The Effect of Management Development Practices on Service Delivery in Higher Education Institutions: Literature Review

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Abstract

In tandem with the global changes, education institutions strive to gain competitive advantage from the human resources who are the only source of differentiation and sustainable advantage for organizations. Employee development increases performance based on global changes that are rendering obsolete some of the original professional skills and knowledge. The purpose of this paper was to review literature on the management development practices especially coaching, mentoring, supervision and role playing from various studies. From the literature reviewed, the study established that management development is critical to performance of employee and recommends a further research on the role of management development on service delivery in higher institutions of leaning in Kenya.

Keywords: *Management development practices, mentorship, employees' performance, higher education institution*

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Background Information

Management development practices are significant in performance of employees in the organization since they enhance employee abilities, capabilities, and skills which make employee distinct in performance from others. Management development practices include Supervision, coaching, mentoring and role playing. Supervision is described as the process of directing or guiding people to accomplish the goals of the organization in which they work. Mentoring is the transfer of tacit knowledge and enacting of professional standards, Coaching is the art of facilitating the enhanced performance and development of others, while Role playing is a development technique that attempts to capture and bring forth decision making situations to the employee being developed. Management development practices are exemplified as reflective relationships providing learning environment and resulting in sense-making and knowledge construction (Grant, 2003, Askeland, 2009). The study reviewed literature based on the four management development practices that is coaching, mentoring, supervision and role playing.

Coaching is an employee developmental practice used as a management contrivance in businesses. It is an open-ended practice which scrutinizes present conditions, sets performance goals and implements a preconceived idea for obtaining the objective (Contua and Kauffman, 2009). It operates alongside related activities, namely mentoring, role playing and supervision as a key developmental method. Brockbank (2008) asserted that coaching accomplish results when a rapport is based on conventional mutual respect the coach and coachee. It is seen as an extremely personalized one to one individual development programme centered on possibilities and potential. Coaching involves making it possible learning rather than teaching and enables coachees to unlock their potential and make the most of their performance. It also uses deductive (drawing it out) method since the coach is required to be an expert on the topic and brief understanding of the topic does help, but can sometimes be a problem. The individual is the one who primarily benefits from a coaching relationship. It also suffice to note that measuring of coaching session takes place in minutes. It can also take place at any time, sessions are generally informal, but can be formal and a working relationship between coach and coachee.

Supervision is explained as the practice of directing or guiding people to accomplish the goals of the organization in which they work. It includes monitoring, assessing performance, competence levels and alignment to organizational policy. Caroll (2006) summarizes that managerial models prescribe that supervisors define and communicate job requirements and expectations, plan, organize and control the job tasks, provide job-related instructions, and manage the performance by arranging the environment, evaluation, corrective and formative feedback and providing consequences for poor performance.

Haggard (2011), asserted that mentoring is a compassionate and caring interpersonal relationship involving an experienced, more knowledgeable practitioner and a less experienced, less knowledgeable individual. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, UK (2008), defines mentoring as the long-term passing of support, guidance and advice. Generally, however, it is regarded as a means to fostering individual growth mainly dependent on the relationship between the mentor and the mentee (Eby and Allen 2010, Haggard 2011)

Role-playing is a management development practice where participants act out a situation by assuming the roles of the characters involved. The situation is one in which has interaction between two people or within a group. It should be specially prepared with briefs written for each participant explaining the situation and, broadly, their role in it. Alternatively, role playing could emerge naturally from a case study when the trainees are asked to test their solution by playing the parts of those concerned. It is also used to give managers, team leaders practice in dealing with face-to-face situations such as interviewing, conducting a performance review meeting, counseling, coaching, dealing with a grievance, leading a group or running a meeting. It develops interactive skills and gives people insight into the way in which people behave and feel. The technique of 'role reversal', in which a pair playing, say, a manager and a team leader run through the case and then exchange roles and repeat it, gives extra insight into the feelings involved and the skills required (Baugh & Elland, 2007).

Role-playing enables trainees to get expert advice and constructive criticism from the trainer and their colleagues in a protected training situation. It can help to increase confidence as well as developing skills in handling people. The main difficulties are either that trainees are embarrassed or that they do not take the exercise seriously and overplay their parts.

