CAREER MANAGEMENT AN ANTECEDENT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND IT'S EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA.

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ABSTRACT

Career development initiatives benefit both employees and the organization they work in. Employees benefit from improved, more marketable skills that allow for increased mobility within the organization while the organisations benefit from increased employee talent, performance and commitment and reduce employee intention to leave for alternative employers. The study aimed to determine the effect of career management on employee commitment in public universities in Kenya. Perceived organization support was considered a moderating variable in the study. Employees' commitment to the organization was the dependent variable. The study focused on the effect of career management on employees' commitment in public universities in Kenya for both academic and non-academic.

This was a field study that adopted a cross sectional descriptive research. The data analysis was both descriptive and inferential. To obtain a comprehensive view of the career management situation in public universities, qualitative research methods was applied in the study. The target population was the University of Nairobi (UoN), Kenyatta University (KU) and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). The three institutions were a good representation since they have more established systems unlike other upcoming universities. Questionnaires and interviewer-administered questionnaire were used as instruments for obtaining the information required. Pilot test was conducted to detect any weakness in design and instrumentation, and Cronbach's Alpha and T-test was used to ascertain internal reliability of each variable used in the study. The results combined provided a better insight into the effect of career management on employees' commitment in public universities in Kenya.

Key words: *career development, career management, organization career management, career management behaviours, commitment*

Introduction

Leibowitz and Lea as cited by Jane and Nadya, (2009) describe career development systems as integrated services and procedures which meet the needs of both individuals and organizations. Services meeting individual needs are referred to as career planning while those related to organizational needs are termed career management.

Career development has been identified as a means of helping organizations to tap into their wealth of in-house talent for staffing and promotion by matching the skills, experience and aspirations of individuals to the needs of the organization (Kapel and Shepherd, 2004; Kaye, 2005). Extensive research has been carried out in a bid to unearth the extent to which organizations can support career development initiatives for their employees. Such research has focused on the extent to which such practices foster organizational effectiveness (Appelbaum, Ayre & Shapiro, (2002) and result in job satisfaction among employees. Other scholars have focused on the extent to which such practices encourage employee commitment (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2007).

Career management is a commonly cited antecedent of career development that is defined as the process by which individuals develop insight into themselves and their environment, formulate career objectives and strategies, and acquire feedback regarding career progress and opportunities (Greenhaus et al., 2000).
According to CIPD (2011), Career management is defined as Planning and shaping the progression or movement of individuals within an organisation by aligning employee preferences, talent and potential with organisational resourcing needs both now and in the future.

Objective of the study

The study sought to establish the effect of career management on employees' commitment in public universities on Kenya.

Scope of the study

This study will cover the public universities in Nairobi and Kiambu counties namely University of Nairobi (UoN), Kenyatta University (KU) and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). The three institutions have high staff establishments and well developed systems and having been in operation for more than twenty years will provide a good representation of public universities in Kenya. The study will target both the teaching and the non-teaching staff in the public universities.

Literature Review

Career management is usually seen as talent management, in which management monitors the implementation of career programmes in order to ease employees' adaptation to rapid organizational changes such as a turbulent working environment, job instability and insecurity, flexible work practice, and multiskilling (Ready & Conger, 2007). The ability of employees to adapt to these organizational changes can enhance the progression of their career ladders in organizations (Adekola, 2011; Greenhaus, et al., 2000; Ismail et al., 2011; Martin et al., 2001). It is not a singular event but a continuing process that is a necessity for adapting to the changing demands of the 21st Century economy. Career management is an ongoing process of preparing, developing, implementing and monitoring career plans and strategies undertaken by the employee

alone or in concert with the organization's career system (Hall, 1986; Greenhaus *et al.*, 2000). In addition, change of business strategies and direction, organization restructuring, and technological changes, will demand ongoing career management resulting in the need to revisit career options and modify career paths (Greenhaus *et al.*, 2000), which can enable employees to make informed decisions that are consistent with their skills, aspirations, and values, and improve organization effectiveness.

