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**Professional Development Practices and Community Service Delivery of Academic Staff
at Kyambogo University, Uganda**

By

Kulthum Nabunya

Abstract

The study explored the relationship between professional development practices and community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University because of the low academic staff service delivery manifested in low innovativeness of community outreach programs in the university. Informed by Suzan Dorling's Theory of Customer Service Delivery and the Human Capital Theory Developed by Adam Smith, the insights of the study were gathered through a survey method that involved the use of self-administered questionnaire and an interview guide a total of 291 respondents were involved in the study and data was analyzed using simple linear regression. Findings from Kyambogo University revealed a significant relationship between professional development practices and academic staff community service delivery among academic staff. This implied that as academic staff were professionally developed through training, seminars, workshops, conferences, study leaves, mentorships and monitoring, their competencies in effective community service delivery improved. These findings support the Human Capital Theory that states that for human beings in the society to be more productive, they must fully be developed through training. Furthermore, from these findings, the article offers insight into how professional development practices significantly relate with academic staff service delivery in Kyambogo University. It concludes further that the more professional development practices are offered to academic staff, the more community service delivery enhances in Kyambogo University. Thus professional development practices significantly relate with community service delivery of academic staff. It was recommended that if community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University is to be improved, policy makers in Kyambogo University particularly the University Council ought to come up with policies favoring the provision of professional development opportunities to their academic staff in order to enhance their community service delivery.

Key words: Uganda, Professional Development Practices, Service Delivery, Training, Community service Delivery.

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Introduction

Service delivery of academic staff has been recognized as pivotal in the attainment of university core objectives (Amadi, 2016). As such, the effectiveness of academic staff is predominantly framed in terms of delivering on the teaching, research and community services. Academic staff service delivery is judged upon these fundamental pillars. The isolation of one pillar suggests that academic staff were not fully serving as expected in universities. It is in this regard that academic staff are expected to be effective in teaching students' content relevant to market demands, preparing before teaching, using appropriate teaching methods assessing learners with specific resources and research and also tie these aspects to the students' communities so as to bring about the required change.

Retrospectively, the performance of academic staff in Sub Saharan African universities has been affected by several challenges including inadequate government funding, lack of competent personnel and failure to evaluate individual works among many others. In a study about students' satisfaction with service delivery in federal universities in South-South geo political zone in Nigeria, Akpoiroro and Okon (2015) showed that students were satisfied with academic staff service delivery in terms of teaching. Furthermore, Khan, Khan and Khan (2011) studied impact of training and development on organizational performance and with use of a comprehensive literature review, they established that training and development significantly affect organizational performance and postulate that once academic staff are developed through training their community service performance would be enhanced.

With regard to community service, academic staff must take the lead in debating critical issues geared towards democracy, political stability and in solving community problems as a way of achieving educational goals (Walters & Openjuru, 2016). The concern of this study was that in the Kyambogo University where this study was focused, these core aspects were still inadequately done (Kasozzi, 2019, Edabu & Anumaka 2014). Furthermore, Enumaka, Seje and Mulimba (2013) studied educational services in selected public and private Universities in Uganda and with use of service quality model revealed that the quality of teaching and research was satisfactory in the Universities where the study was carried out while community outreach was unsatisfactory.

According to Suzan Dorling's Theory of Customer Service Delivery (Dorling, 2000), service delivery in organizations is directed towards meeting customer's needs. The theory states that an organization is expected to aim at consistently delivering high standards of service to retain customer loyalty. This theory is thus founded on identifying and satisfying customers' needs as well as exceeding their expectations. This implies that while at work, academic staff should be conscious of the students' needs and acknowledge them as the guiding principle in whatever they do as they are customers to the university. Furthermore, the needs of the community in form of research and community service/engagement place the community, researchers and the general public as other customers of the university.

The study was also guided by the Human Capital Theory Developed by Adam Smith in the late 1960's and in the early 1970's (Alawamleh, Ismail, Ageel and Alawamleh, 2019). The theory states that for human beings in the society to be more productive they must fully

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be developed through training. Thus, the human capital theory generally influenced the use of professional development of academic staff so as to bring about improved service delivery in universities. Furthermore, from Adam Smith's Human capital theory it was drawn that once academic staff are professionally developed they are more likely to acquire skills to help the community get out or address challenges they are likely to encounter, thus improving on their service delivery.

Service delivery of academics in community outreaches was conceptualized in this study as participation in collaborative projects, debating national issues, devising solutions to immediate community problems, community sensitizations and awareness and collaborative researches. However, given the setting of this study, failure to observe the theory's demand that customer needs (students and lecturers needs) be satisfied through offering professional development opportunities, would imply low academic staff service delivery in terms of community outreach programs leading to loss of students and reputation of the institutions in the community.

