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Original Article

Continuing Professional Development Practices and Academic Staff Performance in Private Universities in Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

The study titled "Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Practices on Academic Performance in Selected Private Universities in Rwanda" explored the impact of CPD practices on academic staff performance at the University of Tourism and Business Studies (UTB) and East African University Rwanda (EAUR). The research aimed to assess the relationship between CPD practices and academic performance, testing two hypotheses: one suggesting that CPD practices have no significant impact on staff performance and the other proposing a significant impact. Using an explanatory mixed-methods design, the study included 98 participants, including academic staff and administrators, selected through universal sampling. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation ($r=0.596$, $p<0.01$) between CPD practices and academic performance, indicating a moderate relationship. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.525 showed that 52.5% of the variability in performance could be attributed to CPD practices. Additionally, the regression model's P-value of 0.000, below the significance level of 0.05, demonstrated that the model has statistically significant predictive capability, suggesting that the observed relationship between CPD practices and academic performance is both reliable and meaningful. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis, confirming that CPD practices significantly influence academic performance. The study recommends that universities develop tailored CPD frameworks to address the specific needs of academic staff, particularly in research, teaching, and career development. It also suggests that academic staff actively engage with these frameworks and that the Ministry of Education encourages annual local and international conferences to enhance networking and collaboration among academic professionals.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, academic professional development has become increasingly significant for both individual growth and institutional progress (Silander & Stigmar, 2018). This trend reflects broader transformations in higher education, characterized by growing student populations, diverse cohorts, and the influence of globalization, which has introduced new pedagogical demands (Cameroon & Woods, 2016).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is crucial for adapting to these changes. CPD, recognized globally in various forms, academic faculty development, educator development, or professional learning, supports teaching and enhances academic practice by fostering personal and professional growth (Chikari et al., 2015; Lee, 2020). For example, in the United States, the American Council on Education promotes effective teaching through initiatives like the Association of College and University Educators' online course (Gyurko et al., 2016). Similarly, the UK and Australia formalize CPD through standards and frameworks, such as the Higher Education Academy and the Australian Higher Education Standards Framework (Hattam & Weiler, 2021; Weuffen et al., 2020).

In France, CPD initiatives focus on adapting to diverse student needs and integrating ICT, as per the 2014 Bertrand report (Bunescu & Gaebel, 2018). Conversely, Pakistan faces challenges with CPD due to a lack of mandatory pre-service training and standardized instructional competencies, leading to low participation (Saleem et al., 2019; Aslam, 2018). South Africa also encounters difficulties with CPD implementation, including low uptake due to poor planning (Seepe, 2017).

Rwanda has made progress in CPD for secondary education through partnerships like VVOB, yet higher education CPD remains limited (Belsky, 2019). Despite global recognition of CPD's importance for academic competitiveness, its implementation varies widely, and local research on its impact is scarce (Dialoke & Nkechi, 2017; Inamorato dos Santos et al., 2019). Addressing this gap is essential for developing effective CPD strategies in higher education.

The specific objectives of this study were to analyze the prevailing CPD practices used for academic staff in selected private universities, to assess the level of academic staff performance in these universities, and to determine if there is a statistically significant cause-and-effect relationship between CPD practices and academic staff performance in selected private universities in Rwanda. The findings of this study will contribute to the advancement of academic staff performance specifically, and to the overall improvement of quality education.

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Statement of the Problem

Research shows that improved teaching and coordinated professional development significantly enhance student outcomes, including retention and graduation rates, and boost faculty satisfaction and engagement (Condon et al., 2016). Despite these benefits, many academics receive inadequate support for teaching development, which negatively affects student learning. There's a prevailing misconception that expertise in a discipline equates to effective teaching (Kelleher, 2003).

As the workplace evolves, higher education institutions need to train academic staff in teaching, research, innovation, and societal needs. To ensure high-quality education and meet the needs of learners, academics, and institutions, it is essential to improve faculty professional development and assess its impacts (Haras et al., 2017).

