



ROLE OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES IN PROMOTING REMOTE LEARNING: A CASE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NAIROBI METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

HR functions need to evolve and adapt to changing trends in remote work and learning. This may involve updating recruitment and selection policies to align with the evolving needs of a remote workforce. Updating recruitment and selection policies is critical in ensuring that organization gain competitive edge. With ever increasing demand for remote learning in higher learning institutions, the essence of recruitment and selection in promoting work culture that appreciate e-learning mode can never be under estimated. The main objective of the study was to determine whether recruitment and selection procedures promote the implementation of remote learning by public universities in Nairobi metropolis. This study was anchored on resource-based view theory. The study targeted public universities in Kenya that are located within Nairobi metropolis. Census and simple random sampling methods were used to select administration and HR registrar, Academic Affairs registrar and lecturers tutoring online classes respectively. From the 29 public universities in Kenya, the study sampled 8 Universities from which the respondents were sampled from. The unit of analysis included university registrars and lecturers tutoring online-classes. The study sampled 44 respondents who took part in this study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation), correlation and regression. The results showed that recruitment and selection had a significant effect on implementation of remote (Beta coefficient: 0.333, Sig-value 0.009). The study concludes that recruitment and selection has an effect on implementation of remote learning, it is therefore important for the public universities in Nairobi metropolis, through the HR department, to strictly adhere to university recruitment and selection policies so that they higher the lecturers with requisite skills and knowledge needed in promoting remote learning.

KEY WORDS: Recruitment, Selection, Remote Learning, Public Universities

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

According to Rashid et al., (2020), adoptions of HRM functions is critical to ensuring that organizations gain a competitive edge. With the wake of COVID-19, most remote learning programs, however, Yusuf and Ahmad (2020) note that, for higher learning institutions to get the greatest outcomes, they must integrate sound human resources management practices with operations management (Bag et al., 2021).

With ever-increasing demand for remote learning in higher learning institutions, the role of HRM functions in promoting a work culture that appreciates e-learning can never be underestimated (McCaffery, 2018). In every institution, HR functions must play an instrumental role in planting a culture that accepts the new shift (e-learning mode) by ensuring that human capital is adequately prepared to assimilate the anticipated change. However, Thite (2022) notes that, with the spontaneous demand for e-learning, which was primarily accelerated by COVID-19, most of the universities still lag behind in the actualization of the e-learning adoption goal.

Globally, the moderating role played by HR in ensuring successful implementation of a remote learning culture has been widely explored in developed states. For instance, in the Philippines, Mugot and Sumbalan (2019) find that where



the university wants to shift from a class-based learning mode to remote learning, the HR function must ensure that lecturers are adequate sources. In Canada, Santos et al. (2020) find that HR functions need to evolve and adapt to changing trends in remote work and learning. This may involve designing job descriptions and criteria for remote teaching and support positions so that recruitment teams can identify the specific skills and traits needed for remote work. These may include self-motivation, digital literacy, strong communication skills, and the ability to adapt to online tools and technologies. Similarly, Supardi and Udin (2020) in Indonesia established that by targeting candidates with these skills, educational institutions can build a remote-ready workforce.

By aligning HR recruitment strategies with remote learning objectives, organizations can effectively support the development of their remote workforce and ensure long-term success. According to Corby, Palmer, and Lindop (2018), to deliver high-quality remote education, institutions can prioritize candidates with expertise in digital pedagogy. This includes an understanding of best practices in online instruction, curriculum design for remote learning, and the ability to engage and support students in a virtual setting. In a UK study, Baltaru (2019) finds that beyond technical and pedagogical skills, recruitment can focus on candidates' ability to support the diverse needs of remote learners, including addressing challenges related to accessibility, equity, and student engagement.

Employee recruitment is one of the best HRM functions that is closely linked with organizational success (Fraij, 2021). Hiring the best-qualified candidates presents an organization with a potential workforce that can deliver on organizational goals. To achieve digital transformation (e-learning), universities, through the HR department, need to ensure that they lay down appropriate measures that guarantee the selection of qualified staff that fit the task. Studies in Australia by Joubert and Snyman (2020) find that with ever-changing technological advancements, finding online e-lecturers who are well versed in tutorial software is a big challenge in the resourcing process. In mitigation, Muisyo and Qin (2021) advocate for the development of an organizational culture that promotes employee skill development and talent nurturing in higher education institutes.

