

“Does Organizational Culture inform Institutional Policies, which influence the Retention and Success of Graduate Students?” A case of an Urban Private University in Kenya

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Abstract:

The success of an organization depends on its culture. Organizational culture, particularly the core values, informs institutional policies. This study focused on MBA students in an Urban Private University (UPU). The MBA program with a population of 300 students (200 evening, 100 distance learning mode) has been experiencing growth in retention and graduation in the recent past. The study sought to determine whether institutional policies, based on the core values (Character [C_1], Competence [C_2], and Community [C_3]), played a role in their retention and success (graduation). Purposive and stratified sampling methods were applied to select 20 (10%) respondents (evening mode). Questionnaires were used to collect data, which were analyzed based on the three core values. The findings revealed that: C_1 — the character of majority (75%) of the respondents was positively influenced by chapel services; C_2 —(80%) of the respondents persisted to graduation due to small classes and lecturers’ open-door policy; C_3 —majority (85%) of the respondents developed a sense of belonging through participation in community of students and outreach programs. Thus, organizational culture informed institutional policies and influenced retention and success of students. Therefore institutional policies embedded in the 3Cs have a relationship with students’ persistence to graduation.

Key Words: Organizational culture, Institutional policy, Students’ retention, Higher education.

1.0 Introduction

Higher education institutions are bestowed a substantive and procedural autonomy to determine their own goals, programs (the *what* of academe) and means by which to pursue those programs (the *how* of academe) (Altbach, Berdahl and Gumport 2005). Accordingly, these institutions design their own institutional policies according to their own core values to meet their

objectives and by extension that of the nation and beyond. Given that organizations are unique based on their culture; it is this culture that directs institutional policies. It is worth noting that public policy is conferred the status of official tool of governance (Sutton and Levinson 2001, p.3); thus the success of any organization depends on the policies informed by institutional core values.

The proposition of this paper posits that organizational culture, especially its core values, informs institutional policies, which influence the retention and success of graduate students. For that reason, organizational culture is vital to growth, development and success of any institution. Brunner (1996, p. 3) argues that “it is culture that provides the tools for organizing and understanding our worlds in communicable ways”. Similarly, Brown (2000) on ‘why study organizational culture’ in his book on Organizational Governance in Higher Education shows that culture influences styles of management and decision making in institutions of higher learning. Additionally, organizational culture brings about continuity and gives strength to institutions; which translates to stability.

Schein (2010) defines organizational culture as a set of assumptions on how the world is and should be, that is shared by a group of people and consequently determines their way of thinking, perceptions, feelings and behavior. Consequently, organizational culture affects capabilities and productivity of an organization. Muya and Wesonga (2012), define organizational culture as a set of beliefs and values which are assumptions about reality and ideals. These assumptions create organizational culture when shared in an institution and develop over a period of time. Organizational values embedded in organizational culture, act as hinges upon which institutional policies revolve.

Institutional policies that focus on providing a supportive environment for students influence their retention and success. Tinto (1993, p.146), argues that “Institutional commitment to students is the basic principle of effective retention in any institution.” Unfortunately, most institutions of higher learning have neither fully invested their resources nor formulated policies geared towards students’ retention programs. Besides, Tinto (1993, p.146), supports the importance of higher learning institutions having their own goals and policies targeting students’ recruitment and retention. Sergiovanni et al (1999, p.230) advances Tinto’s (1993) position, by reporting that “organizations control the actions of individuals within them by making and enforcing policies...”

On the contrary, the main reason for lack of persistence among post-graduate students is poor institutional systems and policies; hence attrition due to poor preparation of students, which leads to lack of adaption to the expectations of higher education. Moreover, retention and student drop-out is attributed to both poor national policies and institutional policies within the higher education sector (Koen, 2007). Based on the preceding positions, we maintain that institutional policies, based on institutional core values, enhance retention and success of students. In view of that, this study sought to examine whether organizational culture, particularly the core values, which inform institutional policies, influence the retention and success students.