In Rwanda, while the Ministry of Education has implemented programs under the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018/19-2023/24 to enhance education from elementary to secondary levels (MINEDUC, 2019), similar impacts in higher education, particularly in Kigali, remain limited. Initiatives like RTTI, established in 2018 to build TVET trainers' pedagogical skills, highlight this disparity. However, academic staff in higher education face significant professional gaps, including in research, grant writing, and pedagogical skills (Glowacki et al., 2020; Rubeba, 2023)

Given these challenges, it is crucial to investigate the impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices on academic staff performance in selected private universities in Rwanda. This study aims to analyze CPD practices and their effects on teaching quality, research, and overall job performance, providing evidence-based strategies for enhancing professional development and educational advancement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed an explanatory mixed-methods research design to analyze Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices. The research began with a quantitative phase, where a structured questionnaire was distributed to academic staff at two private higher education institutions in Kigali: The University of Tourism, Technology, and Business Studies (UTB) and East African University Rwanda (EAUR). The aim was to assess staff involvement in CPD activities and evaluate their perceived effects on performance, teaching effectiveness, research contributions, and community engagement.

The subsequent qualitative phase involved conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants such as Deputy Vice Chancellors for Academics and Human Resource Managers. These interviews sought to provide deeper insights into CPD's impact on staff performance, capturing nuanced perspectives that complemented the quantitative data collected.

The study targeted a total of 98 participants, including 94 academic staff members and 4 senior officials from the institutions. Universal sampling was used for academic staff to ensure comprehensive inclusion, while purposive sampling selected senior management participants for their specialized knowledge. Data collection methods comprised structured questionnaires for quantitative analysis, semi-structured interviews for qualitative insights, and document analysis of CPD program materials, performance records, and institutional policies.

The content validity of the questionnaire was rigorously assessed with a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.96, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.60. Expert reviews confirmed the relevance and representativeness of the items. Face validity was ensured by evaluating the instrument's clarity and consistency. Reliability was tested through a pilot study at East Africa Christian College, with a Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of 0.701, meeting the acceptable standard for consistency.

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Data analysis utilized SPSS version 25 to integrate both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics and inferential tests such as ANOVA, correlation, and multiple regression to explore relationships between variables. Qualitative analysis involved content and thematic analysis to interpret interview data and identify patterns. This comprehensive approach provided a thorough understanding of CPD's impact on academic staff performance, combining statistical rigour with qualitative depth.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Views of Respondents on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Practices

Workshops and Seminars	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
My university regularly organizes workshops and seminars.	3.6022	.89	High Mean
I have attended a local workshop/seminar outside my university within the last 2 years.	3.1383	1.34	High Mean
I have attended international workshops/Seminars with the support of my university in the last 2 years.	2.6915	1.38	Moderate Mean
I have attended international Workshops/seminars on my own fund in the last 2 years.	2.6596	1.40	Moderate Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**3.02**	**1.25**	
Webinars and Online Courses **N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
I have attended webinar meetings on international platforms discussing academic activities.	2.5851	1.33	Low Mean
I always attend a webinar meeting on my personal matters.	3.0957	1.42	Moderate Mean
My university has sponsored me with an online course to enhance my job skills.	2.1383	1.26	Low Mean
I have completed a paid online course on university sponsorship.	2.0426	1.18	Low Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**2.46**	**1.300**	
Conferences and Conventions	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
My university organizes regular national conferences that host local academic staff each Year.	3.39	1.26	High Mean
I was invited to an international conference which accommodated international scholars around the globe for at least 2 years.	2.44	1.31	Low Mean
My university has sponsored me to attend an international conference in the last 2 years.	3.09	1.43	Moderate Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**2.97**	**1.33**	
Action Research	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
My university utilizes the Action Research Model in addressing practical issues in their academic roles.	2.31	1.14	Low Mean
Through Action Research a collaborative research activity lecturers meet to tackle job-related tasks.	2.28	1.14	Low Mean
Action Research Model is effectively implemented at my University.	2.28	1.178	Low Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**2.29**	**1.15**	**Low Mean**
Training and Development	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
My university offers regular training and development opportunities to its academic staff.	3.10	1.082	Moderate Mean

