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Nature of Performance Management of Academic Staff in Private Universities

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Abstract
Performance management is a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization (Aguinis and Kraiger 2009). This study described the nature of performance management of academic staff in private universities.. The study majorly employed a quantitative approach using a cross sectional study design with some qualitative element. 142 respondents were carefully chosen using different sampling techniques. Use of the survey, interviews focused group discussions together with documentary analysis were employed for both quantitative and qualitative approaches respectively. A total of 142 respondents played a part in the study. Data were analyzed using different statistical techniques that mainly included descriptive and inferential statistics respectively. Results were found to be statistically related with academic performance. For that matter, both the conclusions and the recommendations are based on the four objectives of the study which were, (1) To find out the management practices that influence performance of academic staff in private universities in Uganda, (2) To outline the behavioural practices that influence the performance of academic staff, (3) To find out the nature of performance management that influence the performance of academic

staff, and (4) To find out the challenges and possible remedies to the performance of academic staff in private universities in Uganda.

Key words: Academic Performance, Management, Stuart University

Introduction

According to Mullins, L, (2005) the process of performance management includes continuous evaluation of employees' behaviors and performance. Employees should clearly know what is expected of them and how their performance will be measured. An ideal and formalized appraisal scheme should properly measure the individual's performance, highlight the potential of employees and determine the future needs for training in development (Mullins, L 2005). The effective appraisal practice should improve the performance of employees in future. It can also suggest for the rewards and career development of employees. The system which only measures the performance of employees once in a year without providing a continuous feedback and coaching is just a performance appraisal not the complete performance management system because performance management is much more than only measuring the performance (Halachmi 2005). Performance appraisal is an obligatory process in which a rater measures the employee's traits/behaviors individually and these are described in a specific period and the record is maintained by the organization (Coens and Jenkins 2000).

Methods

Study Design and settings

The study adopted both a cross sectional survey as well as a case study design. This was useful in obtaining information on the current status of the phenomena in order to describe what exists.
(Ilona and Natasha, 2011) This method is also justifiable as a means of investigating the relationship between variables which seeks to determine changes over time. This design further described the nature and pattern of the study where both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed. Qualitative approach is justifiable as it helped in the generation of non-numerical data. While quantitative approach on the other hand is useful for generating quantitative data. Both approaches are considered useful as they enrich the study methods (Ritchie, Lewis, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston, 2013).

Sample size and study variables

The study population was derived from quantitative data; the study respondents were academic staff since the study aimed at examining the relationship between organisational behaviour and performance of the academic staff. It should be noted that BSU has a total of 219 fulltime and part-time academic staff (Bishop Stuart University 2017). For qualitative data, the study respondents included: The Vice Chancellor, Academic Registrar, University Secretary, Human Resource Manager and Quality Assurance Director. These formed the key informants' interviews whereas the students' program coordinators formed the Focus Group Discussions.

Respondents for the qualitative data were purposively selected because of their knowledge in the BSU Organizational behavior and performance of academic staff.

The academic staff in this study because the study problem was premised on their performance, which required them to give an expert opinion. Administrators such as the Vice Chancellor, Academic Registrar, University Secretary, Human Resource Manager and Quality Assurance Director were considered to give more insight on organizational behavior of BSU in terms of how it conforms with the NCHE standards and Christian values as a Christian founded institution. Student program coordinators were considered to give more in-depth insight about organizational behavior and academic staff performance since they are primary beneficiaries.

Data Analysis

Richard and Pherson (2010) define data analysis as a process in which raw data is ordered and organized, modeled and transformed into useful information. The data in the current study is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Generally, the process of analyzing data involved categorizing and coding interview notes using analytical coding that represented the themes of the key research questions of the study. Statements with similar viewpoints were clustered and labelled with the same code. The codes were grouped by similarity, and themes and relationships were identified, so that patterns, commonalities and differences emerged. Generalizations that explained the themes and relationships identified in the data were developed after careful inspection and review of the initial coding and categorization of the data (Flintsch & McGhee, 2009). The analysis of qualitative and quantitative data was aided by the use of SPSS software.

