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# INFLUENCE OF QUALITY OF ACADEMIC TALENT ATTRACTED AND EMPLOYED ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LECTURERS AT RONGO UNIVERSITY, KENYA

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**Abstract:** There has been an increase in competition among private and public universities in Kenya as well as shortage for competent teaching staff, which makes it pertinent for universities to attract, retain and motivate highly talented employees. Academic staff in the universities with desired talents continue to move from the universities to other sectors of the economy or even relocating abroad. Managing talent is a challenge in public universities in Kenya as they compete for the same pool of talents with other public universities and private universities. This study therefore sought to determine the quality of academic talent attracted and employed at Rongo University. The study used a descriptive research design. The target population of this study was 102 academic staff at Rongo University comprising. The sample size was 82 members of academic staff who will be selected by use of stratified random sampling. The research made use of primary data and secondary data. The secondary data source was the annual reports from Rongo University while primary data was gathered through use of semi-structured questionnaires. Thematic analysis was deployed in analyzing qualitative data then presentation of results was in a narrative form. With the help of SPSS (version 22) quantitative data was analyzed through use of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The research results were presented in tables and figures. The study found that quality of academic talent attracted and employed has a significant effect on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University ($\beta_1$= 0.329, p-value=0.003). The study concludes that quality of academic talent attracted and employed has a statistically significant effect on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. The study recommends that the Human Resource Department in Rongo University should develop job requirements highlighting the key competencies required in the job. The university should also conduct a job analysis to identify talent gaps that need to be filled during recruitment of new staff.

**Key Words:** Quality of academic talent, Academic performance, Academic staff, Lecturers

## Introduction

Higher education worldwide is in a period of transition, affected by globalization, the advent of mass access to education, changing trends in education and new Technologies, among other factors. Global Perspectives on Higher Education provides cogent analysis and comparative perspectives on these and other central issues affecting University education worldwide. World-class universities also widely known as the most prestigious research universities are imperative for advancing a nation's competitiveness in the global knowledge economy. These universities are fundamental in the creation and dissemination of knowledge, educating a highly skilled workforce for technological and intellectual leadership, and resolving societal challenges (Akhavan & Tracz, 2016). In the last decade there has been an increasing number of countries, regions and higher education institutions across the world that were now involved in the competition for academic excellence. This trend to create or

enhance globally competitive universities has been observed in both developed and developing countries.

In the 21st Century organizations, employees are the most valuable assets as compared to tangible resources like land, capital, and equipment. From planning to implementation of rules and strategies, employees are the core ingredient in an organization (Mahlahla, 2018). Regardless of whether staff is serving customers directly or indirectly, their performance influences the success of the organization. One way of ensuring continued employee performance is appropriately using talent management practices (Ayub, 2017). Through strategic talent management an organization is in a position of ensuring proper setting of their own goals, outlining of key issues, pivoting of resources and time, consolidation of functions, setting of internal environment in line with achievement of organization objectives as well as results.

Talent management is one of the components of strategic management that focuses on the inner surrounding of the firm (Aibieyi and Oghoator, 2015). Better management of talent is accompanied by better skills, cognitive abilities, knowledge as well as the potential to perform better. It is not difficult to hire well talented staff, but retaining them in same organization is the challenge. If employees are talented and they perform better at their area of specialization, the organization will aspire to retain them in the company as long as possible. Nevertheless, organization's staff are either comfortable with the work they are currently doing or they look for jobs which are more satisfying than the current ones.

Chandrachud and Athavale (2015) indicate that Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) in Germany are characterized by recruitment of qualified staff and low staff turnover. In addition, problems associated with recruiting and retaining staff in UK academic institutions of higher learning are the current trending issues. On the other hand, in United States, Chuck and Marie (2017) indicated that advocating the issue of talent management in the government institutions of higher learning entails staff retention and engagement. This starts with hiring, induction of hired staff and socializing with the staff. In South Africa, Kissoonduth (2017) indicates that most academic staff had shifted from their general career for at least one time within a period of three years. According to Kwame, Mahama, Boahen and Boahen (2017) lack of talent management programmes leading to high employee turnover in institutions of higher learning has led to reduction in quality of education and students' dissatisfaction in Ghana. In addition, Ampomah and Cudjor (2015) observe that turnover had positive and negative effect on the organization while staff replacement brought new ideas together with skills in the organization; it further made it hard to recruit new staff.

In Kenya, the competition in the public universities is highly increasing since every institution needs to do better and keep their ratings constant hence being able to attract, developing retaining and motivating employees who are competent. Ng'ethe (2013) indicates that talent retention in higher institutions is questionable more so in terms of payment of salaries. As a result of poor salaries, the teaching staff in Kenya has been shifting to other countries and even to the private learning institutions in Kenya that offer better salaries and chances for professional development. Commission of University Education has been tasked to ensure quality academic programmes and quality faculty members. Therefore, there is need to strategize in order for them to deliver excellent services and products that can attain a competitive edge. Strategic talent management strives to attract, develop and retain high potential employees and this provides an organization with competent staff that will impact on its performance. The future of organizations like universities depends on the acquisition, development and retention of talented people to create the leadership capacity and talent required to implement new strategies so as to meet current and future needs. Therefore, this study aimed at

examining the influence of strategic talent management practices on academic performance of academic staff at Rongo University.