According to Baron and Greenberg (1990) a typical career management programme, as part of the larger human resources system, involves efforts to help employees to assess their own career strengths and weaknesses; set priorities and specific career goals; provide information on various career paths and alternatives within the organisation; and offer employees yearly reviews of their progress towards these goals by managers who have received training in conducting such assessments.

Career Management systems contribute to increased employees professional satisfaction because it helps them to identify and take positions consistent with their objectives and plans. From the perspective of the company, career planning system reduces the needed time to fill the vacancies, help succession planning (preparing employees for filling positions that became vacant following staff turnover or retirement), identify employees with management potential and ensure to all employees the opportunity to identify career goals and develop plans to achieve them (Antoniu, 2010).The two main drivers of career management are organization career management and career management behaviours by individuals.

Ho$_1$: Career management has no significant effect on employees' commitment in public universities in Kenya.

A conceptual frame work was developed in order to understand the relationship of the variable.

Conceptual Framework
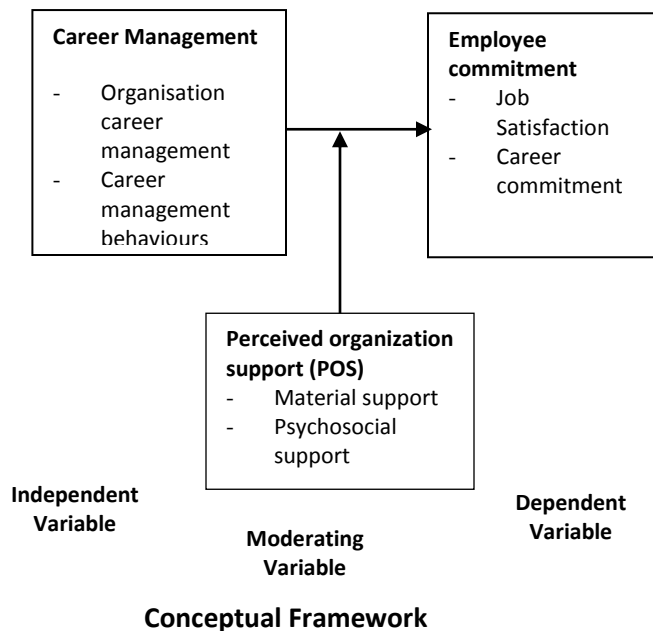
Organisation Career Management (OCM)

The term OCM is usually employed to cover the various policies and practices, deliberately established by organizations to improve the career effectiveness of their employees" (Orpen,1994). Venkiteswaran, (1996) views OCM as "assessment of employee abilities and potential, determination of logical paths of progression, efforts directing individual career interests compatible with organization's future/current human resource needs". As per Baruch and Peiperl (2000), "OCM is concerned with the organization carrying out activities relevant to the career development of its employees".

Organizational career management refers to the procedures taken by organizations to help promote career development, including mentoring programmes, succession planning, job posting, individual counseling, external training, and so on (Gutteridge,1986). These organizational career management practices often benefit career

development among employees by enhancing self-awareness (e.g., Greenhaus & Connolly, 1982), promoting career-planning skills (e.g., Noe, 2002), and integrating employees' career development with organizational opportunities (Harris & DeSimone, 1994). Due to these beneficial effects, perceived organizational career management significantly predicts employees' satisfaction with the promotion process, organizational commitment, and job performance (Eby, Allen, & Brinley, 2005; Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefooghe, 2005; Sturges et al.,2002).

Organizational career management (OCM), also called "organizational support for career development" or "organizational sponsorship", refers to the programs, processes and assistance provided by organizations to support and enhance their employees' career success (Ng *et al.*, 2005; Orpen, 1994). There are many studies exploring OCM activities, such as those by Bowen and Hall (1977), Gutteridge (1993), Louchheim and Lord (1988), Baruch (1996), and Baruch and Peiperl (2000).