Results

This objective presents findings on the nature of performance management that influence university academic staff performance in private universities. Responses were sought on both positive and negative performance management styles as presented hereunder. The positive nature of performance management styles was one of the constructs that were used to measure the performance of academic staff in Bishop Stuart University.

The positive performance management styles

Participants were given some constructs about the positive performance management styles so that they could show the extent to which they agreed with the constructs on a three level Linkert scale ranging from Agree, Disagree to Undecided. The responses for each individual item are presented in Table 1

Table1: Positive Performance Management Styles

Statements	*Agree*		*Disagree*		*Undecided*		*Mean*	*Std.*
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*		
Demonstrating a driver for results	94	66.2	36	25.4	12	8.5	1.87	.523

Taking time to explain how a job should be carried out	106	74.6	36	25.4	0	0.0	2.52	.851
Explaining the part that members are to play in the team	94	66.2	36	25.4	12	8.5	1.97	.733
Making clear the rules, attitudes and the procedures for others to follow in detail	95	66.9	22	15.5	25	17.6	2.11	.646
Organizing work activities	95	66.9	47	33.1	0	0.0	2.07	.643
Communicating to staff how well they are doing	85	59.9	57	40.1	0	0.0	2.33	.748
Letting staff know what is expected of them	108	76.1	34	23.9	0	0.0	1.87	.923
Encouraging the use of uniform procedures for getting things accomplished	84	59.2	47	33.1	11	7.7	2.52	.851
Assigning staff to particular tasks	142	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	2.97	.933
Scheduling the work that is to be done	70	50.1	46	32.4	24	16.9	1.51	.446
Asking that staff follow standard rules and regulations	120	84.5	11	7.7	11	7.7	2.97	.943
Making working on the job more pleasant	97	68.3	12	8.5	33	23.2	2.33	.648
Getting out of their way to be helpful to others	84	59.2	12	8.5	46	32.4	1.87	.523
Respecting staff feelings and opinions and being thoughtful and considerate of others	98	69	33	23.2	11	7.7	2.52	.751
Maintaining friendly atmosphere in the team, approachable and treating staff with equity	97	68.3	34	23.9	11	7.7	1.97	.833
Doing little things to make it pleasant for staff to be members of the team	97	68.3	23	16.2	22	15.5	2.11	.646
Giving staff advance notice of change and explaining how it will affect them	97	68.3	34	23.9	11	7.7	2.07	.843
Looking out for staff personal welfare	108	76.1	23	16.2	11	7.7	2.33	.748

Source: *Primary Data,2019*

Table 1 indicates that majority of the participants, 66.2%, agreed that demonstrating a driver for results is a positive management behaviour among the academic staff (Mean= 1.87; Standard deviation= 0.523). Also, 74.6% agreed that taking time to explain how a job should be carried out was a positive management behaviour (Mean= 2.52; Standard deviation= 0.851).

In addition, 66.9% agreed that making clear the rules, attitudes and the procedures for others to follow in detail, organizing work activities (Mean= 2.07; Standard deviation= 0.643) was a further positive management behaviour. Results further showed that 59.9% agreed that communicating to staff how well they are doing (Mean= 2.33; Standard deviation= 0.748) was a positive management behaviour.

In addition, respecting staff's feelings and opinions and being thoughtful and considerate of others was also agreed upon by majority of the participants, 69%, with the Mean of 2.52 and standard deviation 0.751 as a positive behaviour by management. Another positive management behavior represented by 68.3% of the participants is maintaining a friendly atmosphere in the team, being approachable and treating staff with equity (Mean= 1.97; Standard deviation= 0.833).

Finally, findings revealed that 76.1% agreed that looking out for staff's personal welfare was another positive management behavior at BSU. These findings show that the use of participatory and transparent management strategies emulates positive management behaviors by the top management of the university.

In agreement with the quantitative data, one of the key informants was quoted saying: *"…our leadership is very* objective and transparent;
This has helped us to give our academic staff autonomy to do their things independently. We apply compromise and negotiation at whatever point in our service. This has fostered creativity and innovation among our academic staff." (Participant 5, 4th April 2019).