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I have been sent to attend an official training to sharpen my skills during the last 2 Years.	2.64	1.24	Moderate Mean
My university has sponsored my graduate studies.	2.02	1.33	Low Mean
My university has supported me to pursue a specific short course during the last 5 Years.	1.82	.94	Low Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**2.40**	**1.15**	
Coaching and Mentorship	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
I am aware of coaching and mentoring opportunities offered by my university.	2.54	1.33	Low Mean
Coaching and mentorship programs are conducted on a regular basis at my university.	3.45	8.38	High Mean
My faculty has a coaching and mentorship program for the new staff.	2.38	1.16	Low Mean
My university has a policy on coaching and mentorship programs.	2.31	1.20	Low Mean
Coaching and mentorship are done in an arrangement between the coachee and the coacher.	3.27	1.40	High Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**2.79**	**2.69**	

Source: Primary data, 2024

Table 1 above presents an analysis of various Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices at selected private universities, including workshops and seminars, webinars and online courses, conferences and conventions, action research, training and development, coaching, and mentoring. The aggregate means and standard deviations (SDs) for each CPD practice were analyzed to assess their relevance and implementation. Subsequently, qualitative data were interpreted, and both supporting and contrasting literature were used to contextualize the study's findings within the broader scholarly discourse.

Workshops and Seminars were generally perceived positively, with an overall mean score of 3.02 and an SD of 1.25. This indicates a moderate level of engagement and implementation. Respondents noted that their universities regularly organize workshops and seminars, but there is significant variability in individual experiences, particularly regarding attendance at local and international events. This finding aligns with Rana et al. (2016), who emphasized the importance of seminars and workshops in providing opportunities for in-depth exploration and sharing of ideas. Similarly, Buba et al. (2023) highlighted that conferences facilitate professional growth by allowing educators to demonstrate their expertise and engage with peers, which supports the positive perception of workshops and seminars observed in this study.

Webinars and Online Courses received a lower overall mean of 2.46 and an SD of 1.30, reflecting limited engagement with these CPD practices. Respondents reported minimal participation in international webinars and online courses, suggesting that these are not yet well-integrated into CPD programs at the universities. The low mean indicates that webinars and online courses are emerging technologies not yet fully embraced by the institutions of the study focus.

These findings are corroborated by interview results, where two HR Managers mentioned that these types of CPD practices are still emerging technologies not yet fully embraced by their universities. They emphasized that webinars are considered new technologies, unfamiliar to many staff and managers alike. One manager stated, *"Webinars are still new technologies which are not yet known by many of us. Even we, managers, do not find interest in how they can contribute to academic staff performance. We are going to assess their*

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relevance and prioritize them in our future CPD programs, among other initiatives". These findings are consistent with those of Bell et al. (2017), who highlighted the lack of detailed information among staff, which hinders the development of webinars tailored to meet the specific needs of participants and instructors, thereby impacting training motivation and effectiveness.

Conferences and Conventions showed a moderate level of implementation, with an overall mean of 2.97 and an SD of 1.33. While respondents acknowledged that their universities regularly organize national conferences, opportunities for international conference attendance and sponsorship were less common. This variability reflects the need for increased support for international academic exchange. Musa (2016) underscores the importance of conferences and conventions in enhancing educators' growth and development, which aligns with the need for more frequent international opportunities observed in this study.

Action Research received a low mean score of 2.29 with an SD of 1.15, indicating limited utilization and effectiveness within the universities. Respondents perceived a gap in the integration of action research methodologies to address practical issues and facilitate collaborative efforts. This low perception reflects a need for improved implementation of action research to better address real-world challenges. McDonald and Üngör (2021) highlighted the effectiveness of action research in solving local-level problems, underscoring the importance of enhancing its application within CPD practices.

The low level of implementation of the action research model was also emphasized by the findings from interviews. One Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs mentioned that this practice seems to be time-consuming and requires frequent meetings of academic staff, while their teaching timetable is set for the entire semester or trimester. In his words, he said, "*We are exploring how to reconcile our staff's busy schedules to align with the requirements of action research. As we have many campuses, it requires planning ahead of time. We see the importance of collaborative effort when meeting to address their career issues*". To this McDonald and Üngör (2021) emphasize the effectiveness of action research in addressing local-level problems of practice, providing immediate answers or solutions to these issues.

