



INFLUENCE OF COUNSELLING SERVICES ON NON TEACHING STAFF PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES OF NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Employees are the most important human resource an organization cannot do without. They make a significant contribution to the success of an organization. Currently there is increased pressure for employees to be productive at their work place. This pressure is presented by the need to deliver the expected product or service in the market place while fulfilling the organization's mission and vision. Most employees suffer from a number of personal issues such as emotional, family and home life conflicts, mental health concerns, substance abuse problems, and other health disorders that if not attended to has the capability of negatively influencing on their effective performance. The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of counselling services on non teaching staff performance. The study was guided by person centred theory. The target population comprised administrative staff. Purposive sampling was used to select the administrators in public universities of Nakuru county. Census was used to get a sample size of 91 respondents. A structured questionnaire was administered to provide the required data. The questionnaire was pilot tested to ascertain its validity and reliability. Reliability coefficient of 0.733 was found and considered reliable. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to present and analyze the data Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 a computer program for windows aided in data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that there that there was a moderate statistically significant positive relationship of ($r = 0.472$, $p < 0.05$) between Counselling services and Employee performance. Recommendations were that HR departments in public Universities needs to sensitize employees on the provision of counselling services. These services should also be designed to address employee needs and frequently offered as the need arises. . The study also recommends that further research could be carried out in other cadre of profession in both public and private universities to establish the differences.

Key words: Counselling, Employee Assistance Programs, Employee Performance, Nakuru County.

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1.1 Background of the Study

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is widely used to identify services that address the employee problems in the workplace. EAPs are an employer sponsored benefit consisting of diagnostic and referral services for employees and their families. According to Newton, Hayday and Barkworth (2005) EAP is a worksite program intended to assist in the identification and resolution of employee concerns which affect or may affect work performance. The EAP is an intervention designed to provide professional services to employees whose job performance is affected negatively by work concerns and personal problems. EAPs assist employee in identifying and resolving personal concerns including health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or other personal issues that may affect job performance (Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA, 2010c).

Counselling is the act of assisting a client to have a positive perception about things. It aims to assist the client to possibly perceive things from a different point of view from what the initially perceive it, to enable the client function effectively. Counselling enables a client to develop positive feelings, experiences and behaviours that would facilitate positive change. Counselling services are offered to the person that is undergoing a problem and deserves professional assistance to enable him overcome such problem (Roy, 2011). She argues that such a problem could keep the individual disturbed and under tension unless resolved, the development of this individual will continue to be hampered. Counselling therefore is a specialized service carried out by professionals or trained personnel in personality development and in the act of handling exceptional individuals or groups. Counselling is a process involving two individuals, one seeking assistance and the other a professionally trained person to help solve problems of a client to orient and direct him towards a goal, which leads to his maximum development and growth.

Counselling services are therefore required for individuals having developmental problems because of the handicap they suffer in any area of emotional either because of hereditary factors or environment conditions. When an employee's performance or that of the work group is affected by personal problems, the employer, supervisor or manager must intervene. In such cases referral to professional counselling may be appropriate. An analysis of counselling at work and its associated activities has found a range of benefits to individual employees and the organization. There is positive correlation between the provision of counselling and workplace benefits that impact on employee job performance. (McLeod, 2001).

Most people feel depressed when they experience a breakdown in their relationships or suffer disappointment and when the pressures of work or family life build up as well as anxiety (Lynch, 1998). Giving EAP services for employees experiencing these problems is an important benefit and can enhance the image of the organization to its employees. EAP therefore has a direct impact on the level of employee satisfaction and thus on the value an employee can produce in the organization. This enables employees to serve organization customers and increase their increasing loyalty towards the organization.

EAPs are employer sponsored programs designed to alleviate a range of workplace problems using core technologies such as screening, assessment, brief intervention and referral to service providers, case management and follow-up services for mental health and substance-abuse problems. There has been a significant increase in organization investment in employee wellbeing resulting from the EAP. Attridge (2010) indicates that a number of studies have shown positive outcomes for EAPs in different areas especially in the workplace performance and benefit cost categories.

