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Academic staff job satisfaction and students' grades at completion in private and public universities, Kampala, Uganda

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Abstract
This study investigated the effect of academic staff job satisfaction on students' grades at completion in public and private universities, Kampala Uganda. The study targeted university staff and sampled 750 lecturers from two public and two private universities. A researcher constructed questionnaire was employed to collect data on academic staff job satisfaction. While secondary data on students' grades at completion for two years, 2019 and 2022, was obtained from the four universities. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics; frequencies as well as means and standard deviations at a univariate level. At a bivariate level, student's two independent samples t-test, OneWay ANOVA and Pearson's linear correlation coefficient were used. At a multivariate level, multiple linear regression and multivariate analysis of variance and covariates (MANOVA and MANCOVA) were used to test the study hypotheses. The finding revealed that; students' grades at completion were generally fair, with only less than 55% of the students graduating what is considered good grades (first class and second class upper) degrees, while about 45% attained what is considered poor grades (second class lower and pass) degrees and the level of academic staff job satisfaction was generally high (overall mean =2.70 = high SJ; SD = .608). And the effect of academic job job satisfaction on students' grades at completion was statistically insignificant.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, public universities, academic staff job

Introduction

Higher education institutions no matter their location and ownership status are expected to contribute greatly towards the achievement national education goals through producing graduates with brilliant performance both in grades and in the field of work. These days, many education stakeholders complain about the poor performance of students in higher education institutions. Different factors are given to be responsible for the poor grades including students' slim focus on studies, poor quality of instruction, poor management and inadequate facilitation from parents, among others. As such educational institutions need to create an academic environment that will foster production of quality graduates with the required competencies of the twenty-first century.

The increasing movement of academic staff at university is very critical. Recognizing and applying these factors enlarged the amount of university outcomes and support academic staff's performance. Job satisfaction is one of the main functions that has great contribution and a vital factor in improving university outcomes. Academic staff of a higher institution is a key resource and have a major role to play in achieving the objectives of the institution. The objectives of higher education are to provide in depth knowledge, educate students, seek academic development such as enhancement of students' grade at completion and coordinate national demands. And university academic staff job satisfaction is related to higher education functions, teaching, and research and community service.

The extent to which lecturers complete their jobs plays a critical role in enabling a university to achieve its purpose. Lecturer swho perform their jobs as expected enable their university to achieve its purpose as desired, but the reverse occurs when there is lecturer job underperformance. The latter is unfortunately the situation facing public universities in Uganda (Sanga, 2017 Asiimwe &Steyn, 2013) [26], (Asiimwe & Steyn, 2014). Previous research has shown that the majority of the lecturers in Ugandan public universities are underperforming their jobs (Nassuna, 2017) [21]. The underperformance however, does not take place in a vacuum but under the influence of various factors. Grading system in the education environment can powerfully frame the professional development of students. The primary purpose of any grading system is to measure student grade at completion. In the context of higher education, the semester grade point average (GPA) outcomes was established but the grading system differ in philosophy and practice from one country to another.

Statement of the Problem

Despite existence of bodies like NCHE, DES and the ministry of education to monitor and regulate the quality of education delivery in Uganda, the performance of many graduating students from higher learning institutions is still poor (Apolot, Otaala, Kamanyire, & Komakech, 2018; Okurut *et al*., 2018) reports that there is an increasing decline of bachelor's students' grades at completion from 2019 to 2021. Only very few students get good grades at completion. It shows that student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA) are declining. If these institutions continue to produce graduates with poor grades, many people may fear to join higher education thinking that it is very difficult, the competitiveness of Uganda's graduates may reduce and their employability falls on global market, resulting into wastage of resources invested in education to promote employment and reduce unemployment and then contribute to economic development of the country.

The poor grades at completion among university graduates in Uganda and the general poor performance of these graduates, can be caused by many factors such as academic staff job satisfaction, professional incompetence and inexperience of the instructors, low motivation, inadequate resources and university environment among others. Despite these poor grades and their continued negative consequences on the whole nation, studies on factors responsible for poor grades among university students are scanty. Even the few studies available (e.g. Apolot *et al*., 2018; Tesfaw & Hofman, 2014; Usman, 2015) none of them examined the effect of academic staff job satisfaction on students grades at completion in Ugandan private universities, leave alone public universities, hence the need for this study to fill these content and contextual gaps.

