Impact of staff development programmes on productivity: The case of Tamale campus of University for Development Studies

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Abstract
This study presents the importance of staff development programmes on productivity among the staff of the University for Development Studies on the Tamale campus. The Human Capital Theory was the tool adapted to serve as a theoretical foundation for this study. A convenient sampling technique was employed in selecting respondents for the study. Primary data was collected through the administration of semi-structured questionnaires. The study population was senior members and senior staff of the Tamale campus. Findings from the study show that in-service training was the most predominant staff development programme among respondents, while short courses were the least programme. On the relevance and quality of the staff development programmes, the findings indicated that the programmes were very relevant with no record of the programmes not being relevant. Focusing on the quality of the staff development programmes, the majority of the respondents indicated the programmes were very good in developing their careers with a few of them indicating the quality of the programmes was on average. Challenges faced by respondents in accessing staff development programmes included infrequent training programmes; biases in the selection of applicants; short notification of opportunities; short duration of programmes; inadequate information on programmes; long application and selection process; inadequate sponsorship; unskilled facilitators; and poor planning. Among the recorded challenges, inadequate sponsorship was the major challenge while poor planning of programmes constituted the least of the challenges. It was therefore recommended that the University should establish a Fund or Scholarship Scheme to support staff in the various development programmes since inadequate sponsorship was a major challenge for respondents.

Keywords: human capital, staff development programme, productivity, in-service training, inadequate sponsorship, organizational performance

Introduction

Effectively managing an organization's human resource base is very crucial in discharging both the short- and long-term goals of that organization. Human Capital can therefore be said to be the base of human resource development. According to Cole (2002), some institutions will use all available resources for the permanent development of their staff. Staff development according to Barney (2001) extends beyond just offering training

to include processes such as equipping the people with the requisite skills and giving them access to needed information to help broaden their knowledge to enable them to execute their duties effectively. Pinnington and Edwards (2000) opine that the paramount objective of staff development is to realize organizational corporate goals. Fullan (2006), reiterates that staff development plays an integral role in providing skills and enhancing staff motivation. Barney (2001), postulates that institutions across the globe whether small or large have three basic components in common. The first and foremost component is the human component (human capital), the second is operational techniques needed to enable the institution to function efficiently and the third component talks about enhancing employees to boost their efficiency and effectiveness.

The reviewed literature demonstrates the crucial role employees play in achieving the set organizational goals and targets. The manpower denotes a significant verdict area and therefore its ever-increasing worth cannot be undervalued (Akinusi, 1983; Fullan 2006; Jones and George, 2008). It is incumbent for institutions to engage their staff in systematic training and education, usually initiated in the organization's policy. Cole (2002) suggests that staff development is ideal for addressing complex business challenges in contemporary times. It is, therefore, necessary to undertake this study which seeks to assess the impact of staff development programmes on productivity within the Tamale campus of the UDS to inform Management on the challenges faced by staff in accessing training programmes for career development and ultimately increased productivity.

Multi-Campus University

The University for Development Studies (UDS) was established in May 1992 under PNDC Law 279. The University at its commencement had only two (2) Faculties which are the Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of Integrated Development Studies. During its formative years, the UDS relied heavily on borrowed physical infrastructure and therefore the first batch of its students was housed at the School of Hygiene whiles taking lectures from the Islamic Secondary School in Tamale. Later these two Faculties were relocated to the Nyankpala and Navrongo campuses respectively and this was the inception of the multi-campus nature of the UDS.

The University for Development Studies later grew in terms of the number of Schools and Faculties to a total number of ten (10) Schools/ Faculties hosted within four (4) campuses across the then three (3) Northern Regions of Ghana. The four (4) campuses were:

1. Nyankpala Campus which hosted three (3) Faculties; the Faculty of Agriculture, the Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources, and the Faculty of Agribusiness and Communication Sciences;
2. Tamale Campus had both the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Faculty of Education;
3. Navrongo Campus accommodated the Faculty of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Mathematical Sciences; and finally, the
4. Wa Campus which had the School of Business and Law, Faculty of Integrated Development Studies, and the Faculty of Planning and Land Management.

