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# CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING: THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PERSPECTIVE

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## Abstract

The overall aim of this study was to examine the attitudes and perceptions of administrative staff towards their career development higher institution of learning. The study was conducted in University of Ghana. The specific objectives are to examine the attitudes of the administrative staff of higher institution of learning towards their career development, to examine the perceptions of the administrative staff of institution of learning towards their career development, and to assess the challenges associated with administrative staff career development in institution of learning. A mixed-method approach and cross-sectional design were employed. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. The questionnaire and interview guide were the main instruments used to collect data from a sample of 124 administrative staff. The data collected were analysed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences and presented in descriptive statistical tables and graphs. The results of the study revealed the attitudes of the administration of the Institution's policy regarding staff development. Respondents were however not satisfied with the administration of the policy. Also, administrative staff perceived the conduct of training needs assessments to be non-existent. Again, career development was considered limited i.e., inadequate training opportunities, delay and lack of fairness in staff promotions, and poor monitoring and supervision of staff. Further, these challenges have unveiled a lack of regular training programmes such as refresher courses, workshops, seminars among others. Based on the above findings, the study, therefore, made the followings recommendations; the administration of the Institution's policy on staff development must be followed accordingly. Also, more capacity building and training opportunities should be made available to staff through scholarships, in-service training, and training seminars by management. Further, management must re-examine the issue of staff promotions to ensure fairness, transparency, and timeliness. In conclusion, staff career development in the Institution must be given the needed attention since career development influences staff performance.

**Keywords:** career, development, career development, attitude, perception, higher institution of learning

## Introduction

Career is a multifaceted concept. It can be about meaning, sense of purpose and direction. It also includes ideas of progression and development both at work and on a personal level. Hence, it embraces ideas about lifelong learning as well as skill development. It's concerned with people's futures – the skills they want to develop, what they want to achieve at work, and

as a person – as well as their future employability in a rapidly changing labour market (Cedefop, 2018). A career is defined as a sequence and variety of work roles, paid or unpaid, that a person takes on throughout his/her life. Also, it is a construct that enables individuals to make sense of valued work opportunities and how their work roles relate to their wider life roles (Career Development Institute [CDI], 2017).

Therefore, career development is a unique and lifelong process for each individual in managing learning, work, and transitions to move forward and participate effectively in work and society. Successful career development is important to individuals' personal and economic well-being, social mobility, and both economic productivity and social justice (CDI, 2017). Career development is viewed as very pivotal in the life of a person if he/she should contribute effectively to the development of society.

Career development of administrative staff makes significant contribution to the attainment of the mandate of higher institution of learning and reinforces its place as a legitimate educational partner in the provision of higher learning (Smith, Brooks, Lichtenberg, Mcilveen, and Torjul, 2009). Higher Institutions of Learning (HIL), therefore, play a central role in the human capital development of every nation. A nation with a weak human resource base is unlikely to experience the fast pace of development. The quality of education delivered by higher institutions of learning, therefore, determines to a large extent the contributions to societal development and the country as a whole. Afful-Broni (2014) noted that the mandate of higher institutions of learning is to offer a high quality of learning experience to students where the staff interface with students and manage this learning experience. Hence, sharpening the career of these staff is critical in determining the quality of this interface.

Studies have shown that different factors influence the performance of staff in varied locations and settings. The performance of teaching and non-teaching staff is not only a function of ability but also of motivation (Nnko, 2020). Mmakasa (2017) indicates that a good salary, good physical working conditions, recognition, and many other factors, if well considered, could boost one's motivation leading to higher performance. Nadeem et al. (2011) also identified duties and demands on time, low pay, lack of support from other staff, and students conduct issues as variables that affect the level of staff motivation. Therefore, a well-motivated staff with the right attitude and perceptions do not only build a national and international reputation for themselves but their institutions. This corporate reputation is vital in attracting a high caliber of students, research funds, and consultancy service contracts. However, such achievements are possible only with exceptionally high levels of commitment from the employee.

These reviews show clearly that career development influences staff performance across organisations. The factors that influence career development are dynamic in nature and local context matters. Abang, Othman, and Suleiman (2013) noted that motivation is only one tool which may be used by the effective manager, but other approaches are available. However, one of the biggest factors affecting the performance of employees in an organisation is poor motivation leading to poor performance (Gupta, 2018), and the University for Development Studies is not left out.

Meanwhile, higher institutions of learning are mandated to impart knowledge (teaching, and/or training), research and development, provision of consultancy services as well as administrative services to improve the quality of life (Afful-Broni, 2014). To effectively deliver on this mandate, qualified and competent employees are recruited to perform this task.

