

Effect of Employee Mentoring on Performance of Universities in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This research study assessed the effect of employee mentoring on the performance of universities in Tanzania. The study employed the cross-sectional design and encompassed all 28 fully developed universities in Tanzania, encompassing both mainland and island institutions in Zanzibar. A sample size of 379 was derived via simple random sampling to select necessary respondents from the universities. Primary data was gathered through a survey structured questionnaire, while secondary data was acquired through documentary reviews. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. In addition, inferential analysis was performed via correlation analysis, hypothesis testing, and regression analysis. The study's findings show that employee mentoring had a statistically significant positive effect on the performance of universities in Tanzania ($R=.875$, $R^2=.766$, $p<.000$). The resultant coefficient of determination R^2 of 0.766 signified that 76.6% of universities performance is explained by employee mentoring. The model's R value of 0.875 and the R^2 value of 0.766 signified the appropriateness of the model employed in establishing the link between employee mentoring practices and performance of universities in Tanzania. The linear regression models were used. Hence, a strong departure point in drawing conclusions and comprehensive recommendations.

Keywords: Employee, Mentoring, Performance, Tanzania, University

I. INTRODUCTION

Literally, the concept of employee mentoring has garnered substantial attention in the realm of higher education, particularly in the context of developing countries like Tanzania. In recent years, universities around the globe (Tanzania included) have faced a myriad of challenges, including rapid expansion, increased demand for quality education that fosters graduate employability, and the need for effective human resource management practices (S. J. Mgaiwa, 2021; Rónay & Niemczyk, 2021). Against this milieu, mentoring has emerged as a potential catalyst for enhancing university performance.

Mentoring, defined as a professional relationship between two people where the mentor provides advice and guidance to their mentee to help them grow, learn, and develop professionally, has been strongly attributed and recognized for its role in organizational performance (Reeves, 2023; Hill et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2021). In the context of universities, mentoring not only aids in the personal and professional development of faculty members but also significantly impacts the overall performance of the institution (Sarabipour et al., 2023).

Various studies have shown the effectiveness of employee mentoring in higher education settings. O'Brien (2023) and Mittal & Upamannu (2017) observed that mentoring in universities enhances job satisfaction, reduces turnover, and improves teaching and research outcomes. Furthermore, mentoring has been found to be instrumental in improving the quality of academic leadership and excellence in African universities (Ezimme et al., 2021; Owusu-Agyeman, 2024).

The studies consulted shed light on employee mentoring, however, they lack a deep examination on the impact of employee mentoring on universities' performance in Tanzania. Mshomba (2017) and Ndyali (2016) observed significant challenges facing the Tanzania higher education sector in areas of resource and technological

challenges, and lack of proper capacity building in research and teaching. This research, therefore, examined the effect of employee mentoring on performance of universities in Tanzania. The research seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of how mentoring can be strategically used to enhance institutional effectiveness in the context of developing countries' higher education systems.

1.1 Problem Statement

Universities in Tanzania are central to the economic growth of the country and part of the service sectors in Tanzania which averagely contribute to the GDP a staggering 49% (UNCTAD, 2015; Zoomtanzania, 2017). Individually, universities contribute to the GDP by 2% (Conversation, 2016). Additionally, universities are also expected to engage massively in research and innovation, teaching and learning, community services and contribute to shaping the countries policies on major social and economic issues such as poverty alleviation, education, and healthy (Bailey et al., 2011). However, their contribution and engagement are not satisfactory given their stature and expectations as a major player within the services sector.

Tanzania universities enrolment performance trend is rated low compared to other neighbouring countries (Zephaniah, Zhao & Feng, 2016). In the academic year 2017/18, the total enrolled students were 42,664 as compared to those enrolled in Kenya which were 522,059, and Uganda 110,000 students (Kigotho, 2019; TCU, 2018). That shows Tanzania is far behind Kenya by 84%, and behind Uganda by 44% in enrolment.