2.0 Theoretical Review:

This study was guided by various theories developed by: Tinto (1987); O’reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991); Denison and Mishra (1995). Tinto (1987) developed the theory of student departure and explains why some students persist till graduation, while others depart before graduation. Tinto (1987) argued that students join universities and colleges with different and varied characteristics and behavior just as the students themselves. In this case, students’ characteristics fail to integrate with those of the universities and colleges; hence it becomes very difficult for the students to cope and be assimilated in these institutional characteristics and values. This results into students-institutional conflicts, which if they are not resolved brings about attrition.

In his theory, Tinto (1987) shows that there are three main causes of attrition or departure namely; academic problems, lack of institutional commitment towards students and lack of integration within institutional values and culture as well as social integration. Tinto's (1987) theory suggests that institutions should build a strong long-term commitment towards offering quality education to students as well as have an all-inclusive system of education. In addition, institutions should be committed to putting their students' welfare ahead of institutional goals. Also, institutions should be committed towards development of a community that supports students socially and academically; all students should be integrated in these communities with the same expectations in terms of values and behavior. Furthermore, institutional commitment brings about satisfaction; which leads to retention and success of students.

Similarly, O'reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991) developed a theory on People and Organizational Culture, which maintains that cultures are reinforced within institutions and can be distinguished by values. O'reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991) developed an instrument-Organizational Culture Profile (OCP) that they would use to assess the Person-Organization Fit and found out that correspondence between individual(s) and organizational values is paramount to OCP; this is manifested on how matters that arise in an organization are managed. In their theory, O'reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991) used a 'set of statement values' to assess the extent of relationship between organizations and values, and also on individual preferences on set values within an organization. A sample of MBA and Accounting students was used to assess the OCP and the findings revealed that individual preferences vary from one organization to another and also within an organization; for instance, different groups or departments may vary in values even within an organization.

O'reilly, Chatman and Caldwell's (1991) theory shows that individual satisfaction and organizational commitment are predicted by organizational culture. They therefore concluded that there is great need to understand the fit between individuals in terms of their value preference and organizational values which form organizational cultures. This theory shows that satisfaction, which brings about commitment and persistence, is highly related to organizational values that form organizational culture.

Equally, Denison and Mishra (1995) also developed a model on Organizational Culture and Effectiveness where they used four traits namely; Adaptability, Mission, Involvement and Consistency to measure and establish the relationship between organizational culture and effectiveness. In this model, Denison and Mishra (1995) found out that organizational culture is measurable and highly correlated to outcomes within an organization; that the four traits can be significantly used to predict satisfaction, quality and overall performance within an organization. On adaptability, they established that only high performing organizations are able to perceive and respond to their clients and re-organize their values and cultures to improve on their performance.

Correspondingly, any performing organization has a mission that tells of its doings guided by its values and policies. This gives organizations a strategic direction that informs and operationalizes its vision. Additionally, organizations that encourage the stakeholders' participation, enables them develop a sense of belonging and ownership to the organization's values and culture. Also, consistency brings about a coordinated organization that is well controlled and integrated in terms of its operating systems. In summary, the three theories discussed in this section indicate that organizational culture acts as the foundation upon which institutional policies are anchored; the implementation of these policies influence organizational performance—performance in this case is the retention and success of students.

3.0 Related Literature

Studies on organizational culture and students' retention began as early as in 1980s where researchers like Prunty (1984), on reviewing the concept of educational policy and analysis concluded that education reforms will not come by changing decision making in institutions of learning; but rather through understanding basic institutional values and relationships within and among institutions of learning. A study on organizational culture in higher education by Tierney (1988) revealed that improving ways of assessing organizational culture gives institutions of higher learning a better chance to enhance their decision making strategies.

Similarly, Keup *et al's.* (2001) study on organizational culture and institutional transformation shows that change in organizational culture and beliefs may be used as an environment and platform for institutional transformation and vice versa; that the success of institutional transformation greatly depends on how issues relating to organizational culture are handled. Thus, organizational culture acts as the foundation upon which institutional policies are built. This argument is supported by a student retention survey carried out by Gabriel (2006) in North Virginia Community College, which showed that academic persistence is as a result of more students' involvement with the institution, both socially and academically through institutional values, practices and policies. Koen's (2007) study on postgraduate students' retention and success in South Africa found out that organizational cultural practice and relations are the major key factors that contribute to retention and success of postgraduate students in South Africa. In this regard, organizational culture change is paramount in determining organizational performance.