EAP refer clients to individuals or organizations that offer professional support, advice and treatment in various fields of relevance that match best with the client needs. The EAP has procedures to facilitate client referrals, which address the provision of consultation between the EAP and the host or customer organization, and responsibilities for providing follow-up, aftercare, and transition for clients served. According to McLeod (2001) counselling provides a supportive service to clients and employees in the workplace, developments that help alleviate symptoms of ill behaviour which manifest themselves in the form of conflicts, bullying and undermining of unsuitable work conditions or bad relationships with colleagues. Cole (2003) states that workplace counselling opens up communication between staff and employers, and encourages frank discussions. Counselling enables workers to explore alternative solutions to the problems with greater health and well-being resulting in better work performance.

Personal problems may cause the organization a lot in terms of productivity. According to Oher (1999), solving personal problems, retains quality staff, giving management greater knowledge of employees and how satisfied they are. This results in improved staff morale, efficiency, absenteeism and turnover thereby reducing grievances. McLeod (2001) argues that employees who receive counselling at their workplace experience increased productivity as compared to those who did not practice workplace counselling. Mayor (2006) found that workplace counselling can achieve reduction in work related stress in more than 50 per cent of employees who have received counselling. Workplace counselling assists employees to reduce work related stress as well as socioeconomic stresses or pressures (Tehran, 1997). He found out that work related stress had decreased by a larger percentage and this was shown by work performance that had increased by 50 per cent. In addition, he suggests that employee management relationship also improved within the organization thus made an impact on the productivity level.

There is a positive link between counselling employees and personnel performance. Stresses that affect employees were caused by sickness and led to absence from work. This was a major contributor to poor work performance (Highley, 1996). McLeod (2008) found out that employees have to be aware of all workplace counselling policies and practices for easy evaluation. According to the research, 80 per cent of those who were aware of these policies and practices were able to recommend or use counselling again. McInnes (2007) found out that wellbeing and personal development by employees is better approached when they are all informed. This gives employees to produce better results when all



participants are informed of their existence and rationale. This gives employees a better understanding and appreciation of workplace.

Workplace counselling is important in improving employee well being and performance. It also helps employees in alleviating symptoms of workplace stress, burnout and depression. Workplace counselling should be used as a tool to restore employees and potentially improve employee and organizational performance (Chan, 2011) Workplace counselling has a significant effect on employees. This increases job performance in an organization (Izzat, 2014). A study on evaluating the workplace influence of counselling by David, John and Richard (2012) revealed that workplace counselling resulted in a positive impact on the workplace. According to Munyolo (2015) in his study on the role of EAP on employee productivity he concluded that there was a relationship between use of EAPs and productivity. He noted that with an increase in EAPs, employees are motivated and therefore increasing their productivity.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most organizations realize that job performance of workers seems to be declining. This is because most workers exhibit negative attitude towards their jobs. According to Zetlin (2013) personal problems sometimes affect their work performance. Personal challenge causes absenteeism and makes it difficult for employees to concentrate on their jobs. There is an increased pressure for employees to be productive at their work place. This pressure is presented by the need to deliver the expected product or service in the market place while fulfilling the organization's mission (Beard, 2000). It has been reported that employees suffer from a number of issues such as emotional, family and home life conflicts, mental health concerns, substance abuse problems, and other health disorders that if not attended to has the capability of negatively influencing on their effective performance (The Hartford, 2007). Minimal attention has been given towards ensuring workers in public universities have been provided with the necessary resources, motivation, effective job allocation measures and management (Waswa and Swaleh, 2012). Additionally Owino et al (2013) argues that lack of resources, motivation, and negative relationships leads to stressed employees and poor performance. Public Universities in their strategic plans have indicated provision of Employee Assistance services. Despite these provisions some of non teaching staff performance does not meet the required standard. This study therefore seeks to assess the influence of counselling services on non teaching staff performance in public Universities of Nakuru County.