Training and Development had an overall mean of 2.40 and an SD of 1.15. Respondents perceived a moderate level of regular training opportunities but indicated minimal support for graduate studies and short-term courses. The findings suggest gaps in providing support for further education and skill enhancement. This is consistent with Yohanes (2019), who emphasized the importance of training and development for aligning tasks with employees' abilities and improving performance. Budget constraints were mentioned in interviews as a potential barrier to providing more extensive training opportunities.

Regarding the interview results, the interviewed HR managers acknowledged the importance of training and development, but they raised concerns about budget constraints that universities face when it comes to employee training and development. They emphasized their commitment to improving staff motivation and capacity building in the near future. In their own words, "*As HR Managers, we understand the importance of Training and development, but we are still struggling with compensation and other benefits to motivate our staff. Capacity-building benefits are to follow in the near future. We truly recognize the importance of CPD, and the entire management is committed to upgrading academic staff's job-related skills*".

Coaching and Mentoring showed a mixed perception with an overall mean of 2.79 and a notably high SD of 2.69. While there is a perception of regular coaching and mentoring programs, there is also a significant lack of awareness and formal policies governing these practices. The high

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variability in responses highlights the need for more structured and widely communicated coaching and mentoring initiatives. Idubor and Adekunle (2021) emphasized the benefits of effective coaching and mentoring programs, which underscores the need to address the observed gaps in these practices within the universities.

During the interview session, one respondent Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic and Research, emphasized the importance of coaching and mentoring programs as CPD practices. However, this leader mentioned that "*the practice is not fully implemented in our university due to a small number of academic staff. Any new staff joining our institution are coached by their workmates, as they have not encountered any challenges with this practice"*

In summary, while some CPD practices are moderately implemented, there are significant gaps in the effectiveness, awareness, and support for various CPD activities.

Findings on Academic Staff Performance

The findings on academic staff performance across various dimensions, influenced by Continuous Professional Development (CPD) practices, reveal a mix of strengths and areas needing improvement. This summary incorporates aggregate means and standard deviations (SD), supported by relevant literature and insights from interviews.

Table 2: Views of Respondents on Academic Staff Performance

Course Design and Delivery	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
I am able to prepare my course in line with university guidelines and policies as a result of CPD.	3.44	.94	High Mean
I am able to set clear course learning outcomes of my course before any lecture.	3.74	.938	High Mean
I am able to prepare my course and upload it to an e-learning platform on my own.	3.63	.91	High Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**3.60**	**0.93**	
Innovating Teaching Methodology	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
I always employ active learning strategies during my lectures.	3.70	1.02	High Mean
I usually integrate a problem-solving approach during my class session.	4.14	1.39	High Mean
I usually integrate a case-based scenarios approach during my class session.	3.68	.94	High Mean
I feel confident in integrating an interactive discussion approach during my class session.	3.75	1.00	High Mean
I am able to handle an online class using multimedia technologies such as PowerPoint, videos, discussion forums, and chat discussions.	3.55	1.04	High Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**3.76**	**1.88**	
Research Publications	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
The CPD practices have enhanced my skills in conducting quality research and the public.	2.91	1.29	Moderate Mean
I have gained skills in publication as a result of CPD practices.	2.74	1.33	Moderate Mean
I have published at least 2 articles in recognized journals during the last 2 years.	2.64	1.34	Moderate Mean
I have increased my citation metrics as a result of CPD practices during the last 2 years.	2.47	1.29	Low Mean