Likewise, Ongiti's (2009) study on the impact of policies and practices on professional socialization in women doctoral level mathematical sciences, affirms that when women female graduate students participated in the mathematics community's activities, they developed a feeling that they belong to the group, hence persisted to graduation. Moreover, a study by Muya and Wesonga (2012) on the impact of organizational culture on performance of educational institutions and found out that the culture of institutions of higher learning can only have strength and cohesion if operations in these institutions are conducted within explicit and clear values and policies. In this case, a strong correlation exists between strong organizational culture and high performance within institutions of higher learning.

Accordingly, the literature reviewed hitherto implies that there is a strong relationship between organizational culture, institutional policies (values) and student retention in institutions of higher learning. Based on the reviewed theories and literature, we came up with a theory: Organizational Culture, Policy and Retention of graduate students' model (refer to figure 1:1).

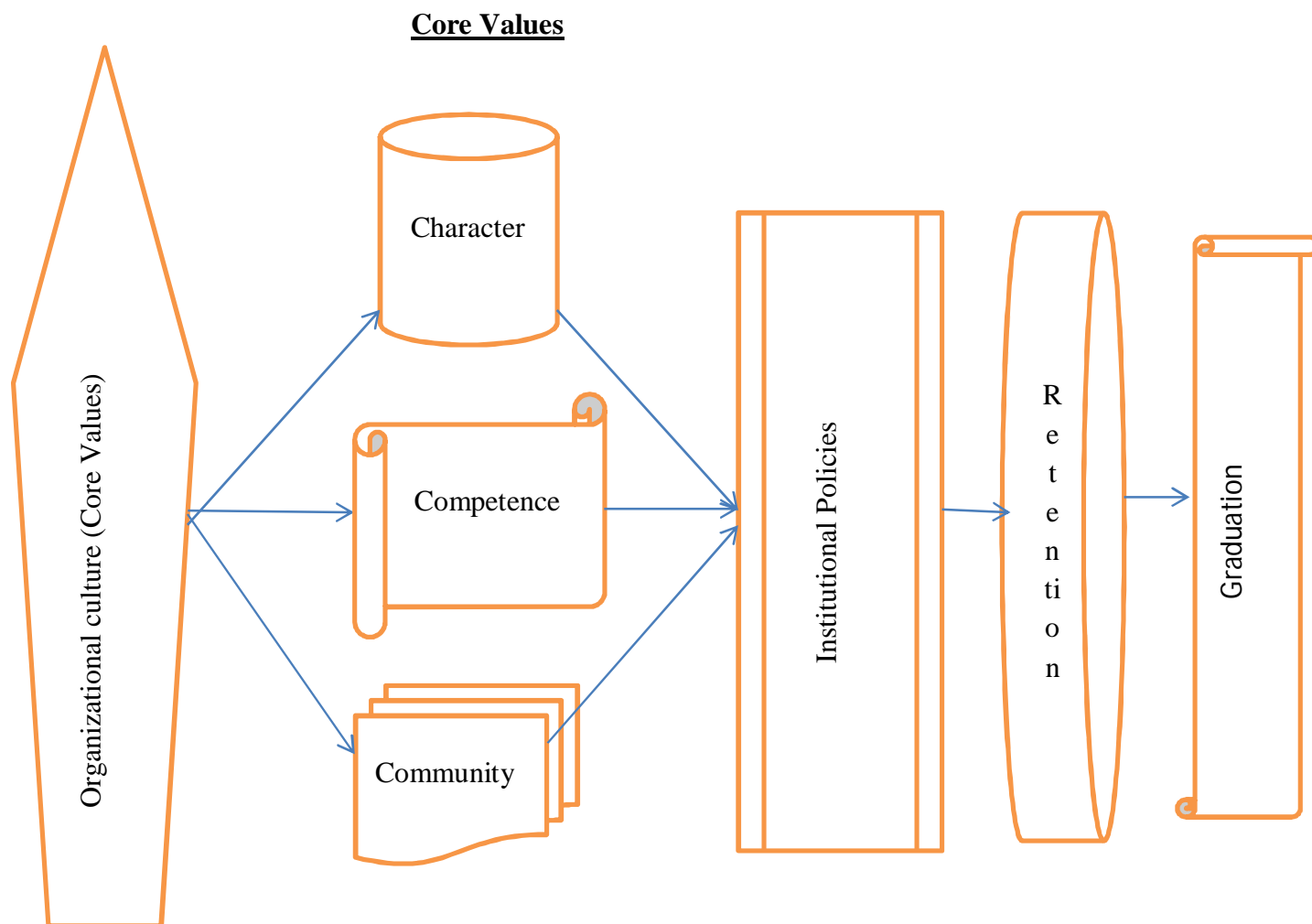


Figure 1:1 Organizational Culture, Policy and Retention of Graduate students

Based on the model in figure 1.1, this paper argues that retention and success of graduate students is influenced by institutional policies which are grounded on organizational culture. As indicated in Figure 1:1, Character, Competence and Community (3Cs) are the core values of the organizational culture at UPU. These values act as the base for the institution's policies. These policies play a key role in the retention and success (graduation) of students. The assumption of this study is that organizational culture informs institutional policies which in turn influence the retention and success of students.

4.0 Profile of UPU

Since its establishment in the year 1990, UPU has been experiencing steady growth rates in terms of student enrolment, retention and success (graduation). UPU has held 18 graduation ceremonies since its founding. Institutional policies at UPU are contained in the University's core values (Character, Competency and Community). *Chapel Service* and *Dress code* are among the institutional policies under the core value of Character (C₁). Chapel Service Policy requires students' physical presence as follows:

- Traditional students¹ — twice a week
- Evening students – Once a week