According to Taylor (2018), recruitment and selection are methods of identifying people who may join and encouraging them to apply for current or expected work openings. Choosing the best talent is the primary recruitment aim of any organization, but various organizations may have other objectives to achieve during the recruitment process (Odondi, 2018). Of late, most of the organizational process has shifted; firms have been compelled to adopt procedures that accommodate changes as they occur. In this light, organizations require a work force that fits within these dynamic shifts. According to Haryono et al. (2020), it's the duty of HR to ensure that firms acquire skilled, professional workforces that match modern trends. This can basically be achieved through recruitment and selection or continuous training and development. In regards to this study, quality recruitment and selection processes within the university will be integrated on the basis of an analysis of job requirements, reviews of applications, recruitment strategy, screening shortlisting procedures, and selection of the right candidates.

1.2 Problem Statement

With ever-increasing demand for remote learning in higher learning institutions, the role of HRM functions in promoting a work culture that appreciates e-learning modes cannot be understated (McCaffery, 2018). Every successful organization must recognize that human resources are crucial since they have a direct impact on performance. In every institution, the HR function plays an instrumental role by planting the new culture that accepts the new shift (e-learning mode) and ensuring that human capital is also adequately prepared to fit and assimilate the anticipated change.

Despite remote learning growing rapidly worldwide, most of the public universities in Kenya are currently facing the challenge of adapting HR-selection policies that support remote learning (Tarus, Gichoya, & Muumbo 2018). According to Mutisya and Makokha (2020), public universities in Kenya lack adequate personnel and capacity to admit, teach, examine, and graduate their students online. Further, Gunga and Ricketts (2020) highlight that lecturers need the technical skills to function in this new remote-learning environment.

Ekwoaba and Ufoma (2015) also assert that public university organizations should establish a framework for regular policy review and updates, involving HR professionals, legal experts, and other relevant stakeholders. By staying proactive and responsive to changes in the external and internal environment, organizations can maintain effective and up-to-date recruitment and selection procedures and policies. With digital learning taking the lead, universities



will require more than just acquiring qualified, experienced lecturers; they must invest in assessing career development for enhanced learning (Sá & Serpa, 2020). Odhiambo (2019) acknowledges that little attention has been paid by practitioners and researchers to the role of recruitment and selection procedures as a human resources function in the implementation of remote learning in these public universities, resulting in limited literature in this field and thus the gap that this study seeks to fill.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study sought to determine whether recruitment and selection procedures promote the implementation of remote learning by public universities in Nairobi metropolis.

1.4 Research hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between recruitment and selection procedures and the implementation of remote learning by public universities in the Nairobi metropolis.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

In order to carry out the research, the study adopted resource-based view theory in determining the role of recruitment and selection procedures in the implementation of remote learning by public universities in Nairobi metropolis.

2.1.1 Resource-Based View

Originally proposed by Birger and Wernerfelt (1984) and later developed and refined by Jay B. Barney (1991) and other scholars, the resource-based view of the firm has found considerable support in the business literature. The theory postulates that organizations with valuable, immovable, inimitable, and rare resources can attain a unique advantage in a competitive environment (Hsuan & Kotzab, 2015). Whether tangible or intangible, the resources must be heterogeneous and immobile (Barney, 1991). As a result, the resource-based perspective elucidates how an institution's property gives it advanced strategic power and superior operational efficiency. Institutions that take advantage of existing prospects using current capital while still developing unique new assets maintain their viability in the future and stay relevant and competitive (Alexy, West, Klapper, & Reitzig, 2018).