Management Development Practices

Management development is a process by which persons advance their capabilities and abilities to be able to perform efficiently in their management tasks. The duty of management is observed as a trivial and ignominious career, barely meriting unrelenting analysis. Yet, in spite of this identity predicament, it might be argued that managers are a fundamental part of the employees therefore there is need to enhance their abilities and capabilities to perform. Management development comes in handy in enhancing the capacities of the individuals. The Kenya Higher education institutions are critical since they are mandated to transfer knowledge to students through teaching and research. Empowerment has emerged as a construct deemed critical to organizational innovativeness and effectiveness, as such empowerment initiatives should be geared towards changing the role of managers. There is need to equip the management employees to execute their roles effectively since management development is linked to matching of the individuals' capabilities to the need of the organization. Development occurs when there is an increase in understanding which is effectively united with the conceptual indulgent that can illuminate it, giving increased confidence to act and distinguish how such stroke communicates to its context. A key presumption is that empowered employees perform better than the less empowered. Management development therefore brings about employee's feelings of empowerment leading to increased autonomy, participation in decision making and accessing of information.

In the public University setting, management development plays a big role in setting the parameter for training and research which is critical to success of the institution.

Service Delivery

Service delivery is crucial to survival of any institution. Performance measures are needed for decision making regarding the human resource in an organization. Askeland, (2009) argued that there is no correct definition of performance and suggested that conflicts between managerial perspectives be recognized. The classical approach to organization performance is best described by Alvesson, (2003) who came up with seven measures of performance in a model measuring Performance Management Process. The model proposes that performance of an organization is a complex interrelationship among several performance criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, quality of products, productivity, and quality of work life, innovation and profitability. Busse, (2009) viewed an organization as a system which receives inputs and then adds value to the output. As such organizational performance can be judged in terms of whether or not an organization achieves the various set of objectives namely; financial or non-financial, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, research and resource output.

Financial measures were widely used for a long time, but in the recent years, researches have proved that other measures such as internal business process, learning and growth and customer perspective. Claire, (2006) measured organizational performance on eight performance areas including constituent satisfaction, reputation, internal process effectiveness, perceived potential for growth, attraction of funding and skilled human resources, diffusion of influence and administrative competence.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is normally looked at in terms of outcomes but it can also be looked at in terms of behavior and can be measured against the performance standards set by the organization. There are a number of measures that can be taken into consideration when measuring performance for example using of productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, quality and profitability measures as briefly explained hereafter. Profitability is the ability to earn profits consistently over a period of time. It is expressed as the ratio of gross profit to sales or return on capital employed. Efficiency and effectiveness **-** efficiency is the ability to produce the desired outcomes by using as minimal resources as possible, while effectiveness is the ability of employees to meet the desired objectives or target. Productivity is expressed as a ratio of output to that of input and measures how the individual, organization and industry converts input resources into goods and services per unit of resources employed while considering quality of products or services that satisfy the stated or implied needs.

As noted by Grant, (2003), it is the responsibility of the company managers to ensure that the organizations strives to and achieve high performance levels by setting the desired levels of individual performance for specific periods in question. Earlier research on productivity of workers has shown that employees who are satisfied with their job are more motivated, have higher job performance, and are more likely to be retained longer than those who are not happy with their jobs.

Quantitative Performance

Human resource is one of the primary sources of competitive advantage in an organization and their performance depends on personal traits, mental abilities and the urge to be integrated with institutional purpose. Performance assessment is important to operations of the organization in that employees are able to take the result of performance assessment to improve their performance. This can be improved through participating in training and development, decision–making, access to information and management support as part of employee empowerment.

Competitiveness and efficiency in the workplace is important today than ever before, for work processes are becoming more complex, competitive and challenging.

Qualitative Performance

Qualitative measures are more subjective in nature, because they are more concerned with measuring changes in peoples" behavior and the individual measures of performance could be in terms of quality, flexibility and cost, innovativeness, time, delivery of service, reliability among others. To sustain high performance means giving close attention to the type of staff and to how best they can be motivated to achieve their best and get recognition for achievement, incentives both intrinsic and extrinsic, leadership, autonomy, and involvement in decision making. The aim is to create a work environment that will enable individuals to deliver results in accordance with organization expectations.

Qualitative measures adopted in this study included non-financial measures namely: adherence to budget, sustainable revenue base, employee satisfaction, publications, and customer satisfaction. These measures were considered because universities are public institutions funded by the Government of Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory postulating that training and development are a form of investment in human beings. The underlying belief then is that development creates assets in the form of knowledge and skills, which in turn increases productivity of the worker. Skilled human resources often acquire these skills through staff development programs or investment in the existing human resource through appropriate on-the job training both within and outside the organization such as seminars, workshops, conferences, and by creating conducive environment through appropriate welfare care like promotion.

Human capital theory proposes that people's skills, experience, and knowledge are a form of capital from which returns are earned for investments made by the employer. The Human capital theory holds that employees should invest in specific training and promotion to enhance employees' career path prospects.