Related Literature

Academic staff job satisfaction in a workplace is a feeling of contentment that is desire from the role and responsibilities in the workplace and is dependent upon a number of factors pertaining to personal, organizational and environmental factors. Considering the job profile and the demand for quality education among universities, the job satisfaction of academic staff in higher education is also affected. In the study conducted by Jawabri (2017) on job satisfaction of academic staff in private universities in United Arab Emirates (UAE) revealed that the academic staff in private universities in UAE has been significantly satisfied with their jobs. It was also found out that only few factors have positively influenced job satisfaction especially supervisors support, promotion, and support from colleagues. While recognition and rewards for work done has a negative impact on job satisfaction of academic staff.

According to Yu and Choe (2021), Emalingat, Asiimwe, Gaite and Tumwesigye (2022) [20] a contrast of one's past expectations about the job and the actual experience of the job determines job satisfaction. It has been discovered that the job satisfaction is linked to an individual's thoughts and emotions about their work and career. (Mahmood, *et al*. 2021) and it is described as a combination of cognitive and affective attitudes, (Ahad, *et al*. 2021) [2]. Meanwhile in the study conducted by Abu Bakar, *et al*. (2021) on the influence of job satisfaction in public universities in Malaysia, the results revealed that the work environment factor significantly predict job satisfaction among academicians. Also, promotion opportunities, salary factor, supervision and factor of colleagues influenced job satisfaction. While according to Szromek and Wolniak (2020), the level of job satisfaction among academic staff in higher education in Poland depends on employment conditions and social significance of the research carried out.

Taking the process dimension adopted in this present study, Victor and Babatunde (2014) described lecturers' job performance as the degree to which academic staff members complete their teaching responsibilities, which include lecture planning, research, and community service. Although these researchers' approach is used in this present study, they related the process dimensions of lecturers' job performance to motivation but not instructional leadership. A similar approach was applied by Alfagira *et al*. (2017) but these researchers also related this performance to motivation. Furthermore, lecturers' job performance includes delivering lectures to students as scheduled by the timetable, and evaluating the students by giving and marking coursework, setting tests and examinations, invigilating and marking them, and submitting their results/marks for final assessment, grading and accrediting (Igbojekwe *et al*., 2015).

This performance further involves supervising research students by creating adequate time for guiding them through their research proposals, projects and dissertations (Ddungu, 2017). The performance further involves conducting research and publishing findings in reputable academic journals, or using the findings to write textbooks, textbook chapters and articles in media outlets and documentaries (Kakulu, 2016). It further involves lecturers participating in community service by carrying out activities such as public scholarship, participatory research, community partnership, public information networks, and civil literacy scholarship (Ddungu, 2018a; Nhamo, 2017). Generally, while existing literature describes what lecturers' job performance entails, it does not relate it to instructional leadership within the context of public universities in Uganda. However, the description of this performance it provides provided the indicators that were used to measure it in this study.

Besides Hallinger, Adams (2016) found out that the way a school mission is defined influences how teachers perform their jobs in terms of how they commit their time, efforts and energies to the worthy cause of educating students. These findings however contrasted those already presented above; for they revealed no significant relationship between defining

an educational mission and teachers' job performance. Teachers felt the same job stress and registered almost the same level of effectiveness in teaching in spite of the changes introduced in the definition of their school's mission. Adams (2016) was however, conducted in a primary school in Minnesota, United States. To recap, existing literature shows that how an instructional leader defines an educational mission influences the way lecturers perform their jobs. However, this literature is deficient about the nature of this influence within the context of public universities in Uganda. This is void filled in this study.