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I have managed to subscribe to various research platforms such as Google Scholar, Research Gate etc., as a result of CPD practices.	2.51	1.38	Low Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**2.65**	**1.32**	
Research Grant Writing Skills	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
I have gained valuable skills in grant writing through CPD practices.	2.47	1.25	Low Mean
I have participated in grant writing as a result of CPD practices.	2.30	1.30	Low Mean
I have signed a consultancy on grant writing as a result of CPD practices.	2.17	1.25	Low Mean
My university won a grant as a result of the skills gained from the CPD program in the last 2 years.	2.06	1.26	Low Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**2.25**	**1.27**	
Personal Career Growth	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
I have been promoted to a higher academic rank as a result of CPD practices.	2.06	1.30	Low Mean
I have become a ToT at my university as a result of CPD practices.	1.89	1.23	Low Mean
I have won a consultancy due to CPD practices offered by my university during the last 2 years.	1.94	1.28	Low Mean
I have become a mentor of the new staff as a result of CPD practices offered by my university.	2.27	1.32	Low Mean
	2.04	**1.28**	
Continuing Learning	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
I have an opportunity to lifelong learning as a result of CPD practices.	3.28	1.11	High Mean
I am confident in learning new skills through the platform established as CPD outcomes.	3.50	1.06	High Mean
Overall Mean and SD	**3.39**	**1.08**	
Acquired Best Practices	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
I have acquired best practices in teaching, research and community engagement from my colleagues as a result of CPD.	3.47	1.09	High Mean
I have learnt to conduct interactive classes in an online learning environment using Webex, Google Meet, and Zoom meetings.	2.93	1.35	Moderate Mean
I am among the best local and international educational moderators at the educational conference.	1.79	1.16	Very Low Mean
OVERALL MEAN and SD	**2.73**	**1.20**	

Source: primary data, 2024

The findings from Table 2 summarize the respondents' views about academic staff performance in areas such as course design and delivery, innovative teaching methodologies, research publications, research grant writing skills, personal career growth, continuing learning, and acquired best practices. The analysis of pedagogic competence reveals that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) practices positively impact course design and delivery. Respondents reported a high mean score of 3.45 (SD = 0.95) for aligning course preparations with university guidelines, indicating that CPD helps ensure course designs meet institutional standards. The mean score of 3.74

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(SD = 0.94) for articulating clear course learning outcomes further reflects the effectiveness of CPD in enhancing course planning skills. Additionally, the ability to integrate e-learning platforms, with a mean score of 3.63 (SD = 0.92), demonstrates successful technology integration due to CPD.

These findings align with Nelson and Spitzeros (2018), who argue that structured work environments contribute to enhanced job performance. Fuchs et al. (2016) also support this, noting that a well-structured work environment improves commitment and effectiveness. Interview data from Deputy Vice-Chancellors corroborate these results, highlighting that CPD has positively influenced course design and technological integration, although there are still challenges in ensuring uniform benefits among all staff.

In terms of innovative teaching methodologies, respondents scored highly on active learning strategies (mean = 3.70) and problem-solving approaches (mean = 4.15), reflecting a commitment to dynamic instructional techniques. The variability in standard deviations (SDs) for these measures indicates differences in the implementation and perceived effectiveness of these methods. This is consistent with (Senthilkumar and Kannappa (2017), who emphasize the importance of active learning and problem-solving approaches in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. Interviews with Deputy Vice-Chancellors also confirmed the positive impact of CPD on innovative teaching methods.

Research productivity findings indicate a moderate impact of CPD practices. Respondents reported a mean score of 2.91 (SD = 1.29) for enhanced research skills and 2.74 (SD = 1.34) for publication skills, suggesting some improvement but also significant room for growth. The mean score of 2.65 (SD = 1.34) for research output and lower scores for citation metrics (mean = 2.48, SD = 1.29) and research platform engagement (mean = 2.51, SD = 1.38) reflect limited impact on these areas.

Seepe (2017) highlights that African higher education institutions face challenges that hinder research productivity, including deficiencies in research capabilities and funding. Interview data from Deputy Vice-Chancellors support these findings, indicating that while CPD has contributed to some improvements, challenges remain in enhancing research output and citation impact.

In terms of personal career growth, respondents reported low mean scores: 2.04 (SD = 1.28) for promotion opportunities, 1.89 (SD = 1.24) for becoming Trainers of Trainers (ToTs), and 1.95 (SD = 1.29) for securing consultancies. These results suggest that CPD practices have had a limited impact on career advancement. The low mean score of 2.28 (SD = 1.32) for mentoring new staff further reflects challenges in career growth.

These findings are supported by Hakvoort et al. (2022), who emphasize that CPD is crucial for professional and personal growth but may not always translate into career advancement opportunities. Interview insights reveal that factors like individual commitment and employer intentions play significant roles in career development, reflecting the need for CPD programs to address these issues more effectively.

