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Academic Career Growth in Institutions of Higher Learning: A Case Study of Makerere University.

The purpose of this study, conducted at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Makerere University, was to investigate the relationship between training opportunities, workload, induction and mentoring, and the academic career growth of staff at the college. The study is premised on an evidenced problem of low career growth among the academic staff, basing on the level of research intensiveness, staff publications, promotions and community outreach. From a broader perspective, the study justifies and underscores the relevance of the humanities and social sciences in driving social-economic transformation. Theoretical perspectives on work and rewards, namely the Herzberg Two Factor theory (1959) and the Equity Theory (1963) are cited to guide the study. The study uses a cross-sectional survey based on a random sample of 74 academic staff out of a target population of 118, representing a 63% response rate. Data were gathered by use of questionnaires, key informant interviews and document reviews, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. The findings at a descriptive/univariate level indicate that staff were satisfied with the available training opportunities and guaranteed study leave, despite the resource constraints to undertake further training. Although research was being conducted, it was difficult to publish the findings in reputable international journals due to the subjectivity of research themes in the humanities and social sciences. Staff were further dissatisfied with workload management, especially in terms of overload and relevance to personal growth. Staff induction and mentoring are almost non-existent. At a bivariate level, the correlations of independent variables (training, workload, induction and mentoring) with staff career growth showed a positive relationship ($P<0.05$). Staff career growth increased with an increase in training, workload, induction and mentoring. However, by the regression model, the predictors of staff career growth were only academic rank and staff workload, with a statistical significance of $P<0.003$ and $P<0.006$ respectively.

The study, therefore, recommends: (i) that staff workload should be well managed and aligned to career rewards. (ii) the MAWAZO, a publishing platform for the humanities and social sciences be revived and (iii) similar studies in future may adapt longitudinal approaches to these factors that may affect academic career growth, and perhaps, comparatively across academic Units/Universities.

Key words: Human resource development, mentoring, induction, training, career growth.