With the Government of Ghana's policy of establishing a public university in each administrative region, the Wa and the Navrongo campuses became autonomous in 2020 and named the SDD-University of Business and Integrated Development Studies and CKT- the University of Technology and Applied Sciences respectively. Following this autonomy, the present UDS with two (2) campuses; Tamale and Nyankpala campuses undertook a restructuring exercise of its Faculties and Schools.

After the restructuring, the Nyankpala campus now has three (3) Schools and four (4) Faculties. The Tamale campus which previously had a Faculty and a School now has two (2) Faculties and five (5) Schools after going through a restructuring process. The two (2) Faculties are the Faculty of Education (FoE) and the Faculty of Sustainable Development Studies (FSDS). The five (5) Schools on the other hand are comprised of the:
- School of Allied Health Sciences (SAHS);
- School of Medicine (SoM);

- School of Nursing and Midwifery (SoNM);
- School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (SoPPS).
- School of Public Health (SPH);

The School of Allied Health was carved out from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) in 2015. The School was mandated to run programmes in human development by training highly qualified health professionals to provide for the health needs of the deprived communities. The School has eight (8) academic departments.

The School of Medicine has its philosophy and mission focussed on achieving human development through the training of health professionals prepared to serve in deprived communities to improve the health and well-being of the people in these communities. The School of Medicine currently has about 21 academic departments, (Vice Chancellor Report, 2021).

The School of Nursing and Midwifery was carved out of the School of Allied Health Sciences in 2020, with six (6) departments The School is mandated to train mainstream nursing and midwifery professionals to provide quality health services to improve the well-being of the people of Ghana and abroad.

The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences was formerly a Department of Pharmacology under the School of Medicine and was later converted into a School with the mandate to train professionals who are equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to take broader responsibilities beyond the usual dispensing. The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences has five (5) academic Departments and a Research Unit.

The School of Public Health offers the underpinning of public health through research and collaboration in the field of teaching and research. The School is engaged in both local and international community service. The School has six (6) academic Departments operating in an integrated way to leverage the joint strengths of expertise from different disciplines to provide leadership in areas such as Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health, and Biostatistics among others, (Vice Chancellor Report, 2021).

The Faculty of Education's core mandate is to address administrative and management challenges in education to respond to contemporary teaching and learning, and research dissemination encounters. The Faculty has nine (9) Departments one of which is situated on the Nyankpala campus. It can also boast three Service Units where students are exposed to the practical aspects of what they are being taught.

The last of the Schools and Faculties on the Tamale campus is the Faculty of Sustainable Development Studies. The Faculty was carved out of the Faculty of Education with the mandate to offer programmes in peace and security, development management and policy studies, among others. The Faculty of Sustainable Development Studies has four academic Departments and a Centre for Peace and Security Studies (Vice Chancellor Report, 2021).

Objectives of the Study
The objectives of the study are to:
1. assess staff knowledge of staff development programmes within the University;
2. assess the operation of staff development programmes among Tamale campus staff;
3. ascertain the relevance or quality of staff development programmes among Tamale campus staff; and
4. identify the challenges encountered by staff in accessing staff development opportunities.

Significance of the Study

Previous studies in Africa revealed devastating staff deficits in institutions of higher learning. This calls for an immediate remedy else the African academy will lose its capability of producing the quality human capital needed for nation-building (Ndulu, 2004; Gyimah- Boadi, 2009).

The University for Development Studies, just like any public institution in Ghana, has policies that govern its operation. The Administrative Manual contains guidelines, rules and procedures for the proper implementation and institutionalization of processes and systems within the University (UDS, 2018). It is therefore expected that the:

1. results of this study will furnish university management in Ghana with information about staff perceptions, knowledge, and staff development programme preferences;
2. findings would contribute significantly to the literature regarding the challenges with the accessibility of staff development programmes in public universities in Ghana given its ever-increasing worth; and
3. results of the study will be useful in informing and improving administrative practice in higher education institutions.

Review of Relevant Literature

Theories- Bureaucratic theory of management and human capital and the Human capital theory. The current study is founded on the Bureaucratic theory of management and human capital by Garrick, (1999), and the Human capital theory by Becker (1964). The bureaucratic theory of management and human capital by Garrick, (1999), states that it is worth investing in people as a form of capital. Human capital theory, by Becker (1964) also suggests the stock of knowledge, skills and abilities, which potentially help to increase productivity and performance at work and in life in general. From Becker's definition, human capital can be said to be a goal or target for the individual's well-being and a means of achieving more fundamental long-term goals in a lifetime career. In addition, expenditure on training and education, which he described as a costly investment, is a means to achieving higher productivity and thereby higher wages. This definition emphasises the importance of training in the development of the skills and knowledge of the employee that may result in productivity increase and attraction of higher wages. The quality of the staff of every organisation can therefore be improved or enhanced through education, training and evaluation. This provides the framework for the evaluation of staff development programmes in institutions of higher learning.