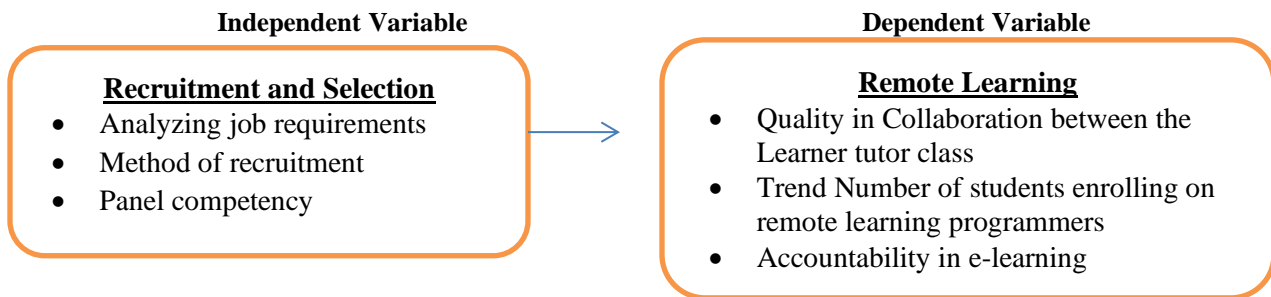
Many researchers, however, have grouped criticisms around the application of resource-based theory (Ombaka et al., 2015), pointing out that there are external variables such as innovations that provide a unique resource that can be used by the organization to generate performance in specific areas such as the operation, marketing process, and others, which yield some complications. As a result, some supporters claim that an organization's competitiveness cannot be accomplished solely by its particular internal capabilities.

The resource-based perspective is deemed applicable in this analysis since the RBV philosophy stresses the importance of taking into account all the institution's internal and external resources, whose availability would determine the success of the adoption of e-learning in public universities. Human capital, available finances, and time factors are critical in the planning and implementation process. Applying the resource-based view to the adoption of online teaching in universities involves assessing the institution's resources and capabilities and aligning them with the strategic goals of offering effective online education.

2.2 Conceptual Review

Conceptual review investigates recruitment and selection procedure, performance and management, training and development and reward and compensation. The framework below show relationship as presented in figure 1. In the research, the dependent variable will be the implementation of remote learning by Kenyan public universities while the independent variable will be recruitment and selection procedures.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Recruitment and selection procedures

According to Taylor (2018), recruitment and selection are methods of identifying people who may join and encouraging them to apply for current or expected work openings. Choosing the best talent is the primary recruitment aim of any organization, but various organizations may have other objectives to achieve during the recruitment process (Odondi, 2018). Of late, most of the organizational process has shifted; firms have been compelled to adopt procedures that accommodate changes as they occur. In this light, organizations require a work force that fits within these dynamic shifts. According to Haryono et al. (2020), it's the duty of HR to ensure that firms acquire skilled, professional workforce that match modern trends. This can basically be achieved through recruitment and selection or continuous training and development. In regards to this study, quality recruitment and selection processes within the university will be integrated on the basis of analysis of job requirements, reviews of applications, recruitment strategy, screening shortlisting procedures, and selection of the right candidates.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

The empirical review highlights the past studies on studies on recruitment and selection, as they relate on employee productivity toward organizational goals.

2.3.1 Recruitment and Selection Procedures and Implementation Remote Learning

In Canada, for instance, Santos et al. (2020) sought to determine the effect of employee selection on organizational productivity. The study focused on telecom companies in Canada. Specifically, employee selection was measured through scrutiny of the applicant's capabilities, education, and experiences. The target population of this study consisted of 220 employees working in the telecom industry. All the participants were selected using the stratified sampling method. Participants were drawn from the top managers, middle-level employees, and the operations level. Data was collected using questionnaires that had both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Pearson correlation was used to determine the association between the study variables. The result found that conducting in-depth reviews on job applicants' skills during the recruitment process helped to avail the best talents for the organization, which in turn were positively correlated with employee productivity and performance. The study concluded that actions taken by an organization to attract job applicants with the skills necessary to support the achievement of its objectives and goals are critical to fostering organizational competitiveness. This study was conducted in a developed state where there is a better chance of attracting a pool of qualified personnel as opposed to a Kenyan organization; therefore, the current study will come up with results that reflect and best apply in the local setting.