Hence, employees form the core of every formal and informal organisation. They are the conduit through which organisations run. To understand the importance of the employee in an organisation, it requires understanding the pivotal role the human element plays in running the organisation. Therefore, a well-managed organisation sees the average worker as the root source of quality and productivity gains. Hence, such organisations do not look up to capital investment, but to employees as the fundamental source of improvement. The world, therefore, looks up to effective and efficient performing organisations, which would provide high job satisfaction to their employees and would also cherish excellence. This is only possible when the career development of the employee is taken seriously.

Therefore, the employee reaction is determined by his/her attitude and perception developed within himself/herself over the years. Their attitudes and perceptions, therefore, have a significant impact on their performance which eventually feeds into the performance of the organisation. It is therefore important to fulfill the needs and wants of the employee which would be the outcome of his/her enthusiasm shown by him/her towards his/her work accomplishment.

Consequently, attitude, in that case, is a reflection of a person's tendency to feel, think or behave positively or negatively towards another person or an object (Aduama, 2016). Attitude is classified into three dimensions; cognitive (beliefs), emotive (feelings), and behavioural (dimensions) (Piderit, 2020). Using a 5point Likert scale in an organisation, Lowe, Schellenberg, and Shannon (2013) rated employees' attitudes in the work environments and reported that higher job satisfaction, morale, organisational commitment, lower absenteeism, and intent to quit were issues that scored higher in terms of employees' attitudes. Similarly, Abang, Othman, and Suleiman (2013) analysed the causes of poor attitude to work in Malaysia using mixed methods.

The results show that poor motivation, inadequate training and development, and job insecurity were the cause of poor attitude to work.

On the other hand, perception in the view of Schacter et al. (2011) is referred to as an interpretation of sensory information to represent and understand the environment. One's perception can be shaped by learning, memory, and expectations (Bernstein, 2020). Employees attempt to understand their work environment by making inferences from past experiences, taking cues from other employees within or without the same organisation or making projections of what they expect to be the outcome of changes in the organisation.

However, employees in the university system comprise, teaching staff and nonteaching (administrative) staff. The distinction between these two sets of employees is that the administrative staff provide the services which enable teaching to run smoothly by the teaching staff. This, therefore, calls for the development of both staff of the university and this should be seen as a shared responsibility of management and the individual employee.

Management on their part, formulate policy guidelines, provide the right resources, and a conducive environment that supports the growth and development needs of the individual employee. In some universities, the Institution developed policy guidelines on employee development/growth. Besides, the mentoring policy of some Universities reiterates the need for the policy to identify, unearth and develop the potentials/capacities of all staff within University in the area of publication, teaching, and administration to improve the quality of the staff and the overall performance of the University. But whether this has been followed to the letter remains the question unanswered. Besides, the commitment to the policy guidelines by management for employees' development particularly, administrative staff for the improvement of their

knowledge, skills, and competencies as well as improving the quality of staff leaves much to be desired.

Preliminary investigation gathered some complaints from administrative staff about the delay by the management of Universities to permit staff to embark on further studies (develop their careers) and even those who obtained study leave to pursue further studies are either delayed in being promoted or denied promotion. This, the researcher thought could serve as a demotivation to this category of staff which could lead to employee turnover in the Institution.

A university as a higher institution of learning (HIL) trains and chains out all categories of manpower capable of taking up jobs in both formal and informal organisations. It is thus expected that employees of universities should be well trained and motivated to be able to train the categories of students who get enrolled in the university. This category of staff that forms part of the trainers is the administrative staff of the university. The right employee training, development, education, and motivation provide big payoffs for the organisation in increasing productivity, knowledge, loyalty among others. Also, developing an employee career aids him/her to continue to make the necessary positive contribution to the success of the organisation regarding his/her performance on the job (Heathfield, 2012). Hence, the process of mentoring, grooming, and developing the employee as he/she progresses to his/her career is relevant for the organisation.

Career development of the employee is viewed as a lifelong process, with emphasis on very early development (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, & Herma, 1951) and hence, the progress of the employee is very critical and this could be based on either attaining a qualification(s) or perhaps on a long service basis (experience). And so, policy on employees' development set by

management in an organisation should be implemented according to its Human Resource Policy (HRP) as employees' progress in their career.