- School based students² –Daily devotions (Student Handbook, 2014-2017 p.6)

Similarly, Dress code policy states that:

“Students will dress and groom in a manner appropriate to persons aspiring to be professional people and be good examples to others. Dress should be characterized by neatness, cleanliness, and modesty, regardless of cultural influence or style. Clothing should reflect the dignity of the occasion for which it is worn” (Student Handbook, 2014-2017, p.13)

Among the institutional policies under Competency (C_2) are: *small* and *manageable* classes (minimum 15, maximum 30), and *academic performance* enhanced, mainly through the lecturers’ *open-door policy*. Small classes largely apply to post graduate programs. The university believes that these small classes influence retention and success of students. For instance,

“The postgraduate program requires a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in the coursework and successful completion of the dissertation or project...the pass mark for each individual unit is considered to be C plain; the student must complete all coursework with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B plain)” (Student Handbook, 2014-2017, p. 67):

Further, at UPU, all course units in all delivery methods (Day, Evening and Distance learning) are either three or two credits ...Though three credit units have a minimum of 40 contact hours, while the two credit units have a minimum of 27 contact hours; lecturers have an open-door policy where they allow students to interact with them on academic and social matters

Student community and *Community outreach* are among the institutional policies under the core value of community (C_3). *Student community* involves: participation in clubs (Student Handbook, 2014-2017, p.15): mentoring programs and academic group work, which is encouraged through class assignments. On *student community*, the university encourages wholesome association; a friendly relationship between men and women as equal members of a Christian based intellectual community (Student Handbook, 2014-2017, p.9). Students are also encouraged to participate in community outreach, where they work to improve the society academically, spiritually and socially. This includes programs like Mentoring, Educational supportive initiatives—For All Children (EFAC)—where UPU sponsors children from poor families through high school education and involves UPU graduate students in counseling and teaching.