In Africa, various researchers have also invested in the role of HRM functions in organizational management. In Ghana, for instance, Ekwoaba and Ufoma (2015) investigated the impact of recruitment and selection criteria on performance using Fidelity Bank Plc, Lagos, Nigeria, as a focal point. The analyses of 130 valid responses were obtained through a questionnaire that was administered to randomly selected respondents. The study revealed that interviewing and final selection, which are part of recruitment and selection criteria, have a significant effect on an organization's performance ($X^2 = 35.723$; $df = 3$; $p < 0.05$). The research concluded that the more objective the recruitment and selection criteria are, the better the organization's performance ($X^2 = 20.007$, $df = 4$; $p < 0.05$). Although the results are critical in the HR managerial discipline, this study was conducted for a long time, thus the need to come up with updated results in this field.



In Indonesia, Haryono, Supardi, and Udin (2020) sought to determine the role of recruiting agencies in sourcing the best professionals and organizations for a competitive edge. The study used purposive sampling techniques to draw the sample population. A sample size of 375 participants was selected from a total population of 15,017 HR managers from the manufacturing industry. A structured questionnaire with a Likert-type statement was used to gather raw data. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics to draw the conclusion. Analysis followed both thematic and quantitative means. The aggregate mean demonstrated quality professionalism by all employees recruited through external agencies as opposed to internal agencies. Further inferential statistics found a significant positive relationship between the recruitment process of agencies and the competitiveness of manufacturing industries in Indonesia. While the findings of this study offered critical insights on the role of the recruitment process in determining organizational competitiveness, the study only utilized secondary data; the current study will utilize both primary and secondary data to draw conclusive results.

Odoni (2018) sought to determine how the recruitment job advertised and the review of applications submitted affected organizational HR capital. Announcing the job was scrutinized through communication platforms (print media, digital media, and radio). This study sample was drawn from HR managers working with Kenya Power Company Limited. The study used a descriptive survey design, and the purposeful sampling technique was employed to select 44 participants who participated in the study. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents. The study established that the type of advertisement channel used by the organization consequently influenced application turnout. Similarly, the study found that the review of applications submitted is critical in matching task requirements with applicants' competences, all of which support the achievement of organizational objectives and goals. The study suggests that organizations should give importance to various tests and emphasize interviews and reference checks so as to acquire a competent workforce. Although this study was undertaken in a government agency, the results cannot be generalized to an institutional setting due to policy deference and administrative structures.

In Kenya, Mbugua, Waiganjo, and Njeru (2018) sought to determine the relationship between employee recruitment and the performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The study population was drawn from HR managers from 10 tier commercial banks currently operating in Kenya, as per the CBK report for 2020. The unit of observation was the top, middle, and subordinate employees of the selected banks. Yamane's (1967) formula was adapted to calculate a sample of 384 employees, which was selected using stratified random sampling. A structured questionnaire was the main tool used in the data collection process. Simple linear regression as a form of inferential analysis was adopted. The study revealed that employee recruitment had a significant and positive effect ($\beta=.418$, $p=0.000<0.05$) on the employee performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Regression analysis showed that organizational culture explains 53.0% of employee performance. While this study was conducted in the banking sector, the current study will shift focus to a university setting. While most of the above literature points to the essence of clear recruitment and selection procedures in an organization, this study will seek to determine the recruitment and selection procedures for the implementation of remote learning by public universities in Kenya.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive study was employed to investigate the research subject. By profiling the topics under investigation. The descriptive analysis design allows for the identification and observation of a subject without manipulating it; it is used to get a greater understanding of the topic under investigation.

3.2 Target Population

According to Sharma (2017), a target community is a common group of study units with which the researcher wants to generalize findings. The study targeted public universities in Kenya that are located within the Nairobi metropolis. According to the Ministry of Education, there are 29 public universities. From the 29 public universities in Kenya, the study sampled 8 universities, which represent 28% of the entire target population. The choice to adopt 28% is based on the assertion by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) that if the target population is homogeneous, the use of 10–50% to draw the study sample is thus appropriate.

The unit of analysis included the university's registrars. Specifically, the study targeted one administration and HR registrar and one academic affairs registrar; also targeted were full-time lecturers tutoring online classes.