Staff Development Programmes and Organizational Performance

Organizations, whether private or public sector, have a common agreement that human resources are keen to keep organizations operative and maintain a high level of organizational performance. Available literature suggests that the private sector has vast empirical data on human resource management and organizational performance. However, there is a paucity of empirical studies on the subject matter in the public sector partly due to the difficulty in defining public organizational performance (Daft, 2001; Delaney and Huselid, 1996).

Human capital is the recognition that people in organisations are important and essential assets who contribute to development and growth in a similar way as physical assets such as machines and money (Stockley, (2005). Hence any expenditure in training, development, health, and support of staff is an investment, not an expenditure. Research has demonstrated the crucial role employees play in achieving the set organizational goals and targets. The manpower denotes a significant verdict area and therefore its ever-increasing worth cannot be undervalued (Barney, 2001; Jones and George, 2008). According to Nwachukwu (1988), an organization's emphasis on developing its human capital (staff) highly determines the efficiency of that organization. However, research has found staff development by organizations to be a global challenge with worsening situations in Africa (Smolentseva, 2003; Hugo, 2005).

Staff development is highly vivacious to the success of any academic institution by ensuring that there is maintenance and augmentation of staff skills and knowledge to improve quality and performance in their job role. Ghenghesh and Abdelmageed (2018) opine that, today's changing world requires serious attention to matters of staff development due to competitiveness and contemporary challenges faced by institutions around the globe. Staff development in the workplace is no longer an option because optimal performance is improbable and unachievable nor is desired productivity a reality without a serious commitment to staff development. Horner (1995) explicitly states that excellence in performance and high quality of service can only be achieved if human resources are deemed equally important as either physical or financial resources.

Millis (1994) suggests that there should be a periodical review of staff development to maximize its benefits to participants due to the constant and complex changes in societal needs worsened by increased technological advancement, and their impact on education. As a result, staff development is now well established and regarded as a significant organizational resource for addressing complex business challenges, hence despite the current economic conditions CEOs are ready to increase their investment in such programmes (O'Connell, 2013).

Organizations may have varied reasons for instituting and implementing staff development programmes. Among the most common reasons are to improve the overall level of efficiency and performance of staff at all levels, ensure availability of the required number of staff succession in case of future contingencies, prevent stagnation of staff in their respective areas of specialization by exposing them to the latest concepts and techniques, improve the thought processes and analytical abilities of staff, provide opportunities to staff to fulfil their career aspirations, understand the problems of human relations and improve human relation skills.

According to Dolan and Capell (2015), staff development programmes are meant to help organizations achieve better results, therefore is it important to ensure that the time and money invested in them contribute to the overall organization's mission. In ensuring a success rate for any staff development programme, certain steps and processes must be followed although sequencing these various steps in chronological order is sometimes difficult. According to Dolan and Capell, (2015), the processes involve six (6) steps as outlined below;

a) Identifying development needs. The first and most important step is to comprehensively diagnose the issues the organization seeks to address termed as the needs assessment. Organizations can base their needs assessment on many different sources of data including assessment of employee's performance level, input from the employees during performance appraisal, employee surveys, certain performance indicators, information concerning anticipated changes, and input from leaders (Dolan and Capell, 2015). Needs assessment is also necessary since it can result in management's decision not to offer any learning intervention.

b) Appraisal of present managerial talent

c) Inventory of staff manpower

d) Development of programmes

e) Conducting development programmes

f) Evaluating development programmes

Methodology

Research Design

This is a quantitative study, which employed the survey design to collect primary data through the administration of a structured questionnaire to respondents by the researcher. Closed-ended questions in the form of multiple-choice questions, as well as ranking scales, were provided for respondents to choose the category that best describes their answer. Secondary data was assembled through the review of relevant journals, textbooks, articles, publications, and magazines.

