The Impact of Working Conditions on Academic Staff Turnover at Africa University, Mutare, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

A study was carried out to assess the impact of staff working conditions on academic staff turnover at Africa University, Mutare, Zimbabwe. Out of a total of 74 academic staff, a sample size of 35 was randomly selected in the four categories of lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor and professor. Several facets of working conditions were explored, namely, leadership style, perceived organizational support, performance management system, academic freedom, collegiality, opportunity and support for research activities, workloads and psychological contracts. This study found that the working conditions were unfavorable and this led to situations where academic staff leaving Africa University at the earliest opportunity.

Keywords: Africa University, Higher education/university management, Staff turnover, Motivation, Working conditions, Job satisfaction, Staff retention.

Contents

1. Introduction

Africa University is a private higher education institution that was founded by the United Methodist Church (UMC) through a Charter proclaimed by the President of Republic of Zimbabwe in March 1992. Africa University is the first private university in Zimbabwe and is located 17 kilometres from Mutare, Manicaland Province, in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe. With an initial student population of 40 in 1992, the University now has over 1,400 full-time students and an additional 1,500 students undertaking block release or parallel programmes. Africa University is pan-African by design with 7 academic faculties and an Institute of Peace Leadership and Governance (IPLG). Students come from 29 countries. Presently Africa University has 74 full-time academic staff.

Tertiary institutions in Africa are confronted with numerous challenges of identifying, recruiting and retaining high caliber academic staff. According to Babakus *et al.* (1996) the leaving of competent and well-trained employees makes it difficult for organizations to immediately fill those positions and maintain high organizational performance. Labour turnover is an inevitable phenomenon in an organization's life cycle. However, it involves redundant monetary and non-monetary costs especially when efficient and experienced workers, leave voluntarily. According to the Africa University Charter (1992) remuneration and work conditions are expected to be at least 25% higher than the Zimbabwe state universities. The report by the Report of the Africa University Compensation Committee (2011) noted that the AU salaries are at least 31% below average when compared to other universities in the region. The University has been facing challenges in meeting its statutory obligations as stated in its 1992 Charter. Therefore, it is imperative to undertake a study on the role of working conditions on academic staff turnover.

2. Research Problem

Statistics from Personnel and Administration office at Africa University indicate that between 2009 and 2013 the University has lost a total of 40 lecturers which results in an average of 8 lectures per academic year. Not only lecturers continuously leave the institution but also lecturers who leave Africa University for staff development purposes fail to return. The few who make an effort to report back to work, do not stay longer. Instead, they move to other institutions of higher learning sometimes without giving adequate notice or following a proper resignation process. This can be a sign of frustration. Is this high turner over of academic staff caused by working conditions?

3. Literature Review

Human resources are viewed as key in developing and utilizing other resources. According to a report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) working conditions have a great impact on the teaching profession today. Working conditions must be viewed as a whole. In an academic environment, it is imperative to have a proper understanding of what academic staff do, how much they are paid to do it and how much support and training they need in order to discharge their duties. The United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation (UNESCO) upholds that the conditions of employment have a direct bearing on the flows of lecturers entering or leaving the profession because they determine how appealing the profession is, particularly in comparison to other types of employment (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1997).

According to working conditions refers to a work environment that promotes the efficient performance of job tasks by employees. Working conditions include proper modes of recruitment and promotion, availability of office space and equipment, internal customer (employees) support services, clear formulation and administration of contracts, safety at the workplace, support from supervisors and management, and opportunities for self-development and career advancement. Emphasizes that working conditions are created by the interaction of employees with their organizational climate. Working conditions, in other words, include the physical and psychological wellbeing of employees and should not be limited to financial remuneration.

Most universities have been affected by a push for structural reforms that emphasize the adoption of private sector management practices. These reforms have resulted in increased emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, formal and explicitly measurable standards, and output controls. These reforms have created a tendency towards managing academic institutions with commercial-like managerial approaches (Watty *et al.*, 2008) and have noted that transformations in the academic environment have placed increased pressures on academic staff. There are growing concerns over the increased stress associated with academic work, decrease in job satisfaction, and an overall negative attitude of academics towards their job.