Career Management Behaviours

Career management behaviours are the actions that individuals take to achieve their career goals. These behaviours occur when individuals choose to initiate and intervene in their career situation in such a way that the individual acts in a desired direction, rather than responding passively to an imposed change (Crant, 2000). These behaviours are referred to alternatively as "career enhancing strategies" (Nabi, 2003), "context-specific proactive behaviours" (Crant, 2000) and "career goal-directed activities" (Lent, 2004). These behaviours include career exploration and planning, skills development, networking and promoting one's achievements (Claes and Ruiz-Quintamilla, 1998; Kossek *et al.*, 1998; Nabi, 2000, 2003; Noe, 1996; Orpen, 1994).

Even though the big five personality factors have been used in previous studies. Some scholars have embraced the idea that under today's conditions, being proactive is the key to career progression and career satisfaction (McCarthy, 2002; Seibert, Crant and Kraimer, 2001). "Proactive personality has been considered a stable disposition to take personal initiatives in a broad range of activities and situations" (Seibert, Crant and Kraimer, 2001: 847). Studies (McCarthy, 2002; Seibert et. al. 2001) suggest that people with proactive personality are more likely to experience career success over time. Seibert et. al. (2001) found that having proactive personality was not directly related to career progress or career satisfaction, but is indirectly related to them through specific proactive behaviour and cognitive processes namely innovativeness, political skills and career initiatives. The basis is that people who take the initiative and make constructive change to their circumstances are more likely to experience career success over time. Burt (1992) suggested that people with larger network of relationship that provide advantage of structural holes in organizations seek better career growth. This career growth is more likely to be extrinsic. Consequently, people with extraversion and proactiveness are likely to achieve better extrinsic career growth. Sturges et al (2001) found that both formal and informal Organizational career management activities were correlated with individual career management activities aimed at furthering the career within the organization, the most prominent being the networking activities.

Perceived Organizational Support

The central contrast within organizational support theory (OST), perceived organization support refers to the degree to which employees believe the organization values their work and contribution, and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger *et al*, 1986). Supportive leader behaviours and a generally facilitative organizational climate may be subsumed

under a variable entitled 'perceived organizational support.' Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) demonstrated that individuals tend to "form global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being". Specifically, individuals evaluate the behavior of organizational agents towards them and infer the general motive underlying that treatment, with the categories that are considered important varying considerably between organizations and between persons. Some individuals might base their sense of perceived organizational support (POS) upon such factors as the organization willingness to provide them with special assistance or special equipment in order to complete a project. Others might develop a strong sense of POS based upon the organization members' willingness to provide them with additional opportunities for training in an area that is of particular interest to them.

According to Champan (as cited in Kopp, 2013), support can be divided into two broad categories: material and psychosocial. Material support includes money, equipment, supplies and the physical environment. Psychosocial support is primarily in terms of expert cognitive advice from the manager. Such structure helps the work group to do the job and share responsibilities (Straub, 2012).

H_{O2}: Perceived Organization support (POS) has no moderating effect of on the relationship between career management and employees' commitment in public universities.

Employee Commitment to Organisation

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) defined commitment as a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets, adding that commitment is distinguishable from exchange-based forms of motivation and target-relevant attitudes, and can influence behavior even in the absence of extrinsic motivation or positive attitudes.

Career commitment is an outcome of career development initiatives. Hall (1971) defines career commitment as the strength of one's motivation to work in a chosen career role (Noordin, Williams & Zimmer 2002). Colarelli and Bishop (1990) contend that career commitment is characterised by the development of personal career goals, the attachment to, identification with, and involvement in those goals. Organisations that provide career relevant information and assistance will narrow employees' career focus and bind them more closely to their employer leading to commitment (Granrose & Portwood 1987).

Organisations that invest in career management are more likely to increase employee's job satisfaction (Lee 2000). A number of researchers who provided alternative views of job satisfaction have appreciated this notion. First, numerous authors describe job satisfaction as a state of mind and provide different interpretations. For instance, Gregson (1987) defines job satisfaction as the positive emotional state resulting from the individual appraisal of one's job or experience. Chay and Bruvold (2003) define job satisfaction as an individual's affective response to specific aspects of the job. Noe (1996) defines it as a pleasurable feeling that results from the perception that one's job fulfils or allows for the fulfilment of one's important job values (Appelbaum, *et al*. 2002).