Thus, employees are not costs, factors of production, or assets, but rather investors in a business. They invest their own human capital, and expect a return on their investment. The predisposition for an employee to invest their time in an organization is based on sense of commitment. Nevertheless, staff development programs may be viewed as generalized investments in human capital. Such investments can reassure employees that the expenditure of their time in the organization will contribute to their development and thus improve employee commitment and loyalty. Staff development programs can give organizations a competitive advantage by linking the strategic interests of the organization with the interests of their employees. For the employee, human capital theory justifies time spent at the workplace on regenerative activities. Training has thus, added value to human resource hence become skilled.

Literature Review

Alevesson, (2003) in his study identified a conceptual framework for measuring the business impact of coaching and concluded that for coaching to have a direct and clear impact on business, certain conditions need to exist thus: (i) there are specific actions for which the executive alone is responsible, (ii) that in the absence of coaching, the executive would perform those actions incorrectly and, (iii) that in the presence of coaching, the executive performs those actions correctly. In essence, coaching should have a positive impact if it improves decision making in ways that otherwise would not happen. The primary conclusion of this study was that the degree of business impact is related to role, task complexity and interdependence of the organizational environment and individual performance, factors which Alevesson pointed out needed to be addressed when designing and evaluating coaching engagements. Alevesson concluded, that whilst coaching did appear to have a positive impact on performance, it may best impact on business when combined with other interventions. He did however, point out the clear limitations of his research in that the sample size (n=12) was too low to allow any definitive conclusions, or for any wider generalizations to be made.

Askeland, (2009) evaluated a coaching programme carried out in a large real estate firm with sales staff, which was aimed at improving sales performance and dealing with high attrition rates of new staff. The programme addressed behavioural issues relating to communication and selling skills and cognitive issues relating to fears of rejection. The positive outcomes were increased property listings, increased sales and higher staff satisfaction as a result of the coaching. Whilst this study was significant in that it provides evidence of positive benefits and outcomes from coaching, it may be critiqued for lack of detail. For example, they mention cognitive issues relating to fear of rejection, but then failed to outline specifically which cognitive skills they referred and did not discuss the methods used to initiate change, thus limiting the ability of the study to apportion success to coaching alone.

Further evidence of coaching effectiveness has been reported by Brockbank (2008) whose study detailed the aims of a coaching intervention on a manager with a focus on enhancing inter and intra-personal skills through development of communication skills. Although the nature of the outcome measured was only qualitative, substantial improvements appear to have been made, with enhanced team performance and less interpersonal conflict reported. This case study however, did not provide any significant empirical data, and the evidence provided was highly subjective, offering no real analysis of the factors which contributed to the impact of coaching. It presented no hard measures of outcomes and offered only anecdotal evidence of effectiveness, hence limiting both reliability and validity.
When the coaching was re-directed to make the behavioural elements more explicit, the coachee reported a positive impact in terms of increased confidence, being more proactive and less discomfort with conflict. However, this study suffers from the same criticism of those previously evaluated in that the sample size was small, there was a lack of detail, and evidence, and no mention of the theoretical models underpinning the research.

Coaching outcomes lead to improved interpersonal skills, and better working relationships among higher education employees presented through a case study of one to one coaching using 360 degree assessments and 'loops' of feedback. Whilst this study highlights some positive effects of coaching, the account is highly anecdotal and adopts a practitioner approach, offering a practical guide to coaching for coaching consultants. The study provided insufficient detail of any hard evidence to substantiate the outcomes and therefore remained highly subjective. It also failed to make any links to theoretical underpinnings, to support or justify any conclusions.

Fenwick, (2007) who measured the positive, affective reactions and self-reported learning and behaviour changes of seventy-five executives and reported increase in self-confidence, self-awareness and sensitivity towards others. More attempts to link outcomes to theory and validate outcomes through rigorous examination of the evidence are needed, in order to draw more reliable conclusions from the results (Contu & Wilmont, 2003).

Reportedly, those managers who worked with a mentor were more likely than other managers to set specific goals, to solicit ideas for improvements from supervisors and to receive improved ratings from direct reports and supervisors (Czarniwska, 2000). A potential flaw in this research however, lies in the fact that the multi-source feedback was not kept confidential, which makes it difficult to eliminate bias in the results. If decision makers responsible for promotion had access to multi-source feedback and the respondents were aware of this, it could be argued that employees accountability for improved performance was already high, thus reducing the potential of this research to attribute performance improvements to mentoring alone.