Furthermore, the graduation rates in Tanzania universities are also low when compared with other universities from East African countries. Kenya and Uganda both record a graduation rate of 36.6% per year while Tanzania has a graduation rate of 26.8 % and therefore, lag by 9.9% (TCU, 2018; Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), 2014; VenasNews, 2019). Moreover, the research output for Tanzania universities' is considered low as compared to other African universities (Sangeda & Lwoga, 2016). These trends are of concern given the expectations by the nation to be pillars of research, innovations and consultancy and most importantly be able to enrol considerable number of students for their sustainability. Their performance is therefore unsatisfactory.

Studies show that employee mentoring has been recognized as a key contributor to the high performance of organizations in both the private and public sectors (Cherono et al., 2016; Shah et al., 2016). However, most studies on this subject have been conducted in developed countries, leaving a knowledge gap in the context of developing countries, including Tanzania. In Africa, particularly in Tanzania, the adoption of employee mentoring is not as widespread, and studies have identified challenges such as poor implementation and lack of employee awareness (Matoka & Raphael, 2022). These studies often face limitations like selection bias, making it difficult to generalize their findings across Tanzania. To bridge this gap, this study investigates the effect of employee mentoring practices on performance of universities in Tanzania.

1.2 Research Objective

This study's objective was to assess the effect of employee mentoring on performance of universities in Tanzania.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H_0 : There is no significant positive linear relationship between employee mentoring and performance of universities in Tanzania.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The Resource Based View (RBV) Theory was used in anchoring the study. This theory traces its fundamental background to David Ricardo in 1817 but its major development came in 1959 with the work of Edith Penrose who expanded the concept of firm's resources beyond land to a bundle of resources (Solesvik, 2018). The theory is of the assumption that firm's performance is always driven mainly by a unique bundle or set of resources that are valuable, rare and difficult to replicate or imitate (Bromley & Rau, 2016; Singh & Mahamood, 2014; Okioga, 2012). Therefore, firm performance is best derived from the kind of resources and on how these are utilized them rather than firms' structures and industrial differences (Mori, 2014). The theory is relevant to this study since the rareness, value, non-substitutable and non-imitable characteristics of the human resources can be brought about by employee mentoring which has been evidenced to instil unique values, experiences, skills, attitudes, and aptitudes in organizations human resources.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic representation of the framework that guided the study. The illustration shows what constituted both the independent variable and the dependent variable.

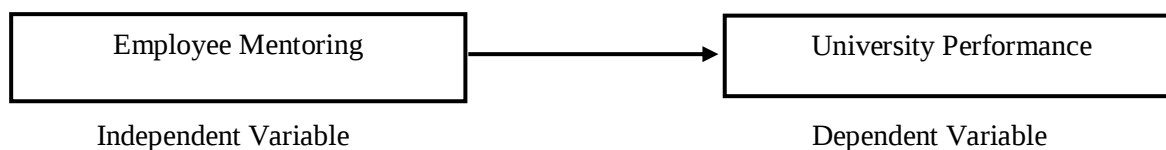


Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

2.3 Empirical Review

Mnasi et al. (2022) conducted research in local government authority in Tanzania and examined the effects of employee mentoring and employee performance. The research used a cross-sectional survey design and employed a structured questionnaire on a sample of 368 respondents. In testing the hypotheses and constructing the model of interest, multiple linear regression analysis was used. The results showed a positive correlation between employee mentoring practices (acceptance, delegation, relationship, and sponsorship) and employee performance at 95% confidence level. The study recommended a full-fledged adaptation of formal programmes with necessary structures, and a deliberate commitment of resources on mentoring practices.

Also, Mgaiwa and Kapinga (2021) did a study on mentoring of early career academics in Tanzania, and underpinned issues and implications for the next generation of academics. The study used a mixed method approach where both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained using open-ended questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interviews from selected universities in Tanzania. It was found that academic exploitation, isolation, and lack of support from senior academics faced early career academics. Furthermore, mentoring training, peers support, and institutional policy strategies were found to mitigate mentoring challenges. Pedagogical, research, and public engagements were recommended aspects to be included in a policy framework that bases on professional development of early career and next generation academics mentoring.