Population of the Study

The study was conducted in five (5) Schools and two Faculties all situated on the Tamale campus of the UDS. The total study population was 297 staff comprising 251 senior members and 46 senior staff in the Schools and Faculties. A convenient sampling technique was employed in selecting 160 participants made up of 140 senior members and 20 senior staff for the study. Questionnaires were administered to respondents of which 150 were retrieved, given the population of the study to be 150 participants.

To ensure validity, piloting of the questionnaire was done involving three senior members and three senior staff of the University who did not partake in the actual study. The pre-testing was done to ensure that the data collection instrument precisely measure what it was designed to measure and that the information acquired was a true reflection of the variables under study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). As a result, the researchers were able to modify items that were not clear before the actual fieldwork was carried out. The reliability of the instrument was also tested using the split-half method, which entails scoring two halves normally even and odd objects of a test individually for grouping. The correlation coefficient was calculated for the two categories of scores which explains the internal consistency of the test. Spearman-Brown Prophecy Formula below was used to test the reliability of the instruments:

$$\frac{2 \times \text{Corr. between the Halve}}{1 + \text{Corr. between the Halves}}$$

$$r = \frac{2r}{r+1}$$

Where r = reliability of the calculated coefficient. Orodho (2004) states that a correlation coefficient of up to 0.8 is good and adequate to evaluate the tools as reliable for research. After piloting, a correlation coefficient of 0.78 for the data collection instrument was attained and therefore considered the questionnaire was reliable.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire was retrieved, coded and checked for completeness. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data in the form of percentages and frequencies using Microsoft Excel and presented as pie charts.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study are presented in Figures 1 to 5. The following are the staff development programmes of respondents on the Tamale campus of the University for Development Studies: further studies; seminars; workshops; conferences; in-service training; professional training; and short courses. In-service training was the most predominant (26.25%) programme among respondents, while short courses were the least (2.5%) programme (Figure 1).
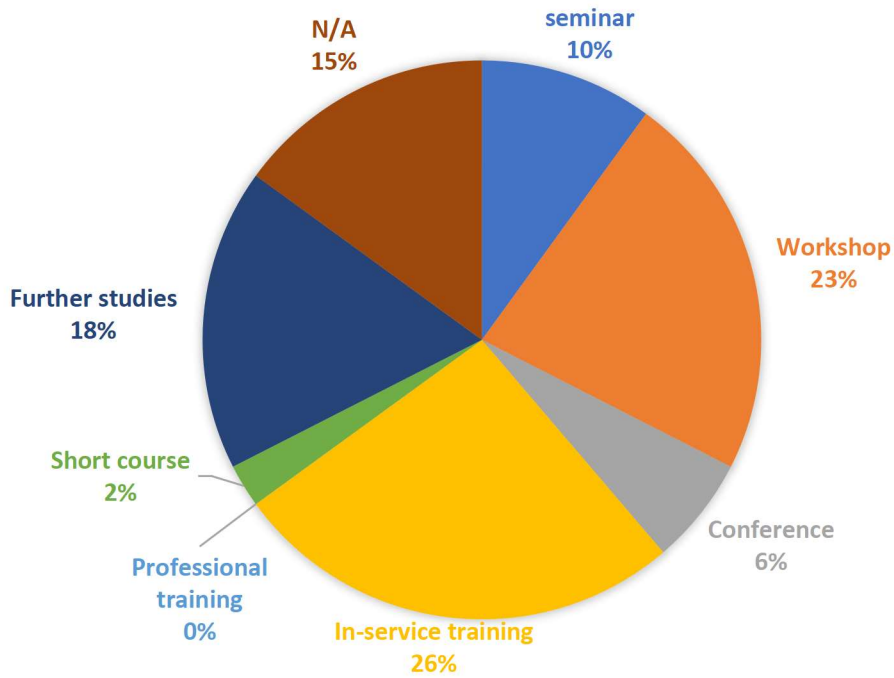
Figure 1: Respondents' Knowledge of Staff Development Programmes

However, no respondent benefited from professional training. This shows that most of the staff on the campus have not embarked on any professional training since they were employed. However, Becker (1964) explains that expenditure on training and education, which he described as a costly investment, is a means to achieving higher productivity and thereby higher wages. Barney (2001), also hypothesizes the importance of human capital and the enhancement of employees' skills to be two of the three basic components organizations whether small or large across the globe need for higher productivity.