Secondly, job satisfaction is a form of attitude towards work-related conditions, facets or aspects (Wiener 1982). Jepsen and Sheu (2003) observe that such an attitude, either in the form of liking, or disliking a job is a universal and an essential aspect of career development.

Research Design

This was a field study that adopted a cross-sectional survey research. Cross-sectional research is a research method often used in social sciences and education. This type of study utilizes different groups of people who differ in the variable of interest, but share other characteristics such as socioeconomic status and educational background. Cross-sectional studies are observational in nature and are known as descriptive research, not causal or relational (Kothari, 2004).

The research was a cross-sectional survey study geared towards describing the characteristics of the study population, in this case to shed more light on the effects of career management a antecedent of career development and its effect on employees' commitment in public universities in Kenya.

Population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2008), a population contains the total subjects that can be considered in a study. The target population in this study was the 22 public chartered universities in Kenya, which have a population of approximately 24,000 employees (KUSU, 2014). The population was all the teaching and non-teaching staff and this population will be stratified using the two strata.

Sampling Frame

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008), a sampling frame is a list, directory or index of cases from which a sample can be selected. Subjects or cases selected from the sampling frame form the units of observation in a study. Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) define a sampling frame as a list of all the items from where a representative sample is drawn for the purpose of a study.

In the case of this study, the sample frame of the study is the list of the 22 public universities in Kenya (CUE, 2014), taking a sample of 3 (three) public universities which is 10% representation of all public universities. Kerlinger (2006) stated that the smaller the sample, the larger the sampling error, and vice versa. Kerlinger (2006) indicates that a sample size, 10% of the target population is large enough so long as it allows for reliable data analysis by cross tabulation, provides desired level of accuracy in estimates of the large population, and allows testing for significance of differences between estimates.

The target population was the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, which have a total staff population of 10,257. These three universities have the bulk of the university staff population, and have more established systems unlike other upcoming universities.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Simple stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample from the academic and non-academic staff. Cooper and Schindler (2008) talk of stratified method as a technique used where the population is not homogeneous. This was considering that the universities employees are on two main categories; teaching and non-teaching staff.

The following formula was used to determine the sample size. (Kothari, 2008)

$$n = \frac{z^2\, pq}{e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2\, x0.5x0.5}{0.05x0.05} = 385$$

n = the desired sample size
z = the standard normal deviate at required confidence level
p = the population proportion estimated to have characteristics being measured
q = 1 − p

e = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05)

A representative sample constituted a total of 385 which represented opinion of 10,257 staff members in the three universities. Stratified sampling was used to group the employees into two categories of teaching and non-teaching staff for representation. In this study, 500 questionnaires were taken to the field to give an allowance for those who may not respond.

Data Collection Instruments
The researcher used closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires and interviewer administered questionnaire as instruments of data collection. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the various selected respondents, targeting to have a representation of various cadres of staff in public universities. In the cases where the respondents requested to be given more time the questionnaires was collected at a later date.

Data Processing and Analysis
Qualitative data: Data frequency distribution and cross tabulation was used in describing and explaining the situation as it is in the public universities. Data was coded and analyzed simultaneously as collected. Through content coding, a list of key ideas and themes for each variable were generated, and this guided the nature of integration needed for both qualitative and quantitative data collected.
Data was then be operationalized through scoring for cross-checking with the quantitative data.
Quantitative data: Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics; measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and measures of symmetry and inferential statistics. Scatter plots were used to show if the relationships are linear. SPSS software was used as a statistical tool for analysis.

Linear regression analysis was used to show if there was a correlation and strength of the relationship between variables both independent and dependent and the effect of the moderating variables on each relationship. Multiple regression analysis was thereafter conducted to test the overall effect on the study model. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also be used to test the goodness of fit of the regression models and finally to test the hypothesis of the multiple regression models. T-test was used to test the significance of model parameters.