Statement of the Problem

Academic staff are expected to support and maintain institutional, national and international reputation through excellence in their service delivery in teaching, research and community engagement (Crawford, 2009). However It was noted that community outreach services were not being implemented at Kyambogo University where academic staff's service delivery was not satisfactory (Kasule, Wesselink, & Mulder, 2016). Likewise, The Auditor General (2015) revealed the service delivery dilemmas in Kyambogo University with more weakness in teacher preparation of students for their community outreach programs as well as in use of teaching methods. Some academic staff were identified as lacking competencies to supervise students' research projects and community outreaches. This was also in agreement with Tumuhimise (2017) who indicated that over 60% of the academic staff in Kyambogo University failed to meet performance expectations and targets. Although several factors like rewards, policies at work place and work environment were found to be related to academic staff service delivery in earlier studies, gaps in academic staff service delivery were still recurring. This study sought to make a contribution by establishing how professional development practices related with academic staff service delivery in the realm of community service delivery in Kyambogo University

Professional development practices

Professional development practices are defined as the process of improving and increasing capacities of staff through access to education and training opportunities inside or outside the workplace (Ofojebe and Chukwuma, 2015). In education, professional development has been used to mean a wider variety of specialized training, formal education or advanced learning intended to help employees improve professional knowledge, skills and effectiveness (McGregor, 2007). Professional development also refers to the systematic maintenance improvement and broadening of knowledge, skills and the development of personal qualities necessary for execution of professional and technical duties throughout the individuals working life (Crawford, 2009).

The earlier conceptualizations are limited in that the nature of professional development practices such as study leaves, mentoring, coaching, workshops, seminars, conferences and in-service training courses which impact on academic staff service delivery were not fully studied in a university environment. In this study, professional development was defined as a process of improving both the instructor's academic standing as well as

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acquisition of greater competence and efficiency in discharging of professional obligations in and outside the university working environment. From the above conceptualization, professional development practices in Kyambogo University involved senior academic staff mentoring, monitoring, inductions, coaching junior academic staff. It further meant offering professional learning, conferences, seminars and orientations to junior academic staff in Kyambogo University.

Service Delivery

Service delivery defined as transferring or handling of something from one party to another (Heery & Noon, 2001). Webster (2006) further defined service delivery as the act of performing duties. In the context of this study, service delivery was used in specific reference to academic staff's discharge of professional duties including teaching, research and community service delivery in Kyambogo University. Teaching service delivery of academic staff in this study was defined as preparing teaching, student assessment, update of teaching programmes, offering guidance to students, giving students feedback, providing students with study materials, regularity at work, compensating for lost time and setting course works in time. Service delivery of academic staff at Kyambogo University was showed to be low with over 70% of the academic staff showing low performance (Edabu & Anuka 2014; Kasule, Wesselink, Naroozi & Mulder, 2016) respectively. Teaching was revealed to be low within the different departments or faculties, there was low course development and innovation, low lecturer preparation, lecturers were neither conducting seminars nor tutorials and they were not selecting appropriate teaching and evaluation strategies. Likewise, The Auditor General (2015) revealed the service delivery dilemmas in Kyambogo University with more weakness in teacher preparations as well as in use of teaching method. Some academic staff were identified as lacking competencies to supervise students' research projects and community outreaches.

Likewise, Tumuhimbise (2017) observed that over 60% academic staff performance in Kyambogo University had declined in the past years despite having leaders. There were performance failures to complete targets like setting exams, marking and grading of students on time. In the same direction, Rwothumio, Musaazi and Orodho (2016), showed that academic staff performance in Kyambogo University has been generally low and has been manifested in form of staff absenteeism, low morale and poor delivery of lectures. Bunoti (2011) showed that lecturers lack practical pedagogical skills to facilitate the development of higher order thinking skills through appropriate methodology. Consequently, students are not empowered to apply and to transfer knowledge so as to transform themselves and society as is their wish.

Professional Development Practices and community Service Delivery.

In this section, literature relating to professional development practices and community service delivery of academic staff was reviewed. Aslam, Javad, Nokandha, Jalahan and Lodhi (2012) noted that professional development was a continuous process of acquiring, disseminating and executing knowledge to build students that are more capable and improving on society. This was much to do with students' community outreach services. However, this study was primarily on academic staff at Kyambogo University not students. Whereas, Enumaka, Seje and Mulumba (2013) studied the educational services in selected public and private Universities in Uganda and established that students were not all satisfied with the quality of community services in these Universities studied. However, this funding

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was not based on the relationship played by professional development practices as the current study did.