**Statement of the Problem**

There are 22 public universities, 14 chartered private universities and 13 universities with Letter of Interim Authority in Kenya. Universities all over the world are meant to be citadels for learning for the wellbeing of the society. They are in this respect associated with prestige, quality and competitiveness. Competition in both private and the public institutions has increased for competent academic staff hence making it pertinent for universities to attract, retain and motivate highly talented employees. In the past, universities employed first degree holders as lecturers, but recently emphasis is on doctoral degree holders. Emerging countries and their universities are committed to boost their capacity and research performance. Despite this development, academic staff with desired talents keep on moving from the universities to other sectors of the economy or even relocating abroad. Employee performance and talent management have become some of the biggest issues in universities in Kenya, because academic staff are the determinants of excellent or poor academic performance of their universities. In the case of rankings ambition, research outputs are key metrics. Conferences, mentorship, innovation, publications and knowledge communication as well as producing marketable graduates through quality teaching as envisioned in Rongo University's vision and mission are measures of quality performance. Therefore, talent management is important in ensuring that universities in Kenya are future oriented, that is to have the right skills in place to be able to perform and grow in the future that is increasingly unpredictable, but not to wait for future challenges before attempting to solve them through talent programs (Nana, 2013).

Despite having staff training policies as well as Human Resource Policy and Procedure manual to guide and govern attraction of talent, Rongo University is still having challenges related to academic staff performance. These challenges have made public universities to turn to part-time lecturers to reduce the wage bill, thus hurting the universities' quality and standards since most of the part-timers may not be committed to the institution. Failure to attract qualified academic staff may be due to low remuneration, lack of opportunities for professional development and low probability of job promotion due to the fact that the University is young and thus is still struggling to set up structures. It is therefore important to examine the effect of quality of academic talent attracted and employed on academic performance of academic staff. Universities have varying higher education systems and are circumscribed by differing cultural, social and historical origins and conditions.

Researchers have conducted research on quality of academic talent attracted and employed and employee performance in Africa including Kenya. Maphoso and Mahlo (2015) investigated on the teacher qualifications and pupil academic achievement in South Africa and found that academic staff qualification had no influence on performance of students. However, having been conducted in South Africa, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to Kenya. Musau and Abere (2015) researched on academic staff qualification and performance of student in technology subjects, science and mathematics subjects in Kenya. The study found out that academic staff qualification does not to have any impact on the performance of students. However, this study was limited to primary schools and hence its findings are not usable in institutions of higher learning.

The Rongo University's vision is to be a world class technology driven University in learning and practice whereas the University's mission is to provide high quality education through teaching, research, community service and nurture innovative graduates. Therefore, it is paramount to determine

how different countries and regions develop world-class universities. Can successful experiences and strategies in one country be copied in other national contexts? This study sought to determine the influence of quality of academic talent attracted and employed on academic staff performance at Rongo University as Universities respond to calls for restructuring and merging of courses due to lack of adequate qualified academic staff with doctorate degrees in Kenyan Universities.

## Theoretical Framework

### Resource Based View Theory

This theory was developed from the work of Birger Wernerfelt in 1990s. This theory is a managerial framework used in determining the strategic resources with the potential to deliver a competitive advantage to a firm. The theory states that the source of sustainable advantage of an organization is derived from doing things in a superior manner; by developing superior capabilities and resources. Valuable resources enable a firm to implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Rare means that resources should not be available to other competitors. Imperfectly imitable implies means resources should not be easily implemented by others and non-substitutable means that the resources cannot be replaced by some other non-rare resource (Hoopes, Hadsen and Walker, 2013).

The theory provides essential knowledge to strategy makers for evaluation of factors that can be implemented to achieve a competitive advantage. The theory however shows that not all resources are equally important, in that not all resources have the capability of creating sustainable competitive advantage. The degree to which resources can be imitated or substituted depends on the sustainability of that resource. Mihi-Ramirez and Girdauskiene, (2013) indicate that out that it is difficult to understand the existing relationship between successful strategies and the sources of advantages. Therefore the organization management must work tirelessly towards identification, understanding and classifying the key organizational competencies. Furthermore, the top managers in a firm must ensure massive investment in learning with an aim of developing, nurturing and maintaining key resources and competencies (Hoopes, Hadsen and Walker, 2013).