Cavanaugh et al. (2022) conducted a study in a large comprehensive cancer hospital in United States of America and investigated the impact of mentoring on employee burnout. The research involved an organizational survey among 14,500 employees, using a chi-square test to analyse self-reported burnout and participation in mentoring relationships. Results indicated a significant correlation: employees engaged in mentoring relationships were less likely to report burnout compared to those who were not. This pattern persisted across various employee groups, considering factors like gender, ethnicity, generation, and job classification. The study concludes that mentoring programs can enhance work satisfaction and professional fulfilment and recommends best practices for institutional mentoring to reduce burnout.

In Abuja, Nigeria, the study conducted by Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2015) on the effects of mentoring on employees' performance in selected family business of that state, found out that mentoring had positive effects on employees' performance and consequently the performance of family businesses in Abuja. The study used survey research design while employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze data obtained from 367 sampled construction industry employees through questionnaires. The Pearson correlation coefficient statistics analysis was used to analyze the gathered data and enabled the researchers to conclude that mentoring had significant relationship with employees' performance and the general performance of businesses. It recommends organizations to adopt mentoring since positively effects employees' performance in achieving organizational objectives. The findings of the study corresponds with those of Clutterbuck and Klasen (2012) who also found out that mentoring had a net effect on job satisfaction that in turn enhances the general performance of the organization.

The study by Nyamori (2015) attempted to determine the effect of workplace mentoring on employee performance. The case study approach was used whereby Save Our Souls (SOS) Children's Villages were studied. Questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of 160 staff and plugged to the SPSS software for analysis. The data was analysed in percentages, frequencies and mean and the inferential statistics computed using Pearson correlation. The findings showed mentorship to have a positive effect on employees' performance and the organizational performance. However, this study will study employee mentoring in relation to the general performance of organizations, universities for that matter.

2.4 Research Gaps

From the reviewed literature, there is lack of adequate data that reflect Tanzanian universities as far as employee mentoring is concerned. Moreover, the lack of a bundle of employee mentoring practices of traditional mentoring, peer mentoring, and group mentoring in improving university performance. The exploration of the practices is inadequate. The review also proves to having limited research on organizational performance in higher education in Tanzania. Hence, the need for this study to bridge the gap.

III METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study used cross-sectional research design. Cross-sectional design was ideal because it supports the application of questionnaires in data collection and is suitable for studies that collect data at a set point in time, it is efficient and inexpensive for it also allows the usage of already existing databases (Cornell, 2024). The study's population (sample frame) was 7071 academic staff drawn from the 28 full-fledged universities in Tanzania (Mainland and Islands, Zanzibar).

Table 1

Sample Frame

Country	Number of Universities	Sample Frame
Tanzania	28	7071

3.2 Sample Size

The study used Yamane's formula to arrive at the required sample size (Drew, 2022). Furthermore, the sample size obtained was subjected to simple random sampling to specifically get the needed respondents of the study. Simple random sampling was preferred since it is a fair method of getting respondents hence, minimizing bias in selecting the respondents (Lopez, 2023). Yamane's formula is hence depicted:

Formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = desired sample size

N = total population

e = acceptable margin of error set at 0.05 (95%) confidence level

Given;

e = 0.05 and N = 7071

Then,

$$n = \frac{7071}{1 + 7071(0.05)^2}$$

n = 379.

Therefore, the sample size of the study was 379 respondents.

3.3 Data Collection

The study obtained both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using a survey questionnaire and secondary data was collected from documentary reviews. The questionnaire was used for it is flexible, consumes less time and money to prepare, and it is more comprehensive in scope (Cornell, 2023). The documentary reviews involved the universities websites whereby the financial, strategic, and annual plans and reports were read to extract required data regarding publications, enrolment, and graduation rates.

3.4 Data analysis

The study used both descriptive and inferential methods in analysing obtained data. Tables depicting frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used in descriptive analysis. Inferentially, both correlation and regression analysis were employed. The correlation, ANOVA and hypothesis tests were conducted

using IBM SPSS. Also, the model summary and linear regression results were run and presented. The R, R², adjusted R², F, significance (p) and beta levels, unstandardized and standardized coefficients were generated and interpreted accordingly.

IV RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 379 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents scattered across the 28 universities from Tanzania mainland and islands (Zanzibar). Returned were 306 questionnaires which equates to 81%. Santhosh (2023) denotes that a response rate of 50% and above is commendable for employees' surveys. Table 2 shows the response rate.