These changes in management theory and practice have changed the ways employees view their relationships with organisations. Pointed out that perceived organizational support plays a great role in employee motivation and retention. Perceived organizational support can be referred to as the degree to which employees perceive their employer to be concerned with their well-being and to value their contributions to the organization. In addition to perceived organizational support, performance management has been pointed out as a new strategy to motivate and retain academic staff. According to Drucker (2003) the changes in academic management style have been accompanied by changes in performance management systems. There is an inherent expectation of measurable outputs, responsiveness to stakeholders' needs and greater accountability. Performance management systems should include not only assessments but rewards in case of good performance and punishment in case on bad performance or non-performance. Herzberg (1967) confirmed that performance linked to a reward will positively impact employee motivation. Trevor *et al.* (1997) observed that the presence of salary growth or promotions resulted in lower turnover. Observed that the absence of rewards and recognition for academics' work resulted in increased levels of job stress and eventually increased academic staff turnover.

Another motivating factor of academics is linked to academic freedom and research activities. According to Nwadiani and Akpotu (2002) academic freedom implies that academics are able to teach freely, undertake research of their own interest, and communicate findings and ideas openly and without any fear of persecution. For Armstrong and Long (1994) in an environment dominated by the ideas of accountability and productivity, academic freedom is compromised. In search of academic freedom, many academics have resisted "managerialism".

According to academics experience impingement on their autonomy and creative space through performance reviews, student evaluations, accreditation, and pressure to publish, plan, predict, and perform according to negotiated standards. Nonetheless has pointed out, "research is a major source of satisfaction for academics and many academic staff would prefer to spend more of their time on research." However, in practice there are impediments. Sometimes, academics have to carry huge teaching loads and this limits the time devoted to research. The ILO/UNESCO (1997) suggested that in order to create favourable working conditions for academics they should be provided with support staff who perform the non-teaching tasks. Provision of support staff would allow academics to concentrate on their core professional activities, namely, teaching, research and outreach. The same report has indicated that provision of support staff results in increased job satisfaction by academic staff with resultant retention possibilities (ILO/UNESCO, 1997). Moreover, the availability of support staff increases the quality and non-teaching services in universities (ILO/UNESCO, 1997).

Academic staffs are part of what Drucker called "knowledge workers." Knowledge workers most of the time know better than their bosses in their area of expertise (Drucker, 1989). Knowledge workers do not want just to be told what to do. They prefer to have a say not only in their specific areas but also to participate in decision- making and problem-solving processes. Knowledge workers are suitable for organisations that abrogate hierarchy and encourage participation and collegiality. Academics, like other knowledge workers, are reluctant to follow decisions that are cascaded on them without relevant participation and consultation. According to in the collegiate decision-making method, the members of an organization have equal decision-making power where each member abides by the common rules (academic regulations). In an academic context, the role of the dean is to raise questions to be solved by their colleagues and draw up mutual concessions that lead to a consensus. The ILO/UNESCO (2002) concurs that in a situation where individuals have to be part of the decision-making process in an organization but that opportunity is not granted, individuals feel dissatisfied. The report further states that where decisions are hijacked by management to the disadvantage of the academics, the collegial importance of the decision-making process will be lost and academic staff may move to institutions where their voices are heard (ILO/UNESCO, 1997).

