



## EFFECTS OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION ON INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

DR ASSUMPTAH W KIRAGU KAGIRI

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess the effect of recruitment and selection in Innovation development at public universities in Kenya. The specific objectives were: to ascertain if positions were advertised so as to attract a pool of qualified candidates thus affecting innovation development at the public universities in Kenya, to ascertain if selection is done in a transparent manner so as to enhance innovation development, to determine if the universities do short listing of candidates in order to enhance innovation development.

**KEYWORDS:** Innovation development, HRM, Recruitment, Selection, Motivation, short listing

### INTRODUCTION

Scarborough, (2003), underscores the important role that human resource plays in innovation by stating that, when firms develop new products and improve management processes, they require the innovative ability of human capital to provide creative ideas, develop innovative approaches, and exert new opportunities. Moreover, Collins and Clark, (2003), contend that human resource management function influence and modify attitudes, capacities and behaviors of employees to achieve organizational goals and it plays a crucial role in nurturing the necessary conditions for catalyzing and channeling individuals towards the development of activities. A view that is also held by Lauren and Floss, (2003), Michie and Sheehan, (1999).

Brock bank, and Atuahene-Gima, (2006), say that when firms use creative capabilities and innovative characteristics as hiring and selection criteria, their employees are likely to spawn diversity of ideas and committed to more innovation behaviors. In recruitment, let the firm hire people for their innovation capabilities. Are they inquisitive? Are they locked in one view point or are willing to consider others? Are they open to new ideas and new concepts?

The skills base is one of the firm's main assets. It is hard for competitors to imitate. This calls for an attitude to encourage learning and to reward efforts which add to the firm's knowledge, (Bell & Bell, 2003). Human Resource Development is a vital area for firms because ideas for innovation, quality and continuous improvement come from people and not from machines. The knowledge embedded in human capital enables firms to enhance distinctive competencies and discover innovation opportunities. (Wright et al., 2001). In addition, the recognition of such talents and capabilities would go a long way in innovation development in the universities. Human resources and their management play a vital role in the development of a nation. The effective exploitation

and utilization of a nation's natural, physical and financial resources require an efficient and committed manpower, (Desler, 2011).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The most explicit role that universities have been allocated with is the production of highly skilled labour and research output to meet perceived economic needs. Though explicit figures in developing countries are not available, estimates by Office of National Statistics in UK indicated that universities contributed over £33.4 billion which is equivalent to 2.3 per cent of UK GDP in 2008. In Kenya, institutes have been faced with performance challenges as performance contracting results for the year 2008/2009 indicated. (GOK 2010).

In recent years, the discussion whether academia can encompass a third mission of enterprise development in addition to research and teaching, has received greater attention, (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). One of such ways of achieving this enterprise development agendum is through innovation capacities of the universities. According to Lester, (2005), these institutions are a primary source of the most valuable assets in the knowledge economy and thus regarded as an engine of innovation. Universities are widely cited as a critical institutional actor in national innovation systems, and hence are expected to live up to those expectations.

In Kenya, the economic, social and political pillars of Kenya Vision 2030 are anchored on among other things, science, technology and innovation, (Bailey, Cloete & Pillay, 2012.). This is an indication of the developing countries continued recognition of innovation in economic development. However, while the significance of universities through their innovation capacities is increasingly becoming a central tenet in various countries, the situation in Kenya is far from being realized.

In an era when knowledge is rapidly changing, and innovating is critical to business success and sustainability, the human capital of the organization is an issue of increasing importance. Over two decades ago, Kozlowski, (2007), called for Human Resource Management (HRM) to be more distinctly embedded in organizational strategy in order to facilitate innovation. Although the importance of effective people management to successful innovation capability has been recognized for some time, (Scarborough, 2003), there still remains many questions regarding the relationship between HRM and innovation, (Newell et al., 2001). This forms the basis of the study as it attempts to establish if there is any relationship between recruitment and selection on innovation development. Nonetheless, the few empirical contributions so far mentioned are highly limited to the developed economies and thus, there exists a gap on the status in developing countries. This study therefore, assessed the effect of recruitment and selection on innovation development among the public universities in Kenya.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study was anchored on the following objectives:

#### **General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to examine the extent to which recruitment and selection affect innovation development at the public universities in Kenya.