3.3 Sampling Size and Technique

A sample is a smaller number of the population that is used to draw conclusions regarding the whole population. Its purpose is to estimate the unknown characteristics of the population. Sampling, therefore, is the systematic process of selecting a number of individuals for a study to represent the larger group from which they were selected (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Census sampling was used to select all the identified university registrars from every university. The study used census sampling method, given the small number as espoused by Martinez-Mesa et al. (2016).

To select the university teaching staff (lecturers tutoring online classes), the study used the simple random sampling method. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sample size of 10–50% is acceptable. Therefore, this study used 20% of the sample size. In total, 44 respondents took part in this study.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure and Results analysis

Likert scale questionnaires were used to collect data. The data was analyzed in two parts, part one descriptive, mean, standard deviation and frequency while part two was linear regression between recruitment and selection and remote learning.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Recruitment and Selection Procedures

This section presents statistical analysis results of effects of recruitment and selection on implementation of remote learning in Kenya public universities.

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

The responses were analyzed using mean and standard deviation results presented in table 1

Table 1: Recruitment and selection procedures

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
The university has an effective recruitment and selection process, that put together job descriptions that are accurate and clearly highlight which tasks will be performed for a particular role	4.13	0.47
The method of recruitment for e-lecturers is open transparent and verifiable	4.08	0.58
Selection processes at the university include a strong pool of applicants, accurate qualification screenings, and proactive strategic alignment with organizational goals.	3.97	0.54
The hiring teams Analyzes e-lecturers job requirements in view of highlighting demands that guide the recruitment procedure	4.18	0.56
Having the right type of hiring and selection process helps the university save time on training.	4.15	0.49
Officers tasked with hiring at the university conducts are competent and conducts careful reviews on all applications submitted	4.15	0.54
Recruiters ensure those candidates' ICT skills and critically evaluated in every step of process.	4.08	0.62
Aggregate Mean	4.11	0.54

Results in Table 1, indicate majority of the study participants agreed that hiring teams within public universities analyzed e-lecturers job requirements in view of highlighting demands that guide the recruitment procedure (mean = 4.18 standard deviation = 0.56) and that Officers tasked with hiring at the university are competent and conduct careful reviews on all applications submitted (mean = 4.15 standard deviation = 0.54). These findings concur with Abdullah and Afshar (2019) that to sustain e-learning competitiveness, universities have to attract and retain individuals with the skills needed to give the organization a competitive edge.

Participants agreed that having the right type of hiring and selection process helps public universities save time on training (mean = 4.15, standard deviation = 0.49) and that most of the universities have an effective recruitment and selection process that puts together job descriptions that are accurate and clearly highlight which tasks will be performed for a particular role (mean = 4.13, standard deviation = 0.47). These findings support the research conclusion by Santos et al. (2020) that conducting in-depth reviews on job applicants' skills during the recruitment



process helped to identify the best talents for the organization, which in turn were positively correlated with employee productivity and performance.

Further, the study established that public universities ensured that methods of recruitment for e-lecturers were open, transparent, and verifiable (mean = 4.08 standard deviation = 0.58); recruiters ensured that candidates' ICT skills were critically evaluated in every step of the process (mean = 4.08 standard deviation = 0.62); and selection processes in all public universities included a strong pool of applicants, accurate qualification screenings, and proactive strategic alignment with organizational goals (mean = 3.97 standard deviation = 0.54). These results are in agreement with the research findings of Mbugua, Waiganjo, and Njeru (2018) that organizations should give importance to various tests and emphasize interviews and reference checks so as to acquire a competent workforce.

The study metrics had an aggregated mean of 4.11 and a low standard deviation of 0.54, which translates to agreement as per the measurement scale. This implies that most of the public universities involved carefully conducted deep analysis on job requirements; they also conducted extensive scrutiny on candidates ICT skills and their educational qualifications and ensured that the method of recruitment and selection was auditable.