The academic workplace is shaped by a sophisticated network of hierarches, recognitions, mutual deference and loyalties but also tensions and conflicts of interests between academic units and non-academic units. Because of their control over budgets and administrative decisions, non-academic units tend to assume a supervisory role (in terms of approvals and disapprovals) while their role is mainly supportive. In such a context, it become demotivating for academics who feel that academic work is being jeopardized to the advantage of non-core businesses. Hence the need for distributive justice in the academia. Distribute justice is grounded in Adam's Equity Theory (Adams, 1963; Carrell and Dittrich, 1978). Equity theory is grounded by three basic assumptions: the theory assumed that individuals are guided by a moral system in which fair distribution of rewards is a fundamental tenet. It also assumed that employees expect a fair, just or equitable return for what they contribute to their job (Carrell and Dittrich, 1978). The third assumption is that employees who perceive themselves as being in an inequitable situation will seek to reduce the inequity. Points out that distributive justice is premised on the extent to which rewards and punishments relate to performance. Distributive justice was an important and significant predictor of organizational commitment and job satisfaction and negative predictor of turnover intentions. Lack of distributive justice may create a climate of acrimony, discontent and dissent if not effectively handled and that such practice may contribute to low productivity and commitment amongst affected staff. Distributive justice has be complemented with procedural justice. Procedural justice concerns the fairness and the transparency of the processes by which decisions are made, and may be contrasted with distributive justice (fairness in the distribution of rights or resources), and retributive justice (fairness in the punishment of wrongs) (Tyler *et al.*, 1985). Hearing all parties before a decision is made is one step which would be considered appropriate to be taken in order that a process may then be characterised as procedurally fair (Tyler *et al.*, 1985). Some theories of procedural justice hold that fair procedure leads to equitable outcomes, even if the requirements of distributive or restorative justice are not met (Tyler *et al.*, 1985). Hough *et al.* (2010) have pointed out that procedural justice in organisations leads to increased levels of trust. Relational Justice, on the other hand, is is defined as the justice produced through cooperative behavior, agreement, negotiation, or dialogue among actors in a post-conflict situation (Casanovas and Poblet, 2008). Perceived equity leads to psychological contracts.

While traditionally contracts are laid down against the background of self-interest, mistrust and potential conflicts, Jack Welch has pointed to a new form of loyalty that he called the "psychological contract". Psychological contracts imply fostering trust, independence, freedom, responsibility and autonomy Psychological contracts give the employees the feeling they get from the company not only financial rewards but also job security and a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment that goes beyond the satisfaction of their vegetative needs. Psychological contracts make employees feel that they are not working for "someone else" but that there are "insiders" and that their participation is acknowledged and rewarded. Psychological contracts imply not only avoiding barriers between management and workers (Bower, 1995) but also creating spaces of conviviality. Therefore, there is a need to foster trust and collaboration within and between organisations.

4. Research Methodology
4.1. Research Design and Method
The researcher used a case study design and a qualitative approach.

4.2. Population and Sampling Techniques
Africa University academic staff were used as the population for this study. There are 6 faculties and 1 Institute at Africa University. At the time of the study, 74 academic staff were employed by Africa University. These 74 academic staff were first stratified into faculties/institute before they were either randomly or conveniently selected from their strata. Given the facts that some faculties do not have Professors or Associate Professors. To eliminate

errors of reliability, the researcher purposefully omitted the rate of Professors but used the Ph.D. category.   The sample was selected as follows:

1 Ph.D. staff, one per Faculty/Institute   =   7
2 Senior Lecturers, two per Faculty/Institute =   14
2 Lectures, two per Faculty/Institute   =   14
Total sample size   =   35

To get a proportional sample fraction from each faculty/institute, proportional number of respondents were selected as above. The sum total of respondents is 47% of the total population under study. The combination of the sub-samples from all the academic staff strata at Africa University constituted the sample size.

4.3. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher personally distributed 35 questionnaires to the respondents who are academic staff at Africa University. The data was collected over a period of two weeks. The researcher received 32 questionnaires (91%), one of the questionnaires was returned blank, making a return rate of 89% of the respondents. The remaining 3 respondents did not return the questionnaires even after following up several times. The non-response rate was 11% including the returned blank questionnaire.

Collected questionnaires were sorted out and incomplete questions were followed up. The respondents had an opportunity to ask the researcher questions that were related to the completion of questions. The researcher also explained all vague or unclear areas to the respondents who solicited for more information. The researcher tried to find out if all unanswered questions were omitted by error or intentionally and the researchers established that all the unanswered questions were intentionally omitted.

4.4. Research Instruments

In this particular study, a questionnaire based on research questions was designed to primarily collect data. Existing secondary documents such as official records of meetings and resolutions were used as reliable sources of information.

4.5. Data Analysis and Presentation

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS – version 14.0) was used to analyze qualitative data since the data had been coded. Frequency tables, bar graphs and pie diagrams were also used to analyze qualitative data.