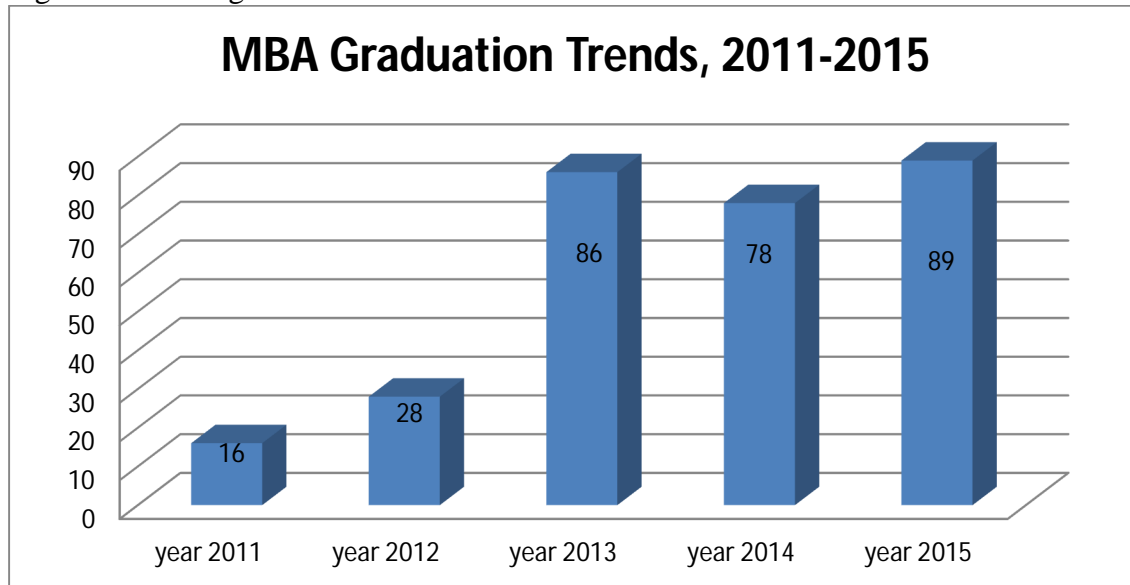
UPU’s MBA program is one of the graduate programs offered under the School of Business. This program is offered through evening and distance learning modes. The program has 9 concentration areas: Marketing, Strategic management, Procurement, Human resource, Accounting, Banking & Finance, Project management, Entrepreneurship and Management Information systems. The program takes an average of two calendar years to complete. This program has grown from a population of 18 students in the year 2006 to 250 students in 2011 and more than 300 in the year 2015. Besides, the program has steadily increased the number of graduating students—from 16 students in the year 2011 to 86 in 2013, but saw a slight decrease in the year 2014 with 78 students (the decrease was due to some potential graduating students not meeting the deadlines for some of the graduation requirements—defense of thesis and final report writing—otherwise the number could have doubled). However, the number of graduating students increased to 89 during the year

¹ Students who attend classes during the day

² Students who attend classes during school holidays (April, August, & December)

2015 graduation (refer to figure 1.2.). This confirms that the MBA program has experienced persistent high students' retention and success in the recent years.

Figure 1.2 MBA graduation trends



The high rate of students' graduation trend (as indicated in figure 1.2) attracted our attention to investigate the factors that led to this success. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether organizational culture (with special attention to the core values [Character, Competency and Community]), informs institutional policies, which in turn influences retention and success of graduate students.

5.0 Research Objectives

This quantitative study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. To find out whether institutional policies based on Character influence retention and success of MBA students
2. To determine whether institutional policies on Competence influenced retention and success of MBA students
3. To investigate whether institutional policies related to Community influenced retention and success of MBA students

6.0 The Study

This study was conducted in an Urban Private University (UPU) based in Nairobi's Central Business District, Kenya, with a total population of about 1,700 students. The MBA program has a population of about 300 (200 evening, 100 distance learning) students. Quantitative data were collected through open- and closed-ended questionnaire, in November 2014. However, more data, especially the number of students who graduated in October 2015 were added (refer to figure 1.2). Purposive sampling (targeting students on their final year on the evening mode of study) method was applied to select the respondents—20 (10%) out of 200. Data were collected and analyzed based on the research objectives, directed by the 3Cs—Character (C_1), Competency (C_2), Community (C_3). Qualitative data (from the open-ended questions) were analyzed centered on the themes that emerged from the research objectives. Quantitative data (from closed-ended questions) were analyzed using SPSS software.