In contrast, continuing learning through CPD is viewed positively, with high mean scores of 3.29 (SD = 1.11) for lifelong learning opportunities and 3.50 (SD = 1.07) for acquiring new skills. This suggests that CPD is effective in providing ongoing professional development. These findings align with Gogunskii et al. (2016), who note that contemporary education initiatives foster continuous learning to meet evolving skill demands. Interviews with HR Managers and Deputy Vice-Chancellors further support these positive perceptions, although they also highlight areas where CPD could improve, such as online teaching proficiency.

Regarding acquired best practices, respondents reported a high mean score of 3.48 (SD = 1.09) for

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learning from colleagues, indicating effective knowledge exchange. However, the lower mean score of 2.94 (SD = 1.36) for adapting to online teaching environments and 1.80 (SD = 1.17) for conference moderation suggests areas needing improvement. Darling-Hammond and Cook Harvey (2018) emphasize that CPD can enhance teaching effectiveness and professional growth. However, interviews pointed out that low engagement in conference moderation might stem from a lack of perceived importance, indicating a need for CPD programs to focus more on these aspects.

Overall, the data shows that while CPD practices have been beneficial in certain areas, there are notable gaps in research productivity, career advancement, and specific aspects of professional development.

Relationship between CPD Practices on Academic Staff Performance

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Correlations

		CPD Practices	Academic Staff Performance
CPD Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.596**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	94	94
Academic Staff Performance	Pearson Correlation	.596**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	94	94

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data, 2024

Pearson correlation analysis presented in Table 3 was utilized to investigate the correlation between CPD (Continuous Professional Development) practices and academic staff performance. The analysis revealed a positive statistically significant correlation between these variables, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.596 and a corresponding P-value= .000 which was less than 0.01, indicating a moderate relationship.

Interpreting this correlation coefficient suggests that as CPD practices increase, there is a tendency for academic staff performance to improve. However, it is crucial to emphasize that correlation does not imply causation. While the analysis highlights a moderate association between CPD practices and academic staff performance, it does not establish a direct cause-and-effect relationship.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.745[a]	.555	**.525**	.54700

a. Predictors: (Constant), Coaching and Mentoring, Conferences and Conventions, Workshops and Seminars, Action Research Model, Training and Development, Webinars and Online Course

Source: Primary data, 2024

The regression analysis presented in the model summary table 4 indicates a strong relationship between the predictors and academic staff performance in private universities, as evidenced by the R-square value of 0.555. This implies that approximately 55.5% of the variance in academic staff performance can be explained by the predictors included in the model.

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The Adjusted R-square value of 0.525, which accounts for the number of predictors in the model, suggests that these predictors collectively contribute to explaining 52.5% of the variance in academic staff performance while adjusting for the complexity introduced by multiple predictors.

The predictors included in the model, such as coaching and mentoring, conferences and conventions, workshops and seminars, action research model, training and development, and webinars and online courses, are all aspects of professional development initiatives commonly implemented in private universities. These predictors represent various opportunities for academic staff to enhance their skills, knowledge, and capabilities, ultimately leading to improved performance.

The relatively low standard error of the estimate (approximately 0.547) indicates that the regression model provides reasonably accurate predictions of academic staff performance based on the selected predictors. This suggests that the model's predictions are relatively precise and reliable, providing valuable insights into the factors influencing academic staff performance in private universities.

Overall, the findings from the regression analysis underscore the importance of investing in diverse and comprehensive professional development programs for academic staff in private universities. By providing opportunities for coaching, attending conferences and workshops, engaging in action research, and participating in training and development activities, universities can support the ongoing growth and success of their academic staff. This, in turn, can lead to improved teaching quality, research productivity, and overall academic excellence, benefiting both the individual staff members and the institution as a whole.

Table 5: ANOVA Table

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.528	6	5.421	18.119	.000[b]
	Residual	26.031	87	.299		
	Total	58.559	93			

a. Dependent Variable: ACADEMICSTAFF_PERFORMANCE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Coaching and Mentoring, Conferences and Conventions, Workshops and Seminars, Action Research Model, Training Development, Webinars and Online Course

Source: Primary data, 2024

The ANOVA table (table 5) provides significant insights into the relationship between predictors and academic staff performance in private universities. It separates the total variance in performance into components explained by the regression model and those that remain unexplained. The regression model shows a sum of squares of 32.528, indicating the variance attributed to the predictors, which includes six degrees of freedom and a mean square value of 5.421.

