CAPSTONE PROJECT

MISALIGNMENT OF EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, AND ASSIGNED ROLES AT EGERTON UNIVERSITY, TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF MOMBASA AND OPEN UNIVERSITY OF KENYA

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1. Executive Summary

This capstone project study deals with the challenge of employee qualifications, skills, and assigned roles in an organization. More often, roles assigned are determined by the skills and qualifications with a view of optimizing organizational and individual performance. Whereas the allocation often matches the skills and qualifications, there are cases where employees grow into a role without proper matching. This is often caused by wrong recruitment procedures, which are sometimes influenced politically or otherwise, natural growth into the position, misallocation of personnel, lack of organic growth in a discipline, grade stagnation due to none performance, staff establishment misalignments, recruitment process or any factors beyond the control of the leaders. The purpose of the study is to find out the extend, the forms of mismatch, the possible causes and propose measures to reduce mismatch between qualifications and skills and roles assignment and propose ways in which such misalignments can be avoided in public universities in Kenya, a case three universities.

The Brainstorming session with university executives who have served for several years, literature review and survey gave the foundation of the study with issues of performance linked to misalignment of employee qualifications, skills and roles affecting individual and organizational performance. The points arising from brainstorming discussions shaped the literature review, which together with the problem statement, literature reviews outcome and preliminary outcomes from the discussion forums informed the data collection process. The data collection survey tool was circulated among employees of the three selected public universities, namely Egerton University, Technical University of Mombasa (TUM) and Open University of Kenya (OUK).

1.1 Why the issue is strategically critical

Employee performance is a crucial factor in organizational performance, management efficiency and effectiveness and the overall health of an institution. It is known that for employees to perform, they must be assigned the right tasks and have their roles aligned with their qualifications and skills. This phenomenon has been reported not to be well addressed in public university setups in Kenya. As a result, poor performance, low morale and low job satisfaction has been reported in many public universities in Kenya. The study output would therefore assist in proposing ways to reduce misalignment gaps by highlighting areas which cause them and recommending ways to reduce.

1.2 Proposed reform

The dominant reform is to reduce the level of mismatch that exists between the roles assigned to employees and the level of qualifications, knowledge and skills the employees possess. The reduction in this gap is expected to significantly raise employee morale, job satisfaction and have

the right jobs and roles assigned to the right employees and reduce recruitment malpractices, which will in turn be expected to improve employee and consequently university performance.

1.3 Expected institutional impact

There are various categories of outcomes, which include the extend of qualification, skills and roles mismatch among public university employees, the causes of mismatches and the possible mitigation measures to reduce the gap. In the first case, understanding the extend and nature of mismatch will assist the university management to start thinking of formulating measures to reduce the gaps. Understanding the possible causes of mismatch is another hint to management, which aids them in alleviating the causes. Lastly, the proposed measures to reduce misalignment will provide a starting point for university managers to implement measures to reduce the misalignment.

1.4 Key performance indicators

How rampant skills mismatch is as depicted by perceptions from the survey, affect on performance, the forms and possible causes of mismatch as described by survey respondents form the key performance indicators of the study.

1.5 Governance implications

The implications to university governance include corrective recruitment process, assignment of roles based on skills and qualifications and other measures to ensure that organizational performance is improved through reducing the misalignment of skills, qualifications, and the roles employees are assigned.

1.6 Stakeholders involved in the reform strategy

The first category of stakeholders is employees, followed by the management and the university councils, whose role is to develop relevant policies for the implementation of the proposed recommendations geared towards reducing the misaligned gaps.

1.7 Summary of implementation progress

The study progress has produced three key items, namely the magnitude of misalignment, the forms, the causes and the proposed mitigation measures. For the next step, the study recommends a comprehensive study covering most of the public universities and private universities. It is recommended that the outcome of proposed the comprehensive study be used to make policy recommendations to the Ministry of education and other higher education stakeholders on employee management of these institutions.

2. Key words

Skills; Roles and responsibilities, qualifications, performance,

3. Background information

Kenya has 35 Public Chartered Universities, 32 Private Chartered Universities three (3) Specialized Degree Awarding Universities (Public), eight (8) Public University Constituent Colleges, two (2) Private University Constituent Colleges and three (3) Institutions with Letters of Interim Authority (CUE 2026). This makes the Universities among the top consumers of human resource in the country. Despite the Universities having a large number of staff recruited through what is known to be a competitive process, it is known that employee qualifications, skills and knowledge still misalign with their roles, hence affecting performance. This argument is corroborated by various studies such as Mutahi & Busienei (2015) and Otiende, et al (2024) who showed that effective human resource contribute to organizational performance.

In this research context, the phenomenon where employee qualifications, skills or knowledge do not match the roles assigned to them can be described as a disparity between the qualifications possessed, skills acquired and the actual roles employees are expected to perform during their day-to-day activities. The purpose of this study is therefore to find out the extent of misalignment of qualifications and skills, the forms and causes of misalignment with a view of proposing solutions to the menage.

3.1 The study context

The study was carried out among three Kenyan public universities, categorized as large medium and emerging when looked at from the size of staff portfolio. Their structure is a standard public university with both academic and admirative staff categorized as junior, middle level and senior staff. The governance model follows the traditional Kenyan public institutions model where the university council/board gives strategic and policy direction while management, led by the vice-chancellor is responsible for day to day running of the university.

Government grants, appropriation in aid, from tuition fees, and external funding sources such as research funds and donations form the funding structure of these universities. Whereas each university has their unique strategic priorities, they share universal national and international key strategic priorities of a university, i.e. to advance teaching and learning, research and innovation and community engagement. More specifically for Open University of Kenya, the key function is to provide quality, transformative and inclusive education.