Table 2: Negative Performance Management Styles

Statements	*Agree*		*Disagree*		*Undecided*		*Mean*	*Std.*
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*		
Displaying loud behaviour towards staff	119	83.8	11	7.7	12	8.5	2.30	.779
Cultivating a sense of helplessness by not boosting staff morale	108	76.1	22	15.5	12	8.5	2.08	.732
Not leading by example	86	60.6	33	23.2	23	16.2	2.04	. 702
Displaying poor communication	109	76.8	22	15.5	11	7.7	2.52	. 721
Displaying poor attitude to work	97	68.3	22	15.5	23	16.2	1.88	.805
Treating people like replaceable parts	107	75.4	22	15.5	13	9.2	1.83	.817
Destroying trust, depleting workplace optimism	96	67.6	35	24.6	11	7.7	1.59	.711
Avoiding giving feedback thereby creating mediocrity	97	68.3	34	23.9	11	7.7	2.30	.649
Not making time for coaching	108	76.1	11	7.7	23	16.2	2.18	.974
Avoiding conflict resulting in dysfunctional behaviour	109	76.8	11	7.7	22	15.5	2.24	. 732
Sitting on employees' ideas	87	61.3	33	23.2	22	15.5	2.32	. 615
Short-term thinking thereby hammering quality, customer service and morale of staff	109	76.8	22	15.5	11	7.7	1.78	.875
Failure to share differing viewpoints and challenges leading to uninformed decisions	97	68.3	22	15.5	23	16.2	1.93	.598
Being out of touch with employees' realities and risking turning bad into worse	98	69	22	15.5	22	15.5	1.69	.637
Allowing marathons meetings and giving up question sessions	109	76.8	11	7.7	22	15.5	2.39	.701
Displaying cynicism	87	61.3	22	15.5	33	23.2	2.66	.765
Lacking humility	86	60.6	22	15.5	34	23.9	2.32	. 782

Source: Primary Data,2019

Table 2 indicates that majority of the participants, 83.8%, agreed that displaying loud behaviour towards staff was a negative management behaviour (Mean= 2.30; Standard deviation= 0.779). Also, 76.1% agreed that cultivating a sense of helplessness did not boost staff morale (Mean= 2.08; Standard deviation= 0.732). 60.6% agreed that not leading by example was negative management behaviour (Mean= 2.04; Standard deviation= 0.702). Similarly, 76.8% agreed that displaying poor communication thus failing to convey thoughts and ideas to staff was also a negative management behaviour.

The results further showed that 68.3% agreed that displaying poor attitude to work thus preventing employees from growing and improving, because of not promoting positive thinking and encouragement, portrayed negative management behaviour (Mean= 1.88; Standard deviation= 0.805).

In addition, 75.4% agreed that treating people like replaceable parts signifies negative management behaviour (Mean= 1.83; Standard deviation= 0.817). Results also showed 67.6% of the participants agreeing that destroying trust, depleting workplace optimism and limiting success through self-serving agenda (Mean= 1.59; Standard deviation= 0.711) was another negative management behaviour. Avoiding giving feedback thereby creating mediocrity, hence bringing loss of unity, confusion in expectations and muddied purpose was agreed upon by 68.3% of the participants as another negative management behaviour (Mean= 2.30; Standard deviation= 0.649).

Similarly, results revealed that 61.3% of the participants agreed that "sitting on employees" ideas thus limiting the success of the University and risking entrenching command-and-control leadership philosophies (Mean= 2.32; Standard deviation= 0.615) was an additional negative nature of behaviour management of academic staff performance. The study found that 61.3% of the participants said that displaying cynicism thus placing a lid on performance (Mean= 2.66; Standard deviation= 0.765), was considered a negative management behaviour.

Finally, 60.6% agreed that lacking humility was another negative management behaviour (Mean= 2.32; Standard deviation= 0.782). These findings show that acting irresponsibly by displaying poor communication, failure to give feedback, not showing empathy and disrespecting employees; are among negative management behaviours that can affect academic staff performance at BSU. It should be noted these findings did not necessarily tell what was happening at BSU.

