of jobs, organizations, and business strategy led to delay in ICT investment application and exploitation. It also turned out that much of the payoff came not from performing the same functions more efficiently, but from transforming business practices through changes in inventory management, outsourcing, and opening new markets.

Notwithstanding the modest impact of ICT on classroom practice, through the Internet, ICT has had dramatic impact on society beyond the classroom. For example, Internet has transformed everything from political election campaigns, to courtship, to shopping. The accessibility of information and ease of communication that are possible with Internet make it easier for parents as well as politicians to obtain a clearer picture of how schools and education systems are managed. Jae-Nam Lee (2000) observes that outsourcing in Information Services (IS), issues ranges from make-or-buy decision to partnership. Organizations considered outsourcing as a commodity, and then focused on the choice between internally developed technology and its external acquisition, what was called “make-or-buy decision” Buck-Lew, (1992) Thus, the role of the service provider was limited in terms of the size of contract as well as of the types of IS services.

Studies done by Gupta, (1992), shows that outsourcing entails critical risks with loss of flexibility, loss of control, and loss of competitive advantage in information management and loss of qualified personnel. They argue that an organization can opt for various outsourcing options (or scope) based on the degree of outsourcing which can be total or selective, period of outsourcing long term or short term, number of provider multiple or single provider. The options are drawn from the disadvantages and advantages of outsourcing that organizations have undergone through.

Though outsourcing is deployed for purpose of gaining social, technological, economic and strategic benefits, no one can assure an effective outsourcing performance. Thus, the focuses are on the issue of performance. According to Grover et al., (1996), many past researches tried to verify if outsourcing was success or failure in terms of system efficiency, user satisfaction and business satisfaction of outsourced information systems, service quality, and cost reduction. However, the results from these studies showed multiple and conflicting results depending on outsourcing projects.

The outsourcing that shapes the relationship between outsources providers and their clients become an important issue as outsourcing gains its popularity. A number of researchers emphasized the importance of contract management with the service

provider. The outsourcing clauses should be well designed in order to reduce unexpected contingencies, possible cost increases, and opportunistic behaviour of the service provider (Fitzgerald, 1995). Likewise, Lacity (1993) proposes fourteen negotiation strategies to the clients in order to avoid pitfalls. Further, Klepper (1995) observes that after many organizations experience difficulties in forming and managing a connection with their service providers, organizations identify the limitations of well-specified legal contracts and instead seek flexible relationships with their service providers based on mutual trust. Outsourcing in the 1990s is evolving from contractual to partnership based relationship.

Phipps (2005), Institute for Higher Education Policy asserts that a core set of issues and questions must be explored when institutional management is deciding to outsource. These 'decision factors' are grouped into several categories namely: (i) Human resource management, financial management and service quality relating to how each alternative will meet campus needs, (ii) Legal and Ethical Considerations entailing the level of risk and potential liability posed by each option, any tax ramifications, and any conflicts of interest, (iii) Mission and Culture which looks into the effects of choosing an option inconsistent with the institution's culture and historical mission, (iv) Ability to control the direction and priorities of the functional area.

2. Outsourcing of Academic Resources

Although outsourcing has attracted a lot of attention in recent years, it is not a new concept as the term has been used to describe working concepts that have actually been in place for some time, based on the concepts of specialization, division of labour and transaction cost economics. Domberger (1998) cites well documented historical accounts of the contracting and outsourcing of goods and services such as third party suppliers in the private sector in the 18th and 19th century who provided services including prison management, road maintenance, refuse collection and the collection of public revenue. Lane (2004) takes a different view by asserting that *"the trend of outsourcing in many places around the world is immature, but it's growing"*.

To confirm that outsourcing is a new name for old practices, Felie, Fitzgerald and Pettigrew, (1996) said *"in the USA outsourcing goes back to the nineteenth century. For example, private investors often owned transport utilities such as toll roads and barge canals. The current rush to 'outsource' is thought to have begun with a widespread belief in the inefficiency of state-owned enterprises"*. Whilst outsourcing is not a new activity, it is taking a new dimension and literature search showed that there was an increase in the

trend from the 1980s. As Bunker and Alban, (1997) state, *“the combination of increased international competition and adverse economic conditions in the 1980s drove both private and public bodies to seek more cost-effective ways of providing goods and services”* which included outsourcing. Mintzberg and Quinn, (1996) assert that ethos or origins of outsourcing developed out of specialization. According to Forey, Gail, and Lockwood, (2011), companies primarily outsource to reduce certain costs such as peripheral or "non-core" business expenses, high energy costs, high taxes, excessive government regulation/mandates, production and or labour costs.