Statistical Analysis of the study variables
The objective of the study was to establish the effect of career management systems on employee commitment in public Universities in Kenya. The descriptive statistics showed that, the respondents understood their personal responsibility towards their career development and had positive career management behavior. 91% indicated that majority of staff in public universities understood their responsibility in the process of their long term career success. 83% of the respondents had gathered information about the existing opportunities for their career growth. This indicates that employees in public university are aware of their career progression or movement plan within the university in accordance to their preferences, talent and potential and that they also understand the university's current and in future resourcing needs. 73.4% of the respondents indicated that they had the necessary resources required for attainment of career goals. 75.6% of the respondents indicated that they had set both the short term and long term goals training requirement for their career development. 67.0% indicated that they were sure of their next step in their career progression. This shows that public University staff has positive career management

behaviours. These are the actions or career enhancing strategies that individuals take to achieve their career goals (Nabi, 2003). The behaviors include career exploration and planning, skills development, networking, and promoting one's achievements.

The descriptive statistics showed that career development is key in public universities, and that public Universities have in place organization Career management (OCM). The employees positive career management behavior shows that public universities have in place programs, processes and support that enhance their employees' career success.

Correlation analysis results for the study variables

Correlation analysis was conducted to show that relationship between the variables under study. Table I below shows the correlation results of the variables.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

		Employee Commitment	Perceived Support
Employee Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	429	
Career Management	Pearson Correlation	.600**	.700**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0
	N	428	430

The correlation matrix showed the pearsons correlation coefficient of between the dependent variable employee commitment and career management to be significantly correlated at (r=0.600, p<0.001). The correlation between career management and the moderating variable, perceived organization support was (r=0.700, p<0.001).

Statistical Modeling
Regression Analysis
The following formula for regression model was used to analyse the relationship.

Regression model

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y= Employee commitment in public universities

X_{1-} Career management

β_0-is a constant (Coefficient of interprets)

$\beta_1 - \beta_2$- are regression coefficient

ε- is a random error term

Anova test was also conducted to determine whether the model worked in explaining the relationship among the variables as postulated in the conceptual model.

Regression results of career management on employee commitment

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.600[a]	0.36	0.358	16.76235

a. Predictor: (Constant), Career Management

Table 2 present a summary of regression model result. The regression results showed that (R =0.600) and (R squared = 0.36) respectively. From the findings shown in table 2, it is notable that there exists a relationship between the study variables.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	67289.4	1	67289.374	239.484	.000[a]
1	Residual	119696	426	280.976		
	Total	186985	427			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Career Management

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

From the Analysis of variance in table 3, another simple regression model was fitted to the data with career management as the independent variable and employee commitment as dependent variable and the model was found to be significant $(F(1,426)=239.5, p<0.001)$ and R squared=0.360. This implies that career management index on its own explains 36% of the variation in employee commitment index.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	33.076	2.512		13.165	.000
1	Career Management	0.634	0.041	0.6	15.475	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

The model coefficient in table 4 was found to be significantly different from zero (t=15.475, p<0.001). The model equation generated for career management is Y= 33.1+0.634X_2. This implies that every unit measure of career management leads to 0.634 increase in employee commitment. This shows that career management contributed to employee commitment in public universities.

Thus from the findings of this study career management has a positive influence on employee commitment.

Therefore we reject the hypothesis based on the study objective that;

Ho_1: Career management has no significant effect on employees' commitment in public universities in Kenya and conclude that career management significantly influences employee commitment.

Moderation models using R squared significance change of variables

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_M M + \varepsilon$$
$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_M M + \beta_{M_i} X_i M + \varepsilon$$

(i=1,2,3,4)

Where M_i is the moderating variable (Perceived organization support) and $X_i M$ Is the interaction term between $_i$ independent variables and the moderating variable.

In order to determine the moderating effect of perceived organization support (M) on the relationship between career Management (X_1), and employee commitment(Y), perceived organization support (M) and the interaction term were hierarchically added into a regression procedure in SPSS.

Three models arising from this were found to be significant (see table 5) below. From the model summary table it is clear that adding Perceived organization support (M) to a model containing career management (X_1) as a predictor improved the R squared by 0.116 which was significant with p<0.001. But adding the interaction term to the model containing the other two variable did not significantly improve the model (change in R squared =0.000, p=0.539) implying that the moderating role of perceived organization support (M) is not statistically significant.