The HRP structure for the employee should define the different levels of jobs or groups of jobs by referring to relative internal value as determined by job evaluation. It should provide a progression path by added skills or performance competence. For instance, the some universities policy on staff development is clear but whether it is followed and staff rewarded accordingly for added skills, qualifications attained and performance competence is a different matter altogether. In short, rewarding skills development, experiences, qualification attainment, and professional competence turn to be problematic and sometimes very weird as staff especially, administrative staff progress in their career either by obtaining a qualification(s) or on a long service basis (experience).

This study is further informed by the fact that while there have been increasing trends to study either employees' attitudes or perceptions, much of this research has been conducted in other public organisations and on different subjects than HIL and career development where the working conditions of employees differ from other organisations. For instance, existing literature revealed that many of the studies were conducted on job satisfaction, performance management, learning and instructional effectiveness, organisational change but gave no prominence to career development (Aduama, 2016). There is, therefore, the need to examine the attitudes and perceptions of administrative staff towards their career development in the higher institution of learning to appreciate the concerns of the administrative staff better and hence, the study. It is in the wake of this that the study is being undertaken to examine the attitudes and perceptions of administrative staff towards their career development.

### **Research Questions**

What are the attitudes of administrative staff towards their career development in higher institution of learning?

What are the perceptions of administrative staff in higher institution of learning about their career development?

What are the challenges associated with administrative staff career development in higher institution of learning?

### **Method**

The study was conducted at the University of Ghana. A cross-sectional design was adopted in this study. This is because data was collected and analysed at one point in time by the researcher from the given sample of population elements only once. The study target population was all the administrative staff of the senior staff category of the University of Ghana. The qualification for selection was based on the fact that this category of staff is middle management and might want to progress to the next level/grades (senior management level) or grow in their respective position. The sample size of 124 was used in the study. The samples were selected purposively. Purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents who have adequate knowledge of the subject matter under investigation and can provide adequate information to address critical issues. Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data for the study. The questionnaire was a 5-point Likert scale such as strongly agreed, agreed, not sure, disagreed, and strongly disagreed with assigned values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The questionnaires were pretested to ensure validity and reliability. To achieve this, ten (10) questionnaires were administered to staff of one of the campuses in the Institution that is part of the study but not selected. To analyse and present the data, the data was first edited, coded, and categorised to detect errors of incorrect answers as well as missing



data. The data was then analysed using the numerical data obtained from the study. This was effectively achieved using descriptive statistics with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A cut-off point of  $\bar{X} = 3.0$  was used.

## Results and Discussion of Findings

### Research Question 1

What are the attitudes of administrative staff towards their career development in higher institution of learning?

**Table 1: descriptive statistics on the attitudes of administrative staff towards their career development in higher institution of learning**

S/N	Statements	Mean	Decision
1.	The institution's policy on career development is clear and robust	3.3	Agree
2.	The institution policy on career development is well administered	2.5	Disagree
3.	Supervision is satisfactory	2.5	Disagree
4.	Relationship with supervisor is cordial	3.4	Agree
5.	Working condition is not hazardous	3.4	Agree
6.	Personal life is improved	3.3	Agree
7.	Salary is improved	3.3	Agree
8.	Job security is guaranteed	3.4	Agree

9.	Job training is taken seriously	2.7	Disagree
10.	Management include all staffs in development training	2.6	Disagree
11.	Training at all levels are organized annually	2.4	Disagree
12.	Training impact positively on staff job growth	2.5	Disagree
13.	Training influences staff progression and career advancement	2.8	Disagree
14.	Staff receive updated training which is required for their positions	2.5	Disagree
15.	The training is adequate	2.4	Disagree
16.	Supervisors conduct effective coaching with staff	2.4	Disagree
17.	Coaching sessions are meaningful and motivational	2.4	Disagree
18.	Supervisors solicit inputs on issues and support of subordinate	2.5	Disagree
19.	Staff have good mentors for their career	2.2	Disagree

*Scale: Strongly Agreed=5, Agreed=4, Not Sure=3, Disagreed=2, Strongly Disagreed=1*

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

In the Table above, analysis of the data revealed that the clarity and robustness of the Institution's policy on administrative staff career development showed a mean value of  $\bar{X} =$

3.3, which is considered a strong factor. This suggests that respondents agreed that the Institution's policy is clear and robust with regards to administrative staff career development. This implies that respondents are satisfied with the clarity and robustness of the policy on administrative staff development in the Institution. This calls for management to religiously follow the policy to ensure that no staff in the Institution is left out in terms of staff development.