Most entrepreneurs start up their business and do most of the work themselves, taking on the responsibility for marketing, sales, HR, technology, and other components of the business (Hughes, 2009). As the business grows, tasks become enormous that someone is hired to do the non-core work. And, in the spirit of stretching their cash, the people they hired people are expected to follow in their footsteps – offloading as much work and a variety of work to their hired personnel. The decision to outsource is normally a strategic one and not deciding to outsource is a tactical choice.

3. Key Questions that Guided the Study

- i. To what extent did provider’s selection influence institutional management efficiency in public universities Nyeri and Kiambu counties?
- ii. How did provider availability and accountability to organisation goals influence institution management efficiency?

4. Significance of the Study

The study sought to determine whether provider’s quality of service influenced institutional management efficiency in public Universities in Nyeri and Kiambu counties. Outsourcing enhances competition in the public educational institutions which is an indirect benefit since being aware that services or office may be outsourced could make those on the college start thinking about efficiency and effectiveness in performance. Outsourcing allows higher educational institutions to be innovative, to test new products and services, to competitively price alternatives, to brand and strengthen their own capabilities, and to focus on what they do best (Bartem & Manning, 2001).

This research expanded the boundaries of knowledge on public universities and education ministry and particularly on the synergies generated by the public

universities in meeting the ever expanding training needs in particular and helping attain government developmental goals. The study provided vital information to both the parents and the students on the role of public universities in supplementing their educational needs for self-development and shed light on to the secret of their success. In the Kenya Vision 2030, (Government of Kenya, 2008), it is argued that Business Process Off-shoring (BPO) is a new but promising sector to Kenya and especially the youth. The government seeks to mould Kenya to be among the top three (3) Business Processing Off-shoring destinations in Africa.

The research provided information on new business areas that can be exploited and add knowledge in the area of entrepreneurial management in general and outsourcing practices in particular to academia in outsourcing. Finally, the study may assist teachers, educational leaders, and educational stakeholders establish and employ greatly required strategies that increase academic and graduation achievement among students.

5. Theoretical Framework

The main exponent of the resource based theory was Birger (1984) and which is well expounded in his article 'A Resource-Based View of the Firm'. Nevertheless, the origins of the resource-based view can be traced back to earlier research. In retrospect, elements can be found in works by [Coase](#) (1937), [Selznick](#) (1957), [Penrose](#) (1959), [Stigler](#) (1961), [Chandler](#) (1962, 1977), and [Williamson](#) (1975), where emphasis is put on the importance of resources and its implications for firm performance (Conner, 1991, Rumelt, 1984, Mahoney and Pandian, 1992, Rugman and Verbeke, 2002). According to Birger (1984), resource-based view of a firm explains its ability to deliver sustainable competitive advantage when resources are managed such that their outcomes cannot be imitated by competitors, and which ultimately creates a competitive barrier (Mahoney and Pandian 1992 cited by Hooley and Greenley 2005, Smith and Rupp 2002,). Further, RBV theory supports the view that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage is reached by virtue of unique resources being rare, valuable, inimitable, non-tradable, and non-substitutable, as well as firm-specific (Barney 1999). Accordingly, a firm may reach a sustainable competitive advantage through unique resources which it holds, and while these resources cannot be easily bought, transferred, or copied, and simultaneously, they add value to a firm while being rare. It also highlights the fact that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage is not a function all resources.

Fundamental similarity in these works is that unique value-creating resources will generate a sustainable competitive advantage to the extent that either through acquisition or imitation. No competitor has the ability to use the same type of resources. Major concern in RBV is the ability of the institution to maintain a combination of resources that cannot be possessed or built up in a similar manner by competitors. Further such literatures provide us with the premise on which to gauge the sustainability strength of competitive advantage. Further, it depends on the ability of competitors to use identical or similar resources that has the same impact on a firm's performance. Thus, the institution's ability to avoid imitation of their resources should be analysed in depth to understand the sustainability strength of a competitive advantage.

According to Black, Boal, (1996), and Grant (1995), resources are the inputs or the factors available to an institution, which helps to perform its operations or carry out its activities. They also recognize that resources, if considered as isolated factors, do not result in productivity; hence, coordination of resources is important. Hooley and Greenlay (2005) assert that the ways a firm can create a barrier to imitation are known as "isolating mechanisms", and are reflected in the aspects of corporate culture, managerial capabilities, [information asymmetries](#) and property rights. Further, the other three aspects are direct or indirect results of managerial practices except for legislative restrictions created through property rights. King (2007) asserts that inter-organization causal ambiguity may lead to sustainable competitive advantage for some firms. The degree to which decision makers understand the relationship between organizational inputs and outputs is usually described on a continuum of causal ambiguity (Ghinggold and Johnson 1998, Lippman and Rumelt 1982).