The theory depicts that the valuable capabilities of the firm need to be secured (through retaining the talent) and kept away from the competitors with an aim of achieving competitive advantage and firm's growth. The profitability or performance of an institution increases with improvement in caring of the natural resources, nurturing the resources and protecting them (Savanevičienė and Vilčiauskaitė, 2017). When an organization improves the talent through staff training and development, which in turn builds a competitive advantage; the institution will definitely attain its goals, and ensure satisfaction of the stakeholders' interest hence resulting to growth of the institution since the organization will take care of the talents through retention. The theory further advocates for talent nurturing and ensuring they are not taken up by competitors and this can be achieved through talent attraction and recruitment. Through nurturing the academic staff, talents will be improved hence increasing their performance level and the productivity will be depicted in the overall improvement in the performance of the institution.

According to this theory, the key managerial tasks with respect to talent management practices include: identification and attraction of the firm's potential key resources, evaluating whether these resources fulfill the valuable criteria (rare, imperfectly-imitable and non-substitutable) develop (train), nurture and protect (retain) resources that pass these evaluations (Mihi-Ramirez and Girdauskiene, 2013). Thus the theory can explain the employee job cycle (talent attracted and employed) which forms the

independent variable of this study In relation to this study, this theory advocates the essence of creating a competitive advantage, superiority through possessing valuable resource which are talents in this case

## Conceptual Framework

The independent variables of this study are; quality of academic talent attracted, staff training and development and talent retention strategies. The dependent variable was academic performance of lecturers as shown in Figure 1.

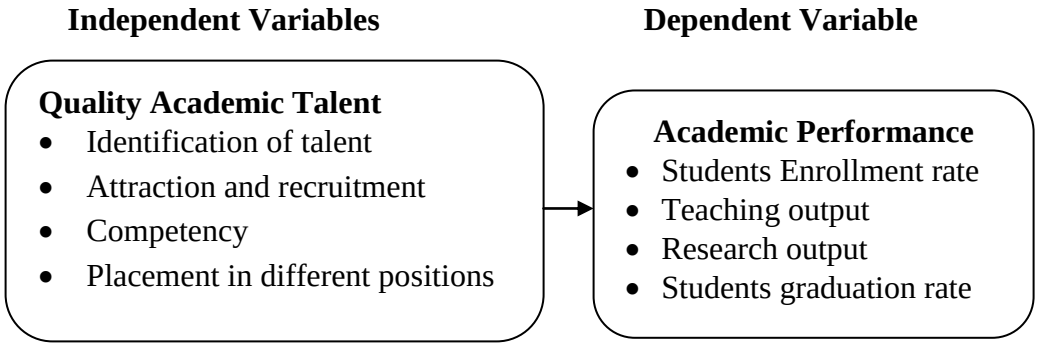


**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## Literature Review

According to this research, quality academic talent means the key competencies that an academic staff have to engage in higher tasks beyond the normal prevailing trend. It is the accentuated knowledge, skills and attitudes of an individual. Rajpal (2016) investigated on quality of employee talents attracted and employed in technical institutions in India. The research used cross-sectional survey design. The research targeted on AICTE approved Technical Institutions and UGC approved universities in India. The study revealed that research capability, awareness of the latest technology and staff teaching ability are among the key talents attracted in approved universities in India. The study also revealed a significant relationship between employee academic staff competence and employee productivity level in AICTE approved Technical Institutions and UGC approved universities. Findings further showed that work motivation moderates the influence of staff competence and employee productivity.

Amalia and Saraswati (2018) conducted a study on the effect of staff competences and teachers performance in Indonesia. The research targeted on 120 academic staff working in Yadika High School. The research adopted descriptive survey design. The results of this study revealed that competence affects teacher performance; good competence improves the performance of teachers as a result it is necessary to improve the competence. Teacher performance should become a standard. Secondly, for low-competency teacher group, teacher-certified group has higher performance level than teachers without certification so that certification becomes a moderating variable in the relationship between competence and performance.

Nbina (2012) researched on staff competence and pupils' performance in Nigeria. The research used a survey design. It was found that staff competence influences performance of pupils. In addition, qualified staff made students performs better as compared to unqualified staff. In Kenya, the Ministry of Education has raised academic qualification of University lecturers to Master's level in any relevant field from accredited institution of higher learning as one of the strategy of improving academic performance. This study investigated the competence of academic staff to establish whether it had an

influence on the academic performance of students and Rongo University at large.

Appah, Amoah, Micah, Ahiamenyo, and Lemaire (2015) researched on the influence of staff quality on the performance of students in the St. Michael-Albertville Schools (STMA) in the Western region of Ghana. The study deployed a descriptive survey design. The research results indicated that in spite of there being quality and trained academic staff, the performance of the students in Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly still remains poor. In Metropolis it was found that the performance of the students relates to the quality of the academic staff. In STMA school in Ghana the research revealed that academic performance of students is least influenced by classroom effectiveness. However, this research was concerned with teaching while the current research will focus on quality of academic talent attracted among the lecturers in Rongo University.

Maphoso and Mahlo (2015) investigated on the teacher qualifications and pupil academic achievement in South Africa. The research employed a descriptive research design. The research findings revealed that there are no significant differences in qualifications of teachers in boarding and non-boarding schools. The research found that academic staff qualification had no influence on performance of students. The research concluded that performance of students in both boarding schools and day schools is not influenced by academic staff qualification. Furthermore, the research revealed that performance of students in Grade 12 in Limpopo Province is not influenced by qualification of academic staff.