This was also followed by the administration of the Institution's policy on administrative staff career development and the statistics revealed a mean value of  $\bar{X} = 2.5$ , which is considered a weak factor. This means that respondents disagreed that the Institution's policy on administrative staff career development is well administered. This is because the mean value fell below the cut-off point of  $\bar{X} = 3.0$ . This suggests that respondents are not satisfied with the way the policy is administered in the Institution. This, therefore, serves as a wake-up call for management to act before employees begin to leave the Institution for better opportunities elsewhere.

The results further revealed that working conditions in the Institution is not hazardous, because the mean value  $\bar{X} = 3.4$  is more than the discriminating mean indicated above. The analysis of the data showed that there was an improvement in respondents' lives ( $\bar{X} = 3.3$ ) and salaries ( $\bar{X} = 3.3$ ). Respondents further agreed that their job security was guaranteed ( $\bar{X} = 3.4$ ). This is so because their mean values hit the strong factor level. This, therefore, suggests that respondents agreed that the composite items that are, working condition, personal life, and salaries are better. This appears to be a welcoming situation because a serene environment is good for effective service delivery. Also, the improvement of staff personal lives and salaries imply that staff especially, those who are motivated by financial incentives will put in their best. While those who agreed

that their jobs were secured would equally be motivated to give their best. Therefore, management has to reassure staff that their jobs are secured as long as they remain in the confined of the law and tenets of the Institution.

Further, respondents agreed that they have a cordial relationship with their supervisors ( $\bar{X} = 3.4$ ). This serves as a good ground for staff to give their best because of the cordiality that exists among staff and supervisors. This could give them the peace of mind to work harder. Respondents, however, disagreed that the supervision of administrative staff was not satisfactory ( $\bar{X} = 2.5$ ) because the mean value fell below the cut-off point of  $\bar{X} = 3.0$ . This suggests that the supervision of administrative staff needs to be taken seriously by their supervising officers at the workplace.

From the Table, the results revealed that the composite items on job satisfaction such as job training is taken seriously ( $\bar{X} = 2.7$ ), management includes all staff in development training ( $\bar{X} = 2.6$ ), training at all levels are organised annually ( $\bar{X} = 2.4$ ) fell below the cut-off point or strong factor level. This suggests that respondents disagreed that management does not include all staff in development training. Also, respondents disagreed that training is organised annually at all levels. Respondents further disagreed that job training is taken seriously in the Institution.

Also, analysis of the data revealed the mean values of the following composite items: pieces of training impact positively on staff job growth ( $\bar{X} = 2.5$ ), training influence staff career progression and advancement ( $\bar{X} = 2.8$ ), the training is adequate ( $\bar{X} = 2.4$ ) and staff receive updated training which is required for their positions ( $\bar{X} = 2.5$ ). Hence, respondents disagreed that pieces of training impact positively on their job growth. Respondents also disagreed that training influences their career progression and advancement. They disagreed that training in the

Institution is adequate. They further disagreed receiving updated training relevant to the positions they were holding. This suggests that respondents do not receive adequate training that impacted positively on their job growth as well as influences staff career progression and advancement. Management would have to do more in terms of organising regular training for staff in areas that they lack behind to increase their skills, knowledge, and competence for better performance in the Institution.

Besides, the results showed the following mean values of the composite items. Effective coaching that is, supervisors, conduct effective coaching sessions with staff ( $\bar{X}= 2.4$ ), coaching is meaningful thus, coaching sessions are meaningful and motivational ( $\bar{X}= 2.5$ ), feel valued at the job that is, supervisor solicits inputs on issues and opportunities of subordinates and staff have good mentors for their career development ( $\bar{X}= 2.2$ ). In evaluating the data, respondents disagreed benefitting from effective and meaningful coaching support from their supervisors to help in their professional development. This requires the attention of management and the human resource department to act. Also, respondents felt that their supervisors do not respect their views and hence, do not involve them in decision-making gear towards the development of the Institution. Besides, respondents disagreed with having good mentors to support their career development. Considering the closeness of the mean values, it should serve as a wake-up call for management to do more and initiate a good succession plan to build and sustain the human resource base of the Institution, necessary for quality education delivery.

The above findings are therefore contrary to the assertion by the Ethics Policy most universities which indicates that “The University recognises the importance of mentoring as a tool for professional and intellectual growth in an academic community. Consequently, Management

and all Seniors Members shall mentor new professionals and members of the University to grow in their respective career paths. Mentoring should be considered as an integral part of the assessment of staff for promotion.”

#### Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of administrative staff in higher institution of learning about their career development?