Based on empirical literatures, resource based view provides the understanding that certain unique existing resources will achieve superior performance which finally culminates to a competitive advantage. Imitation of such resources will in extension depend on sustainability of the ability of competitors. However, due to volatility of the contemporary markets, the existing resources of a firm may not be adequate to facilitate the future market requirement. There is a vital need to modify and develop resources in order to encounter the future market competition. An organization is obliged to exploit existing business opportunities to sustain its competitiveness in the future market environments (Chaharbaghi and Lynch 1999), Song et al., 2002.

6. Critical Review of Theories and Gaps

The resource-based view has been criticized for weaknesses. Kraaijenbrink et al. (2010) assesses several critiques on the resource-based view. The following critiques have been discussed. (1) The resource-based view has no managerial implications, (2) the resource-based view implies infinite regress, (3) the resource-based view's applicability is too limited, (4) sustained competitive advantage is not achievable, (5) the value of a resource is too indeterminate to provide a useful theory, (6) the resource-based view is not a theory that is about the firm and (7) the definition of a resource is not clear to work with.

According to Priem & Butler (2001), the resource-based view misses managerial implications or operational validity. The resource-based view explains that managers have to develop and obtain strategic resources that meet the criteria valuable, rareness, non-imitable and non-substitution (VRIN criteria) and how an appropriate organization can be developed. However, the resource-based view does not explain how managers can do this (Connor, 2002).

According to Priem & Butler (2001) and Collins (1994), the resource-based view entails infinite regress. Firms, who have a capability which they can put in practice best, can be overtaken by a firm that can develop that capability better than firm who is best in practice (Collins (1994) calls this second-order capabilities).

The applicability is too limited. Kraaijenbrink et al. (2010) works out three points of criticism on the applicability of the resource-based view. First, Connor (2002) argues that the resource-based view does not apply to smaller firms. This because sustained competitive advantage "...cannot be based on their static resources, and therefore they fall beyond the bounds of the resource-based view" (Kraaijenbrink et. al, 2010).

Second, Kraaijenbrink et al inscribes, "Miller (2003) argues that the resources a firm needs to generate a sustained competitive advantage are precisely those resources that are hard to acquire in the first place. In one sense, Miller's argument is that only firms that already possess VRIN resources can acquire and apply additional resources; otherwise, competitors would acquire them with equal ease. Miller draws our attention to the implicit path dependency within the RVB in that every organization's past shapes its present and future performance when not used to trace back to the ultimate root resources responsible for an organization's SCA, though this does not render the RVB overly problematic. If the RVB's scope includes the individual resources and capabilities of the entrepreneurs that constituted the firm - and we see no reason why it should not - it applies even to newly founded institutions."

Thirdly, currently, organizations are in a dynamic environment where innovation and changes are needed to stay ahead of the competition. According to the resource-based view, a sustained competitive advantage can be reached if resources are meeting the VRIN criteria. However, in this constant changing environment, the competitive advantages will be temporary (and not long lasting as Barney (1991) argues).

The resource-based view offers a useful framework to gain sustained competitive advantage. However, there are limitations on the resource-based view. Firstly, the resource-based theory is based on the incapacity to do an empirical study on measuring the performance. Because of the heterogeneity of organizations, composing a homogeneous sample is hard or even impossible (Locket et. al, 2001). Secondly, the resource-based view is focused on the internal organization of an establishment and it does not consider the external factors like the demand side of the market. So even if an institution has the resources and the capabilities to gain a competitive advantage, it might be that there is no demand, because the model does not consider the "customer". Thirdly, the resource-based view has a limited ability to make reliable predictions (Priem & Butler, 2001). However, Tywoniak (2007) states that "*the usefulness of RBV appears to be greater in terms of generating understanding and providing a structure for strategizing.*" Barney (2001) states "*resource-based logic can help managers more completely understand the kinds of resources that help generate sustained strategic advantages, help them use this understanding to evaluate the full range of resources their firm may possess, and then exploit those resources that have the potential to generate sustained strategic advantage*".

7. Methodology

This study was guided by a mixed method approach because the study collected, analysed and combined both qualitative data and quantitative data (Creswell, 2008). Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected from literature and a combination of primary sources; mainly from academics, administrators and students; and from observation. The major rationale informing the select of mixed method research was its strength in that, there could be insufficient arguments, meaning that neither quantitative nor qualitative may bring about enough evidence since the methods supplement each other. The investigator took qualitative research strengths and mixed them with the strengths of the quantitative research. Although the study was largely qualitative, quantitative data was put to maximum use to make analysis of data meaningful and help in not only arriving at certain conclusions but also helping make

suitable endorsements. According to Creswell (2008), when a set of data is used to provide a secondary role in a study based basically on the other data type, the embedded design as a mixed methods design is most appropriate. The researcher used concurrent timing where both qualitative and quantitative methods were implemented during a single phase of the research (Creswell, 2008). The quantitative method was engaged to report the data in this study. According to Creswell (2009), quantitative method involves testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables

8. Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

Bell, (2003) defines sample as a group of people who are used to obtain information about a larger group or a whole population. In this study, a sample size of 560 participants from 3 universities were selected since it will not be possible to include all members. Out of the 560 participants, 233 were sampled from the target population.