3.2 The Risk environment

The Risk environment of all public universities in Kenya is deeply rooted in financial instability, which is caused by underfunding by government. This has led to increased debt, nonpayment of statutory obligations and poor service provision. Another risk is staff related issues such as delayed

promotion, acute shortage of skilled personnel, and overworking among others. These staff issues lead to low morale and performance challenges.

3.3 Alignment with National Higher Education Policy and Global governance standards

The current higher education landscape is dominated by the funding model and the drive to leave no one behind when it comes to university education. This current funding model requires that minimal, or no fees are paid by students directly. This affects university recruitment and promotion plans leading to stagnation and overworking of existing staff, among other operational areas of the university.

Besides aligning with the national education policy, the study also fits to individual institution. For example, it aligns with university strategic plan goal number three, Enhancement of Organizational Agility and Excellence, and issue one which is institutional performance.

3.4 Strategic Imperative

The overall strategic imperative has its foundation in strategic goals of the various universities which require that universities enhance organizational excellence, an initiative largely contributed to by employee performance. Lack of proper qualifications, skills and roles alignment negatively affects performance, thereby having the possibility of resulting to the following:

a) **Reputational risk**: Organizational public image is key to growth and customer retention. University's public image is largely contributed to by their employees. This means that if staff are not delivering services efficiently and effectively, public image may be damaged, leading to customer dissatisfaction and stakeholder trust erosion. Qualifications, skills and roles gap management should therefore be given priority to ensure service delivery.

b) **Financial exposure**: Failure to align qualifications, skills and roles has been shown to affect individual and organizational performance. This means the same work which would have been undertaken by one person may need extra hands, hence leading to more personnel expenditure. Work not done correctly may also be repeated and consequently done poorly with a higher cost.

c) **Governance weakness**: Having employees serve in roles which they do not possess necessary qualifications and skills lead to governance challenges such as inefficient bureaucracies and weak accountability, which may lead to poor performance.

d) **Regulatory pressure:** Public service regulations and laws relating to public sector human resource management may be affected by the effects of misalignment. Examples are lack of staff review after the mandatory three years, personnel practicing in areas where they are not qualified (e.g. a finance officer carrying out procurement work without a license) and a case where none PhD holders supervise masters students, among others.

4. Institutional Diagnostic Analysis

4.1 Problem statement

The effective performance of institutions depends largely on the alignment between employees' qualifications, skills, and assigned roles. However, many organizations, particularly universities, are experiencing a growing ismatch between academic qualifications and actual competencies, which undermines performance outcomes. This misalignment often results in the misallocation of personnel, where individuals occupy positions that do not match their skill sets, leading to inefficiencies and reduced productivity. Additionally, there is a lack of organic professional growth within disciplines, as some individuals advance academically without a corresponding development in mindset, practical skills, or role readiness, limiting their ability to perform effectively in higher positions. This situation may lead to grade stagnation due to poor performance, which lowers staff morale, job satisfaction and negatively impacts overall institutional output in the form of performance. In some cases, staff continue to occupy positions within the establishment without delivering meaningful institutional benefits, thereby straining resources. Moreover, external influences such as political interference can exacerbate the mismatch between qualifications and skills, resulting in appointments or promotions that are not merit-based. Collectively, these challenges hinder organizational efficiency, weaken performance, and raise concerns about the sustainability and effectiveness of institutional human resource practices.

The misalignment or mismatch can be caused by one or more of the following factors:

a) **Misallocation of personnel**: This is where an employee is assigned roles because of their personality as opposed to relevant skills qualifications and personnel
b) **Lack of organic growth in a discipline**: Also referred to as lack of natural transition to roles, is a case where the individual academic qualifications have grown and made them move to a higher position, necessitating different, perhaps more complicated roles and yet the individual's mindset has stagnated in their lower positions/roles. **rade stagnation due to non-performance**: This is where an employee has served in a certain grade for very many years to an extent that they have acquired greater skills and qualifications, rendering them overqualified for the position. This leads to low morale and reduced performance output to the detriment of the University.
c) **Staff establishment misalignments**: Where, for any reason, the staff establishment is not well crafted, staff may occupy positions within the staff establishment without being effective in carrying tasks/roles associated with the specific establishment. This leads to situations where the organization cannot hire qualified and skilled personnel for the position because the establishment does not allow.
d) **Recruitment process:** Where employee recruitment process is not professionally done, employees may be placed at positions which they are not professionally qualified for or those which they have not acquired skills for. This is often caused by interference e.g.

political or otherwise interested persons within the organization. In some cases, the recruitment process is faulty and hence produces a mismatch.

4.2 Study Objective

The overall goal of the study is establishing the extend of qualifications & skills and employee assigned roles misalignment, identify the forms and cause of misalignment and recommend corrective measures.

4.2.1 Study Specific Objectives

a) To find out the extent of employee qualifications & skills and assigned roles mismatch within public universities in Kenya
b) To identify the forms of employee qualifications & skills and assigned roles
c) To diagnose the common causes of employee qualifications & skills and assigned roles mismatch
d) To recommend appropriate strategies for reducing misalignment of employee qualifications and skills and assigned roles.

4.3 Scope of the Study

Whereas the core business of universities is largely teaching & learning and research, the support sections are key. The administrative and support service personnel play a critical role in advancing the objectives of the university, In addition, it is known that even academic staff (professors and lecturers) get appointed to positions of responsibility, which sometimes brings about qualifications and skills misalignment. This therefore calls for the study to cover both academics and administrative staff of the universities. The study will be carried out across all public universities and will cover staff in grade five (5) to fifteen (15).

a) Academic/teaching members of staff from grade 11 to 15
b) Support services such as office messengers, cleaners, drivers and office assistants
c) Shared services, including but not limited to Human Resource, Finance, Medical service, security, Audit and procurement among other related areas.