This is because the study only sought to find out what participants thought would be a positive or negative nature of performance management by the university authorities. The findings thereof are a pointer to red zones which management of universities should trade on carefully, as well as the green zones which they should comfortably embrace in their bid to manage the performance of their academic staff.

Discussion

The third research question of this study sought to find out the nature of performance management that influenced academic staff performance in private universities. This nature was categorized into positive and negative performance management styles. Results about the positive nature of management style showed that majority of the participants agreed that demonstrating a driver for results is a positive management behavior among the academic staff, taking time to explain how a job should be carried out, making clear the rules, attitudes and the procedures for others to follow in detail and organizing work activities were positive management behaviour that influenced performance of university academic staff. These findings are in line with Armstrong, (2006), who argues that, the process of performance management practices involves the identification of common goals between the appraisers and appraisee and these goals must correlate to the overall organizational goals where if this process is conducted effectively, it will increase productivity and quality of output of the staff and the organization as a whole (Armstrong 2006).

In addition, respecting staff's feelings and opinions and being thoughtful and considerate of others, maintaining a friendly atmosphere in the team, approachability and treating staff as equals, plus looking out for staff's personal welfare were considered as other positive management behavior at BSU. Qualitative results also agreed with such positive performance management nature that the use of participatory and transparent management strategies emulates positive management behaviors by the top management of the university. Such working atmosphere would definitely lead to improved staff performance. This view is also held by Schaufeli, W, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker, A, (2002), who contend that a working environment would be synonymous with such terms as employee commitment, organisation citizenship behaviour and psychological contract (Schaufeli, W et al. 2002).

Results about the negative nature of management style showed that majority of the participants agreed that displaying loud behavior towards staff, cultivating a sense of helplessness by not boosting staff morale and not leading by example, displaying poor communication thus failing to convey thoughts and ideas to staff, displaying poor attitude to work thus preventing employees from growing and improving, not promoting positive thinking and encouragement, and treating people like replaceable parts, signifies negative management behavior. Such nature of performance management does not cultivate a sense of employee engagement which in turn limits the potentials of staff and the organization as a whole.

Note that Newman, D and Harrison, D. (2008), assert that staff personal engagement involves organizational employees embracing their work responsibilities, employing and expressing them physically, psychologically and affectively during their role performances. However, to do this, they need a supportive management (Newman, D and Harrison, D 2008)

Majority of the participants agreed that destroying trust, depleting workplace optimism and limiting success through self-serving agenda and avoiding giving feedback thereby creating mediocrity, hence bringing loss of unity; confusion in expectations and muddied purpose were considered to be negative management behavior. Other elements of negative behavior management included: "sitting on employees" ideas thus limiting success of the University and risking entrenching command-and-control leadership philosophies, displaying cynicism thus placing a lid on performance and lacking humility. Such characteristics of performance management contravened its goals. For example, Ying (2004) argues that performance management is concerned with how employees work, their management to improve their performance and ultimately how to increase their contribution to the organisation.

They further argue that performance management underpins the notion that performance management is a strategic and integrated approach that is intended to sustain organizational competitive advantage through performance improvement (Ying 2004). The following section discusses the challenges that affect academic staff performance.

Conclusion

This objective presents the conclusions of the study about Organisational Behaviour and Performance of Academic Staff in Private Universities in Uganda with Evidence from Bishop Stuart University. Both the

conclusions and the recommendations are based on the four objectives of the study which were, (1) To find out the management practices that influence performance of academic staff in private universities in Uganda, (2) To outline the behavioural practices that influence the performance of academic staff, (3) To find out the nature of performance management that influence the performance of academic staff, and (4) To find out the challenges and possible remedies to the performance of academic staff in private universities in Uganda.

Recommendation

This objective sought to find out the nature of performance management that influence the performance of academic staff in private universities in Uganda. From the findings, it was concluded that the nature of performance management that influenced performance of academic staff was either positive or negative. Positive nature of performance management involved university top management leading by example and allowing staff to operate in teams.

This not only led to commitment of staff to the university but also promoted decision making competencies of academic staff. The negative nature of performance management involved the top management of the university displaying loud behaviour and disrespecting staff in public, which would lead to dwindling of staff morale and therefore compromised their performance.

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