Sampling procedures were purposeful and simple random techniques. These techniques were suitable for this study because of the nature of its objectives. For purposes of effective data collection, a sample size of 2 human resource manager 10 deans, 65 heads of departments and 156 lecturers was picked. The decision to use a sample of 233 was based on the suggestion by Nachimias and Nachimias, (1991) who proposed that adequacy and resources should determine the sample size which should be big enough to enable capturing a variety of responses and facilitate comparable analysis.

The simple random sampling method on the other hand was used in obtaining a representative sample. Deming in Cooper & Schindler (2003) argued that there is greater accuracy of results by sampling as compared to studying the entire population. According to him sampling possesses the possibility of better interview (testing), more thorough investigation of missing, wrong, or suspicious information, better supervision, and better processing than is possible with complete coverage. This technique offered the researcher the advantage of being able to calculate the sampling error of measurement and able to give a significant level of confidence. The table below illustrates the sample selected. Sloven's formula was used for determining the minimum number of respondents required for the given population size. (Trochim, 2008)

$$S = \frac{P}{1 + P(0.05)^2},$$

where

S = Sample size

P = Population

0.05 = Level of significance

$$S = \frac{560}{1+560(0.05)^2} = \frac{560}{1+560(0.0025)} = \frac{560}{1+1.4} = \frac{560}{2.4} \approx 233$$

9. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The researcher sampled 233 participants from the three public universities in Nyeri and Kiambu counties. Out of the 233 participants, those who participated effectively in answering the questionnaires and in the interview guide were 213. Therefore, the findings of this research were based on the 213 human resource managers, and lecturers plus 10 deans who were involved in focus group discussions which was a response rate of 95.5%. According to Creswell (2012), 60% of data collected is good enough for analysis.

10. Categories of Participants

Table 1 below displayed below shows categories of participants who were drawn from 3 public universities in Nyeri and Kiambu counties. These categories as shown in the said table 1 were 10 (4.3%) deans of schools, 2 (1.2%) human resource managers, 65 (27.9%) heads of departments, and 156 (66.6%) lecturers. All these categories put together formed the 233 sample size. Although the deans of schools and human resource managers categories registered smaller percentages compared to the heads of department and lecturers they never the less gave very valuable contributions in their capacity as leaders.

Table 1: Sample Size Determination and Sampling Techniques

Category	Sample Size	% Proportion
Deans of schools	10	4.3
Human Resource Managers	2	1.2
Heads of Departments	65	27.9
Lecturers	156	66.6
Total	233	100

Source: Researcher 2017

11. Discussion of Findings

This study examined how academic resource provider selection influenced institution management efficiency in public universities in Nyeri and Kiambu counties. Three levels of analysis were engaged, specifically: descriptive, inferential and thematic; and then mixing and interpreting of the data. In this analysis, the investigator used frequencies, percentage and tables, and analysed the data according to the study objectives as it is shown below.

11.1 Academic Resource Provider Selection and Institution Management Efficiency

Under the descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages were recognised from variables based on five-point. Likert scale seeking to scrutinise how accountability of the academic resource provider influenced institution management efficiency in the Universities. Table 7 provides the statistical analysis with reference to the variables.

Table 2: Extent to which factors have improved the public universities

	Academic resource provider	Mean	Std. Deviation
Availability of the academic resource providers to the institution	170	3.24	.894
Accountability of the academic provider to the institution	170	3.56	1.054
Responsiveness of the academic resource providers to the academic requirements of the institution	170	3.44	.967
Valid N (Listwise)	170		

Availability, accountability and responsiveness of academic resource providers were deemed to have significant value to the institutional management efficiency and their average scores were at 3. Of the three factors, availability had the smallest dispersion from the group mean while accountability had the highest. The implication of this to the study was that it was strongly felt by the respondents that the provider had to be available, accountable and responsive to the institution.. However many were actually “carousing” between universities.

Table 3: Factors considered when selecting academic resource providers

	Academic resource provider	Mean	Std. Deviation
Qualifications influence on institutional management efficiency	170	2.69	.596
Salaries influence on institutional management efficiency	170	2.22	.717
Policies influence on institutional management efficiency	170	2.11	.714
Terminal benefits influence on institutional management efficiency	170	1.92	.733
Valid N (Listwise)	170		

Qualifications of the academic resource provider was seen to be the most considered factor while terminal benefits the least considered factor. The implication of this was that the study found the outsourced academic provider should be highly qualified so as to enhance institution management efficiency. However, at times to reduce costs the universities are forced to employ part time lecturers of lower caliber hence jeopardizing the performance and consequently institution management efficiency.