Table 5: Moderating models using R squared significance change of variables

Independent variables Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
X_1	.601[a]	0.361	0.36	16.73923	0.361	239.81	1	424	0.000
X_1 and M	.691[b]	0.477	0.475	15.15826	0.116	94.057	1	423	0.000
X_1,M and X_1*M	.691[c]	0.478	0.474	15.16943	0.000	0.377	1	422	0.539

The moderating effect on employee commitment by perceived organization support on the career management was not statistically significant based on the regression results in which the interaction term was insignificant (t= -0.614, p=0.539). This can be explained to mean that public University employees are keen on their career development activities and have positive career management behavior with or without perceived organization support.

Hence accepting the hypothesis;

Ho_2: Perceived Organization support (POS) has no moderating effect of on the relationship between career management and employees' commitment in public universities in Kenya.

Conclusions

The objective was to establish the effect of career management systems on employee commitment in public universities in Kenya. Career management has a positive influence on employee commitment. According to the findings, public Universities are keen in providing information on job openings and training opportunities. The employees understand the key skills that the university need in the next five years.

The respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the level of career advancement opportunities that are available in the university. This shows that public universities have in place organization Career management (OCM) and have in place programs, processes and support systems that enhance their employees' career success.

The findings also showed that employees in public universities have very high levels of career management behaviours. The employees are aware of which actions to take and what information to gather and also the plans to achieve their career goals. The big number of respondents indicated that they had necessary resources required to attain career goals and that they had set both short term and long term goals.

From the findings it is evident that there is positive correlation between career management and employee commitment. The regressions results showed that every unit measure of career management leads to 0.634 increase in employee commitment. Career management index on its own explains 36% of the variation in employee commitment index.

However 48.8% of the employee indicated they would need to change their career paths and 65.9% indicated that they were not receiving feedback on their career growth from their bosses.

It is important to note that change of business strategies and direction, organization restructuring, and technological changes, demand ongoing career management, resulting in the need to revisit career options and modify career paths. Public universities should therefore realize that careful considerations of their career management strategies will in return influence higher employee commitment.

Recommendations

i. For career management to have positive effect on employees, public universities will be required to align their employee preferences, talent and potential with the organizational current and future resourcing needs. Public Universities should ensure that at the point of recruitment they identify candidates with diverse abilities who can be trained and developed for the benefit of the universities.

ii. For employees in public Universities to experience long term career satisfaction in all their career development stages, it is recommended that public Universities allow for flexibility of career paths so that those employees that desire to change their career paths can do so as long as they meet the requirements for the path they wish to shift to. This will in turn benefit the public Universities by producing employees who are more motivated and committed who will not exit the organization in search of meeting their desired careers goals elsewhere. Nearly half (48.8%) of the employees interviewed indicated that they wished to change their career paths.

iii. In the study, respondents indicated that they were not receiving feedback on career development from their bosses. This is a serious omission since feedback helps individuals to assess their own career strengths and weaknesses and formulate career objectives and strategies. It is

therefore recommended that public universities come up with ways to provide career development feedback to their employees regarding their career progress and opportunities. The supervisors' needs to be supportive and to provide coaching in terms of identifying the right gap and how it may be closed. Employees will also require to be coached on how to carry out career self assessment and reality checks. Public Universities should be responsible for creating an environment where continuous learning is valued.

iv. It is recommended that public universities embrace career management systems since they will contribute to increased employees professional/job satisfaction because it will help them identify and take positions consistent with their objectives and plans.

v. From the study it was 57.3% respondents indicated that the University did not have a deliberate development programme for succession. According to Antoniu, (2010) By embracing organization career management (OCM) public Universities will benefit in reducing the required time to fill vacancies, help succession planning (preparing employees for filling positions that become vacant following staff turnover or retirement), identify employees with management potential and ensure all employees have the opportunity to identify career goals and develop plans to achieve them.

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