The second objective, assessing the operation of staff development programmes among staff at the Tamale campus was achieved by examining the selection criteria used for one to benefit from or be selected for a staff development programme.
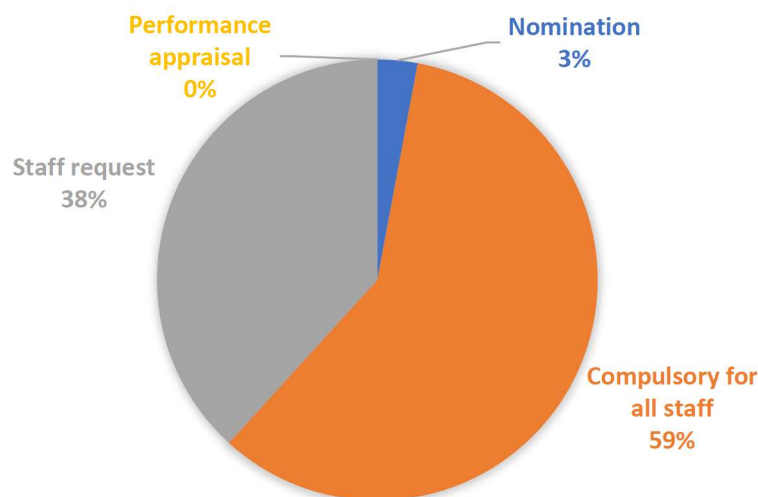

Figure 2: Selection Criteria for Staff Development Programme

From Figure 2, the following are the selection criteria: nomination; compulsory for all staff; upon staff request; and performance appraisal. The study revealed that the most used selection criterion was compulsory for all staff (58.82%) followed by staff own request (38.24%) whiles nomination was recorded as the least (2. 94%). The findings also show no records for performance appraisal as presented in Figure 2. This finding depicts the association between Figure 1 (staff development programme) and Figure 2 (selection criteria) because in-service training programmes are usually compulsory for every staff. Since in-service training was the most predominant staff development programme, management should endeavour to select skilled facilitators who are experts in the field as opined by Pinnington and Edwards (2000) the crucial role employees play in achieving the set organizational goals and targets.

The study also sought information on the relevance and quality of the staff development programmes on the campus (Figures 3 and 4).
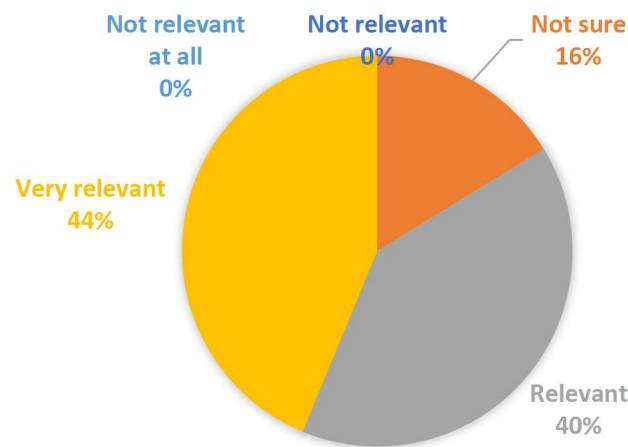

Figure 3: Relevance of Training Programmes Received by Respondents

The findings indicated that the programmes were very relevant (44%). The respondents who were not sure of the relevance of the training programmes recorded 16%. However, there was no record of the programmes not being relevant at all. Cumulatively, relevant and very relevant accounted for 84% of the respondents signifying the importance of staff development programmes on productivity in every institution. This corroborates the findings of Fullan (2006) who indicated that staff development plays an integral role in providing skills and enhancing staff motivation, and therefore Cole (2002) echoes that due to the importance of staff development programmes, some institutions will use all available resources for the permanent development of their staff.