7.0 Summary of the Major Findings

The major findings are presented based on the three themes/core values Character (C_1), Competency (C_2), Community (C_3), as advanced in the research objectives. Theme One: *Character* (C_1): 75% of the respondents indicated that UPU had influenced their character positively (in spiritual growth, Christian morals, being more responsible and independent, being ethical and competent holistically and influence in community participation); 5% indicated that UPU did not influence their character significantly; whereas 20% did not respond to that question. Similarly, 90% of the respondents indicated that they have been positively impacted by attendance of Chapel services that are held every week at UPU.

Correlation for the data collected revealed that Character (C_1) and Persistence are positively related, $r(18) = 0.216$ for the Chapel policy and $r(18) = 0.793$ for the Dress code policy. The p-value 0.00 is < 0.01 and hence correlation is significant at 0.01; therefore 99% confident that there is true association between C_1 and Persistence (refer to table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Relationship between C_1 and Persistence (Correlations)

		Chapel	Dress code	Persistence
Chapel	Pearson Correlation	1	.327	.216
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.160	.361
	N	20	20	20
Dress code	Pearson Correlation	.327	1	.793**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.160		.000
	N	20	20	20
Persistence	Pearson Correlation	.216	.793**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.361	.000	
	N	20	20	20

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

Theme Two: *Competency* (C_2): majority (80%) of the respondents indicated that they were happy to be at UPU because of the small and manageable classes and the academic performance enhanced through the lecturers' open-door policy. Other factors include clean learning environment and studying facility, campus location, MBA Coordinator, holistic education, good and welcoming staff, the Christian fellowship at UPU and the students' portal for accessing learning materials and interactions with lecturers.

Table 1.2 Relationship between C_2 and Persistence (Correlations)

		Persistence	Open-door Policy	Academic Performance
Persistence	Pearson Correlation	1	.608**	.216
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.361
	N	20	20	20
Open-door Policy	Pearson Correlation	.608**	1	.216
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.361
	N	20	20	20

Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.216	.216	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.361	.361	
	N	20	20	20

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

Additionally, respondents indicated that they like the fact that exam results are usually released on time at UPU; thus, persistence to graduation.

Correlations revealed that Competence (C_2) and Persistence are significantly related, $r(18) = 0.608$ for Open-door policy and $r(18) = 0.216$ for Academic Performance, $p < 0.01$. The p-value (0.004) is < 0.01 , hence correlation is significant at 0.01 and 99% confident that there is true association between Competence (C_2) and Persistence (Refer to table 1.2)

Theme three: *Community (C_3)*: majority (85%) of the respondents developed a sense of belonging due to their participation in student community and community outreach, hence persistence and success, while 15% though matriculated on the program, did not develop a sense of belonging at UPU.

Table 1.3 Relationship between C_3 and Persistence (Correlations)

		Persistence	Comm. Outreach	Comm. Other Students
Persistence	Pearson Correlation	1	-.096	-.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.686	.556
	N	20	20	20
Comm. Outreach	Pearson Correlation	-.096	1	-.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.686		.749
	N	20	20	20
Comm. Other Students	Pearson Correlation	-.140	-.076	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.556	.749	
	N	20	20	20

However, correlations revealed a negative association between C_3 and Persistence, $r(18) = -0.096$ for Community Outreach and $r(18) = -0.140$ for Community with other students, $p > 0.05$. Correlation is therefore not significant. Therefore, we are not confident that there is true association between C_3 and Persistence (Refer to table 1.3).

Conversely, a positive correlation was revealed between Students' satisfaction and Academic performance, Chapel services and Community Outreach. Correlation between community outreach and satisfaction is significant at 0.01 ($p < 0.01$) and hence confident that there is association between the two variables (Refer to table 1.4).