Qualitative results revealed that universities offering e-classes begin by conducting a thorough job analysis when selecting e-lecturers; this is done to identify the roles, responsibilities, skills, qualifications, and experience required for the position. This information helps create accurate job descriptions and specifications. Further, they reported that a recruitment strategy was developed, outlining where and how the organization would source candidates. This can include internal job postings, external advertising, job fairs, social media, and recruitment agencies.

The study revealed that job openings are advertised through various channels, both online and offline, to attract a wide pool of potential candidates. The advertisements clearly communicated the job details, requirements, and application process. Respondents reported that applications received are screened to identify candidates who meet the basic qualifications and requirements. Depending on the position, the recruiting team conducted preliminary assessments such as skills tests, cognitive assessments, or personality assessments to further narrow down the candidate pool.

It was reported that shortlisted candidates were invited for interviews. Interviews can take various formats, such as one-on-one interviews, panel interviews, or behavioral interviews. The purpose is to assess the candidate's skills, experience, cultural fit, and motivations. The recruiting team often conducts reference checks to verify the candidate's qualifications, work history, and character. This step helps to ensure the accuracy of the information provided by the candidate.

4.1.2 Pearson Correlation

The study conducted Pearson correlation analysis to indicate a linear association between the predicted and explanatory variable. The results are presented in table 2

Table 2: Pearson Correlations

		Remote Learning	Recruitment and Selection (X1)
Remote Learning	Pearson Correlation	1	.803
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	39	39
Recruitment and Selection	andPearson Correlation	.803	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	39	39

The correlation coefficient between remote learning and recruitment and selection is 0.803; this factor implies that there is a strong positive association between recruitment and selection procedures and the implementation of remote learning at public universities in Kenya. This positive relationship was statistically significant since the significant value, as shown in Table 4.8, is 0.009, thus $p < 0.05$. These findings are in agreement of the research conclusion by Abdullah and Afshar (2019), that in order to sustain e-learning competitiveness, universities will have to attract and retain individuals with the skills needed to give the organization a competitive edge.

4.1.3 Regression of recruitment and selection on remote learning

In this study, a simple regression analysis was conducted to test the influence among predictor variables. The model summary is presented in table 3 .

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.803 ^a	.645	.567	.41351

From table 3, the R Squared, is 0.645 indicating that recruitment and selection accounts for 64.5% of variation in implementation of remote learning at public universities in Kenya.

The study further tested the significance of the model by use of ANOVA technique, The findings are tabulated in table 4 .

Table 4: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.640	1	.640	3.744	.010 ^b
Residual	6.327	37	.171		
Total	6.967	38			

Based on ANOVA statistics results, the study found that the regression model had a 0.010 level of significance, implying that the data was appropriate for drawing conclusions about the population's characteristics because the significance value (p-value) was less than 5%. This is because the p value (0.010) is significant at the 5% level of significance, hence rejecting the null hypothesis and stating that the model is not adequate. This evidence is further supported by comparing the calculated statistics value with the critical value; that is, the calculated f-value was 3.744, but the F-critical value was 2.612, indicating that the calculated value of F was greater than the critical value, indicating that recruitment and selection procedures had a considerable influence on the implementation of remote learning at public universities in Kenya. The model of the study was also determined by use of the coefficient as presented in the table 5.

Table 5: Regression Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.769	.366		13.018	.000
Recruitment and selection	.333	.172	.303	1.935	.009

According to the results of the regression analysis in table 5, improved recruitment and selection procedures will enhanced the quality of recruited staff with relevant skills and knowledge and competences critical to delivery of quality of remote learning at public universities in Kenya. This is because recruitment and selection variable is a significant variable for investigating the change on remote learning since the p value (0.009) is less than 0.05 rejecting the null hypothesis stating that the coefficient is not significant

5.0 CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

It is evident that recruitment and selection has an effect on implementation of remote learning because it enables the universities to acquire lecturers with requisite skills, knowledge and competencies, critical to delivery of remote learning. Given that quality recruitment and selection procedures were found to promote the implementation of the remote learning, it is therefore important for the public universities in Nairobi metropolis, through the HR department, to strictly adhere to university recruitment and selection policies so that they higher the lecturer with requisite skills and knowledge needed in promoting remote learning.



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