#### **Specific Objectives**

1. To determine if positions are advertized so as to attract a large pool of qualified candidates thus influencing innovation development in public universities.

2. To ascertain the extent to which selection is conducted in a transparent manner hence affecting innovation development in public universities.
3. To establish if the short listing is carried out in a fair method and subsequently picking qualified candidates who would contribute to innovation development in public universities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Human capital theory explains entrepreneurial outcomes of an individual's knowledge to the economic value to a firm. Education provides a source of human capital because it enables individuals to gain explicit knowledge necessary for task performance. Elbert and Hartfield: (2002) and Guest (2007), state that human resource management practices that enhance the human capital development also enhance better performance of a firm.

Additionally, Tesluk and Jacobs, (2008): Hambrick, (2007), note that through such as workshops, seminars, conferences among other activities, more human capital acquire greater know-how to face the executive job demands of carrying heavy loads, operating under great pressure and making hundreds of quick effective decisions in the day-to-day operations as well as to set the strategic direction for the firm.

### **Empirical Review**

Several studies have described HRM practices as a means of creating a niche by a firm, (Delery 2008: Preffer, 2004: Walker, 2001). In addition to this observation, it is important to have a motivated team which has a high level of commitment to produce results. Various studies in this regard conclude that these practices which include training and development, recruitment and selection, and reward management may lead to better quality performance, low turnover, high morale and commitment, (Arthur, 2004: Delery & Hesled, 2006: Shaw & Premush, 2007: Snell & Youndt, 2005).

The dynamic business environment has made the adoption of HRM practices paramount for competitive advantage. Many studies have been carried out recently and they have established that there is a correlation between HRM practices and employee performance, (Becker & Huselid, 2009: Chang & Kuo, 2004: Jarventus, 2007: Riov & Crouches, 2008: Sang, 2005). These studies confirm that there is a relationship between HRM practices and performance and this by extension confirms that management of this very vital resource will have positive contribution to innovation development.

Brewer, (2003) found that public servants are motivated by a strong desire to perform. Local public universities should provide a work environment that allows employee to serve and an incentive structure to support the initiative. A research conducted using a sample from public and private employees in the United Arab Emirates (Yousef, 2008), found that the more the employees are satisfied with their job, the better their performance on the job. The public universities should design jobs that allow employees to utilize their knowledge and skills. The tasks should be diverse and made interesting in such a way that the employee will derive job satisfaction.

### **Critique of Existing Literature**

A considerable body of research has explored how to choose external partners for R&D activities. According to many of these studies, organizations choose external partners with the aim of reducing costs and risks as well as leveraging economies of scale; some of these studies have focused on complementary assets and technology convergence, (Roberts & Berry, 2005, Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 2006, Mowery & Rosenberg, 2009, Miotti & Sachwald, 2003). They have issued a

list of possible actors in innovation development. Bethwald, (2003), highlighted the importance of a firm's collaborations with competitors.

Many studies focus on the possible benefits as well as on the risks involved in this context. This is particularly echoed by Bengtsson and Kock, (2000). Thirdly, they discussed universities and research centers – the focus of this article. In this study, focus is only on one narrow aspect of the role the human resource plays in innovation development. Many researchers have studied the institutional side of the firm-university relationship, including policies that regulate it.