5. Findings

5.1. Leadership Style

Results indicated that 38.7% of the academic employees, the majority, disagreed to the statement that the management and leadership at Africa University is sensitive and supportive of their work schedules (Table 1). About 19.4% of these employees strongly disagreed with this statement. Despite being the second majority (25.8%), fewer academic employees agreed to the statement than those who disagreed and strongly disagreed. This meant that most of the academic staff viewed management and leadership as insensitive and unsupportive of their work schedules.

Table-1. Management and Leadership Style (N=31)

Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Management and leadership is sensitive and supportive of academic staff's work schedules	19.4	38.7	12.9	25.8	3.2
Management style does not allow for academic input in the decision making process	3.2	22.6	29.0	35.5	9.7
Management style encourages academic career path and development	22.6	35.5	22.6	12.9	6.5

5.2. Participation in Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

The majority (35.5%) of the academic personnel agreed with the statement that management style does not allow for academic input in the decision making process (Table 1). This is followed by (29%) of the workers who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement and a much smaller proportion (22.6%) disagreed with this statement. These results indicated that most of the Africa University academic employees were of the opinion that management style does not allow for academic input in the decision making process.

The majority 41.9% of these workers disagreed that they are involved in the decision-making process from the faculties up to institutional level. This result further confirmed the earlier finding which indicated that Africa University management style does not allow for academic input in the decision making process.

5.3. Career Path and Staff Development

Results also indicated that 35.5% of the academics disagreed with the statement that management style encourages academic career path and staff development (Table 1). While 22.6% of these workers strongly disagreed with this statement, another 22.6% neither agreed nor disagreed.

These results showed that more academic employees disagreed with the statement than those who agreed. According to these workers, the management style at Africa University does not encourage academic career path and staff development.

5.4. Perceived Organizational Support and Psychological Contracts (N=31)

Table-2. Perceived Organisational Support and Psychological Contract

Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Management cares about well-being of academic staff	25.8	29.0	22.6	22.6	0.0
Management uses discretionary decisions rather than external forces in favourable treatments	6.5	35.5	16.1	32.3	9.7
Organizational policies and procedures have positive orientation to all academic staff	9.7	45.2	29.0	9.7	6.5
The distribution of resources among academic staff is fair	16.1	35.5	22.6	9.4	6.4
Supervision and evaluation of performance by Deans is fair and transparent	3.2	22.6	35.5	32.3	6.5
Working conditions are generally favourable to academic staff	13.3	50.0	10.0	20.0	6.7

Results revealed that the majority 29% of the academic staff disagreed with the statement that Africa University management cares about their well-being (Table 2). The second highest percentage (25.8%) of the staff strongly disagreed with this statement. Smaller but equal proportions of these workers neither agreed and nor disagreed or agreed (22.6% each). This implied that most of the academic employees were of the view that Africa University's management does not care about their well-being.

The academic employees were somehow divided about the statement which said 'management uses discretionary decisions rather than external forces (e.g. labour unions) to award favourable treatments'. While 35.5% of the academics disagreed with this statement, 32.3% agreed. This suggested that the management could be using both ways to award favourable treatments, one way with some members of staff and the other way with others, or they are not really aware which way is used.

5.5. Organizational Policies and Procedures

Results further revealed that the majority 45.2% of the academic staff disagreed to the statement that organizational policies and procedures have positive orientation to all academic staff (Table 1). The second majority (29%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. According to the academic staff, Africa University's organizational policies and procedures do not have positive orientation to all academic staff.

5.6. Distributive Justice

Most of the academic personnel also disagreed with the statement that said 'the distribution of resources among academic staff is fair' (Table 3). About 16.1% of these employees strongly disagreed with this statement. While 22.6%, the second majority, neither agreed nor disagreed, only 19.4% agreed to this statement. These results implied that the distribution of resources among academic staff was unfair to most of the academic staff.