**Table 2: percentage responses on the perceptions of administrative staff in higher institution of learning about their career development**

S/N	Statements	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
1.	Access to institutional sponsored training and seminar is fair	29(23.0)	35(28.2)	25(20.2)	23(19.0)	12(9.7)
2.	Communication with the supervisor influences my progression.	12(9.7)	28(22.6)	29(23.4)	38(31.0)	20(16.1)
3.	I can influence the day-to-day success of the institution	12(9.7)	24(19.4)	30(24.2)	38(31.0)	20(16.1)
4.	I am able to influence decisions that affect my career development	31(25.0)	28(22.6)	18(14.5)	26(21.0)	21(16.9)
5.	My supervisor(s) management capabilities have positive	36(29.0)	24(19.4)	28(22.6)	20(16.0)	16(12.6)

	impact on my career progression					
<b>6.</b>	Recognition received from my supervisor is commendable	29(23.4)	26(21.0)	24(19.4)	23(19.0)	22(17.7)
<b>7.</b>	My supervisor actively involved and concerned with my career development	28(22.6)	38(30.6)	25(20.2)	19(15.0)	14(11.3)
<b>8.</b>	Current performance appraisal process is well managed	30(24.2)	39(31.5)	22(17.7)	18(15.0)	15(12.1)
<b>9.</b>	The process of identifying candidates to fill open positions is fair	31(25.0)	35(28.2)	22(17.7)	19(15.0)	17(13.9)
<b>10.</b>	Training needs assessments is conducted regularly	29(23.4)	26(21.6)	25(20.5)	23(19.0)	21(16.9)
<b>11.</b>	Management support for my efforts to improve my weakness is remarkable	35(28.2)	49(39.5)	15(12.1)	14(11.0)	11(8.9)
<b>12.</b>	Administrative staff are easily promoted	32(25.8)	43(34.7)	20(16.1)	15(12.0)	14(11.3)
<b>13.</b>	The quality of orientation and training	34(27.4)	47(37.9)	23(18.5)	12(9.7)	8(6.5)

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received for my  
current position  
is good.

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Table 2 presents the expressed views and perceptions of administrative staff on career development in the Institution. Using a 5-point Likert scale, the analysis revealed a sizeable number of 35(28.2%) of the respondents were not satisfied with the fairness associated with staff accessing the institutional sponsored training and seminars. Further 29(23.4%) were very dissatisfied with the statement. While 23 (19.0%) were somewhat satisfied, 25(20.2%) were neutral on the assertion. This widely perceived dissatisfaction, suggests a demotivation for some staff which is likely to impact negatively their performance. Therefore, the necessary attention should be given to the issue of institutional sponsored training and seminars for staff. Besides, 28(22.6%) were dissatisfied with the role of communication with their supervisors in influencing their development. While a good number of the respondents 38(31.0%) expressed satisfaction with the level of communication with their supervisors and its influence on their development. Further, 17(13.7%) said they were very satisfied with the level of communication with their supervisors and its influence on their progression, while 29(23.2%) were neutral on the statement. Though the percentage of satisfaction is higher than the rest, however, it cannot say to be that impressive. Hence, supervisors and management would have to do more to encourage communication among supervisors and staff as well as management which will feed into performance. Also, 24 (19.4%) of the respondents felt that they could not influence the day to day success of the institution. However, a good number 38 (31.0%) of them expressed satisfaction with their ability to influence the success of the Institution while 20 (16.1%) said they were very satisfied with their ability to influence the success of the Institution. Again,



30(24.2%) remained neutral. This perceived good influence suggests that staff value the inputs they were making in shaping the Institution and this could serve as a source of self-motivation.

Recognition is one of the ingredients that seeks to motivate the individual and hence, necessary for every institution to consider. A good number of 23(19.0%) of the respondents felt that their efforts in the Institution were being recognised, while 22(17.7%) said they were very satisfied with the recognition they received from their supervisors. However, 29(23.4%) indicated that they were very dissatisfied with the recognition they received from their supervisors. Again, 26(21.0%) said they were not satisfied with the recognition they received from supervisors, while 24(19.4%) were not sure with the recognition received from supervisors. This is a call for management to double their efforts in terms of recognising the efforts the individual or groups are making in the Institution. Because the saying that a country that does not reward its heroes is not worth dying for could be the order of the day in the Institution. Showing concern and good leadership to staff can also serve as a source of motivation for staff. A good number of 38(30.6%) of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the interest and concern shown by their supervisors towards their career development. Also, 28(22.6%) said they were very dissatisfied with the concern expressed by their supervisors towards their career development. However, 19(15.0%) were satisfied, while 25(20.2%) were neutral on the issue. Again, 14(11.3%) of the respondents were very satisfied with how the current performance appraisal process was managed. About 39(31.5%) of the respondents were not satisfied with how the current appraisal system was managed in the Institution, while 30(24.2%) of the respondents were very dissatisfied. Also, 18(15.0%) of the respondents were satisfied with the current performance appraisal system in the Institution. Further 15(12.1%) of the respondents were very satisfied, while 22(17.7%) remained neutral over the performance appraisal process.