11.2 Academic Resource Providers and Institution Management Efficiency

The study sought to examine whether the availability of the outsourced academic resource provider had any influence on institutional management efficiency. The study found out that availability had moderately influenced institutional management efficiency. This was as a result of 44.7% of the universities lecturers indicating that it had moderate influence. On the other hand, (5.9%) of the lecturers thought that it did not influence institution management efficiency. Further, the study generated mean $M=3.24$ and standard deviation $=.894$. The implication of this was that it was important for the provider to be readily available to pick up assigned duties. This was in alignment with (Wesley, 1996), who stated that availability is the probability that an item will be in an operable and committable state at the start of a mission when the mission is called for at a random time, and is generally defined:

$$\text{Uptime} \times 100 \div (\text{Uptime} + \text{Downtime}).$$

However, some lecturers felt that it did not necessarily affect institution management efficiency

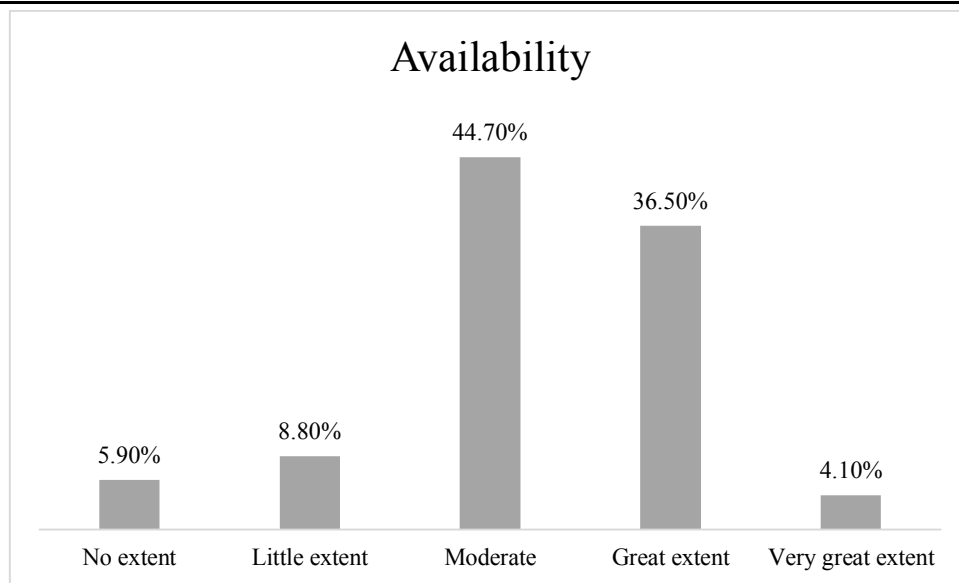


Figure 1: Availability of the Academic Resource Providers

Further Wesley states that availability is also the [Characteristic](#) of a [resource](#) that is committable, operable, or usable upon [demand](#) to perform its designated or [required function](#). The implication of this was that although the providers may have been available they were not fully committed because the terms of service were not friendly. This forced them to hop from one university to another because the terms were temporary. However, the outsourced academic resource provider must strive to avail himself to pick up assigned tasks and in time. Failure to do so was detrimental to institution management efficiency in public universities.

11.3 Accountability of the Academic Provider and Institution Management Efficiency

Ensuing the study findings, it was evident that accountability influenced institution management efficiency to a great extent with responses at 58.2% by heads of department and at 36.5% of lecturers respectfully. On the other hand, (5.3%) of the lecturers thought that it did not influence institution management efficiency at all further, the study found that $M=3.56$ and a standard deviation of 1.054. This implied that accountability was important and that the outsourced academic resource provider should be accountable for the success of the public universities in Kenya. This was in alignment with Reyes (2006) statement that accountability is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, [products](#), decisions, and policies including the [administration](#), governance, and implementation within the scope of the role or employment position and encompassing the obligation to report, explain and be answerable for resulting consequences. The figure below supports this view.