According to Fenwick, (2007) executives reported increased levels of satisfaction with supervision outcomes and believed that supervision had a positive impact on their lives. This study also highlighted the role of self-efficacy, communication style and interpersonal style as being important components of the supervision process. This research did not however, provide sufficient detail about how self-efficacy or communication was measured and whether this was done in a systematic way, therefore limiting the potential to make more accurate judgments about the implications of the results.

Carter & Little, (2007) conducted a research in a survey commissioned by a global company for high potential employees in higher education wanting to develop emotional competence through supervision. The survey included a sample of thirty-three participants. The supervision used within the institution for high potential employees was underpinned by some robust theoretical models originating from the field of clinical psychotherapy, and the supervision process used followed a four stage process and was on enhancing emotional competence to support effective leadership. Reported outcomes included: (i) more effective leaders; (ii) improved interpersonal skills (enhanced listening, achieving more buy-in); (iii) increased commitment to the company; (iv) increased performance management; (v) increased productivity; (vi) positive impact on the company's bottom line. Whilst many of these outcomes are positive indicators of effective supervision and lend support, in particular, to the role of an insight-oriented approach to supervision underpinned by self-awareness, the study may however be criticized for lacking empirical rigour by not providing evidence of statistical analysis. Performance improvement measures also appeared to be self-report measures supplied by the supervision only weakening the validity of results.

Crist & Taner, (2003) conducted a study on "The Role Play Expectations and Predictions of Trends for Human Resource Development at Large Public Universities within the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Area". The study was designed to identify the role expectations, reporting hierarchy, years in role and trends in human resource development in large public universities within the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) geographic area. The study involved 174 employees as respondents, library method and questionnaire were used. The questionnaire was developed in 3 parts: management training with 46, performance with 15 and 4 questions for demographic characteristics and was handed out to employees. For assessing questionnaire validity, the experts' opinions were requested and to confirm its reliability Cronbach's alpha method was applied. The reliability results calculated 0.81 and 0.79 for management training and organizational performance accordingly both of which were above the reasonable threshold (0.7) hence reliability of questionnaires was proved. The data was tested using the linear regression analysis to look at the influences of intellectual capital to the performance of the respondents.

Respondents felt the greatest average institutional emphasis was on those roles where the delivery and support of existing HRD programs and services were involved; while the least average institutional stress was on the roles of involving and assisting individual employees with their developmental needs.

Discussion

A review of the literature on management development practices effectiveness indicates several key issues. Thus, from a Human Resource Management perspective, the evidence is often subjective (Gallacher,2007), there is a lack of standardization and clarity of definitions, and often sample sizes are small (Kilburg, 2000; Kegan & Lahey, 2001). Theoretical models to measure effectiveness are useful for identifying factors which are thought to be relevant for measuring management development effectiveness (Grant, 2010; Kilburg, 2000). Thus, although other outcomes have been discussed; satisfaction (Askeland, 2009), and increases in self-confidence, self-awareness and sensitivity towards others (Busse, 2009), measurements of management development practices outcomes have been dominated by performance measures (Brockbank, 2008). In view of their contribution to organizational effectiveness (Carter & Little, 2007) it appears that organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour are additional measures that are worth considering when evaluating management development effectiveness, yet to date little research has been carried out in this area.

A review of the empirical evidence reveals very few studies have demonstrated effectiveness in management development practices (Clutterbuck, 2005; Grant, 2003; Fenwick, 2007). Some positive outcomes of management development practices so far reported included increase in performance (Baugh, and Elland, 2007; Grant, 2010); enhanced interpersonal communication and working relationships (Kilburg, 2000; Fenwick, 2007); increased self-confidence and self-awareness (Griffiths & Campbell, 2009), increased satisfaction, where the importance of self-efficacy and communication skills have also been highlighted (Brown et al 2009). Factors perceived to be of particular importance include: engagement and commitment (Clutterbuck, 2005); employee's attitude and openness to feedback (Czarniawska, 2000); receptiveness to change and motivation as well as buy-in and willingness to participate (Contu & Willmott, 2003), all of which have been linked to success. Management development practices are to a large extent applied on a case-by-case basis and used as a remedial tool with its purpose vaguely defined, but its potential is greater. Both secondary and primary data provide evidence that management development, performed according to definitions, always generates value equivalent or larger than its costs. The value of the investment is perceived to be proportionate to its purpose and to the level at which individual goals are set.

In the study, two gaps between the literature and research data are identified namely: (i) the importance of the management development and (ii) the major benefits to be expected from management development practices on employee performance. While management development was expected to impact on the results of employee performance, the study results indicated less than expected impact. This can be explained by the differences in the level at which goals were set. The second gap may be a trend, with the present focus more concerned on the development of managerial skills, while literature shows that management development supports the development of all skills with lasting results. In addition, the skills acquired are lasting and most often management development leads to self-learning, which in turn generates self-acting behaviour. Thus, there is a potential to use management development practices beyond its present daily applications.