Musau and Abere (2015) researched on academic staff qualification and performance of student in technology subjects, science and mathematics subjects in Kenya. The research adopted ex-post-facto survey research design. Academic staff qualification was found not to have any impact on the performance of students in SMT subjects. It was found that the performance of students could be influenced by factors like career growth of the academic staff which may enhance their satisfaction hence making them more committed to their job. Therefore it is worth establishing the relationship of quality of academic talent recruited and employed at Rongo University and how it influences their performance.

**Research Methodology**

The research adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population of this study was 102 academic staff in Rongo University who included graduate assistants, tutorial fellows, assistant lecturers, lecturers, senior lecturers and associate professors and professors. The sample size in this research was determined through use of Slovin's Formula. The research adopted this formula as it considers the entire population.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + NE^2}$$

Where by: n = no. of samples; N = total population; E = error margin / margin of error (0.05); *= multiplication sign

$$n = \frac{102}{1 + (102 * 0.05^2)}$$

$$n = 82$$

**Table 1: Sample Size**

| Academic Staff | Target Population | Sample Size |
|---|---|---|
| Graduate Assistants | 3 | 3 |
| Tutorial fellows | 18 | 14 |
| Assistant Lecturers | 9 | 8 |
| Lecturers | 45 | 36 |
| Senior lecturers | 8 | 6 |
| Associate professors | 14 | 11 |
| Professors | 5 | 4 |
| **Total** | **102** | **82** |

In this research stratified random sampling was employed to select 82 academic staff from the target population. The strata in this research was different categories of academic staff namely, graduate assistants, tutorial fellows, assistant lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors. Stratified random sampling was used in this research since it was suitable in selecting a sample size that best depicts the entire population. This sampling technique was suitable since it has minimal chances of bias in sample selection it also ensures no over representation of some segments or under representation. The number of academic staff per category was selected through proportionate sampling. Further sample size per category was selected through proportionate stratification.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was sourced from the Rongo University's annual reports. The researcher used 102 semi structured questionnaires to gather primary data from the Graduate Assistants, Assistant Lecturers, Tutorial Fellows, Lecturers and Senior Lecturers. An interview schedule was used for professors and associate professors in order to triangulate the information gathered from lecturers. Interview questions were aligned to the research objectives. A pilot study was conducted to enhance the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The research used a Document Analysis Guide for analysis of University documents namely; annual reports and policy documents including Human Resource Procedure Manual, staff training and development policy and research policy.

The research instruments generated both quantitative and qualitative data. Thematic analysis was adopted in analysing qualitative data where the findings were presented in a narrative form. The research adopted both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics with the assistance of SPSS (version 22) to analyse quantitative data. Descriptive statistics included standard deviation, mean, frequency distribution tables and percentage. Inferential statistics included Correlation Analysis together with Regression Analysis. The research results were then depicted in tables and figures (pie charts). The Multi Regression model was as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby; Y = Academic performance of lecturers; $B_0$ = Constant; $\beta_1$ =Coefficients of determination; $X_1$ = Quality of academic talent attracted and employed; and ε = Error term

## Research Findings and Discussions

The sample size of this study was 82 academic staff in Rongo University. Out of the 82 questionnaires that were distributed, 71 were filled and returned, which gave a response rate of 86.6%. However, a return rate of 100% was not achieved as some of the responses had inconsistent information while others were incomplete thus could not be used for analysis in this study. According to Kothari (2012),

a return rate which is above 50% is adequate for data analysis thus the response rate of 86.6% was within the acceptable limit for drawing conclusions.

**Quality of academic talent attracted and employed**

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to the influence of identification of talent on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. Where 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents neutral, 4 represents agree and 5 represents strongly agree. From the findings it indicates Rongo University considers oral skills of the staff since 57.7% the respondents agreed that Communication Skills is identified and incorporated during recruitment. 53.5% of the respondents agreed that Rongo University focused on identifying and incorporating research skills during recruitment. This is an indication that Rongo University being a research and learning center emphasises publications of the academic staff. Further, 46.5% of the respondents agreed and 28.2% strongly agreed that Rongo University focused on identifying and incorporating resource mobilization skills during talent recruitment.

The findings also show that 46.5% the respondents agreed and 16.9% strongly agreed that Rongo University focused on identifying and incorporating teamwork skills during talent recruitment. In addition, 45.1% of the academic staff also agreed and 11.3% strongly agreed that Rongo University focused on identifying and incorporating job mastery skills during talent recruitment. Further, 49.3% of the respondents agreed and 16.9% strongly agreed that Rongo University focused on identifying and incorporating continuous learning during talent recruitment. Also, 52.1% of the respondents agreed that Rongo University focused on identifying and incorporating network and collaboration skills during talent recruitment. This means that Rongo University had recruited staff who could create linkages with other partners for the institution. These findings agree with Farooq and Shahzadi (2006) findings that universities were focusing on collaboration skills, teamwork skills and resource mobilization skills during staff recruitment.