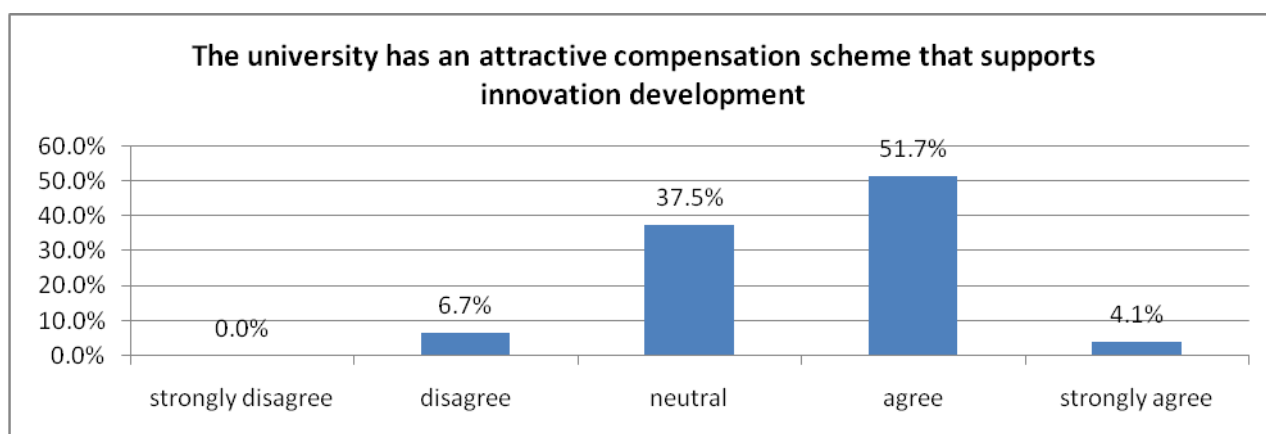
In an era when knowledge is rapidly changing, and innovating is critical to business' success and sustainability, the human capital of the organizations is an issue of increasing importance. Over two decades ago, Kozlowski, (1987), called for Human Resource Management (HRM) to be more distinctly embedded in organizational strategy in order to facilitate innovation. Although the importance of effective people management to successful innovation capability has been recognized for some time, (Hull & Azumi, 1984, Bontis, 1998, Scarbrough, 2003), there still remain many questions regarding the relationship between HRM and innovation, (Frenkel et al., 1999; Newell et al., 2001). Nonetheless, the few empirical contributions so far mentioned are highly limited to the developed economies and thus, there exists a gap of the status in developing countries. This study therefore, investigates the role of Human Resource Management in innovation development among the public universities in Kenya.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted survey research design. A research design is a detailed plan for how research will be collected, Borg, Meredith and Gall, (2003), state that it is the pillars of research. The design was appropriate study adopted because it includes descriptive elements and goes beyond to identify and explore the causes lying behind the effects and the nature of relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Explanatory research attempts to investigate the causes of particular phenomena other than describing them. The target population was the lecturers working in public universities in Kenya. The study employed survey design because the population of interest was drawn from different public universities. The study collected primary data by use of self administered questionnaire. According to Kothari, (2004) and Sakaran, (2003), use of questionnaire is recommended because the point of interest is behavior, views, opinions, perceptions and feelings. The questionnaires were dropped at the respondents by the research assistant and picked at a later date. The data collected was analyzed using Excel package and the results presented using tables and graphs. The researcher pre-tested the research instrument using 15 respondents. The purpose of the pilot study was to validate the constructs in the questionnaire and to supplement the literature review. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to check the internal consistency and evaluate the reliability of the measures. An alpha of 0.84 was obtained therefore, acceptable, as proposed by Cronback, (1951). As a result, the questionnaire was amended and the literature review enriched. This is what Cooper and Schindler (1998), suggests.