Table 1.4 relationship between community outreach and satisfaction (Correlation)

		Open-door Policy	Academic Performance	Satisfaction	Chapel	Comm. Outreach
Open-door Policy	Pearson Correlation	1	.216	-.140	-.176	-.096
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.361	.556	.457	.686
	N	20	20	20	20	20
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.216	1	.327	.216	-.096
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.361		.160	.361	.686
	N	20	20	20	20	20
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.140	.327	1	.327	.688**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.556	.160		.160	.001
	N	20	20	20	20	20
Chapel	Pearson Correlation	-.176	.216	.327	1	-.096
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.457	.361	.160		.686
	N	20	20	20	20	20
Comm. Outreach	Pearson Correlation	-.096	-.096	.688**	-.096	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.686	.686	.001	.686	
	N	20	20	20	20	20

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

The findings of this study indicate that students are holistically satisfied with the MBA program and would introduce their friends and family to UPU. Due to their satisfaction they are able to persist to graduation.

Multiple Regression Analysis:

The regression sample consists of the 20 MBA program respondents drawn from UPU. The dependent variable is students' persistence while the predictors are the UPU's core values which are the 3Cs (Character, Competence and Community).

Table 1.5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.886 ^a	.785	.686	.205

a. Predictors: (Constant), Community –Other Students, Community Outreach, Dress code, Open-door Policy, Chapel, Academic Performance

The Correlation Coefficient, R, is positive and close to 1 (R = 0.886). This reveals that there is high positive association between the dependent variable (Persistence) and the predictors (C₁, C₂ and C₃). However, estimates of this model may be wrong by 0.2 (refer to Tale 1:5).

When Persistence was predicted, the data revealed that C₁, C₂ and C₃ contribute to the model. Open-door policy and dress code were found to be significant p< 0.1 and can be used to predict persistence in future. However, Chapel services, Community Outreach, Community with other students and academic performance were found not significant and may not be used to predict

persistence in future. This may be as a result of the size of the sample used. Therefore, may need to increase the sample size so as to include the variables in future prediction. (Refer to table 1.6).

Table 1.6 Prediction Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.286	.438		-.652	.526
	Chapel	.119	.151	.119	.787	.445
	Dress code	.786	.182	.660	4.319	.001
	Community Outreach	2.793E-17	.214	.000	.000	1.000
	Open-door Policy	.452	.151	.452	2.990	.010
	Academic Performance	-.143	.155	-.143	-.921	.374
	Community- Other Students	.071	.176	.060	.406	.691

a. Dependent Variable: Persistence

Regarding persistence up to graduation within the stipulated period, as indicated in figure 1.3, majority (85%) of the respondents indicated that they will finish their MBA course on time while 15% felt that they will not finish on time.

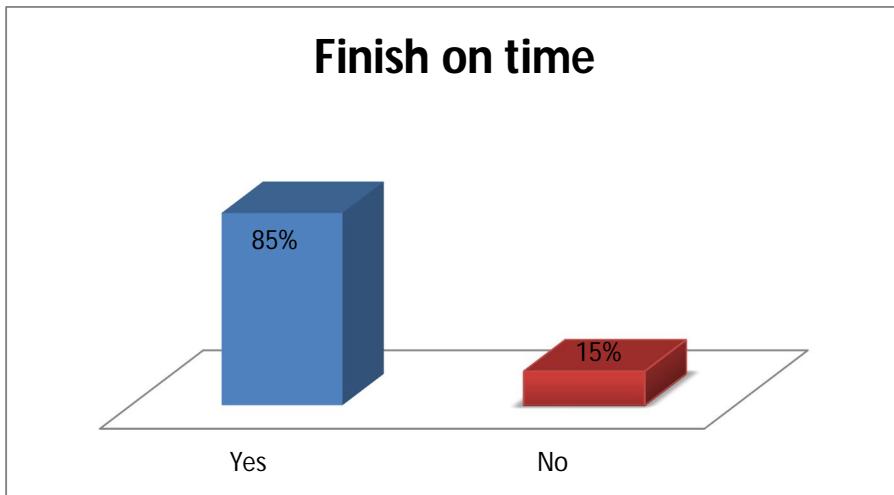


Fig. 1.3 Expected graduation time

Some of the reasons indicated by those who said they will not finish their course on time include; financial constraints, working conditions, health issues and course structure in terms of limited number of units that a student is supposed to take per trimester.