Moreover, 42.3% of the respondents agreed and 16.9% strongly agreed that Rongo University identified and incorporated innovation skills during talent recruitment. The results show that 39.4% of the respondents agreed and 11.3% strongly agreed that Rongo University focused on identifying and incorporating result oriented personnel during talent recruitment. Whereas, 5.6% strongly disagreed, 11.3% disagreed and 32.4% were not certain whether Rongo University was keen on the previous performance and results of the candidates during recruitment. Also, 49.3% of the respondents were neutral whereas 35.2% agreed with the statement that Rongo University focused on identifying and incorporating problem solving skills during talent recruitment. These findings concur with Appah *et al.* (2015) findings that public universities in Ghana were focusing on innovation skills and problem solving skills during talent attraction and recruitment. This shows that half of the respondents were not sure whether Rongo is recruiting staff that can help solve their institutional problems. It is also important to note that key academic talents identified during recruitment included communication skills, Research skills and publication, Network and Collaboration since more than half of the respondents agreed.

**Table 1: Identification of Talent and Academic Performance of Lecturers**

| Key academic talents identified during recruitment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communication skills | 1.4 | 8.5 | 22.5 | 57.7 | 9.9 |
| Problem solving skills | 0.0 | 9.9 | 49.3 | 35.2 | 5.6 |
| Results-orientation | 5.6 | 11.3 | 32.4 | 39.4 | 11.3 |
| Research and publications | 0.0 | 4.2 | 16.9 | 53.5 | 25.4 |
| Innovation | 2.8 | 19.7 | 18.3 | 42.3 | 16.9 |
| Job mastery | 0.0 | 7.0 | 36.6 | 45.1 | 11.3 |
| Teamwork | 0.0 | 12.7 | 23.9 | 46.5 | 16.9 |
| Network and collaboration | 7.0 | 15.5 | 9.9 | 52.1 | 15.5 |
| continuous learning | 9.9 | 5.6 | 18.3 | 49.3 | 16.9 |
| Resource mobilization | 0.0 | 8.5 | 16.9 | 46.5 | 28.2 |

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to competency mapping and placement in different positions of lecturers at Rongo University. Where 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents neutral, 4 represents agree and 5 represents strongly agree. From the findings 45.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that they had the right academic talent to help the university grow. In addition, 40.8% of the respondents and 42.3% strongly agreed that they work in the department where they are qualified to be. Further, 38.0% of the respondents agreed and 23.9% strongly agreed that Rongo University communicates on the kind of academic talent needed during recruitment. These findings agree with Maphoso and Mahlo (2015) findings that public universities in South Africa were using advertisements that comprised of requirements and section criteria. Also, 52.1% of the respondents agreed that Rongo University has clear criteria for promotion that define behaviors, achievements and key performance indicators of academic staff. The findings also show that 32.9% of the respondents were neutral on the statement indicating that Rongo University uses objective method to assess performance of academic staff output. Further, 24.3% of the respondents disagreed, 23.9% agreed and 23.9% strongly agreed that staff who fail to meet organizational targets are provided with relevant training. Also, 27.5% of the respondents were neutral since they might be lacking knowledge on the performance management system in place. 21.7% of the respondents agreed and the same percent disagreed on the statement indicating that Rongo University conducts job analysis to identify talent gap and 27.5% were neutral since they are not aware of any job analysis process. The neutrality could result due to lack of awareness of the promotion criteria of lecturers at the University. This indicates that at Rongo University the level of training for academic staff who fail to meet the target is low or lacking.

**Table 2: Competency Mapping and Placement in Different Positions**

| Competency and Placement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I believe I have the right academic talent to help the university grow | 7.0 | 0.0 | 8.5 | 39.4 | 45.1 |
| I work in the department where I am qualified to be | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 40.8 | 42.3 |
| Rongo university communicates on the kind of academic talent needed during recruitment | 4.2 | 14.1 | 19.7 | 38.0 | 23.9 |
| Rongo university has a clear criteria for promotion that define key performance indicators of academic staff | 1.4 | 5.6 | 18.3 | 52.1 | 22.5 |
| Rongo university uses objective method to assess performance of academic staff output | 15.7 | 14.3 | 32.9 | 25.7 | 11.4 |
| Staff who fail to meet organizational targets are provided with relevant training | 22.9 | 24.3 | 21.4 | 23.9 | 7.0 |
| Rongo university conducts job analysis to identify talent gaps | 18.8 | 21.7 | 27.5 | 21.7 | 10.1 |

The respondents were asked to indicate how quality of academic talent in terms of key competencies affects academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. From the findings, 15.38% of the respondents indicated that the quality of staff attracted and employed at Rongo University impacts on student performance. This was an indication that a high percentage of lecturers believe that whoever is employed greatly influences performance of the students. On the other hand 10.26% of the respondents indicated that a talented staff performs well and delivers while a poorly talented member of academic staff will struggle to perform. In addition, the respondents indicated that a well-grounded personnel in their area of specialization has good classroom delivery and overall student performance (2.56%). Further, the academic staff indicated that talented staff assist in talent nurturing (5.13%). The respondents further indicated that quality academic talent assists in meeting deadlines (7.69%), that enables them to perform their duties effectively (2.56%). The respondents also indicated that it increases productivity rate (7.69%), improves competency of lecturers (12.82%), leads to research and innovation and impacts on quality of teaching and supervision of students (10.26%).