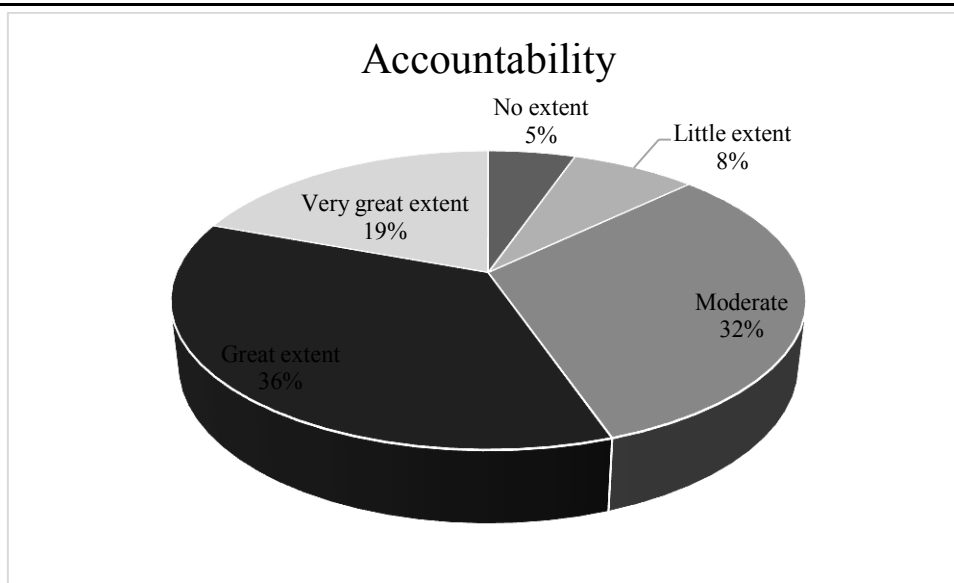


Figure 2: Accountability influence on Institution Management Efficiency
Responsiveness of the Academic Resource Provider and Institution Management Efficiency

Responsiveness in the context of a system can be defined as the outcome that can be achieved when institutions and institutional relationships are designed in such a way that they are cognisant and respond appropriately to the universally legitimate expectations of individuals

The study found that 38.8% of the university lecturers registered that responsiveness of the academic resource provider to university requirements moderately influenced institutional management efficiency. The study registered a mean of $M= 3.44$ and Std Deviation $.967$. Weik (2000), stipulates that responsiveness as a concept of [computer science](#) refers to the specific ability of a system or functional unit to complete assigned tasks within a given time. Further, he argues that long delays can be a major cause of user frustration, or can lead the user to believe the system is not functioning, or that a command or input gesture has been ignored. The study supported that responsiveness is therefore considered an essential [usability](#) issue for human-interaction and other functionalities. The rationale behind the responsiveness principle is that the system should deliver results of an operation to users in a timely and organized manner

The implication was that through the benefits offered employers send a message about what they believe is important. Insurance and retirement benefits communicate a concern for the financial well-being of employees. Wellness benefits communicate a concern for the physical well-being of employees. Together, these benefits communicate a desire to invest in employees' total well-being, helping them achieve a sense of belonging. According to Kaiser (2009) employees look at their workplace benefits to aid

them establish financial security and employees of public universities are not different. He further states that they are primarily motivated by a sense of calling to perform their job functions. The figure below further explains the findings.

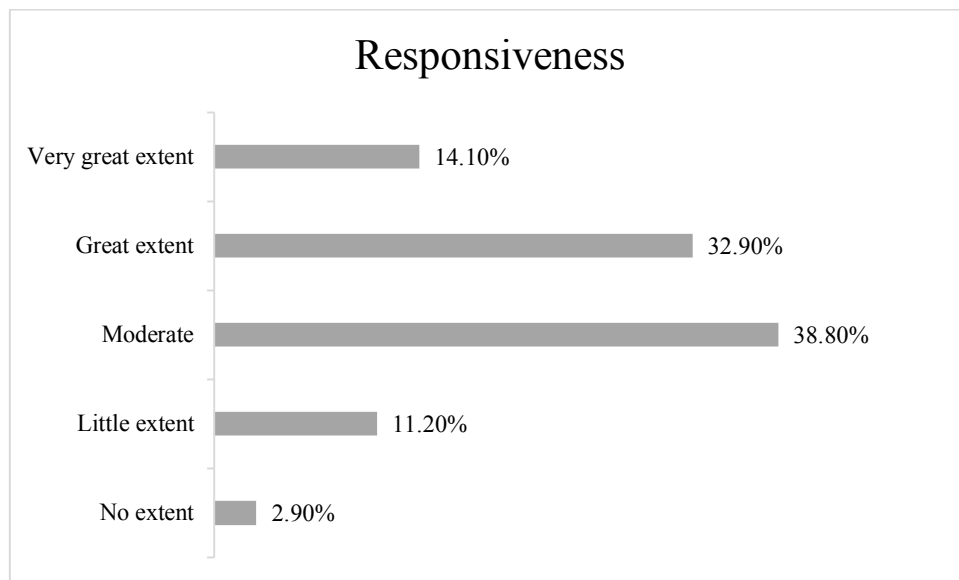


Figure 3: Responsiveness of the Academic Resource Provider
Analysis of inferential statistics how was this done?

To confirm whether academic resource provider selection influenced the relationship between academic resource outsourcing and institutional management efficiency in public universities, data was collected, analysed and shown on Table 9 below.