Additionally, fairness in the selection of staff to occupy higher positions when an opportunity exists is one key strategy used to motivate and retain hard-working staff. Hence, the analysis of the data revealed that an appreciable number of 35(28.2%) of the respondents were dissatisfied with the processes followed in identifying candidates to occupy certain positions. Also, 31(25.0%) of the respondents were very dissatisfied with the processes involved. This suggests the existence of unfair practices and the so-called 'Godfather' factor may be at play. This is a worrying situation and management need to re-examine the promotion system to ensure fairness, transparency, and timeliness. While 22(17.7%) prefer to be neutral over the issue, some 19(15.0%) expressed their satisfaction with the selection process in an attempt to fill vacant positions internally and further 17(13.7%) were very satisfied with the statement. Finding on the conduct of training needs assessment on regular basis further revealed that 29 (23.4%) of the respondents were very dissatisfied with the pace. About 26 (21.0%) were not satisfied, while 23 (19.0%) and 21 (16.9%) were satisfied and very satisfied respectively. About 25 (20.5%) decided to remain neutral. This might be due to the limited number of training offered for the staff or the usual 'lack of funds' that characterised many public institutions across the country. This calls for special attention since in the absence of training needs assessments it is unlikely that training delivered will address the critical training needs of staff for increased productivity. Since staff productivity is measured in terms of the services they provide, training would be correlated with promotions and career development.

The ability of a manager to identify performance weakness in staff is central in devising and giving the right support to boost performance. The results in Table 4.3 revealed that the majority of the respondents 49(39.5%) and 35(28.2%) are dissatisfied and very dissatisfied respectively with the level of support offered to them by senior officials to help address observed weaknesses

on the job. Thus, efforts to help improve weaknesses are minimal. About 23(19.0%) showed some level of satisfaction and 21(16.1%) said they were very satisfied with the assertion, while 15(12.1%) remained neutral.

The statistics revealed that 15(12.0%) of the respondents were satisfied with promotions among the administrative staff in the Institution while 14 (11.3%) were very satisfied regarding promotions in the Institution. However, a good number 43 (34.7%) of the respondents said they were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied 35 (25.8%) with administrative staff promotions in the Institution. Whilst 20 (16.1%) remained neutral to the assertion. Further investigation shows that promotion from one rank to another within junior and senior staff category was easier as compared to promoting senior staff to senior members' category over the past three to five years in the Institution. Though some senior staff obtained qualifications that could take them to the senior members' level such as captured in Table 4.1 above on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, but this is seldom done. Management therefore to institute measures to promote senior staff (administrative) waiting to be promoted to the next grade. As it stands now, some staff could leave with the vast experiences they have gathered over the years in the Institution to other organisations that are ready to give them the opportunity with those qualifications.

Finally, the results revealed that 47(37.9%) of the respondents were dissatisfied with the quality of orientation and training received for their current positions. Also, 34(27.4%) of the respondents were very dissatisfied with the quality of training offered. However, 12(9.7%) and 8(6.5%) of the respondents said they were satisfied and very satisfied with assertion respectively, while 23(18.5%) of the respondents remained neutral. Hence, more needs to be done in terms of delivering quality orientation and organising a regular training session for both old and newly recruited staff to enhance their academic progression in the Institution for increased productivity.

Research Question 3

What are the challenges associated with administrative staff career development in higher institution of learning?

**Table 3: frequency and percentage response of the challenges associated with administrative staff career development in higher institution of learning**

Challenges Facing Staff Performance	Freq.	%	Rank
Access to information is limited (poor public address system, poor management of information)	7	5.6	4th
Inadequate refresher training/lack of quality orientation	20	16.1	1st
Lack of fairness in dealing with staff/lack of recognition/discrimination among staff	9	7.3	3rd
inadequate furniture, irregular power & internet supply,20 lack of consumables in the office		16.1	1st
Management delay in responding to request made	5	4	6th
No accommodation for staff/lack of vehicles to convey staff to work and run errands	6	4.8	5th
Poor career development opportunities (unfair amendment of academic progression rules which affect20 administrative staff, no sponsorship, lack of promotions)		16.1	1st
Poor maintenance and inadequate infrastructure (no toilet facilities for staff)	9	7.3	3rd
Poor working environment - not conducive	11	8.9	2nd
The poor working relationship between senior staff and			