The quality of talents also affect curriculum development which in turn affect academic performance (12.82%), influences knowledge dissemination (5.13%), sharpens skills and attitudes (5.13%) and improves time delivery of teaching and training (2.56%). However, the key informants indicated that Rongo University does not recruit based on need and lacked competitiveness. These findings are in line with Kwame, Mahama, Boahen and Boahen (2017) findings that talent management led to reduction in employee turnover in higher institutions of learning which in turn led to an improvement in quality of education, students' satisfaction and reduction in expenses related to training and recruitment of new staff in Ghana. It is clearly indicated from the findings that non adherence to quality greatly impacts on students' performance, quality improves lecturers' performance as well as enhancing curriculum development.

**Table 3: Effect of Quality of Academic Talents on Academic Performance**

| Effect of quality on academic performance | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| A talented staff performs well and delivers while a poorly talented staff will struggle to perform | 4 | 10.26 |
| A well-grounded personnel in their area of specialization has good classroom delivery and overall student performance | 1 | 2.56 |
| Talented staff assist in talent nurturing | 2 | 5.13 |
| Helps in meeting deadlines | 3 | 7.69 |
| Enables them to perform their duties effectively | 1 | 2.56 |
| Increases productivity rate | 3 | 7.69 |
| Improves competence of lecturers | 5 | 12.82 |
| Impacts on student performance | 6 | 15.38 |
| Leads to research and innovation and impacts on quality of teaching and supervision of students | 4 | 10.26 |
| Quality of talents affects curriculum development which in turn affect academic performance | 5 | 12.82 |
| Influences knowledge dissemination | 2 | 5.13 |
| Sharpens skills and attitudes | 2 | 5.13 |
| Improves time delivery of teaching and training | 1 | 2.56 |
| **Total** | **39** | **100.00** |

The study findings indicated that the techniques that are commonly used to gauge the uniqueness of the applicants are majorly qualification, research, oral communication and publications that an individual has managed to produce. It is also important that persuasion technique was seen as a way of identifying lecturers with talent during recruitment.

The academic staff were asked to indicate whether Rongo University was losing lecturers to its competitors. From the findings, 56.3% of the respondents indicated that Rongo University was not losing lecturers to its competitors while 43.7% indicated that Rongo University was losing lecturers to its competitors. This in line with Chandrachud and Athavale (2015) findings that Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) were characterized by recruitment of qualified staff and low staff turnover though to a small extent. According to the results of the document analysis it was indicated that six academic staff members had left Rongo University to other institutions. Though a higher percentage of the academic staff felt that Rongo University was not losing lecturers to its competitors it is evident that staff leave Rongo for greener pastures elsewhere.