According to the table above, there was a relationship between qualifications and institution management efficiency in public universities policies on outsourcing academic resources with a Pearson correlation of $r= 1.000$. This implied that qualifications of universities employees affected policies on institution management efficiency. The above results aligned with findings of Rossi Hansberg (2008) who established that ability to utilize foreign resources may raise the firm's productivity and decreases firm's cost by permitting it to expand employment, output and wages increment. This means that wages or salaries have great effect on academic resource provision in higher learning institutions. The higher the wages the better the academic resource provision by the providers (Rossi, 2008).

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Table 4: Academic Resource Provider Selection and Institutional Management Efficiency

Correlations			Qualification Influence on Institution Management Efficiency	Salaries Influence Institution Management Efficiency	Policies Influence Institution Management Efficiency	Terminal Benefits Influence Institution Management Efficiency
Control Variables						
Availability of the academic resource providers to the institution & Accountability of the academic provider to the institution & Responsiveness of the academic requirements of the institution	Qualification	Correlation	1.000	.531	.447	.278
	Influence	Significance	.	.000	.000	.000
	Institution	(2-Tailed)				
	Management	Df	0	165	165	165
	Efficiency					
	Salaries	Correlation	.531	1.000	.215	.571
	Influence on	Significance	.000	.	.005	.000
	Institution	(2-Tailed)				
	Management	Df	165	0	165	165
	Efficiency					
	Policies	Correlation	.447	.215	1.000	.274
	Influence	Significance	.000	.005	.	.000
Institution	(2-Tailed)					
Management	Df	165	165	0	165	
Efficiency						
Do Terminal	Correlation	.278	.571	.274	1.000	
Benefits	Significance	.000	.000	.000	.002	
Influence	(2-Tailed)					
Institution	Df	165	165	165	0	
Management						
Efficiency						

The study further found out that almost all policies in the public universities were applicable to daily management of duties and the influence of salaries on staffing decisions with a Pearson Correlation $r = .571$. This indicated that academic providers were influenced by salaries in order to apply the available policies in public universities. According to Blinder (2005) in his study about firms in USA, he established that there was a relationship between task specialization and outsourcing in considerable policy interests.

The study found out that a Pearson correlation $r = 1.000$ between application of the right policies and the influence of policies on staffing decisions. Majority (67%) of the lecturers opined that public universities policies had great influence on academic outsourcing practices. The implication was that there was a relationship between the influence of public universities policies and outsourcing of academic resource. Chen et al (2009) states that there was increasing researches that state that more firms are offshoring and outsourcing knowledge intensive activities that will improve their

competitive advantage through exploiting local expertise and talents to maintain economic demands. In the meantime, theoretical discussion has spread from the earlier transactions expenses of economy and resource base analysis to now knowledge based theories. Further, the institutions and governments should enact policies that will cater several factors for instance infrastructural and industrial clusters that are important to institution outsourcing (Peng, 2009).

Further, (66%) of heads of departments established that when applying the right policies for outsourcing of academic resources there was a strong influence with a Pearson correlation $r = .00$. This meant that right policy enactment by public universities would generate growth and development of academic outsourcing practices. This was supported by majority (67%) of lecturers who made it clear that right policies would help outsourcing of academic resource. The policies in public universities enabled lecturers and other employees in daily management of duties. A Pearson correlation $r = .00$ was achieved indicating that there was a strong relation between the two variables. This was in in align with Dess et al (2005) who states that raising of offshoring and outsourcing has developed from transactional work to more core practices which have enabled firms to have porous boundaries. Further, Malik et al. (2015) states that there was need for effective decisions and policies that can aid in coming up with more fine grained analysis to improve outsourcing and offshoring, at deeper, critical and sophisticated levels. The researcher split factors into four main policy considerations; what to be offshored or outsourced that include core segments of the value chain to be retained in-house, (ii) Secondly, where to get the resources, transformation. Further, (iii) the internalization strategies of the institutions that could affect choices of outsourcing and, (iv) off shoring locations.

11.4 Thematic analysis

The responses of human resource managers indicated that availability of the academic resource provider greatly influenced institution management efficiency amongst public universities. According to one human resource manager, "*accountability is imperative for the success of an organisation, we hold our provider answerable to interpret policies correctly.*" It was established that the provider was liable for choices taken. One human resource manager added, "*accountability is actually the acknowledgment of responsibility for action and decisions taken. And this plays a great role in institution management efficiency.*" It was established that responsiveness of academic resource providers was a major concern of public universities when choosing academic resource provider. Another human

resource manager stated *“outsourced academic provider ought to deliver results to users in a timely and organised manner.*

Yet, another human resource manager reported that *“the experience is of outmost importance because with more experience in lecturing, the candidate being outsourced understands his field/ expertise so as such there is better delivery of services”*. According to Wang (2006) resource quality is the first and core factor to consider from various providers of outsourcing resource. He further stated that it is the main proficiency that is set on resources that had great influence on the project delivery. He recommended that there was need to evaluate carefully how capable and qualified the workforce of resource providers was, if the professionals had any experience in the same project or not. If possible, request for case studies through going over the provider’s portfolio that will provide you with hints of their previous experiences (Wang, 2006). Further, the deans of schools and human resource managers stated that there was access to better technology and systems and periodical optimal staffing. For instance, one of the human resource managers indicated that *“There is access to better technology and systems. Every outsourced activity comes with new technology”*.