8.0 Discussions

The success of student recruitment is determined by their retention and success. Policies geared towards student retention, especially at the graduate level are widely studied and discussed in higher education platforms; yet the problem of student attrition still exists. It is a high time universities anchored retention policies on their organizational core values so as to enable students develop a sense of belonging, hence persist in the program until graduation. This study sought to

determine whether institutional core values—Character, Competency and Community—which hinge on institutional policies propelled by organizational culture enhance retention of students. The fact that majority of the respondents (75%) indicated that Character, as one of the core values influenced their persistence at UPU, is a clear indication that policies based on Character influence retention and success of MBA students. This finding advances Tinto's (1993) theory that it is important for institutions to have their own goals and commitments as institutions of higher education besides the goals, commitments and policies they set on students' recruitment.

Similarly, policies on competence enhance the retention and success of students. Written and unwritten policies and practices must be communicated, implemented and experienced in order to determine their success. Among the factors that influenced retention and success of MBA students at UPU are: small, manageable classes and lecturers' open-door policy. This supportive environment facilitates student-student and faculty-student interactions, which make students develop a sense of belonging and validation; hence persistence and success. This finding builds on Gabriel's (2006) argument that academic persistence is as a result of students' involvement with the institution both socially and academically; through institutional values, practices and policies. Correspondingly, Ongiti's (2009) study revealed that graduate students persist because of experiencing a supportive environment at the department; for example, the open-door policy and the availability of faculty members for consultation.

The foregoing arguments relate well to the UPU's policies on Community and their impact on the MBA students' retention and success. The fact that the university puts a lot of emphasis on policies and practices related to community values; students are encouraged to participate in students' community and community outreach services; hence the high rate of interaction between student-student, student-faculty and student-faculty-community. The results of this study complements Herzig's (2004 a) argument that one path to becoming integrated is through particular forms of participation in communities of practice of graduate study. To complement Herzig's (2004 a) argument, Ongiti's (2009) study on the impact of policies and practices on professional socialization in women doctoral level mathematical sciences, affirms that when women female graduate students participated in the mathematics community's activities, they developed a feeling that they belong to the group, hence persisted to graduation

The study also revealed that the MBA students were satisfied with UPU's institutional policies anchored on the 3Cs, hence persistence to graduation. These results support Tinto's (1993) theory that institutional commitment to students is paramount for this brings about satisfaction. The fact that most respondents (85%) indicated that they were satisfied and proud of UPU, they developed a sense of belonging. As a result most students are absorbed into the labor market during internships. Thus, the findings of this study support O'reilly, Chatman and Caldwell's (1991) model on People and Organizational Culture, which maintains that cultures are reinforced within institutions and can be distinguished by values. The findings also concur with Koen's (2007) and Muya and Wesonga's (2012) studies which revealed that a strong correlation exists between strong organizational culture and high performance within institutions of higher learning. Additionally, the findings of this study affirm our theory—organizational core values guide organizational policies and practices, and when implemented and experienced by students, they influence their retention and success.

9.0 Conclusions

The three core values (3 Cs) of the organizational culture at UPU are Character, Competence and Community (3Cs). UPU being a Christian based institution; propagates Christian values embedded in the 3Cs, which act as the base for the institution's policies. These policies play a key

role in the retention of students, hence graduate at the stipulated time. The 3Cs were found to have a relationship with students' persistence to graduation. C_2 and C_3 were found to have a positive relationship with persistence in that, as C_2 and C_3 increases, persistence increases. C_1 was found to have a negative relationship with persistence in that, as C_1 increases persistence decreases and the opposite is true. Based on the findings of this study, we therefore conclude by affirming our theory, as presented in figure 1.1, that organizational culture, which shapes institutional policies, influences the retention and success (graduation) of students.

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