4.4. Literature and Practical Review

In this section, we carried out literature reviews through identifying the key words, searching for literature, organising literature, synthesizing literature evaluating and providing suggestions for literature review. In the end, a research/practical gap was identified.

a) Identification of keywords: The literature review keywords were identified using the primary keywords related to the project title. They include skills mismatch, employee performance, overqualification, job satisfaction, productivity, person-job fit, organizational performance. According to ChatGPT, the three main keyword areas are mismatch concepts, skills/education, and performance outcomes. The following were then identified as key terms to be used to carry out literature review search

	Mismatch Area	**Key words**
1	**Core mismatch terms**	skills mismatch; qualification mismatch; education–job mismatch; overqualification / underqualification; overeducation / undereducation; skill gap / skills gap; competency mismatch
2	**Skills and human capital**	employability skills; workforce skills; human capital; competencies / core competencies; technical skills vs soft skills; Knowledge
3	**Labor market and job fit**	job–skill fit; person–job fit; person–organization fit; labor market alignment; workforce alignment
4	**Performance and outcomes**	employee performance; job performance; productivity; organizational performance; work efficiency;
5	**Related impacts**	job satisfaction; employee engagement; turnover intention; career progression; wage effects / earnings
6	**Methods / context (optional)**	performance evaluation; impact assessment; regression analysis (if quantitative); qualitative analysis (if interviews/case studies);

Other keywords are: workforce developments; job requirements; employer dissatisfaction; job demands are exceeding workers' capacities; employees' field degree and the job requirements; general skills as opposed to occupation-specific skills; and job satisfaction.

4.4.1 Literature review and theoretical framework

Universities' human resource policies are anchored in the job-person theory (Edwards 1991; Memon, Salleh & Baharom (2015).), both for academic and other employees. It was therefore important in our study to obtain employee self-evaluation perception on their roles in the university. The blue ocean strategy is less applicable in university human resource considerations because university services and structures are similarly regulated. To get the relevant variables and constructs, a series of brainstorming sessions and literature review was conducted. Key words obtained from literature review and brainstorming formed the variables for designing the survey tools. Figure one shows the resultant conceptual view of the survey variables and their relationships.

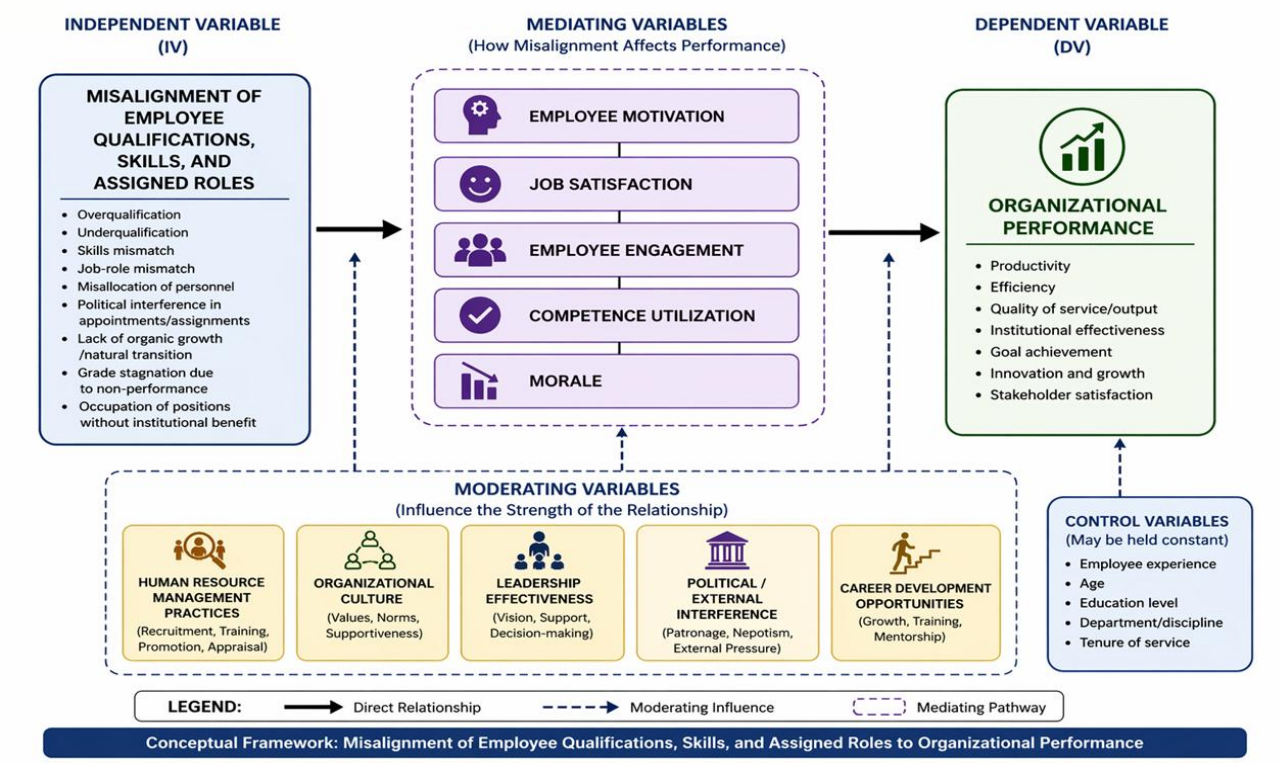


Figure 1: A conceptual view of the survey variables and their relationships

5. Methodology

5.1. Introduction

The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey to examine the extent of qualification and skills mismatch among employees and establish the forms and causes of these misalignments. The survey facilitated the description of existing conditions and their analysis without manipulating them.