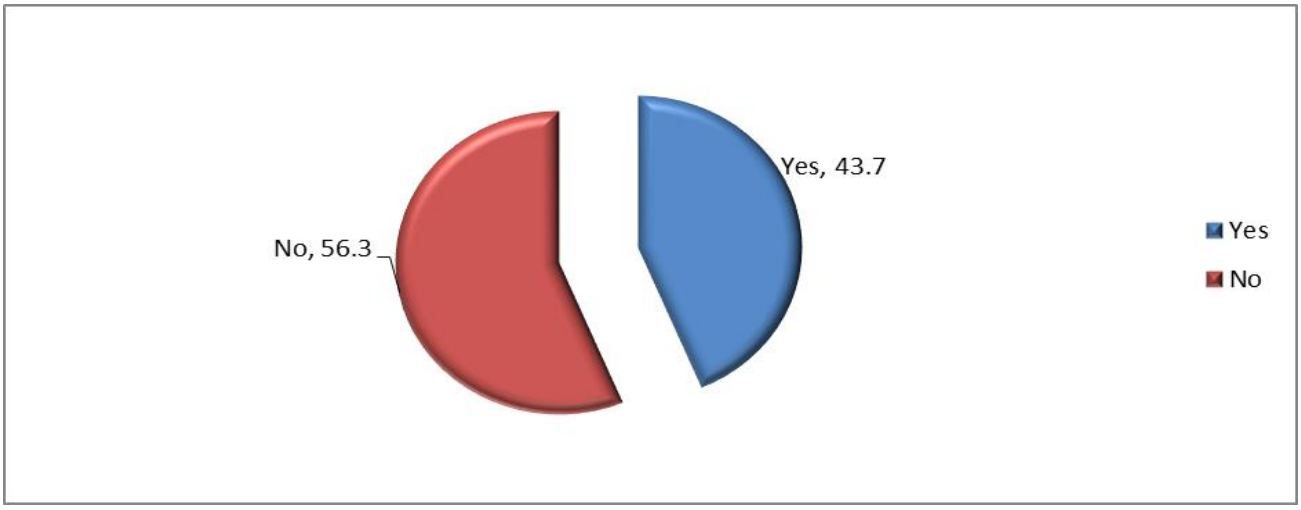


**Figure 2: Losing Lecturers to Competitors**

**Academic performance**

The dependent variable for this study was academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. In a scale of 1 to 10, most of the key informants (professors) rated the academic performance of lecturers in Rongo University as 7. Specifically, quality was rated as 7 and commitment was rated as 6. The key informants also indicated that the curriculum was shallow and needed review and development. They also indicated that lecturers do good job especially part-timers, but regular lecturers are not doing their best not working hard.

The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement level on various statements relating to academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. Where 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents neutral, 4 represents agree and 5 represents strongly agree. From the findings, 53.5% of the respondents agreed that Rongo University has a class capacity that they can manage. However, 39.4% of the respondents agreed and 18.3 strongly agreed that the student -staff ratio at Rongo University is high. These findings agree with Webometrics (2019) report that compared to other public universities in Kenya, Rongo University attraction of students is low and hence there was no congestion in classes and lecture rooms. This implies that performance can be hindered by this high number of students though the lecturers agree that the classes that they have are manageable.

The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement level on various statements relating to teaching output at Rongo University. Where 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents neutral, 4 represents agree and 5 represents strongly agree. According to the results, 64.8% of the respondents agreed that they complete their teaching content within the set time frame. In addition, 64.8% of the respondents agreed that most of their students score good grades in their exams. Further, 33.8% of the respondents agreed and 31.0% were neutral on the statement indicating that there has been an increase in the number of students who score first class degrees. Though the academic staff indicated that they complete teaching in time and that the students they teach score good grades, most of them are unsure of the general scores of the students at the end of the course as they graduate.

According to the results, 67.6% of the respondents agreed that they have a number of research publications. In addition, 32.4% of the respondents were neutral, 31.0% strongly disagreed and 26.8% agreed that Rongo University funds their research projects. This implies that most academic staff have published at least more than two publications, though funding was not done by Rongo University.

Though some were uncertain whether the University funds the research projects. Funding seems to be lacking at Rongo University.

From the findings, 52.1% of the respondents agreed that most of the students in Rongo University under the undergraduate category, graduate within the stipulated time. In addition, 50.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement indicating that most of the students in Rongo University under the masters' category graduate, within the stipulated time. Further, 54.9% of the respondents disagreed with the statement indicating that most of the students in Rongo University under the PhD category graduate within the stipulated time. Also, 31.0% of the respondents agreed and 28.2% disagreed with the statement indicating that most of the academic research at Rongo University enhances new scientific discoveries. These results indicate that the undergraduate students graduate at the stipulated time whereas the Masters Students and PhD students seem to take a longer time.

**Table 5: Students Graduation Rate of Rongo University**

| | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have a class capacity that I can manage | 1.4 | 15.5 | 14.1 | 53.5 | 15.5 |
| The student –staff ratio at Rongo university is high | 18.3 | 15.5 | 8.5 | 39.4 | 18.3 |
| Most of my students score good grades in their exams | 9.9 | 8.5 | 14.1 | 64.8 | 2.8 |
| There has been an increase in the number of students who score first class degrees | 5.6 | 29.6 | 31.0 | 33.8 | 0.0 |
| I complete my teaching content within the set time frame | 0.0 | 11.3 | 14.1 | 64.8 | 9.9 |
| I have more than two research publications | 7.0 | 2.8 | 11.3 | 67.6 | 11.3 |
| Rongo university funds my research projects | 31.0 | 9.9 | 32.4 | 26.8 | 0.0 |
| Most of the academic research at Rongo university enhances new scientific discoveries | 12.7 | 28.2 | 26.8 | 31.0 | 1.4 |
| Undergraduate | 0.0 | 5.6 | 12.7 | 29.6 | 52.1 |
| Masters | 9.9 | 50.7 | 21.1 | 15.5 | 2.8 |
| PhD | 12.7 | 54.9 | 18.3 | 11.3 | 2.8 |

## Inferential Statistics

Correlation and regression analysis were used examine the influence of independent variable (quality of academic talent attracted and employed) on the dependent variable (academic performance of lecturers at Rongo university).

## Correlation Analysis

The study used Pearson product-moment correlation analysis to assess the association between independent variable (quality of academic talent attracted and employed) and academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University (dependent variable). From the findings, as shown in Table 6, there was a positive association between quality of academic talent attracted and employed and academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University($r=0.349$, p-value=0.003). The association was considered significant as the p-value 0.003 was less than the significant level of this study which was 0.05. These findings agree with Gee (2018) lecturers' competencies have an effect on service delivery and academic performance. The findings also agree with Nbina (2012) findings that students taught by qualified teachers performed significantly better than those taught by unqualified teachers.