On the quality of the staff development programmes, the majority of the respondents indicated that the training programmes were very good (36. 25%) in developing their career while a few of the respondents indicated the quality of the training programmes was on the average (15%). There was no record of the quality of the programme being poor or very poor by the respondents (Figure 4).
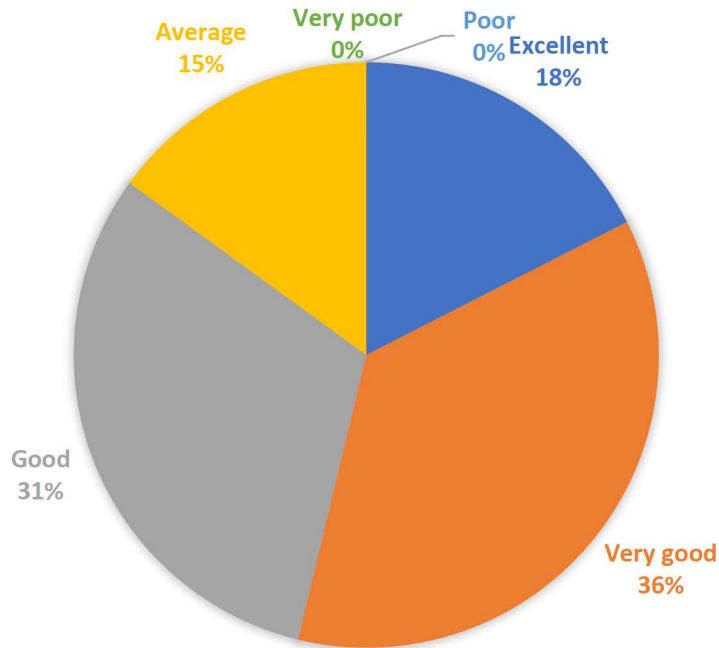
Figure 4: Quality of Staff Development Programmes

Cumulatively, good and very good contributed to 67.5% of respondents. This shows that more than half of the respondents indicated that the training programmes organised by the University were of good quality. This confirms findings from previous studies which suggest that the stock of knowledge, skills and abilities potentially help to increase productivity and performance at work and in life in general (Becker, 1964). It also supports the assertion made by Cole (2002) that training is ideal for addressing complex business challenges in contemporary times.

The last objective of the study sought to identify the challenges encountered by staff in accessing staff development opportunities. From the findings, the main challenges faced by staff in accessing staff development programmes on the Tamale campus included: infrequent training programmes; biases in the selection of applicants; short notification of opportunities; short duration of programmes; inadequate information on programmes; long application and selection process; inadequate sponsorship; unskilled facilitators; and poor planning. It was observed from the responses obtained that inadequate sponsorship was a major challenge (22.5%) while poor planning (2.5%) of programmes constituted the least of the recorded challenges (Figure 5).
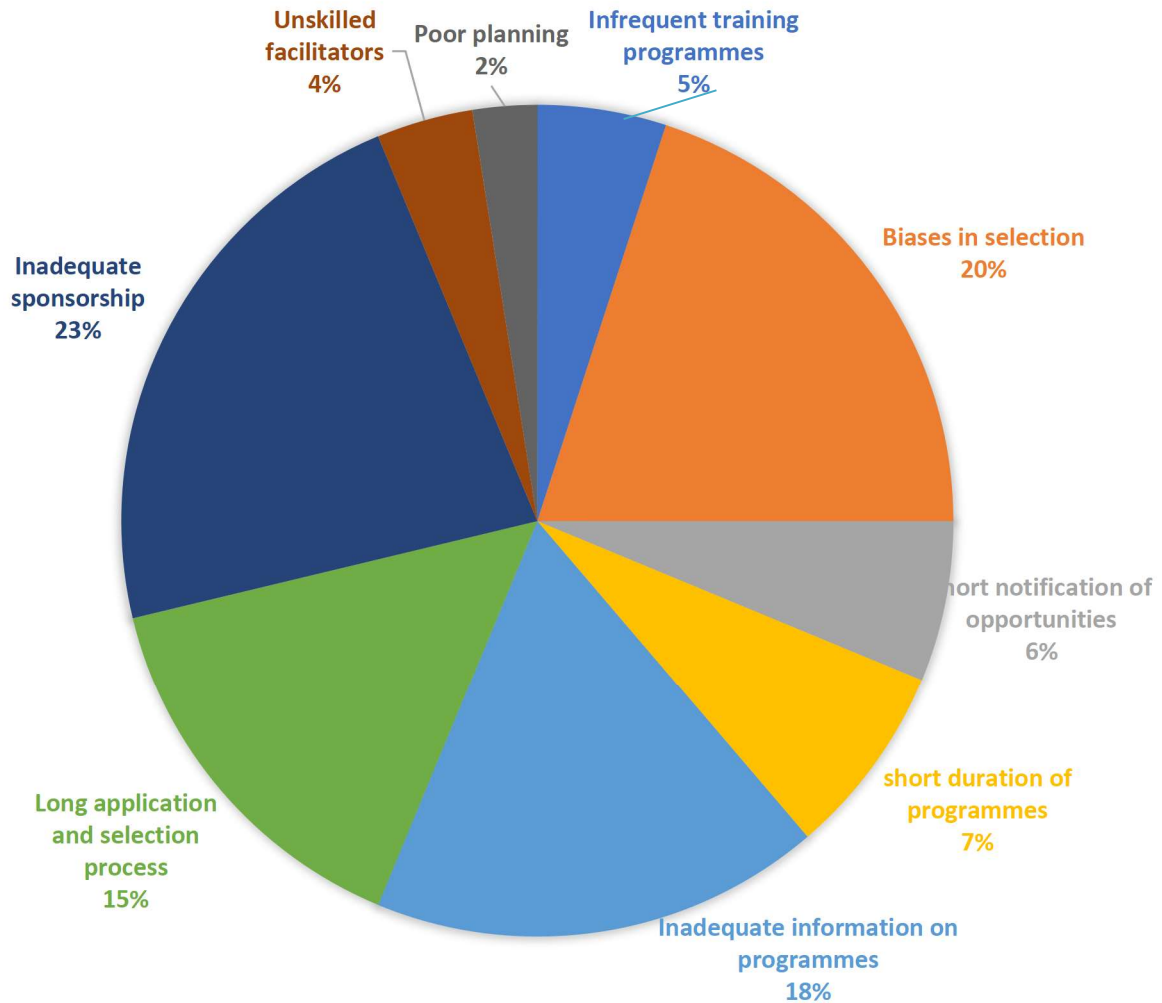
Figure 5: Challenges in Accessing Staff Development Programmes