Grades are used to assess the students' performance. The motivational impact of grading depends on its functional significance, Students' focus on performing well to obtain good grades may undermine their interest "love of learning". According to Krijsman, *et al*, (2017), the extent to which academic staff grade their students is partly due to reasons of selection. However, the goal of achieving academic goals remains unfulfilled if academic staff cannot demonstrate quality performance in the form of students' achievement score. According to Asif, *et al*. (2016), the students' performance has no significant correlation with academic staff job satisfaction. But job satisfaction has a positive correlation with promotion, colleagues, working conditions and supervision. On the otherhand, according to Emalingat, Asiimwe, Gaite and Tumwesigye (2022) [20] job satisfaction of academic staff in terms of their work condition, responsibility, salary, professional status, relationship with colleagues and administrative style of their employer influence their job satisfaction. And the job satisfaction of the academic staff is often reflected in academic performance of their students.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive correlational and a cross–sectional survey design to establish the effect of academic staff job satisfaction on students' grade at completion. The descriptive survey design enabled the researcher to describe the state of affairs as they are and report the findings (Kombo &Tromp, 2009). The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect the data making it mixed method approach. Questionnaires was used for quantitative approach in order to generate quantifiable data that can explain the effect between academic staff job satisfaction students' grade at completion and relationship between instructional supervision and students' grade at completion. The interview guide was used for qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was used to capture views and the opinions of respondents in regards to academic staff job satisfaction and students' grade at completion. The triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative approaches helped generate both quantity and quality information about the topic under study.

The target population for the current study was all the academic staff in the four selected universities (two public and two private chartered). The total population of academic staff from these four universities according to statistics of 2021, is 2932 (NCHE, 2021) [20]. The researcher utilized Yamane's formula to determine the minimum sample size for this study. A total of 858 academic staff was the sample size of the study.

Questionnaires and interview guide were used to gather primary data. While record sheet was used to collect students' grades a completion.

Data Analysis

The researcher hypothesized that academic job staff job satisfaction is a significant determinant of the quality of students' grades at completion. At a univariate level, means and standard deviations were used to determine the effectiveness of the level of academic staff job satisfaction and students' grades at completion. At the bivariate level, Pearson's Linear Correlation Coefficient, student's two independent samples t-test and Oneway analysis of variance were used to test whether the variables of the study were significantly correlated. At the multivariate level, multiple linear regression and Multivariate Analysis of Variance and Covariance (MANOVA and MANCOVA) were used establish the effect of the predictor variables on the dependent variable (students' grades at completion) and to test the study hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This study was based on the objective to assess the relationship between academic staff job satisfaction and students' grades at completion in private and public universities, Kampala Uganda.

Descriptive Analysis of students' Grades at Completion

The study sought to establish the factors that predict academic staff job satisfaction and students' grade at completion. Secondary data on students' academic grades or Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) was collected from the four universities. The data on students' final CGPA at graduation, was collected for two years, those who graduated in 2019 and those who graduated in 2022. The table below presents the descriptive statistics of students' grades at completion by year in the four universities under study.

Table 1: Percentage and Grade

Grade	Year	Percentage Mean	Std. Dev	t -statistic	Sig.
First Class	2019	5.6092	7.35957	-2.184	.029
	2022	7.2119	12.18752		
Second Class Upper	2019	46.6397	18.17734	-3.281	.001
	2022	51.0685	18.18644		
Second Class Lower	2019	45.4450	20.01935	3.093	.002
	2022	40.7997	20.47650		
Pass	2019	2.3092	5.21235	4.593	.000
	2022	.9261	1.98519		

The results reveal significant differences in students' grades at completion in the two years studied (2019 and 2022). The significant differences mainly favour grades in the year 2022, since in most cases, more students passed in better grades

(first class and second upper) compared to those in 2019 and on the other hand, more students in low grades (low class degrees) in 2019. For example, on average, more students (7.2%) got first class degrees in 2022 compared to 2019 (5.6%). In the same way, more students (over 51%) got second-class upper degrees in 2022 compared to 2019 (46.6%). On the lower side of completion grades, more students (45.4%) got second-class lower degrees in 2019 compared to 2022 (40.8%) and a similar trend is seen for pass degrees, which occurred more in 2019 (2.3%) than in 2022 (0.93%). The reason why student's grades at completion are better in 2022 than in 2019 requires investigation.

Table 2: Means and standard deviations on the level of Job Satisfaction (JS)