1.3 Purpose and Objective of the Study

To establish the influence of counselling services on non teaching staff performance in public Universities of Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Question

What are the influence of counselling services on non teaching staff performance in public Universities of Nakuru County, Kenya?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study was guided by Person Centered Theory

2.1.1 Person Centered Theory

Person Centered Theory is also known as Client Centred Theory was developed by Carl Rodgers in the 1940s. Rather than viewing people as inherently flawed with problematic behaviors and thoughts that require treatment, person centered therapy identifies that each person has the capacity and desire for personal growth and change. Rogers termed this natural human inclination "actualizing tendency," or self actualization. He likened it to the way that other living organisms strive toward balance, order, and greater complexity. According to Rogers (1957) individuals have within themselves vast resources for self understanding and for altering their self concepts, basic attitudes, and self directed behaviour. These resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided. The theory is guided by three principles namely:

(i) Unconditional positive regard

The clients' experiences, positive or negative, should be accepted by the therapist without any conditions or judgment. In this way, the client can share experiences without fear of being judged. Corey (2009) suggests that a therapist needs to communicate with deep and genuine caring for the client as a person. He further states that caring should be unconditional and the client should not be judged by feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

(ii) Accurate empathetic understanding

Empathy is the ability to understand what the client is feeling. This refers to the therapist's ability to understand sensitively and accurately but not sympathetically the client's experience and feelings in the here and now. An important part of the task of the person centered counsellor is to follow precisely what the client is feeling and to communicate to them that the therapist understands what they are feeling.



(iii) Congruence

Congruence is also called genuineness. Congruence is the most important attribute in counselling according to Rogers. This means that, unlike the psychodynamic therapist who generally maintains a 'blank screen' and reveals little of their own personality in therapy, the Rogerian is keen to allow the client to experience them as they really are. The therapist does not have a façade (like psychoanalysis), that is, the therapist's internal and external experiences are one in the same. In short, the therapist is authentic. Gurman and Messer (2003) states that therapists should be genuine during the therapy hour. Therapists need to openly express their feelings and reactions throughout the session. Thus if the therapists are genuine in their relationships with clients then the trust will be generated and the process of therapy will get underway.

2.1.2. Counselling Services and Employee Performance

Counselling is the act of assisting a client to have a positive perception about things. It aims to assist the client to possibly perceive things from a different point of view from what they initially perceive it to enable the client function effectively. Gichinga (2011) defines counselling as a relationship in which one person helps another to understand and solve their problems the ultimate goal is a helping relationship. Employee counselling can be defined as a process which is initiated by the counsellor or the manager to assist the employee or subordinate to gain knowledge, understanding and insights on a performance concern. This could relate to the counsellee's attitude, motivation or interpersonal skills. Workplace counselling is the provision of brief psychological therapy for employees of an organization paid for by the employer. Workplace counselling offers employees a facility that is confidential, easily accessed, provides a properly qualified and supervised practitioner, and promises to alleviate distress within a reasonably short period of time.

Workplace counselling enables the employer to give a service that is valued by employees and has the potential for savings by reducing sickness absence, takes pressure off managers through the availability of a constructive means of dealing with 'difficult' staff or situations, and contributes to its reputation as a caring employer. Essentially the aim of counselling is to provide timely professional and confidential aid for employees whose personal problems might otherwise lead to work impairment, absenteeism, reduce productivity and cause accidents and conflicts in the workplace, or even job termination.

Counselling enables a client to develop positive feelings, experiences and behaviours that would facilitate positive change. Roy (2011) agrees that counselling services are offered to the person that is undergoing a problem and deserves professional assistance to enable him overcome such problem. She argues that such a problem could keep the individual disturbed and under tension unless resolved, the development of this individual will continue to be hampered.

Counselling is seen as encompassing the full range of personalized assistance given to the individual seeking to expand his self understanding and his understanding of others (Odeburumi, 2002). The EAP counselling component is seen as the primary intervention and so is the subject of most EAP related research (Attridge, 2009). Previous research has shown that EAP counselling client satisfaction is generally around 95% and measured improvements in employee absenteeism, productivity and identified a positive impact on workers compensation costs (McLeod, 2001).