The study covered three public universities in Kenya, comprising of Egerton University, representing large universities, Technical University of Mombasa, representing a medium university and Open University of Kenya for the small Universities. The Universities were purposefully sampled from public universities in Kenya to keep the scope manageable.

5.2 Study Design

A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was used to collect data from employees at a single point in time and describe current levels of mismatch, forms of mismatch and the possible causes. The results were used to establish the possible recommendations for reducing the misalignment gap.

5.3 Unit of Analysis and Target Population

The unit of analysis was individual employees, since the mismatch of interest concerns each employee's qualifications, skills, and assigned role directly affects employees.

The target population included both the academic staff and administrative staff of the three purposefully selected universities.

Whereas there is no standard known nomenclature for categorizing universities in Kenya, some notable ones are in the form of large, medium and small public universities. This categorisation takes into consideration the total number of students and by extension the age of the university. In some cases, the categorisation is about the type of university, whether public, private, specialised, science based, or general university. In this study, we elected to categorise universities based on the number of staff they have hence resorting to large, medium and small universities. It is important to note that skills and roles misalignment is believed to affect public institutions as compared to private institutions and a result, the study was restricted to public universities.

5.4 Sampling Procedure

Stratified random sampling was used to ensure fair representation of both academic and administrative staff. To ensure that all cadres were catered for, the sampling covered from grade 5 to 15, with each university getting a percentage of their population. The percentage was determined by the total population of the three Universities. The rationale for public universities is largely because the issue of misalignment was established to rampant the public compared to private institutions. Furthermore, since the information collection tools were administered online, the population size was manageable and finally the need to ensure comprehensive coverage of representation, leading to enhanced accuracy and policy relevance of findings.

5.5 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected using structured questionnaire **(**Likert-scale items covering qualifications, skills, assigned roles, recruitment, morale, and performance). Key informant interviews **with relevant personnel** such as HR officers and departmental heads were interviewed to provide additional explanations on staff placement and role assignment.

5.6 Data Analysis

The data collection tools contained questions which would collect both qualitative and quantitative data sets. Quantitative data was analysed using frequencies, percentages and simple regression to establish the extend the forms and what causes misalignment.
Qualitative data was analysed thematically and used to support quantitative findings in a descriptive manner.

This study was guided by the following set of variables which formed the basis of a conceptual framework.

a) The independent variables are:

The independent variables are largely employee characteristics and the kind of roles available. They include:

i. Highest educational qualifications
ii. Area of specialization
iii. Work experience
iv. Training e.g. internal or external, professional
v. Overqualification, underqualification, skills mismatch, job-role mismatch
vi. Area of specialization
vii. Level of the job in the organization
viii. Category of employee e.g. manager, low level, middle cadre
ix. Reporting lines e.g. to supervisor, to CEO etc.

b) Mediating Variables (How misalignment affects performance)

The mediating variables are meant to explain *why* misalignment leads to poor performance:

i. Employee motivation
ii. Job satisfaction
iii. Employee engagement
iv. Competence utilization
v. Morale

c) Moderating Variables (Factors that influence the strength of the relationship)

These affect *how strongly* misalignment impacts performance:

i. Human resource management practices (recruitment, training, promotion systems)
ii. Organizational culture
iii. Leadership effectiveness
iv. Political/external interference
v. Career development opportunities

d) Control Variables (optional, depending on your design)

i. Employee experience
ii. Age
iii. Education level
iv. Department/discipline
v. Gender

e) The dependent variables

The dependent variable is Organizational performance and made up of

i. Effectiveness service delivery: Does the employee produce the intended results
ii. Efficiency: Does the employee produce the intended results within the timelines
iii. Cohesion: Does the employee ensure that there is harmony between him/her and colleagues
iv. Punctuality: How available is the employee when required
v. Quality of work
vi. productivity,
vii. institutional effectiveness

Qualifications, skills and roles matching issues

a) The nature of work versus training
b) The nature of work versus educational qualifications
c) The nature of work versus and specialization
d) Roles and responsibilities versus years of experience
e) Training areas versus roles and responsibilities

5.7 Adopted Questionnaire

Just like a standard questionnaire, the study developed a research instrument for data collection that consisted of a set of questions and statements aimed at collecting information from the respondents. The questionnaire was used to collect demographic information, personal opinions, facts or attitudes from respondents.

5.7.1 Questionnaire design

In this research the questionnaire was designed to meet the basic requirements, including:

a) Achieving the research objectives

b) Providing complete and accurate information
c) Making it easy for the respondents to complete
d) Making sound analysis and interpretation possible

The type of questionnaire used was structured and largely collected both quantitative and qualitative data with specific information. It was a self-administered questionnaire, with requests to fill it sent through email and shared on a survey monkey platform. Most of the questions were **Likert scale** (e.g., 1–5: strongly disagree to strongly agree) for consistency and simplicity.