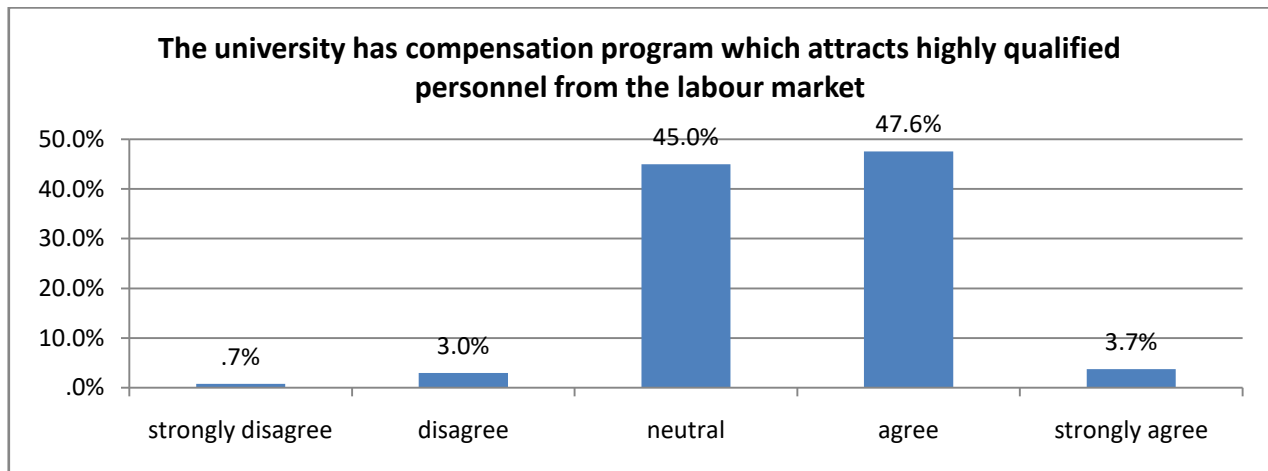
### Discussion of Findings

Statements	strongly disagree	Disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	#	%
The university is committed to fair and transparent recruitment and selection process	0.0%	6.7%	37.5%	51.7%	4.1%	269	100.0%
The university encourages the recruitment of qualified staff	.7%	3.0%	45.0%	47.6%	3.7%	269	100.0%
All vacant positions in the university are filled up competitively	1.1%	3.0%	43.1%	49.4%	3.3%	269	100.0%
The university has a policy that guides recruitment and selection	1.1%	5.9%	45.7%	43.5%	3.7%	269	100.0%
All vacant positions in the university are advertized	0.0%	4.5%	48.0%	43.5%	4.1%	269	100.0%
The university is an employer of choice due to its competitive salary	.7%	4.1%	48.0%	43.9%	3.3%	269	100.0%
The university management highly discourages canvassing	.7%	3.0%	47.6%	45.4%	3.3%	269	100.0%



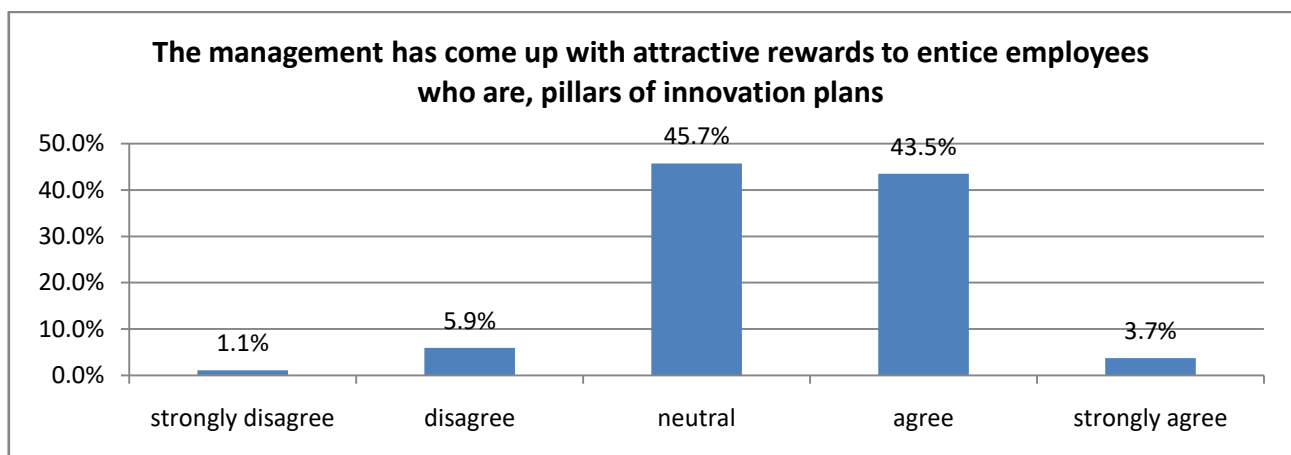
The respondents were asked if the university has an attractive compensation scheme which supports innovation development. The bar graphs show the following scenario;

51.7% agreed, 37.5% neutral, 6.7% disagreed, 4.1% strongly agreed while nobody strongly disagreed. The trend suggests that the majority of the respondents held the view that the university compensation at the universities encourages innovation development.