management/no motivation/ poor engagement of faculty management	11	8.9	2nd
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Too much workload for staff/inadequate staffing (no messengers to deliver mails, a limited number of supporting staff.	6	4.8	5th
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A number of problems likely to affect administrative staff performance in institutions of higher learning (IHL) were listed and respondents were asked to rank in order of priority according to the three (3) most important challenges. The results aggregated are contained in Table 3 above. Respondents considered a lack of regular training programmes such as refresher courses, workshops, and seminars, and even respondents indicated that the few pieces of training and orientations that were organised in the past for them lack quality. In Table 3, this challenge was ranked number one on the list. This, therefore, calls for management to put in measures in organising refresher courses, workshops, and among others for staff to keep them updated and not left out in this competitive global world.

The lack of modern office space and logistics was also ranked number one challenge facing administrative staff in the Institution. Inadequate equipment – computers, printers, copiers, and so on, irregular power supply, lack of stationeries, inadequate furniture were cited as some of the critical elements missing. For some staff, this was affecting administrative services. The absence of a stable internet connection for staff adds another layer to the research problem highlighted. This requires urgent attention from management. Also, appropriate steps should be taken to complete some of the uncompleted structures in the Institution to help ease pressure on the limited office space.

Furthermore, poor career development opportunities were ranked number one on the challenge list. For instance, changes such as the amendment of academic progression rules have affected administrative staff and many described it as unfair. The absence of sponsorship support for staff to undertake further education especially, the administrative staff was highlighted as another area needing critical attention. The lack of regular promotions for staff who are due was emphasized and described as worrying. This tends to drive people away from the Institution to take up appointments somewhere else.

The poor working environment was ranked second by the respondents in the problem list presented in Table 3. The poor working environment is reflected in the lack of adequate office equipment such as printers, computers, and photocopying services in many offices. Inadequate stationeries to support effective administrative service delivery was an area highlighted for consideration.

Also, a poor working relationship between senior officials and administrative staff (senior staff) was cited as one of the issues bordering staff in the Institution. For instance, some staff felt that they are not being engaged as expected while others felt that they are not being motivated enough to give their best. Hence, management needs to engage more with staff, they should be motivated enough to deliver since this is considered the number two by staff on the problem list.

Furthermore, poor maintenance and inadequate infrastructure that is, the lack of decent washroom facilities for staff was cited as one of the problems in the list. This was ranked third in the Table. As a measure of this, the long-standing structures on campus should be completed and the washrooms attached to them completed for staff. Also, the few washrooms on the campus should be decently kept for staff since this tends demotivating staff. Besides, the staff was of the view that they were not been treated fairly. The lack of recognition of administrative

staff was highlighted as an area needing critical attention. This staff thought borders their career development in the institution while some staff felt that they were discriminated upon and the individual's weakness has no secrets. The researcher called on management to take a second look at this issue.

Communication and perhaps effective communication is the key to the success of every well-meaning institution. Hence, poor management of records and information in an institution tends to limit access to information. This, therefore, tends to nurture grape-vine information, gossips, backbiting, petty quarrels among others which do not order well for the growth and development of an institution. Poor management of information was ranked number four among the challenges list in the above Table. Management should therefore consider this issue critically.

The lack of accommodations for staff specifically on campus serves as a disincentive to respondents. Others felt that lack of vehicle (bus) to convey staff to and from work is a challenge while some respondents felt the lack of vehicles for errands within the campus or outside campus serves as a hindrance to their effectiveness. Respondents, therefore, felt that anything short of this affects them and should be considered by the management of the Institution seriously. Some respondents felt that it is done on other campuses and should be replicated across all campuses. Furthermore, inadequate staffing which is reflected in too much workload for the few staff, poor maintenance of the limited facilities for staff, and limited funding support for administrative activities was a problem on the list. These broad areas need management support to help motivate staff to work harder for the attainment of the institutional goals.

Finally, management delays in responding to matters of administrative staff was another concern raised by respondents. Though it is ranked the sixth in the problems list in the Table above,

nonetheless, it is worth considering since it tends demotivating staff of the Institution. For instance, respondents felt that requests made by them are not honoured as expected. Besides, they thought that nobody gives attention to issues that affect administrative staff in the Institution. This serves as a wake-up call for management to act because the Institution needs the support of all for the achievement of its goals.