5.7. Distributive Justice and Support for Academic Staff (N=31)

Table-3. Distributive Justice

Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
University provides equipment and resources necessary for the academic staff to execute duties	16.1	35.5	3.2	45.2	0.0
Academic staff salaries and benefits are paid according to qualifications and experience	16.1	38.7	12.9	29.0	3.2
The work of academic staff is evaluated according to the university's set standards	6.5	19.4	29.0	41.9	3.2
Disciplinary procedures are well documented and communicated to all academic staff	9.7	22.6	22.6	41.9	3.2
Academic staff are satisfied with their remuneration package	58.1	32.3	9.7	0.0	0.0
Deans provide sufficient feedback and guidance on evaluation and performance	6.5	29.0	38.7	22.6	3.2

Source: Questionnaire results

Results indicated that the majority 45.2% of the academic staff agreed with the statement that said 'The University provides the equipment and resources necessary for the academic staff to execute their jobs' (Table 3). But 35.5% of these workers disagreed with this statement and 16.1% of them strongly disagreed. These results suggested that the academic workers were divided in their views regarding whether Africa University provides the equipment and resources necessary for the academic staff to execute their jobs with some of them agreeing and others disagreeing with the statement.

Most of the academic staff disagreed that their salaries and benefits are paid according to their qualification and experience. This was mentioned by 38.7% of the academic staff and another 16.1% of them strongly disagreed with the statement. In contrast, a smaller proportion (29%) of the academic workers agreed that their salaries and benefits

are paid according to their qualifications and experience. Lack of payment of salaries according to qualifications and experience is likely to discourage some academic workers and influence them to leave the institution especially when more qualified and experienced members of staff are lumped together with those with lower qualifications and fewer years of experience.

The study further revealed that the majority 58.1% of the academic staff strongly disagreed with the statement that said they are satisfied with their remuneration packages. Another 32.3% of them disagreed with the statement but none agreed. These results suggested that the academic staff at the University were strongly dissatisfied by their remuneration package. Other researchers found that poor salaries and working conditions have caused university professionals in Zimbabwe to leave the country in large numbers since the crisis in the 2000s.

While 29% of the academic employees neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that said 'the work of academic staff is evaluated according to the university's set standards', the majority (41.9%) of them agreed with this statement (Table 3). Most of them also agreed that disciplinary procedures are well documented and communicated to all the academic staff. But, most of them neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that said 'supervisors or Deans provide sufficient feedback and guidance on the academic staff's evaluation and performance'. This result was consistent with the earlier finding where most of the academic workers also took a neutral view when given a statement which said 'academic staff considers supervision and evaluation of their performance by the Deans to be fair and transparent' (Table 3). Both results suggested that most of the academic workers doubted whether their evaluation by Deans was fair and transparent. This could also mean that while some of them received feedback on their evaluation by Deans, others did not. Another author in the related literature reviewed asserted the need for the HRM to streamline the pay and incentive schemes and also administration policies in a fair and transparent manner to ensure that distribute justice is not just done but is seen to be done.

5.8. Performance Management

Most of the academic employees took a neutral view with regard to the statement which said 'academic staff considered supervision and evaluation of their performance by the Deans to be fair and transparent' (Table 4). But, the second group (32.3%) of the staff agreed with the statement. This suggested that most of the academic personnel regarded their supervision and evaluation by the Deans as fair and transparent. Results revealed that the majority 41.9% of the academic staff disagreed with the statement that said 'performance appraisals are consistent and fair' (Table 4). The proportions of the academic employees who took a neutral view and those who agreed to the statement were equal at 22.6% each.

This meant that most of the academic staff at Africa University were of the view that performance appraisals were inconsistent and unfair. Consistently, the majority (53.3%) of the academics also disagreed that promotion is based on performance at Africa University (Table 4). These results suggested a link between inconsistency and unfair performance appraisals which culminate in promotion not being based on performance. It is difficult for promotion to be based on performance when the system of performance appraisal is inconsistent and unfair.

Table-4. Performance Management System (N=31)

Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Goals and objectives are clear to all academic staff	12.9	29.0	16.1	38.7	3.2
Performance appraisals are consistent and fair	9.7	41.9	22.6	22.6	3.2
Promotion is based on performance	10.0	53.3	23.3	10.0	3.3

5.9. Academic Freedom and Collegiality

Table-5. Academic freedom and collegiality (N=31)

Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Academic staff cooperate and support each other in their academic tasks	16.1	25.8	22.6	32.3	3.2
Academic staff share academic information with each other at all times	9.7	32.3	22.6	32.3	3.2
Academic staff enjoy their academic freedom	9.7	16.1	22.6	51.6	0.0
Academic staff are involved in decision-making processes from faculties up to institutional level	9.7	41.6	16.1	25.8	6.5

Most of the academic staff agreed that they cooperate and support each other in their academic tasks. This was mentioned by 48.4% of the academic staff, which was the majority. Those who disagreed with this statement were very few (Table 5). Consistently, 32.3% of the academic staff agreed that the academic staff share academic information with each other at all times.