Counselling and psychological support for employees is the basis of any human organization. Modalities of counselling services include telephone counselling, face to face counselling, psychological debriefing, group support and legal advice. The importance of this is to support staff through any difficulties that impact on their working lives. Core to the service is the ability to work with organizations and their staff at all levels. Performance counselling is an indispensable part of job supervision in any organization if employees must be efficient in their performance.

Employee counselling programs are beneficial to solving employee problems that affect job performance. Counselling programs were initially designed to address drug and alcohol problems among employees, but their role has expanded over the years to meet more employee's needs. Such employees' needs addressed by these counselling programs include marriage and family problems, financial problems, legal problems, stress, anxiety, depression, and other emotional disturbances. Modern counselling services cover employees and their families such that, issues arising from both work and home environments are addressed. The provision of workplace counselling has steadily expanded over the years, with more than 75% of medium and large organizations in Britain and North America making counselling available to their staff (Carroll & Walton, 1999; Oher, 1999)

Employee counselling programs according to Richard, Emener, and Hutchison (2009) have the ability to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of employees' work. Therefore increased work efficiency and effectiveness results to high productivity and improved performance in an organization. Employee counselling programs according to Gupton et.al (2011), relieves negative behavioural attributes such as anger, violence, substance abuse, absenteeism, attendance at work and work related accidents that impact negatively on job performance. One of the many reasons for adopting employee counselling programs in any organization is to mitigate employee's personal problems that affect their job performance. Implementation of the counselling programs is one of the positive ways of managing the lives and performance of employee. According to Zarkin and Garfinkel (1994), organizations that value its employees will provide counselling programs to improve job performance, enhance productivity, and protect its investments.

According to Rajin (2012) the role of EAPs is to motivate employees to seek help before their personal problems reach a chronic stage that reduces the employee's ability to perform their job well, to retain valued employees, restore employee's productivity and to enable them to lead a meaningful and happy life while they are in the workplace.



2.2 Conceptual Framework

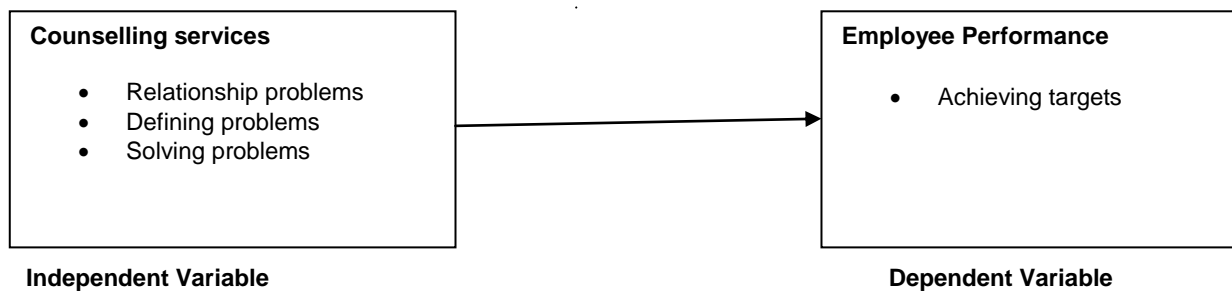


Figure1: Conceptual Framework

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The design was ideal for this study because the researcher conducted a study of facts as they were at the time of the study (Frankel & Wallen, 2000). According to Orodho (2003) descriptive research describes the nature of existing conditions, identifies the standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determine the relationship that exists between the specific events. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) defines target population as that population whose research and findings are used to generalize to the entire population. The target population was the Public Universities non teaching staff in Nakuru County. The study used purposive sampling technique to select administrators in public universities. The validity and reliability of the research instrument was pilot tested to ascertain the validity and reliability. This research used both quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative helps to understand people's perceptions while quantitative focuses on prediction. .

3.2 Sample Size

A sample of 91 employees was selected for this study from the target population. The study used census as advocated by (Israel², 1992), that a census is attractive for small population of 200 or less. A census eliminates error and provides data on all the individuals in the population. Finally, the entire population was sampled to achieve a desirable level of precision.