6. Evidence Base

6.1 Survey Results

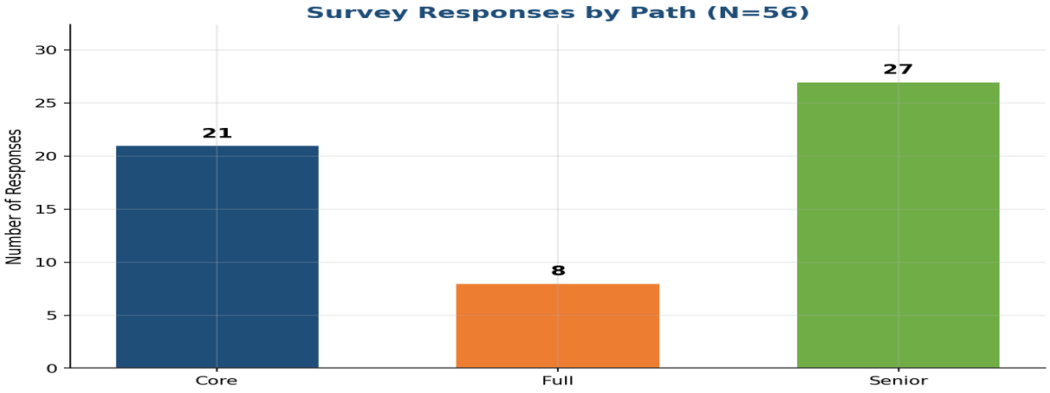
This section of the report presents results obtained from the survey.

1. Response Overview

Path	Number of Responses	Percentage
Core (Standard staff)	21	37.5%
Full (Extended staff)	8	14.3%
Senior (Supervisory / Management)	27	48.2%
Total	56	100%

6.2 Key Demographics

The institutions represented by the respondents were Open University of Kenya (OUK), Technical University of Mombasa (TUM), Egerton University, and a minimal other which were negligible. The majority of those who filled in the questionnaire from TUM were senior staff, those from Egerton filled in the core questionnaire (the main questionnaire). OUK were a mix of respondents. Figure 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on the type of survey tool they filled.



Those who filled the questionnaire were drawn from both genders of Male and Female being represented across all paths.

Many of the respondents had their highest education level as PhD and Master's degree. This was most common among the academic and Senior cadres. The most common job categories witnessed were academics, human resource, administrative, ICT and finance. Common specializations are academics (Mathematics, Philosophy, Engineering), HR, Secretarial/Administrative and ICT.

6.3. Main Findings on Skills–Role Misalignment

In this section, we report results related to employee characteristics and skills which may be contributing to skills-roles misalignment. The findings are grouped into senior management, full path and core staff path, which senior staff is grade 14 and above, full path is everyone in the organization and core staff is largely academic members.

6.3.1 Senior Management Path

All the respondents (27) in the senior category of staff reported being overqualified for their current roles. However, there were mixed reports on how the senior staff perceived the lower-level skills roles mismatch among the lower staff. The senior staff perceived the level of mismatch among staff under their supervision as ranging from very low to High.

For those who filled in the main questionnaire, 52% reported either being over-qualified or under-qualified, meaning there is some level of mismatch. Under the same category 48% of all the respondents reported having their qualifications and skills matching their role. Figure 2 shows the responds on the match between roles and qualifications as reported by the respondents

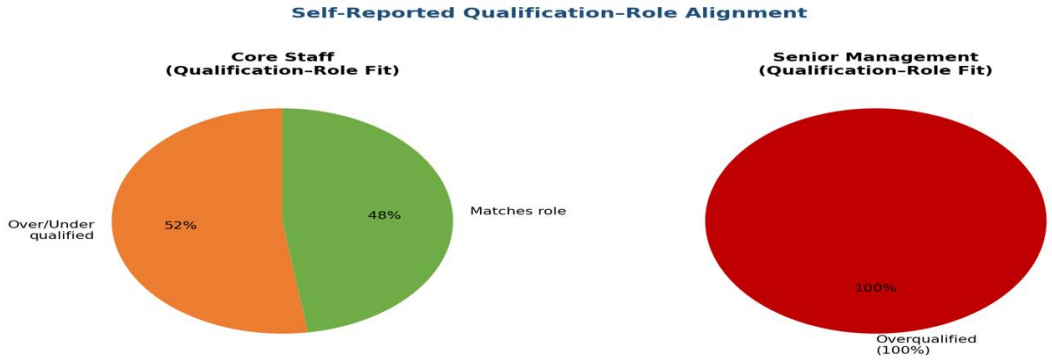


Figure 2: The match between roles and qualifications

According to senior members of university staff who filled in the questionnaires, mismatch among their officers is Moderate, with11 out of 27 respondents reporting moderate and four (4) saying it is high.

In terms of performance, the effects of mismatch to performance was reported to be moderate to great extent on both organizational and individual performance. 85% of the respondents say mismatch affects organizational performance at moderate to very great while 78% say it affects individual employee performance at moderate to great extent. Figure 3 shows these facts.

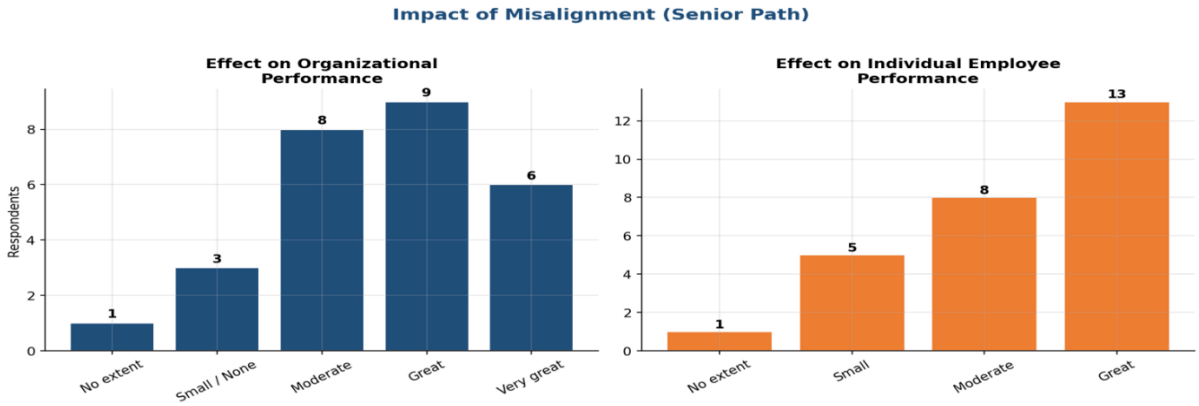


Figure 3: Effects of qualifications, skills and assigned roles mismatch to performance

6.3.2 Forms and causes of mismatch

Table 1 lists the forms of qualifications, skills and roles mismatch among university employees. Wrong specialization, lack of technical competencies and inadequate pedagogical skills were among the top reported causes. This was followed by qualifications, which are either under or over and lack of various skills including research, digital and managerial.
The issue of over qualifications or under qualifications attracted mixed views. While all the senior staff reported being overqualified, most of the lower staff indicated their qualifications match their roles.