The F-statistic of 18.119 suggests that the model is statistically significant, with at least one predictor impacting performance. This is reinforced by a P-value of 0.000, well below the 0.05 significance level, indicating that the observed relationships are reliable and meaningful. Conversely, the unexplained variance (Residual) has a sum of squares of 26.031, with a mean square of 0.299.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the included predictors such as coaching and mentoring, conferences, workshops, action research, training development, and online courses collectively impact academic staff performance. This underscores the need for private universities to

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invest in diverse professional development programs, empowering staff to enhance teaching quality, research productivity, and overall academic excellence.

Table 6: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1(Constant)	.879	.226		3.882	.000
Workshops and Seminars	.259	.072	.304	3.580	.001
Webinars and Online Courses	.126	.082	.143	1.530	.130
Conferences and Conventions	.039	.020	.146	2.001	.048
Action Research Model	.318	.067	.421	4.762	.000
Training Development	.080	.089	.079	.898	.372
Coaching and Mentoring	-.022	.031	-.055	-.694	.489

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Staff Performance

Source: Primary data, 2024

This means the linear regression model is:

$$pcdY = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y is academic staff performance β_i are regression coefficients, X_1 is Workshop and seminars, X_2 is webinars and Online Courses, X_3 is Conference and Conventions, X_4 is Action Research Model, X_5 is Training and Development, X_6 is Coaching and mentoring, ε are random errors

The interpretation and analysis suggest that the regression model successfully captures the relationship between CPD (Continuous Professional Development) practices and academic staff performance.

The regression equation presented ($Y = 0.879 + 0.259X_1 + 0.126X_2 + 0.039X_3 + 0.318X_4 + 0.080X_5 - 0.022X_6 + \varepsilon$) indicates how different CPD practices (X1 through X_6) influence academic staff performance (Y).

In this model:

The coefficients table presented in Table 6 provides valuable insights into the relationship between predictors and academic staff performance in private universities. Each predictor's unstandardized coefficients, standardized coefficients (Beta), t-value and significance levels (Sig.) are presented:

Starting with workshops and seminars; the coefficient (B) of 0.259 suggests that for every one-unit increase in participation, academic staff performance is expected to increase by 0.259 units. Furthermore, the standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.304 emphasizes that workshops and seminars have a moderate positive impact on performance, even after accounting for the influence of other predictors. The p-value ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$) indicates that workshops and seminars have a statistically significant impact on academic staff performance. The t-value ($t = 3.580$) reflects the magnitude of the relationship, and in this case, the t-value suggests that the coefficient for workshops and seminars is statistically significant. Therefore, the impact of workshops and seminars on academic staff performance is not only significant but also substantial.

On the contrary, webinars and online courses do not show statistical significance ($p = 0.130 > 0.05$). Despite a positive coefficient ($B = 0.126$) indicating a potential positive relationship, the relatively lower Beta of 0.143 suggests a weaker impact compared to other predictors. The t-value of 1.530 further supports the lack of statistical significance, indicating that the observed relationship may not be robust enough to conclude a meaningful influence on academic staff performance.

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Moving to conferences and conventions, a coefficient (B) of 0.039 implies that each unit increase in participation leads to a 0.039-unit increase in performance. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.146 indicates a moderate positive impact, reinforcing the importance of networking and knowledge exchange in enhancing academic staff performance. The p-value ($p = 0.048 < 0.05$) implies that conferences and conventions have a statistically significant impact on academic staff performance, which underscores that participation in these events positively influences academic staff performance. However, the t-value of 2.001, while significant, suggests a slightly less pronounced impact compared to workshops and seminars.

The action research model emerged as a highly statistically significant predictor ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) of academic staff performance. The substantial coefficient ($B = 0.318$) suggests a strong positive relationship, indicating that participation in the action research model significantly enhances performance. The high standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.421) reinforces this, highlighting the relatively high impact of engaging in research-oriented activities. The t-value of 4.762 further confirms the robustness of this relationship, underlining the importance of fostering a culture of research and inquiry among academic staff.