Mullins (2010) observed that training is necessary to ensure adequate supply of staff who are technically and socially complete and capable of career advancement into specialist departments or management positions. Training is therefore a key element of improved organizational performance. It helps to reconcile the gap between what should happen and what is happening between desired targets or standards and actual levels of performance. However, Mullins (2010) also added that although potential benefits of training may appear obvious, it does not necessarily follow that training will lead to improved performance and more so in the area of community concern. This literature was theoretical in nature but this study was empirical, showing how professional development practices impact on service delivery of academic staff in the areas of community outreaches of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

Furthermore, Sullivan (2011) stated that providing clear development policies allows human resource managers to develop and retain individual employees who are engaged in continuous training created through staff development practices would easily to get clear solutions to immediate problems and challenges the community is facing. However, several studies have indicated that academic staff in universities have not been fully developed to actively participate in community outreaches. This study found out whether a similar situation prevails among academic staff in Uganda. These earlier reviewed studies had been carried out on the influence of other factors like rewards, administrative styles, policies in place among others on service delivery of academic staff. However, they did not establish how professional development practices may be impacting on this low service delivery creating the need to undertake this study to establish how professional development practices related with service delivery of academic staff of Kyambogo University

According to Kasozi (2009) performance of academic staff in universities in Uganda was still below the expected level, this was basically attributed to the low university funds that cannot allow training academic staff to the level that can enable them serve their communities. The study did not consider funding as the primary cause of low academic staff engagement in community outreach services. But rather, it focused on professional development practices already in place relation with service delivery of academic staff in the area of community outreaches in Kyambogo University.

Meanwhile, Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2016) in a study about academic staff development and outcomes in state Universities in South Nigeria revealed that a significant relationship exists between staff development and service delivery of academic staff in terms of community service. As academic staff, in-service training and attendance of conferences, and workshops positively influenced the output of academic staff. However, this study involved use of regression analysis to show the exact impact of how professional development practices relate with service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University. Mushemeza (2016) argued that another core function of academic staff was to make contribution to community outreach. Modern universities are supposed to be leaders in economic development of their communities and nations. It is therefore important for academic staff to design programmes and projects that focus on community needs and aspirations.

Additionally, Odinga (2010) studied staff development programs and job performance of lecturers of Moi University and established that professional development practices improved on community service delivery of academic staff. Lecturer's community service work like talk shows and supervision of students in internship helped build respect for the work being by academic staff, hence motivating them intrinsically. However, this study

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established whether a similar scenario existed among academic staff professional development and community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

In Uganda, McGregor (2007) stated that in the wake of the Mujaju Report that most universities resolved that the PhD would be the minimum qualification for appointment to the position of lecturer. Without qualified academic staff, it is difficult to sustain quality university education in the three aspects of teaching, research and particularly community outreach services. Despite the above challenges the visitation committee was pleased to note that despite the absence of government scholarships; our public universities are making commendable efforts to grapple with the challenges of staff development to boost academic staff qualifications. By then public universities had 288 members of staff on various staff development programmes, 136 were pursuing PhDs and 152 were on various masters courses. On a sad note, some of the university's departments were identified as headed by teaching assistants while on other occasions teaching was done by part time staff. This weakness would only be resolved through professional development of academic staff to allow the available staff acquire qualifications they need to deliver.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between professional development practices and service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University. Specifically, the objective of this study was to establish the relationship between professional development practices and community service delivery of academic staff of Kyambogo University.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

H1: There is a positive relationship between professional development practices and community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

H0: There is no relationship between professional development practices and community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

Methodology

The study was majorly guided by Auguste Comte post-positivism philosophy, which ontologically argues that the nature of reality about professional development practices and academic staff service delivery is objective. Objective reality demands use of quantitative techniques of data collection and analysis in order to arrive at truth and epistemologically, one has to use objective methods to arrive at the truth. Thus, the study was majorly quantitative in approach with embedded qualitative approaches for triangulation purposes. It was guided by both the Cross Sectional and Correlational survey designs. The use of Cross-Sectional Survey meant that data was collected from the target population at one point in time. The survey method allowed generalization of the study findings to the rest of the study population. Hence, the survey allowed handling a wide population of academic staff from Kyambogo University within a limited time frame.

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Findings

The findings from Pearson's correlation coefficient technique are presented in tables 1-4 below.

Table 1: Pearson's correlation coefficient index between professional development practices and community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University.