Study Model

The study adopted the following model showing the relationship between management development practices and service delivery characterized by mentoring, coaching, supervision and Role playing on service delivery indicated by financial and non financial measures.

Independent variable **Dependent Variable**

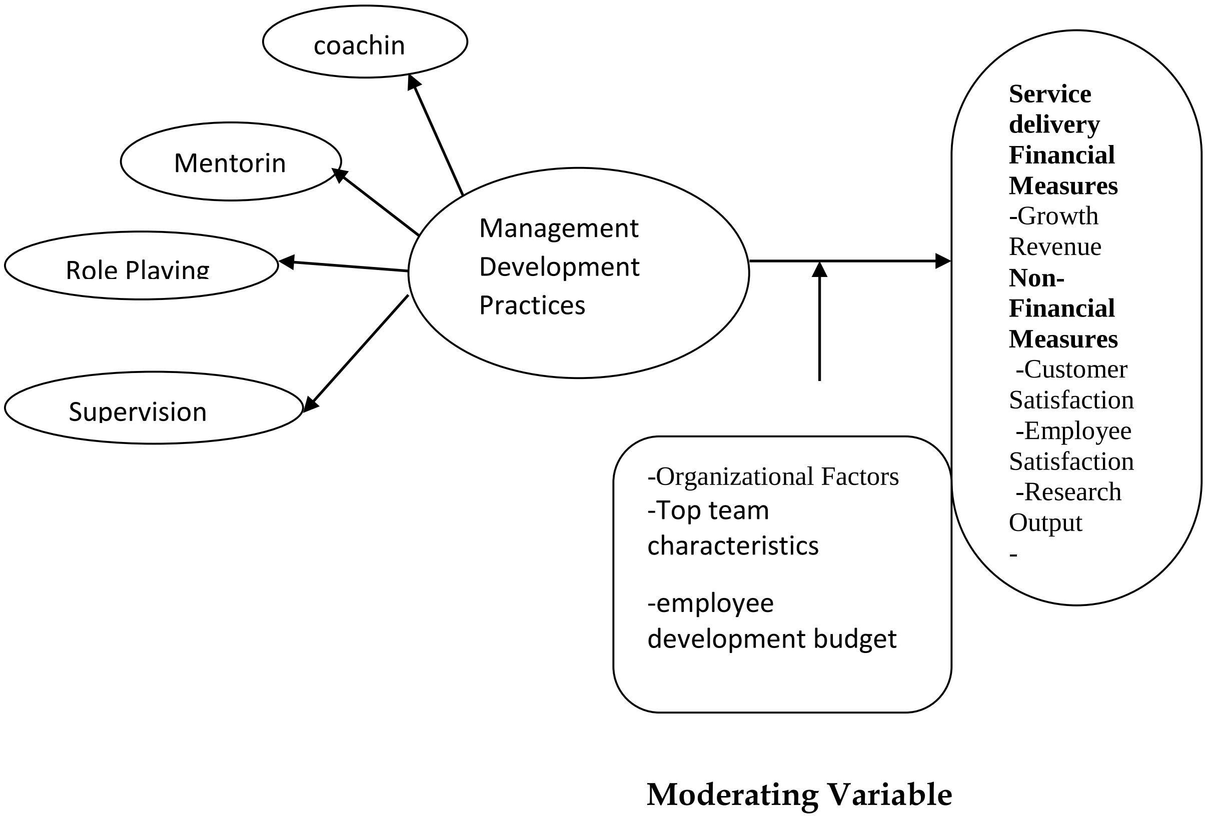

Figure 1: Model Showing the Relationship between Management Development Practices on Service.

Conclusion

It is evident that most valuable asset available to an organization is its people. Indeed, there is a paradigm shift from human resource to human capital which consists of the knowledge, skills and abilities of the people employed in organization which is indicative of their value. The costs of management turnover, such as subsequent recruiting expenses, disruptions of course offerings, discontinuities in departmental and planning, and loss of advisors, are borne at individual, departmental and institutional levels and have an impact on quality of services and the image of the institution. Lack of management development has several disadvantages such as costs related to decreased organizational loyalty, loss of knowledge and experience regarding the institution, and increase in time and cost in training and developing novice employees. In the higher education institutions, the departure of some employees means that the synergies that come with a group of academics working together is diminished, and the impact and scope of knowledge production and dissemination is lessened.

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