### **Conclusions**

From the study, it was concluded that the administrative staff of the Institution were somewhat satisfied with some of the motivators/satisfiers and hygiene factors. For instance, improvement of the working condition. Respondents called for more attention to be given to the administration of the Institution's policy on staff development, supervision of administrative staff in the Institution. Also, some level of attention is needed to tackle the issue of job training, increasing access to updated training, the inclusion of all staff in developmental issues, as well as coaching/mentorship in the Institution. Continuously working to have a motivated staff is beneficial to both the individuals and the institution. The study concluded that management needs to pay more attention to their human resource practices. For instance, administrative staff promotions in the system, particularly, those who obtained higher qualifications promotions should be done with all fairness, transparency, and urgency. The findings pointed to unfairness, lack of transparency, and delays in the promotion of administrative staff, especially to senior membership level.

The study also concluded on the need to improve on staff development, which includes improving on the process of identifying candidates to fill open positions, scholarships for further studies, management support to improve on staff weakness, and strengthening work supervision.



The study concluded on the following as challenges associated with administrative staff career development; lack of regular training programmes such as refresher courses, workshops, seminars among others. According to respondents, the few pieces of training and orientations that were organised in the past for them lack quality.

The study also concluded that the lack of modern office space and logistics was one of the challenges facing the administrative staff of the Institution. For some staff, this was affecting administrative services. The absence of a stable internet connection for staff adds another layer to the research problem. This requires urgent attention from management.

Poor career development opportunities were also a challenge identified. For instance, respondents indicated that changes such as the amendment of the academic progression rules have affected administrative staff and many described it as unfair. The absence of sponsorship support for staff to undertake further education especially administrative staff was highlighted as another area needing critical attention. The lack of regular promotions for staff who are due was emphasized and described as worrying.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings presented above, some recommendations are made for the attention of the Management of the Institution, government, and policymakers in the educational sector.

Management of the Institution should step up their game in updating the staff horizon to improve upon their career. This should not be a one time show but should be a continuous process for both old and newly recruited staff. More importantly, the capacity building and training sessions need to be organised for staff. This can be done through scholarships for those who demonstrate greater promise and commitment, organising regular in-service training, study leaves with pay for staff and participation in training seminars.

Also, Management should take a keen interest in the Institution's policy on staff development. For instance, the administration of the Institution's policy on staff promotion particularly, administrative staff should be fairly administered always devoid of bias. Management needs to strengthen staff supervision in the Institution to increase performance.

Management needs to pay more attention to their human resources practices to ensure that the maximum benefits are driven. For instance, administrative staff promotions in the system, particularly, those who obtained higher qualifications should be done with all fairness, transparency, and urgency.

Also, another area that needs improvement in the career development of staff and which should be taken seriously by Management includes improving on the process of identifying candidates to fill open positions, scholarships for further studies, management support to improve on staff weakness.

Management should design comprehensive and quality training programmes such as refresher courses, workshops, seminars, and among others for staff training. Besides, the necessary measures should be taken in organising refresher courses, workshops, seminars and among other things for staff to keep them updated and not left out in this competitive global world and this should be continuous.

Also, modern office space and logistics for staff in the Institution are required. Hence, appropriate steps should be taken to complete some of the uncompleted structures in the Institution to help ease pressure on the limited office space. Again, equipment such as computers, printers, copiers, etc. should be provided. The issue of power supply, stable internet connection, stationeries, furniture must be tackled seriously.

Poor career development opportunities must be given the seriousness it deserves. For instance, changes such as the amendment of academic progression rules have affected administrative staff and many described it as unfair and hence, Management should give consideration to it. Also, sponsorship support for staff to undertake further education especially administrative staff should be given the needed attention by the Management of the Institution.

Against this background, poor career development came up top on the problem list, this solution is well linked to their needs. Management should therefore consider expanding the scope of training opportunities for staff including securing sponsorships to help upgrade the skills of people for improved performance.

Also, concentrating efforts to improve the work environment to make it more conducive. Providing adequate and secured space, provision of logistics/equipment and furniture, standby generator, office consumables, and safety measures should be put in place. Besides, consideration should be given to the mentorship scheme and fair academic progression policies for all staff in the Institution.

Further, the involvement of lower-level staff (junior and senior staff) in decision making processes and avoid victimisation of staff. Also, supervision at the workplace is strengthened as well as the allegation of any staff be investigated fairly. Again, open forum/regular interaction with all staff or the inclusion of Association representatives in the management board. Moreover, recognising the best performing staff or hard-working staff is a good path to embark upon by management and which could serve as a catalyst for higher performance.

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