Items on Workload	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation	Rank
The number of course units I teach is affordable for me	3.12	.986	High JS	1
The number of students in my classes is fairly manageable	2.99	1.005	High JS	2
Workload for marking & grading of students work is manageable	2.94	1.107	High JS	3
I am always given a manageable workload	2.90	1.107	High JS	4
Average Mean for Workload	2.99	0.827	High JS	
Relationship with Supervisors and Colleagues				
There is good communication with the people I work with	3.06	1.106	High JS	1
There are good staff-administrator relations	3.05	1.007	High JS	2
There is a sense of friendship and teamwork with colleagues	3.03	1.044	High JS	3
There are chances for socialization with colleagues during work	2.97	1.025	High JS	4
There is good coordination of tasks and activities	2.97	1.059	High JS	5
Average Mean for Supervisors and Collegial Relations	3.02	.807	High JS	
Rewards and Incentives				
My university has clear and fair policies on salaries and allowances	2.47	1.083	Low JS	1
In general I am happy with my job payment	2.38	1.053	Low JS	2
I feel my pay is fair and sufficient	2.29	1.134	Low JS	3
My salary compares well with other similar jobs elsewhere	2.29	1.072	Low JS	4
I am always rewarded and recognised for my good performance	2.23	1.175	Low JS	5
I am satisfied with the extra duty allowances, meeting, transport and annual financial allowances paid to me by my university	2.07	1.274	Low JS	6
The salary is always adjusted based on market situations	1.99	1.222	Low JS	7
Average Mean for Rewards and Incentives	2.24	.825	Low JS	
Promotions				
I have adequate opportunities for professional growth	2.55	1.084	High JS	1
University management supports me in my professional growth	2.52	1.114	High JS	2
Job promotion is based on performance results	2.50	1.115	Low JS	3
The promotion policies in this University are clear and fair	2.44	1.054	Low JS	4
The requirements for promotion are clear and easy to fulfil	2.43	.993	Low JS	5
Iam satisfied with promotion opportunities provided in my university	2.38	1.141	Low JS	6
Average Mean for Promotions	2.47	.771	Low JS	
Working Environment				
University provides sufficient facilities todo work (electricity, internet)	2.94	1.079	High JS	1
The university provides places for restaurants and worship	2.85	1.088	High JS	2
The offices and areas of work are comfortable and safe	2.83	1.004	High JS	3
Lecture rooms and laboratories are spacious, comfortable & safe	2.73	1.076	High JS	4
The university provides me with sufficient resources to do my work	2.73	1.112	High JS	5
The wash rooms are clean, spacious, comfortable and safe	2.63	1.108	High JS	6
Average Mean for Work Environment	2.79	.762	High JS	
Overall Mean for Job_Satisfactn	2.70	.608	High JS	

***Source*:** Primary data (2023)

The means and standard deviations reveal that in general, there is a generally high level of job satisfaction among academic staff in the four studied universities (Overall mean =2.70; SD=0.608).On average, the ratings revealed that these academic staff derive their job satisfaction mainly from their relations with supervisors and colleagues, workload and the work environment. These three aspects of job satisfaction, received higher levels of agreement on the statements asked, meaning that they are the most satisfying factor for the staff in these four universities.

The aspect of relations with supervisors and colleagues received the highest mean rating of 3.02 (SD=0.807), implying that what these staff enjoy most at their places of work are the relations with their supervisors and fellow staff. Good relations create a conducive work environment in which staff support each other in not only issues of work accomplishment but also in socializations. These good relations with workmates and bosses is highly valued and may motivate people to love their job and as a result even work better and produce good performance results, such as good students' grades at completion.

The other important factor revealed that the staff value more their workload. This job satisfaction element, received a high level of agreement, with an average mean of 2.99 (SD=0.827), suggesting that these academic staff are not much burdened. It also implies that the workload is flexible enough, it allows them to participate in other things like projects, so they are not much tied. This flexible workload enhances efficiency in delivery and results into good end results in terms of students' grades at completion.

Also, the work environment factor, was an element which received high level of agreement on most of the items asked,

with an average mean score of 2.79 (SD=0.762). Respondents showed a high level of agreement with several working environment aspects, such f facilities or doing work like electricity, internet, and so on. They also agreed that the university provides adequate places for restaurants and worship, their offices, laboratories and lecture rooms are spacious, comfortable and safe and the wash rooms are comfortably clean and safe. Like Victor and Babatunde (2014) pointed out, job satisfaction of academic staff means that they are happy with several factors within their work environment and this is indicated by their job performance aspects such as the degree to which they complete their teaching responsibilities, plan and conduct their research and community service activities. If the lecturers get committed towards accomplishing their work tasks, the quality of their performance improves and eventually the quality of students' grades at completion also improve.