3.3 Data collection

The structured questionnaire was used to collect the information from the employees of the universities at their work place. Questionnaires were circulated to 91 respondents who were Administrators in public Universities of Nakuru County. 76 (83.5%) questionnaires were successfully completed and received while 15 (16.5%) questionnaires were not returned. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) reported that 50% response is adequate, 60% good and above 70% rates as very good.

3.4 Data Analysis

Once the raw data had been collected, the first step was to clean the data for any inconsistencies. The coding of the data was the next step. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to explain results of the findings. These included means, frequencies and percentages. Analysis was done using a computer programme, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In addition, the researcher used Pearson correlation so as to determine the relationship between counseling services (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable).

4.1 Results and Findings

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyze counseling services. In reference scaling (Likert scale) used in the study design, 5 represented strongly agree, 4 represented agree, 3 represented Not sure, 2 represented disagree and 1 represented strongly disagree, therefore strongly disagree (1) was minimum, strongly agree (5) was maximum. The mean was analyzed based on the respondents choices scaled between strongly agree and strongly disagree as indicated in table 1

**Table 1: Elements of Counselling Services**

Elements of counselling services	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Counselling plays an important role in solving employees' problems	76	2	5	4.38	0.711
Counselling helps employees in defining their problems	76	2	5	4.14	0.605
Counselling helps employees in dealing with problems	76	2	5	4.24	0.630
Counselling enables employees to be more responsible towards their duty at work	76	2	5	3.91	0.882
Counselling enables employees to adapt themselves with working environment	76	2	5	3.89	0.918
Discussing personal problems with counsellor lightens the pressure on the employees	76	2	5	3.88	1.006
Counselling process takes a long time and it is boring	76	1	5	2.36	1.163
I feel ashamed and shy to discuss my problems with counsellor	76	1	5	2.79	1.135
Counselling session helps me to know my weaknesses and problems	76	1	5	3.93	0.772
Counselling is important in improving job satisfaction among the employees	76	1	5	3.79	0.957
Counselling helps us in developing self-improvement	76	1	5	3.97	0.748
Counselling service is one of the important facilities in an organization	76	2	5	4.39	0.655
I think the counselling programs are waste of time and money	76	1	4	1.43	0.596
Valid N (list wise)	76				

According to the findings in table 4.2 it is evident that most of the respondents in this study agreed with most aspects of counselling services with a mean of 4. The findings concur with to Richard, Emener, and Hutchison (2009) that counselling programs have the ability to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of employees' work. However the findings revealed that respondents disagreed that counselling process takes a long time and it is boring compared to those who strongly disagreed that counselling programs were waste of time and money represented by a mean of 2 and 1 respectively.

Table 2: Elements of Employee Performance

Elements of employee performance	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
I am satisfied with my performance at my work	76	1	5	4.08	0.829
I fear about the quality of my work	76	1	5	2.71	1.081
I work more than 8 hours	76	1	5	3.39	1.173
I get tensed at non achievement of my target	76	1	5	3.63	0.978
I am able to plan and work in an organized manner while identifying priorities	76	2	5	4.05	0.943
I am able to communicate effectively with customers and other colleagues	76	1	5	4.00	1.083
I am self-driven to undertake the agreed tasks	76	1	5	4.35	0.830
I am careful in carrying out tasks or duties with proper attention	76	2	5	4.29	0.689
Personal problems affects my job performance	76	1	5	3.53	1.160
I respond to customers request promptly	76	2	5	4.08	0.891
Valid N (list wise)	76				

The analysis in table 4.5 above showed that the respondents agreed with most aspects of their performance with a mean of 4. The respondents in the study were neutral whether they fear about the quality of their work and that they work more than 8 hours with a response mean of 3. The findings revealed that employees were self driven to undertake the agreed tasks with the highest mean 4.35. This results is consistent with Rajin (2012) that EAPs motivates employee to seek help



before their personal problems affects their productivity. The study also established that respondents were neutral about fearing the quality of work with lowest mean of 2.71.