The coefficient (B) of 0.080 suggests a positive relationship between training development and academic staff performance, though relatively weak. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.079 indicates a minimal impact on academic staff performance. However, the p-value ($p = 0.372 > 0.05$) does not demonstrate statistical significance, as also the t-value of 0.898 is not statistically significant, suggesting that the observed relationship may not be statistically meaningful. This implies that participation in training development does not significantly influence academic staff performance in private universities.

Similarly, coaching and mentoring demonstrate a relatively low coefficient ($B = -0.022$), implying a slight negative relationship between coaching and mentoring and academic staff performance, but it is not substantial. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of -0.055 indicates a minimal negative impact on academic staff performance. The p-value ($p = 0.489 > 0.05$) and the t-value of -0.694 indicate that the coefficient is not statistically significant at $p > 0.05$. Therefore, the impact of coaching and mentoring on academic staff performance appears to be less significant.

In general, the coefficients suggest that participation in workshops and seminars, conferences and conventions, and the action research model positively influence academic staff performance in private universities. However, the impact of webinars and online courses, training development, and coaching and mentoring appears to be less significant. These findings underscore the importance of investing in professional development programs that emphasize active learning, collaborative research, and innovative teaching practices to enhance academic staff performance.

Hypotheses Testing

Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant statistical impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices on the performance of academic staff in selected private universities in Rwanda.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a statistically significant impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices on the performance of academic staff in selected private universities in Rwanda.

The analysis indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between CPD practices and academic staff performance, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.596 and a corresponding P-value of .000, which is less than 0.01. This confirms that

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there is indeed a moderate relationship between CPD practices and academic staff performance.

Furthermore, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.525 suggests that approximately 52.5% of the variability in academic staff performance can be explained by CPD practices. This further supports the alternative hypothesis, indicating a significant impact of CPD practices on academic staff performance.

The regression model performed indicated a P-value of 0.000, which is less than the significance level alpha of 0.05, indicating that the model has a statistically significant predictive capability. The significance of the P-value being less than 5% suggests that the relationships between the predictors (CPD practices) and academic staff performance are unlikely to have Occurred by chance. In other words, the observed relationships between these predictors and academic staff performance are deemed reliable and meaningful based on the data collected.

Therefore, the Null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis confirming that CPD practices significantly influence academic performance.

CONCLUSION

The study underscored the critical role that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices play in enhancing the performance of academic staff at selected private universities in Rwanda. The analysis highlighted a diverse implementation of CPD activities, including workshops, seminars, and conferences, though some practices like webinars and action research face challenges in adoption and institutional support. These findings pointed to the necessity for improved strategic planning and support mechanisms to overcome barriers and maximize the effectiveness of CPD initiatives.

Additionally, while academic staff demonstrate strengths in areas such as course design and innovative teaching, challenges persist in research productivity, grant writing, and career growth. The study's hypothesis testing shows a significant positive correlation between CPD practices and staff performance, reinforcing the value of CPD in boosting academic outcomes. This emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to bolster research capabilities, support career advancement, and promote a culture of lifelong learning, alongside a sustained investment in professional development initiatives.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, several key recommendations have been proposed to enhance Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices and improve academic staff performance at private universities in Rwanda. For higher learning institutions, it is crucial to develop tailored CPD frameworks that address the specific needs of academic staff, focusing on research capabilities, teaching methodologies, and career development. Universities should provide robust support for CPD activities, including adequate funding, infrastructure, and resources, to create an enabling environment for professional growth. Encouraging collaboration and networking through international conferences, research projects, and mentoring programs is essential. Institutions should also invest in CPD practices like the action research model to foster collaborative problem-solving and knowledge sharing and establish partnerships with capacity-building organizations to enhance staff skills.

The Ministry of Education and the Higher Education Council (HEC) are advised to play a proactive role in supporting academic staff development. Recommendations include establishing a dedicated institute to address capacity-building gaps identified in audits and organizing regular workshops and seminars to enhance skills such as research and grant writing. Conducting regular institutional audits will help ensure the quality of education and staff proficiency. Additionally, the Ministry should

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promote the organization of local and international conferences to facilitate networking and collaboration among academics. Mentorship programs that pair experienced staff with junior faculty are also recommended to provide guidance and support, further advancing professional development within higher education institutions.

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