Deans of schools held discussions with the researcher and results from the focus group discussions indicated that indeed the outsourced experienced provider understood his field had better delivery of services and may have been willing to avail himself/herself. However the study established that the outsourced academic resource providers ‘availability to undertake responsibility was a challenge because as one dean pointed out *“many are hopping from one university to the other. This has lowered the quality of education as some of the outsourced lecturers are not very committed because they “moonlight” in so many other universities”*. Another dean added, *“It is imperative to hold them accountable if we plan to enhance institution management efficiency”*. It was established that if the academic resource provider was offered a better package they would be more grounded. *“If the package offered included final absorption into the system, they might be more responsive and this would enhance efficiency”*, said another dean.

As Morgan (1997) notes, focus groups *“provide direct evidence about similarities and differences in participants’ opinions and experience”*. One dean said that *“the academic resource provider’s exposure to various experiences influences decision making’*. And another dean added that, *“Outsourcing policies increase efficiency in institutions”*. The study established that academic resource provider selection was essential in enhancing the institutional management efficiency. Among other factors that affected institutional management efficiency included provider availability, provider liability and provider

responsiveness Availability was found to be the most significant factor in institutional management efficiency in public universities in Kenya.

11.5 Triangulation and Interpretation of the Data

The researcher mixed and interpreted data from descriptive, inferential and thematic on the first objective. The study established that most of the respondents agreed that there was a strong association between the selection of academic resource provider and institution management efficiency as was revealed by the quantitative data analysis. The study established that most of the universities lecturers indicated that availability had significantly influenced institutional management efficiency. Thematic analysis also implied that accessibility and liability were of outmost importance in institutional management efficiency On the other hand, data obtained from the qualitative analysis revealed that qualifications of academic resource providers was a major concern of public universities when choosing academic resource provider This information implied that experienced and qualified academic resource providers selection had a positive relation to service delivery, as was revealed by both qualitative and quantitative findings.

11.6 Academic Resource Provider Selection and Institution Management Efficiency in Public Universities

Availability of the outsourced academic resource provider played a significant role in institution management efficiency. Accountability of the outsourced academic provider to the institution was found to play an equally important role to institution management efficiency in public universities. Lecturers admitted that accountability was important for the success of the public universities in Kenya Responsiveness of the outsourced academic provider to the institution needs was of great enhancement to institution management efficiency. The rationale behind the responsiveness principle is that the system should deliver results of an operation to users in a timely and organized manner.

12. Summary of the Study Findings

The investigator summarized the outcome conclusions according to the research objectives, dealing with each objective independently in sub headings. This section provides a summary of the findings of the research objectives which were exploring: how academic resource provider selection influenced the relationship between

academic resource outsourcing and institutional management efficiency to explore how provider satisfaction influenced the relationship between academic resource outsourcing, and institutional management efficiency, to determine how outsourced academic provider capability to handle change influenced relationship between academic resource outsourcing and institutional management efficiency to explore whether quality of service influenced the relationship between academic resource outsourcing and institutional management efficiency, and finally, to determine how competitive environment influenced the relationship between academic resource outsourcing and institutional efficiency in public universities.

12.1 Academic Resource Provider Selection and Institutional Management in Public Universities

From the questionnaire of the heads of department and the lecturers, it was established that 44.7% of the respondents indicated that it had moderate influence on institution management efficiency in public universities. The outsourced academic resource provider within reason understood the responsibility of availing himself to the institution to teach and perform any other assignments. However, it is worth noting that the percentage is way below average.

On the issue of accountability, the study established that only 35.9% of the respondents agreed to a great extent that accountability influenced institution management efficiency. On the other hand, (5.3%) of the lecturers thought that it did not influence institution management efficiency at all. The study found that 38.8% of the university human resource managers registered that responsiveness of the academic resource provider to university requirements moderately influenced institutional management efficiency

The study established that qualifications of the outsourced academic resource provider had great influence on institutional management efficiency in public universities in Kenya with most lecturers indicating a very high influence. Further, the study found that there was a relationship between qualification and application of the right policies when outsourcing academic resource in public universities in Kenya.

13. Conclusions

The investigations were carried out to explore the relationships between academic resource outsourcing and institution management efficiency in public universities in Nyeri and Kiambu counties. From the outcomes, it was deduced that the outsourced

academic resource provider should be easily available to pick up responsibility and also be accountable for decisions made. The universities should ensure long time continuity of the academic provider in the organisation by application of the right policies.

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