**Table 6: Correlation Coefficients**

| | | Academic performance | Quality of academic talent attracted and employed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Academic performance | Pearson Correlation | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | |
| | N | 71 | |
| Quality of academic talent attracted and employed | Pearson Correlation | .349** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .003 | |
| | N | 71 | 71 |

**Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis was used to assess the association between the independent variable (quality of academic talent attracted and employed) and the dependent variable (academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University).

The regression equation was;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby; Y = academic performance of lecturers; $X_1$ = quality of academic talent attracted and employed; ε = Error Term; $\beta_0$ = Constant Term; $\beta_1$-$\beta_3$ = Independent variables Beta Co-efficient.

The R-squared shows the variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable being studied. The R-squared in this study was 0.122. This implied that the independent variable (quality of academic talent attracted and employed) could explain 12.2% of academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University.

**Table 7: Model Summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .349[a] | .122 | .109 | .45137 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Quality of academic talent attracted and employed

The analysis of variance shows whether or not a model is a good fit for the data. The F-calculated (9.550) was greater than the F-critical (4.0012) and the p-value (0.000) was less than the significance level (0.05) and hence the model was suitable in depicting the data. This implied that the model could be used in predicting the influence quality of academic talent attracted and employed on the dependent variable (academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University).

**Table 8: Analysis of Variance**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Regression | 1.946 | 1 | 1.946 | 9.550 | .003[b] |
| 1 | Residual | 14.058 | 69 | .204 | | |
| | Total | 16.003 | 70 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Academic performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Quality of academic talent attracted and employed

The regression model was as follows;

$$Y = 2.028 + 0.329X_1 + \varepsilon$$

The results show that quality of academic talent attracted and employed has a significant effect on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University as shown by a regression coefficient of 0.329. Since the p-value (0.003) was less than the significance level the effect of quality of academic talent attracted and employed on academic performance of lecturers was statistically significant. These findings are contrary to Farooq and Shahzadi (2006) findings that there is a significant relationship between trained teachers and academic performance. However, they agree with Maphoso and Mahlo (2015) findings that there is no significant difference in qualifications of teachers between schools with low and high academic achievement.

The findings of this study can be explained by the fact that Rongo University has only operated as a full-fledged public University for less than 3 years, since October 2016. As such, the University has not been putting much considerations in the quality of quality of academic talent attracted and employed and most of the times only focused on academic qualification of the recruits. In addition, due to its location, it may not a preferred University to most of the academic staff as most academic staff (lecturers) prefer working in Universities closer to major towns like Kisumu, Eldoret and Nairobi. Therefore, due to lack of many options the university end up recruiting the staff that apply for the jobs.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that quality of academic talent attracted and employed has no significant effect on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. However, the study found that during recruitment of talent Rongo University focused on identifying and incorporating various skills during recruitment. It is also important to note that Key academic talents identified during recruitment included communication skills, Research skills and publication, Network and Collaboration since more than half of the respondents agreed.

Rongo University communicates on the kind of academic talent needed during recruitment and has a clear criteria that define behaviors, achievements and key performance indicators of academic staff. However, Rongo University was not conducting job analysis to identify talent gap and the academic staff who fail to meet organizational targets were not provided with relevant training. The study found that found talented academic staff assist in talent nurturing, help in meeting deadlines, enable them to perform their duties effectively, increase productivity rate, improve competence of lecturers, lead to research and innovation and considerably influence the quality of teaching and supervision of students.

## Recommendations

The study found that key competencies depend on the quality of academic talent attracted and employed and considerably influences academic performance of lecturers. The study therefore recommends that the human resource department in Rongo University should develop job requirements highlighting the key competencies required in the job. More than half of the academic staff indicated that staff who fail to meet organizational targets should be provided with relevant training which was not a case in Rongo University. The study therefore recommends that Rongo University should develop performance management program for staff who fail to meet some of the relevant requirements. In addition, more than one half of the academic staff indicated that Rongo University does not conduct job analysis to identify talent gap. The study therefore recommends that the university should always conduct a job analysis to identify talent gaps that need to be filled and hence develop appropriate job requirements based on the gaps and implemented during recruitment of new staff to improve the quality of staff.

## Areas of further Research

This study focused on the academic performance of lecturers and hence obtained information from lecturers. However, the lecturers could have been biased in rating their academic performance. The study therefore suggests future studies to focus on both lecturers and students, who are the customers in public universities. This study was limited to Rongo University, which is one of the public universities in Kenya. Therefore, the findings are not generalizable to other public and private universities in Kenya. The study therefore suggests comparative studies on talent management strategies and academic performance of lecturers in other public universities and private universities in Kenya. The study found that quality of academic talent attracted and employed could only explain 12.2% of the academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. The study therefore suggests further studies on other factors affecting the academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University.

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