But, 25.8% disagreed and 16.1% strongly disagreed with the statement of sharing information at all times indicating a division among the academics with regard to this statement. This meant that while some of the academic workers were of the view that academic information is shared among the academic staff at all times, others did not think so.

The academics were also divided on the statement that said 'academic staff are given opportunities to express their professional experiences and developmental needs' with 32.3% agreeing and another 32.3% disagreeing with the statement (Table 5). About 22.6% of the academic workers neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement indicating that they were not sure about this aspect.

5.10. Workload and Pressure (N=31)

Table-6. Workload and pressure (N=31)

Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Lecturers are allocated courses using their level of education / expertise	6.5	25.8	12.9	41.9	12.9
Workload is fairly distributed among academic staff	12.9	38.7	6.5	29.0	12.9
Workload is constituted by core business of academic staff	3.3	26.7	13.3	50.0	6.7

Results indicated that the majority 50% of the academic workers agreed that their workload constituted of the core business of academic staff including teaching, research, service, leadership, and administration (Table 6). Only a few (26.7%) of these workers disagreed with this statement. While 41.9% of the academic staff agreed that lecturers were allocated courses using their level of education or expertise, 12.9% strongly agreed with this statement. This meant that most of the academic staff members were satisfied that lecturers are allocated courses using their level of education or expertise. On the contrary, the academic staff were somehow divided with regard to the fairness in the distribution of the workload. But, slightly more academic workers disagreed that the workload is fairly distributed among academics than those who agreed that is, 38.7% compared to 29%. A heavy workload which is not in commensuration with the remuneration is also likely to encourage some academics to exit from the system.

5.11. Research and Outreach Activities (N=31)

Table-7. Research Activities

Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Africa University provides adequate research support to academic staff	13.3	46.7	26.7	13.3	0.0
Research and/or publications are used to promote academic staff	13.3	30.0	23.3	30.0	3.3
Africa University has a research ethics unit to guide research activities of academic staff	6.7	6.7	13.3	66.7	6.7

Source: Questionnaire results

An overwhelming majority (66.7%) of the academic staff members agreed that there is a research ethics unit that guides research activities of the academic staff at Africa University (Table 7). Some of them were however, not sure as they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The academics were divided regarding the statement which said 'research and/or publications are used to promote academic staff at Africa University', with 30% of them agreeing and another 30% disagreeing. About 22.6% were also not sure whether research and/or publications are used to promote academic staff at the university.

Results then revealed that the majortiy 46.7% of these academics disagreed that the university provides adequate research support to them (Table 7). These results suggested that because the University did not support research among the academic staff, it also does not use research and/or publications as a promotion criterion. These results were consistent with the earlier finding that the management style used at the University does not encourage the pursuance of a career path through staff development. Supporting research and publications among academic staff is one way of supporting their career path and development, which Africa University is failing to do.

6. Conclusion

Overall, half of the academic staff rated the general working conditions at Africa University as unfavourable to them. Only one-fifth of them were of the view that working conditions were generally favourable to academic staff. The majority of the respondents were of the opinion that management style at Africa University does not allow for academic input in the decision making process. The findings also revealed that the management style of the institution does not encourage academic career path and development. The attribution of discretionary treatments, fairness, rewards, and distribution of resources was rated negatively by academic staff. The findings have shown that most of the academic staff at Africa University was of the view that performance appraisals were inconsistent and unfair. The results suggested a link between inconsistent and unfair performance appraisals and promotion not being based on performance. Academic staff enjoyed their academic freedom (teaching, research, expression of opinions) and the sustained networks among their colleagues however most of these networks were rather based on personal affinity and friendship outside the institutional context.

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