Table 2

Response Rate

Academic Rank	Frequency	Percent (%)
Professor	5	1.6
Associate Professor	12	3.9
Senior Lecturer	50	16.3
Lecturer	72	23.5
Assistant Lecturer	109	35.6
Tutorial Assistant	58	19.0
Total	306	100.0

The distribution of responses was tutorial assistants 58 (19%), assistant lecturers 109 (35.6%), lecturers 72 (23.5%), senior lecturers 50 (16.3%), associate professors 12 (3.9%), and full professors were 5 (1.6%). The highest responses came from assistant lecturers (35.6%) and professors attributed to the lowest at 1.6%.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

The objective of the study was to assess the effect of employee mentoring on performance of universities in Tanzania. Therefore, both the descriptive results for the independent variable and dependent variable were obtained and analysed. The detailed descriptive results for the objective are depicted in Table 3 and 4.

4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis for Employee Mentoring in Tanzania Universities

Employee mentoring was the independent variable of the study. The thorough descriptive statistics are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Employee Mentoring in Tanzania Universities

Statements	Mean	SD
The newly employed academic staff are always assigned with someone to orient them with work	4.39	.634
Senior employees guide junior employees to perform work better	4.37	.565
Seniors assigned to mentor juniors are always more experienced in matters relating to work	4.45	.554
The work is performed better when peers guide each other	4.44	.599
Mentorship done between peers makes it easier to discuss work related issues	4.43	.587
Peers are always willing to assist each other with work related matters	4.35	.637
Working in groups help to perform work better	4.55	.566
Academic staff prefer work group orientations	4.24	.663
The university prefers groups orientations when orienting workers on matters relating to work	4.30	.649
Weighted Mean & SD	4.39	.606

From Table 3, the descriptive scores for employee mentoring were 4.39 weighted mean and 0.606 standard deviation. The average mean for employee mentoring implies that universities in Tanzania highly practice employee mentoring. This is in agreement with O'Connell (2023) who agrees that universities use mentoring to thrive.

4.2.2 Descriptive Analysis for Performance of Universities in Tanzania

Performance of universities in Tanzania was the dependent variable and it was measured on the areas of publications, enrolment, and graduation rates. The descriptive results are depicted in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Performance of Universities In Tanzania

Statements	Mean	SD
Every academic staff does publications	4.08	.813
The motivation to publish is high in this university	4.12	.755
The university gets enough publications from academic staff	4.07	.851
The enrolment of students is satisfying in this university	4.15	.742
The academic staff help in the enrolment of students	4.19	.717
This university has good enrolment trends	4.29	.684
The academic staff help in graduating of students	4.35	.616
The university environment supports a good number of students to graduate	4.31	.653
The university's student's graduation rates are high	4.27	.611
Weighted Mean & SD	4.20	.712

From Table 4, the dependent variable's scores were 4.20 weighted mean and 0.712 standard deviation. The average mean score implies that a higher number of respondents agreed that university performance in Tanzania is well measured with publications, enrolment, and graduation rates. Balandya et al., (2022) also used number of publications to gauge Tanzania's higher education best performance.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

This segment presents the correlation analysis of the study variables, focusing mainly on independent variable of employee mentoring (EM), and the dependent variable which is university performance (UP) in Tanzania. The relationships between these two variables were assessed using Pearson's correlation analysis. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Correlation Matrix

Indicator		Employee Mentoring	University Performance
Employee Mentoring	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
University Performance	Pearson Correlation	.842**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation results from Table 4 show that employee mentoring had a very strong positive correlation with dependent variable of the study ($r=0.842$, $p<0.001$). Moreover, the correlation results signify a significant strong positive relationship between employee mentoring and performance of universities in Tanzania. This further denotes that, as employee mentoring increase, also the performance of universities in Tanzania will increase positively. These results are in agreement with Isangula *et al.*, (2022) who concluded that clinical mentoring is a good entry point in improving competence. Also, these findings align with O'Brien (2023) who also maintains that employee mentoring improves organizational performance.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Results in Table 5 regarding the model summary, shows that employee mentoring had a significant explanatory power on performance of universities.