Table 1: Reported forms of mismatch

	Form of Mismatch	**Number of "Yes"**
1	Wrong specialization	4
2	Lack of technical competencies	4
3	Inadequate pedagogical skills	4
4	Underqualification	3
5	Overqualification	3
6	Lack of managerial skills	3
7	Inadequate research skills	3
8	Inadequate digital skills	3

9	Poor communication	2

6.3.3 Perceived Causes of Mismatch

The top three causes of misalignment were reported to be poor recruitment, political interference and lack of continuous training. Others are poor promotion criteria, lack of competency assessments and inadequate workforce planning. Table 2 lists various causes of mismatch.

Table 2: perceived causes of mismatch

	Perceived Cause	**Number of "Yes"**
1	Poor recruitment	4
2	Political interference	4
3	Lack of continuous training	4
4	Poor promotion criteria	3
5	Lack of competency assessments	3
6	Inadequate workforce planning	3
7	Budget limitations	3
8	Weak appraisal systems	2
9	Staff establishment limits	2
10	Rapid institutional expansion	2
11	Technological changes	1

To reduce the mismatch between skills and roles, and hence effects to performance the key mitigation strategies reported included training, mentoring, coaching, and competency-based deployment.

Qualifications, skills and roles misalignment management

In one of the survey questions, senior staff were asked to describe how they manage qualifications, skills and roles misalignment and their related challenges. Analysis indicated the following measures,

a) Continuous professional development (CPD): This is where staff serving in various posts are continuously sent for professional courses, most on yearly basis. Some of the constraints reported under this treatment are funding, workload, delayed approvals and weak alignment of the course to real gaps.
b) Mentoring and coaching: Senior staff reported to be taking lower-level staff, who they perceive to be having roles and qualifications misalignments through mentoring and coaching programs. The challenges with this work overload and unwilling staff.

c) Targeted / continuous training: Besides CPDs, leaders reported identifying specific training courses for specific employees to ensure skills gaps are reduced, which raised the issue of demand for more targeted, competency-based programmes.
d) Competency-based deployment & skills matrices: This entails identifying employees competences and assigning them duties which match their skills. The approach uses a tool which matches competences and skills. The challenge with this approach is that whereas competence and skills may match, qualifications and experiences may be lacking. This approach may call for reassignment when gaps are large.
e) Clear role communication & performance monitoring: Some of the
f) Better recruitment aligned to actual needs: The best approach is to ensure that qualifications and skills are matched upfront with the roles at recruitment stage. This may mean. This calls for the need to have proper job requirements at the advert level and avoid other interference and interests.

7. Summary of findings, notable patterns and overall Conclusion

Qualifications of staff are a key factor with over-qualification appearing more frequently than under-qualification, especially among senior and academic members of staff who reported 100% over-qualification. The major root causes of qualifications, skills and roles assigned misalignment were structural, which included recruitment practices, political interference, weak continuous training and limited workforce planning.

Training and mentoring are the most proposed mitigation measures for the misalignment across all levels of the organizational structure. Professional development was identified as the most suitable training option. However, continuous professional development (CPD) happens among the employees but is constrained by funding and workload. Under the same need for training, it was reported that staff require more targeted, competency-based interventions. In addition, respondents consistently recommend skills audits, competency-based placement, better job–person matching during recruitment, stronger appraisal–development link, and stronger linkage between performance appraisal and staff development, sustained coaching, mentoring and training.

The responses indicate that skills–role misalignment is a recognized issue in the participating Kenyan universities. While many staff (especially at senior levels) report being overqualified, the main challenges appear to be related to deployment practices, limited continuous training, and systemic issues in recruitment and workforce planning. Mismatch is widely acknowledged and judged to affect both organizational and individual performance by most supervisors. A majority of the respondence indicated the effect was moderate to great.

7.1 Root cause Analysis

In order to propose workable solutions for the problems associated with employee qualification & performance and roles misalignment, there is need to understand the results as collected from the survey respondents and the brainstorming sessions by the long-serving experts. The most suitable tool for this study was the risk matrix mainly because the study was meant to identify the problem, which is misalignment, the forms of misalignment, which can be classified as risks and proposed solutions which can be mitigation measures.

7.1.1 Qualifications, skills and assigned roles gap analysis model

The key objectives of this study were to establish the extent of qualifications, skills and roles mismatch, to identify the forms and what causes them as well as proposing ways on how to mitigate the issues. The recommendation to universities therefore is presented in a matrix which matches each form of mismatch with its most closely related perceived cause and proposed mitigation measure. Table 3 gives the details of the recommendations and provides a tool for qualifications, skills and roles assignment gap analysis. Whereas many of the forms of mismatch have specific measures, there are causes and measures which cut across several forms of mismatch. Table 4 gives the details. In addition, continuous professional development (CPD), mentoring & coaching, competency-based deployment, skills matrices, succession planning, clear role communication, performance monitoring and recruitment aligned with actual institutional needs were identified as cross-cutting measures affecting various forms of misalignments.