4.2 Influence of Counselling Services on Non teaching Staff Performance in Public Universities of Nakuru County.

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of counselling services on non teaching staff performance in public universities of Nakuru County. The key elements of Counselling services on non teaching staff performance in public universities of Nakuru County were: - Counselling plays an important role in solving employees' problems, counselling helps employees in defining their problems, counselling helps employees in dealing with problems, counselling enables employees to be more responsible towards their duty at work, counselling enables employees to adapt themselves with working environment, discussing personal problems with counsellor lightens the pressure on the employees, counselling process takes a long time and it is boring, employees feel ashamed and shy to discuss their problems with counsellor, counselling session helps employees to know their weaknesses and problems, employees think the counselling programs are waste of time and money, counselling helps employees in developing self-improvement, counselling service is one of the important facilities in an organization and is important in improving job satisfaction among the employees. The study used Pearson Correlation to establish the kind of relationship that existed between counselling services and employee performance.

Table 3: Correlation between Counselling Services and Employee Performance

		Employee performance
Counselling services	Pearson Correlation	0.472
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000
	N	76

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Based on table 4.7 the results revealed that there was a moderate statistically significant positive relationship of ($r = 0.472$, $p < 0.05$) between Counselling services and Employee performance. Consequently, this confirms the effect of counselling services on performance of non teaching staff in selected public universities of Nakuru County and answers the first research question that counselling services has significant influence on the performance of non teaching Staff in public universities of Nakuru County.

The findings agree with Gishinga (2011) who sees counselling services aim is to provide timely professional and confidential aid for employees whose personal problems might otherwise lead to work impairment, absenteeism, reduce productivity and cause accidents and conflicts in the workplace, or even job termination. It is also supported by Izzat, (2014) who stated that counselling services increases job performance. These findings are consistent with studies done by Richard, Emener, and Hutchison (2009) who argued that counselling services have the ability to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of employees' work. Therefore increased work efficiency and effectiveness results to high productivity and improved performance in an organization.

5.1 Summary

The main objective of the study was to assess the Influence of counselling services on Non teaching Staff Performance in Public Universities of Nakuru County.

5.2. Influence of Counselling Services on Non teaching Staff Performance in Public Universities of Nakuru County

The objective of the study was to assess the Influence of counselling services on Non teaching Staff Performance in Public Universities in Nakuru County. Based on the findings first, it was established that non teaching staff in public Universities in Nakuru County acknowledged that Counselling services plays an important role in dealing with their problems and enabled them to be more responsible towards their duty at work, hence improving job satisfaction among the employees. Second, the study established that the counselling services is one of the important services in Public Universities. Counselling service offered in public Universities has moderate effect on Non teaching Staff Performance in Public Universities in Nakuru County. In general the results revealed that there is statistically significant positive relationship between counselling services and Non teaching Staff Performance in Public Universities indicated by moderate positive correlation of 47.2%.

5.3 Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to assess the Influence of counselling services on Non teaching Staff Performance in Public Universities of Nakuru County.



5.3.1 Influence of Counselling Services on Non teaching Staff Performance in Public Universities of Nakuru County

The study established that non teaching staff in public Universities of Nakuru County acknowledged that Counselling services plays an important role in dealing with their problems and enabled them to be more responsible towards their duty at work, hence improving job satisfaction among the employees. It can be concluded that counselling services is one of the important services in Public Universities and therefore important in improving non teaching staff performance.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

As indicated from the results of the study counselling services improve/enhance non teaching staff performance. It is recommended that employees should be sensitized on the availability of these services and accessibility to them.

It is also recommended that HR departments in public universities should be responsive to the needs and constantly changing requirements of the employees by designing EAPs suitable to the needs of the employees. Public universities need to establish an office with professionals who will be able to address specific needs of employees.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Further Research

This research was based on the influence Employee Assistance Programs on non teaching staff performance. The study focused on public universities only. This limits the generalization of results. Similar studies needs to be conducted in private universities. A comparative study can also be done to capture the Employee Assistance Programs adopted in public and private universities and their effect on staff performance and determine whether there is a difference in effect.

This research selectively captured non teaching staff only. A further research can be done to capture other cadre of profession in public universities such as the teaching staff and other support staff to establish whether the findings will be the same.

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