Results also indicated that the staff were not happy with two elements of their job, that is rewards and incentives (average mean=2.24; SD=0.825) and promotions (average mean=2.47; SD= 0.771). Generally, most of the staff disagreed with most aspects of a good system of rewards and incentives and a good/fair system of staff promotion. This means that the current reward and incentive systems in the sampled universities are not satisfactory to most of the staff members. This suggests that whereas the salary and allowance payment is regarded as the biggest motivating factor for most workers in developing countries, seeing it insufficient may demotivate the staff and eventually the quality of their job performances may reduce, meaning that even the students' academic grades at completion will be poor.

On the other hand, the effect of job satisfaction (JS) on students' grade at completion aws tested. The null hypothesis tested was that; job satisfaction is not a significant predictor of students' grade at completion. This null hypothesis was tested using the General Linear Model (GLM) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Given that students' grades at completion (DV) had four numerical (percentage) measures (First Class, Second Class Upper, Second Class Lower and Pass), the GLM's MANOVA was deemed fit instead of ANOVA from the multiple linear regression models (Hasan, 2020; Taylor, 2011; Bauer & Curran, 2005)..

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Students' Grades at completion by Level of Job satisfaction

Grades	Job Satisfaction	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
First Class	Very low Job Satisfaction	6.65	10.552	77
	Low Job Satisfaction	6.59	9.662	190
	High Job Satisfaction	6.10	9.823	418
	Very high Job Satisfaction	7.16	10.862	45
	Total	6.35	9.911	730
Second Class Upper	Very low Job Satisfaction	46.50	18.157	77
	Low Job Satisfaction	50.45	19.095	190
	High Job Satisfaction	48.53	17.917	418
	Very high Job Satisfaction	46.43	18.577	45
	Total	48.68	18.303	730
Second Class Lower	Very low Job Satisfaction	44.64	20.008	77
	Low Job Satisfaction	41.68	21.493	190
	High Job Satisfaction	43.75	19.843	418
	Very high Job Satisfaction	43.72	20.913	45
	Total	43.30	20.350	730
Pass	Very low Job Satisfaction	2.23	5.401	77
	Low Job Satisfaction	1.29	3.507	190
	High Job Satisfaction	1.63	3.924	418
	Very high Job Satisfaction	2.69	5.352	45
	Total	1.67	4.111	730

Results indicate that the main effect of job satisfaction on students' grades at completion is statistically insignificant.. Since the main effect tests revealed insignificant results, null hypothesis was accepted and a conclusion made that job satisfaction does not significantly influence students' grades at completion.

Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

This study's findings showed that academic staff job satisfaction does not significantly affect students' grades at completion within the private and public universities of Kampala Uganda. The findings therefore suggest that job satisfaction among academic staff is a weak predictor of students' grades at completion. This means that in understanding the factors that influence the quality of academic grades students graduate with, academic staff job satisfaction is not close.

These findings are in line with those of Asif *et al*. (2016), who indicated that academic staff job satisfaction has no significant correlation with students' performance. Another earlier study by Grady (1984) also found out that lecturers' job satisfaction had no significant effect on students' grades at completion. This researcher indicated that students' scores were not significantly related to teachers' job satisfaction.. These findings deviate from several previous findings and even theoretical postulations discussed by Gyde, Karen, Simon and Uta (2023), who revealed that lecturers' job satisfaction is significantly correlated with students' final grades and general academic achievement. They lecturers' job satisfaction leads to "high-quality teacher-student interactions", teachers provide emotional support, good classroom management and provide instructional support, all of which result into increased motivation of learners and academic achievement.

Academic staff job satisfaction did not prove to be a significant determinant of students' grades at completion

within the private and public universities of Kampala Uganda, contrary to expectation and majority of the previous findings. Therefore, more researches are needed to reach a logical conclusion and explanation, as to why and how job satisfaction of academic staff explains students' grades at completion. Efforts to improve job satisfaction among academic staff should be more researched to ensure that what is done contribute positively towards improved instruction and so the quality of students' grades at completion. It is possible to motivate staff in a way that does not help them improve their teaching performance and this way, their job satisfaction levels will not help improve students' grades at completion. Therefore, if students' grades at completion are to improve, the rewards and motivation strategies must be based on instructional performance results. This implies that the rewarding systems need to be tagged to the results of instructional supervision and feedback.

Compliance with ethical considerations

This article was sponsored by the authors themselves

Disclosure of conflict of interest

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study

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