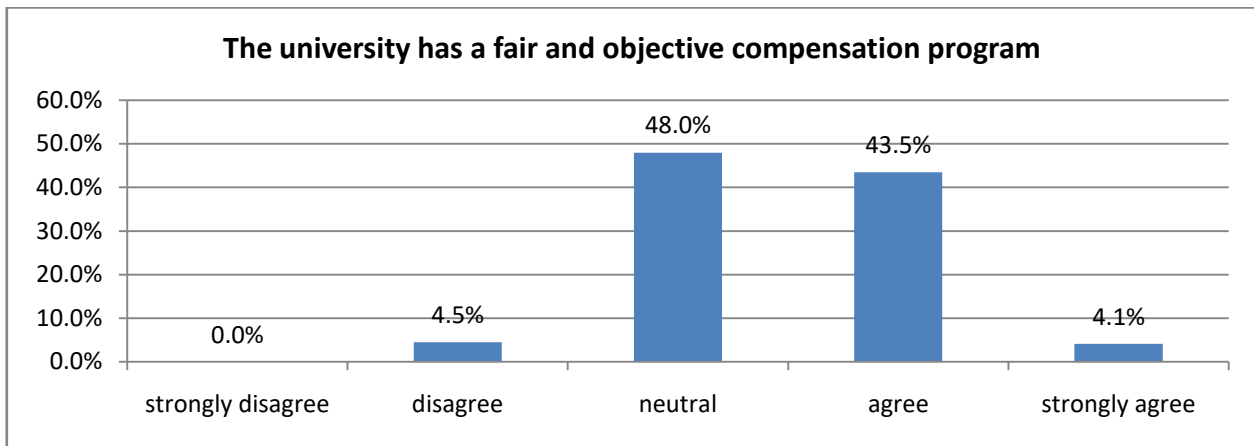
As regards to the question if the university has a compensation program which attracts highly qualified personnel from the labour market, the respondents had the following opinions:

47.6% of the respondents agreed, 45% of them were neutral, 3.7% strongly agreed, 3.0% disagreed and only 0.7% strongly disagreed. This implied that a slightly higher percentage hold the view that the universities' compensation program highly attracts highly qualified staff from the labour who could enhance innovation development.



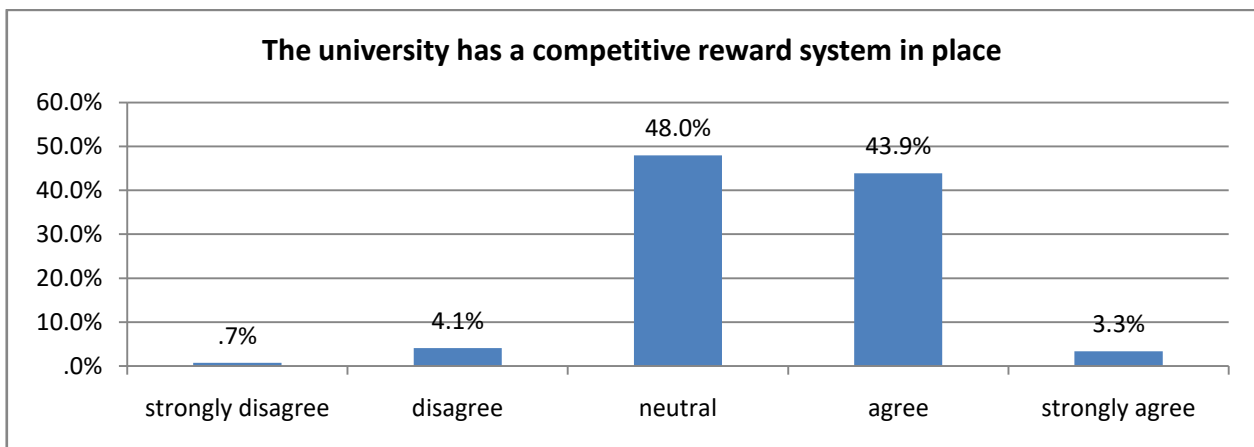
The study aimed at establishing whether the management has developed attractive rewards in order to entice employees so as to promote innovation development. The results in the above graph capture the following views:

45.7% appeared neutral, 43.5% agreed; another 5.9% disagreed with the view while 1.1% strongly agreed. The findings could suggest that the employees are either not sure if this happens or they choose not to comment.