As it has been noted that some causes contribute to more than one form of mismatch, each university, because of their unique nature, may therefore implement the various mitigation measures differently.

The timelines and budgetary allocations are subject to each university requirements. As such, the overarching recommendation for universities is to carry out comprehensive qualifications, skills and roles assignment gap analysis and apply a similar model as proposed in this study to reduce the existing gaps. The application of the tool may vary with each form of mismatch, cause and mitigation measure being unique and not necessarily the same as what is being presented by this study. It is important to note that the timelines are approximate considering the time and stakeholder engagements required by the specific mitigation measures.

Table 3: Details of the qualifications, skills and roles mismatch, perceived cause and proposed mitigation

No.	Form of mismatch	Perceived cause	Proposed mitigation measure	Timelines
1	Wrong specialization	Poor recruitment	Better recruitment aligned with actual job requirements and workforce needs.	24 months

2	Lack of technical competencies	Lack of continuous training	Targeted and continuous professional training to address identified competency gaps.	Immediate, Conti
3	Inadequate pedagogical skills	Lack of continuous training	Targeted CPD in teaching methods, instructional design and assessment.	6 months
4	Underqualification	Poor promotion criteria	Competency-based deployment, targeted training and clear qualification requirements for assigned roles.	24 months
5	Overqualification	Weak appraisal systems	Stronger appraisal–development processes, career development and better-matched work deployment.	Immediate
6	Lack of managerial skills	Lack of competency assessments	Competency-based assessment, mentoring and coaching for staff in managerial roles.	Immediate and as
7	Inadequate research skills	Budget limitations	Allocate ring-fenced funding for research skills development, training and mentoring.	12 months
8	Inadequate digital skills	Technological changes	Targeted digital skills training and continuous professional development.	Immediate to 24
9	Poor communication	Weak appraisal systems	Clear role communication, performance monitoring, mentoring and coaching.	Immediate to 24

Table 4: Causes of misalignments and measures cutting across different forms of mismatch

Perceived cause	**Closest mitigation measure**
Political interference	Strengthen merit-based recruitment, deployment and promotion procedures.
Inadequate workforce planning	Improve workforce planning and align recruitment with actual institutional needs.
Staff establishment limits	Strengthen workforce and staff establishment planning to support timely promotions and appropriate deployment.
Rapid institutional expansion	Improve workforce planning and succession planning to ensure staff capacity keeps pace with institutional growth.
Lack of competency assessments	Introduce regular skills audits, competency assessments and competency-based deployment using skills matrices.
Poor promotion criteria	Establish transparent, merit-based promotion criteria linked to qualifications, competencies and performance.
Budget limitations	Allocate ring-fenced budgets for CPD, training, promotions, mentoring and coaching.
Weak appraisal systems	Strengthen the link between performance appraisal, staff development, training and career progression.

It is worth noting that whereas there was recorded mismatch between qualifications, skills and assigned roles, universities still continue to effectively carry out their mandates without minimal disruptions. This phenomenon may be associated with the pareto principle (Abyad 2020) which states that 80 % of the work in an organization is usually accomplished by 20% of the actors.

7.2 Limitations of the study

Whereas the study met its objectives, we note that it might have had the following limitations

a) Small sample size: The study population in Kenyan universities is about 30,000 employees. Using the three Kenyan public universities with a total population of about 2,000 may have biased the outcome of the study.
b) Duration of study: The study was carried out for less than three months, with almost half the time being consumed by preliminary fact finding and data collection tools preparations. Such a study should be longitudinal in terms of time and the population of study.
c) Possible biases by the researchers: The problem context was formulated by researchers who happen to have been managers in various public universities for some time. This could have biased the research objectives and hence the data collection tools based on what the researchers perceived about their employees. To mitigate this, future research may need to employ independent researchers.
d) Data collection: The data collection process relied on expertise conversations with public university leaders and a survey carried out among three public universities. This missed out on key informant interviews with Human Resource officers, departmental heads and other low level leaders in a university set up who would have provided more details on qualification, skills and assigned roles misalignment.

7.3 General recommendations

The overarching recommendation arising from the study is for each university to carry out comprehensive qualifications, skills and roles assignment gap analysis and apply the proposed model to reduce the existing gaps. The application of the tool may vary with each form of mismatch, cause and mitigation measure being unique and not necessarily the same as what is being presented by this study.
While applying the proposed model, each institution is advised to assign reasonable timelines for each mitigation measure considering that some measures may require participation and approvals by various university stakeholders.

To enhance the tool, the institutions may consider introducing aspects of emerging technology use. For example, during the recruitment process tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) may be utilized to forestall interferences such as political. For example, for competence-based recruitment, an institution could use AI tools to carry out competence-based test for employees to be hired or those to be promoted. They could also search their profiles across available open systems to ensure that they are what they claim to be.

Other recommendations arising from the findings include:

a) **Skills Audit**: Conduct regular, institution-wide competency mapping against role requirements
b) **Competency-based placement**: Align recruitment, deployment and promotion to verified skills and qualifications
c) **Targeted CPD**: Fund and design training around identified gaps (digital, pedagogical, managerial, research)
d) **Appraisal-development link**: Use performance appraisal outcomes to drive mentoring, training and career paths
e) **Policy and governance**: Reduce political interference in recruitment; strengthen workforce planning and CUE/KNQA guidance

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ANNEXTURE I: Introductory statement/Cover Letter

QUESTIONNAIRE ONE: INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT / COVER LETTER

Dear Respondent,

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study titled *"Misalignment of Employee Qualifications, Skills, and Assigned Roles and Its Effect on Organizational Performance."* The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which employees' qualifications and skills align with their assigned roles, and how this alignment or mismatch influences performance within the organization.