		PDP	CSD
PDP	Pearson correlation	1	0.422**
	Sig.2 tailed		0.000
	N	140	140
CSD	Pearson correlation	0.422**	1
	Sig.2 tailed	0.000	
	N	140	140

Source: Field Data 2019

Findings in Table 1 shows Pearson's correlation coefficient index between professional development practices and community service delivery of academic staff $r = 0.422^{**}$ with a significance P value = 0.000. Since the significance P value was greater than 0.05 the critical value, it implied that professional development practices had a highly positive significance relationship with community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University. These findings suggested that as academic staff in Kyambogo University are developed professionally through offering on the job and off the job training opportunities, there is a likelihood that their engagement in community outreaches through sensitizing communities, engaging in community activities and working hard to solve community problems would be possible and the reverse is true.

Table 2: Regression model summary on professional development practice and community service delivery in Kyambogo University

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.422 ^a	.178	.172	.66703

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSDKYAMBOGO

Source: Field Data 2019

Table 3: Regression ANOVA on professional development practice and community service delivery in Kyambogo University

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.317	1	13.317	29.930	.000 ^b
	Residual	61.400	138	.445		
	Total	74.717	139			

a. Dependent Variable: PDPKY

b. Predictors: (Constant), CSDKYAMBOGO

Source: Field Data 2019

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Table 4: Regression coefficient on professional development practice and community service delivery in Kyambogo University

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.229	.208		10.692	.000
1 CSDKYAMBOGO	.356	.065	.422	5.471	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PDpKY

Source: Field Data 2019

Table 2 show adjusted $r^2 = 0.172$ which implied that professional development practices of academic staff in Kyambogo University explained only 17% of the change in community service delivery of academic staff. This meant that the remaining 83% is accounted for by other various factors not considered in this study. The regression model was good $F = 29.930$, with a corresponding $\text{sig} = 0.000$ less 0.05. This meant that professional development practices significantly predicted community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University. This implied that as the academic professional development of staff is enhanced, the possibility that their community service delivery increases and the reverse is true.

Discussion

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between professional development practices and community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University. Findings derived from the Pearson's Correlation and Regression analysis techniques revealed a highly significant relationship between professional development practices and community service delivery. The findings in the two contexts showed that as academic staff in the two contexts are developed through professional development programmes training, study leaves, seminars, workshops and conferences the greater their community service delivery in form of making sensitizations, engaging in community activities, solving community problems, debating national issues, participating in collaborative projects and timely assessment of students work done in communities enhances and the reverse is true.

These findings were in direct agreement with findings in earlier studies like those of Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2016) in a study about academic staff development and outcomes in state universities in South Nigeria which revealed that a significant relationship exists between staff development and service delivery of academic staff in terms of community service. It was hence established that in-service training and attendance of conferences and workshops have a positive influence on output of academic staff. This also revamps the view that once academic staff are professionally developed the level at which they help the community to solve the problems occurring enhance.

The study findings were in agreement with Sullivaton (2011) who stated that providing clear development policies allows human resource managers to develop and retain individual employees who are engaged in continuous training created through staff development practices would easily to get clear solutions to immediate problems and

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challenges the community is facing. Hence academic staff who are developed through different forms of training are able to gain confidence in debating national issues

The findings concurred with Mushemeza (2016) who argued that another core function of academic staff was to make contribution to community outreach. Modern universities are supposed to be leaders in economic development of their communities and nations. It is therefore important for academic staff to design programmes and projects that focus on community needs and aspirations. The study findings supported Odinga (2010) who studied staff development programs and job performance of lecturers of Moi University and established that professional development practices improve on community service delivery of academic service delivery.

The study findings were more or less in agreement with McGregor (2007) who stated that in the wake of the Mujaju Report most universities resolved that the PhD would be the minimum qualification for appointment to the position of lecturer. Thus, it is important to note that without qualified academic staff, it is difficult to sustain quality university education in the three aspects of academic staff service delivery particularly community outreach services. On a sad note, some of the university's departments were identified as headed by teaching assistants while on other occasions teaching was done by part time staff.

There is an insignificant correlation between professional development practices and research service. This could have been due to other extraneous variables like individual staff factors relating to their motivation that affect their service delivery. Conclusively, professional development practices significantly relate with academic staff community service delivery in Kyambogo University.

Conclusion and recommendation

It was concluded that professional development practices significantly relate with community service delivery of academic staff in Kyambogo University. These findings conclude further that once professional development practices are offered to academic staff in the university there are high possibilities that community service delivery of academic staff enhances and the reverse is true.

It was further recommended that Kyambogo University council comes up with policies favoring sponsoring professional development practices of academic staff especially through increasing the budget for professional development to enable academic staff fully engage in community activities. This may also be done by putting up a professional development plan aimed at equipping academic staff with skills to solve community problems in the spheres of the social, political and economic needs of society.

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