This implies that if the institution wants to encourage more staff to embark on staff development programmes, sponsorship packages should be made available since there is a direct relationship between staff development programmes and productivity at the workplace in every institution be it private or public. Again, because human Capital is the base of human resource development, Cole (2002) admonished institutions to use all available resources for the permanent development of their staff.

Inadequate information on programmes was the third recorded challenge (17%) among staff in accessing a staff development programme. Barney (2001) clarifies that staff development extends beyond just offering training to include processes such as equipping people and giving them access to needed information to help broaden their knowledge to enable them to execute their duties effectively.

Conclusion

The study revealed that there is currently no staff development policy at the University for Development Studies. However, most staff depend on certain provisions in the Administrative Manual as well as the Strategic Plan for Workforce Development for issues on staff development. This notwithstanding, staff development programmes have been of high quality and relevant in contributing to increased productivity in the University. Unfortunately, there is inadequate sponsorship for staff to undertake these development programmes which hitherto will enhance their work and ultimately impact the productivity of staff.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the conclusions of the study:

Short Term

1. Regular training programmes should be organized by the Training and Development Unit of the University. Staff upon appointment should be made aware of the necessary training programmes for their career development.
2. The Training and Development Unit should endeavour to select skilled facilitators who are experts in the field for staff development training programmes especially in-service training, seminars and workshops in various areas. This will make the organized programmes attractive to staff in subsequent training.

Medium Term

3. The University should establish a Fund or Scholarship scheme to support staff in the various staff development programmes. This will enable more staff to partake in such training, hence leading to increased productivity.
4. The Registrar should encourage staff to undertake professional training programmes, especially those in the following categories: administrators; accountants; auditors; procurement officers; surveyors; engineers; and architects. This will enhance and improve their work and ultimately increase productivity.

Long Term

5. The Registrar should constitute a committee to develop a staff development policy document for the University. This will clearly outline the various programmes, guidelines, and selection criteria of staff for these programmes, which will eliminate the issue of biases in the selection process. It will as well reduce the bureaucracies and inadequacy of information available to staff.
6. The Registrar should institute Human Resource Units on the various campuses of the University. This should be headed by a senior member not lower than the rank of a Senior Assistant Registrar. This department will coordinate all Human Resource issues including staff development programmes on the campuses. He/she will as well serve as the liaison officer between the campus and the Central Administration of the University.

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