Your participation in this study is highly valuable, as it will contribute to a better understanding of workforce management practices and inform strategies aimed at improving employee performance and organizational effectiveness. You have been selected because of your role within the organization, and your responses will provide important insights for this research.

The questionnaire will take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. All information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purposes. You are not required to provide your name, and your responses will remain anonymous. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Kindly respond to all questions as honestly and accurately as possible.

Your cooperation and support are greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Laila Abubakar - Technical University of Mombas
Isaac Kibwage _Egerton University
Christopher Chepken- Open University of Kenya

SECTION A Demographic Information

	Question	
1	What type is your institution	Private/public
2	Gender	male/female/others

3	Job category/position	Finance, HR, Academic
4	Name-	Name/Optional
5	Age	Years
6	Department	E.g. Computing
7	Name of Institution	E.g. Open University of Kenya

SECTION B: Independent Variable(s)

These are questions measuring the main predictor(s) in the study

#	Question	
1	What is your specialization area	HR/Finance/Clerical /Secretarial etc
2	What Skills and competencies do you posses	
3	List the trainings you have received	
4	What are your jobs and responsibilities	
5	Are you overqualified/underqualified for your job	YES/NO
6	What skills do you lack, if any	List
8	Education level	
9	On average, how many years did you stay in one grade	1-10
10	What is your grade	4-15
11	When did you join the University	month/Year

SECTION C: Factors affecting performance

These are questions which aim to explain how or why the independent variable affects the outcome, in this case performance, given the skills gap.

#	Question	Measurement
1	In a scale of one to five, how motivated are you with your work	1-5

2	How satisfied are you with your current job	1-5
3	How engaged are you in your current position	1-5
4	How would you rate your morale towards job satisfaction	1-5

SECTION D: Employee performance

#	Question	Measurement
1	How would you rate your performance	1-10
2	What was your appraisal results in the latest appraisal cycle	1-10
3	How do you rate the performance of your immediate supervisor	

Questionnaire TWO: Senior management

This category of questionnaire will be administered to staff at supervisory levels such as deans, directors, heads of department and senior management. The objective is to understand the actual picture of the average employee performance against skills and qualifications mismatch

QUESTIONNAIRE TWO: INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT / COVER LETTER

Q2: SECTION A: Demographic Information

	Question	
1	What type is your institution	Private/public
2	What is your grade	4-15
3	When did you join the University	month/Year
4	Gender	male/female/others
5	Job category/position	Finance, HR, Academic
6	On average, how many years did you stay in one	1-10

	grade	
7	Name-	Name/Optional
9	Age	Years
8	Education level	
9	Which unit do you head	School/directorate/HR/Finance/
10	Name of the Institution	E.g. Open University of Kenya

Q2: SECTION B: Independent Variable(s)

These are questions measuring the main predictor(s) in the study

#	Question	
1	What is your specialization area	HR/Finance/Clerical /Secretarial etc
2	What skills and competencies do you posses	
3	List the trainings you have received	
4	What are your jobs and responsibilities	
5	Are you overqualified/underqualified for your job	YES/NO
6	What skills do you lack, if any	List
8	Education level	
9	On average, how many years did you stay in one grade	1-10
10	What is your grade	4-15
11	When did you join the University	month/Year
12	What is the size of your department	Number

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Q2: SECTION C: Dependent Variable(s)

The questions in this section are aimed at obtaining responses which may point out the relationship between skills, qualifications & roles mismatch and performance.

#	**Question**	
1	What is the average performance in appraisal	
2	In your experience, how rampant is skills & qualifications and roles mismatch among your officers?	1-5 (5 is very high, 4 high, 3 moderate,2 low, 1, very low
3	To what extent does skills & qualifications and roles mismatch affect organizational performance?	
4	To what extent does skills & qualifications and roles mismatch affect individual employee performance among your officers?	
5	From your experience, how do you ensure that misaligned skills and qualifications and roles mismatch does not affect performance	Training, mentoring,
6	In your opinion, which method of reducing misalignment between roles and skills and qualifications mismatch	
8	On average, what is the % of employees under you who meet dateline	[1-20, 21-40, 41-60,61-80 over 80]
9		
10		
11		
12		

Under this category, we utilise Islam, R., & bin Mohd Rasad, S. (2006), model of performance evaluation to find out the average organizational performance. Supervisors are required to indicate the average performance based on each performance indicator for their staff. The outcome will be used to correlate with skills, qualifications and roles mismatch outcome.These performance indicators speak to Employee performance in form of productivity, efficiency quality of work and service delivery.

Please rate the average performance of staff who report to you based on the following indicators:

[1-Poor, 2-Below Expectations, 3-Meets Expectations, 4-Exceeds Expectations, 5-Outstanding]

Sub category : Quality/Quantity of work

a) Completion of tasks on time
b) Concern for goals
c) Undertaking multiple assignments

Sub category : Planning/organization

a) Setting clear objectives
b) Identifying resources required for their work
c) Seeking guidance from subordinates, peers and seniors

Sub category: Initiative/commitment

a) Demonstration of commitment as a responsible person
b) Works under minimal supervision
c) Meeting of expectations

Sub category:Teamwork/cooperation

a) Maintaining harmonious work environment
b) Adaption to changes
c) Sharing of information resources

Sub category: Communication

a) Conveyance of information/ideas
b) Resolution of Conflicts
c) Clarification Seeking

Sub category: External factors

a) Contribution to society
b) Involvement at the non organizational activities
c) Promotion of the institution

What interventions would you recommend to improve alignment? (Tick all that apply)

a. Training and re-skilling
b. Curriculum reform
c. Industry linkages
d. Performance-based promotions
e. Specify other