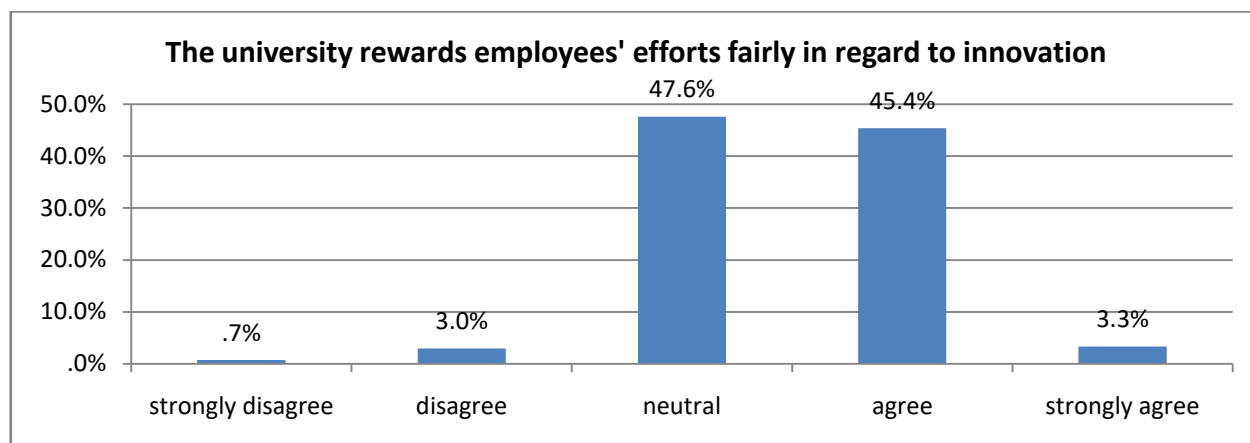
The study intended to find out if the university has a fair and objective compensation program and the respondents who answered the question indicate the following scenario:

48.0% of the respondents was neutral, 43.5% agreed, 4.5% disagreed, 4.1% strongly agreed while no one strongly disagreed. This could suggest that a slightly higher majority of the employees were either not sure or they preferred not to comment.



The above question sought to find out if the universities have competitive reward systems in place and the above graph depicts the following scenario:

48.0% of the respondents were neutral, while a slightly lower percentage agreed at 43.9%, 4.1% disagreed, 3.3% strongly agreed and only a minority of 0.7% strongly disagreed. Since a slightly higher minority appeared neutral, this could either suggest that they were not sure or they wished not to respond to this question.



The question was to find out if the universities reward employee's effort in a fair manner in connection to innovation. The findings show the following trend:

47.6% of the respondents were neutral, while a slightly lower majority were at 5.4% agreed, 3.3% strongly agreed, 3.0% disagreed with that view while only a minority of 0.7% strongly agreed. The impression created by these findings could be either that the respondent were unaware or they preferred no to give a view as to whether to universities rewards were fair enough to encourage innovation development at the universities.

### Major Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

The objectives of the study were to establish the role that HRM play towards innovation development in public universities. From the study, the researcher was able to deduce that the universities support innovation development by not only offering attractive compensation and rewards to the existing employees but also such rewards attract innovative and creative potential employees.. In addition, the universities entice individuals in order to encourage innovation. Moreover, the universities were giving fair and competitive rewards to creative and innovative individuals and this encourages innovation development in the human capital and consequently, the universities.

In conclusion, the researcher inferred that though this is happening, there should be commitment by both parties. Both short term and long term measures must be embraced. right policies and strategies must be developed and communicated to the human capital. Innovation development and financial planning must be put as a priority.

The researcher recommended that the issue of innovation development must be key. There should be conscious and deliberate policies by the universities as well as creating an enabling environment for innovation to thrive. Friendly policies should be formulated such that every employee who demonstrates innovative ideas is trained to bring out the best in him/her.

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