Table 6*Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.875 ^a	.766	.763	.24667

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Traditional Mentoring, Employee Peer Mentoring, Employee Group Mentoring

b. Dependent Variable: University Performance

The findings in Table 5 show that university performance model as a function of employee mentoring, yielded an R^2 value of 0.766. This is an indication that 76.6% of the variation in performance of universities in Tanzania can be explained by employee mentoring, a position also maintained by the study conducted by Agarwal & Raghav (2023), who suggested that employee mentoring was critical in ensuring organizations perform best.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

The study's null hypothesis was tested at a 5% significance level to conclude its rejection or acceptance. The null hypothesis one (H_0): *There is no significant linear relationship between employee mentoring practice and performance of universities in Tanzania* beta coefficient results showed a significant positive linear relationship between employee mentoring and performance of universities ($\beta=0.307$, $p<0.001$). The statistically significant results prompted to the rejection of the null hypothesis since there exists a positive linear relationship between employee mentoring and performance of universities in Tanzania. The rule of thumb suggests the rejection of the null hypothesis if the $\beta \neq 0$ and the $p<0.005$ (Akansha, 2021). Consequently, by rejecting the null hypothesis, the study therefore concluded that employee mentoring has a significant effect on performance of universities in Tanzania and this conforms with Hair et al. (2019). Table 6 shows a thorough summary of the hypothesis testing results.

Table 6*Hypotheses Testing Results Summary*

Hypothesis		Results		Decision
		Beta (β)	p-values (sig.)	
H_0	There is no significant positive linear relationship between employee mentoring and performance of universities in Tanzania	0.307	0.001	Reject

4.6 ANOVA Results

Table 7 shows the goodness of fit, and the results clearly indicate the model was a good predictor of universities performance ($F_{3,302} = 328.750$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 7*ANOVA*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	60.009	3	20.003	328.750	.000b
	Residual	18.375	302	.061		
	Total	78.385	305			

a. Dependent Variable: University Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Traditional Mentoring, Employee Peer Mentoring, Employee Group Mentoring

The results from Table 7 imply that the independent variable (employee mentoring) is a good predictor of performance of universities; since employee mentoring predict the dependent variable university performance, thus supporting a strong relationship, between the independent and dependent variable.

4.7 Linear Regression

Linear regression for all the independent variables was done and Table 8 depicts the results.

Table 8*Linear Regression Results*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.731	.080		21.638	.000
	Employee Mentoring	.045	.009	.307	5.173	.000

a. Dependent Variable: University Performance

From Table 8, results show that, a unit increase in employee mentoring corresponded to a 0.045 increase in university performance. The results show that employee mentoring is effective in enhancing university performance.

The resultant regression equation is as shown:

$$Y = 1.731 + 0.045EM + e.$$

Where:

UP = University Performance, EM = Employee Mentoring, and e = error term

Therefore, the regression model concluded that employee mentoring had a significant effect on performance of universities in Tanzania. Employee mentoring, as a succession planning mechanism, had a significant effect on the performance of universities in Tanzania. These findings echo those of Li et al., (2023), who discovered that employee mentoring influenced the employees innovation performance and the overall performance of organizations.

V CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that employee mentoring is a valuable tool for enhancing performance of universities. Employee mentoring proved to be highly effective in improving university performance. Employees normally feel comfortable when their skills and experiences are enhanced by fellow employees. They will replicate the best and sometimes outperform their mentors. This initially benefits the universities and push them to higher success heights. Therefore, all universities seeking on ways to maximize their performance should consider prioritizing employee mentoring.

5.2 Recommendations

Universities, both public and private, should ensure that employee mentoring practice is incorporated into their strategies for improving performance. Specifically, matching mentors and mentees based on experience, expertise, and professional development needs. The adoption of employee mentoring can also ensure maximum performance efficiency in universities, potentially reviving some universities that have suffered from poor performance issues over the years. In fact, some of the poorly performing universities might be rejuvenated through the implementation of employee mentoring, especially after serious integration of the practice. The policy makers and legislators should seriously and strategically infuse mentoring practices in their policy and legislations.

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