AN INQUIRY INTO BACKGROUND CHECKS AT LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (USIU) AFRICA

BY

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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AFRICA

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MATHEW KIMOKIY

A Project Report Submitted to the Chandaria School of Business in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the degree of Executive Masters in Organizational Development (EMOD)

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AFRICA

SUMMER 2014
STUDENT'S DECLARATION
I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than the United States International University Africa for Academic Credit.

Signed: __________________________ Date: _________________________

Mathew Kimokiy (ID. No.640654)

This project report has been presented for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

Signed: __________________________ Date: _________________________

Dr. Kefah Njenga

Signed: __________________________ Date: _________________________

Dean, Chandaria School of Business
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ABSTRACT

Human resource procurement is critical to the overall fabric in an institution of learning and a key avenue for propagating its culture. As a factor integral to a mission success, recruitment of employees and student admission continues to be quite dynamic in its approaches and strategies. Employee value system and personality disposition are key elements in the development of the core principles of integrity and trust which are important for the reputation of the organization. Cases of employee or student security related incidences in learning institutions continue to evoke pertinent concerns on the manner in which human resourcing, retention and management is undertaken.

The purpose of the study was to investigate and evaluate the effective management of background check at learning institutions in Kenya, a case of USIU Africa. The research study was guided by the following three objectives; to evaluate the background check procedures in place at USIU Africa; to highlight the benefits of an effectively managed background checks, identify the challenges and make recommendations for an effective background check at an institution of higher learning.

The research project incorporated a descriptive design in order to carry out an in-depth study of an effectively managed background check in learning institutions. The study was carried out at USIU Africa and with the target population being employees of USIU Africa to include teaching, non-teaching staff and contractors. The study employed simple random sampling technique in determining the representative sample for the unit of analysis from the sample frame of USIU Africa employees. Primary data was collected by use of semi-structured questionnaires, open ended questions and interviews with some key managers of USIU Africa.

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics for the qualitative data and quantitative data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was then coded according to different variables and descriptive statistics such as frequencies, mode, mean percentiles, variances and standard deviations used for ease of interpretation. The data has been presented in the form of tables, figures and charts for appropriate analysis and interpretation.

The findings regarding the first research objective on the evaluation of background check procedures in place at USIU Africa indicated that employees had different knowledge and
perceptions about background check procedures in place at the institution. Some knew various aspects of background checks while others had limited knowledge of what background checks entail.

The findings on the benefits of an effectively managed background checks indicated that employees gave overwhelmingly a number of benefits in line with the institutions mission and vision for mutual gains. Such benefits include institutional reputation, low hiring risks and a safe learning as well as working environment.

The study finally identified a number of challenges in undertaking an effective background check at a learning institution like high costs and lack of clear management policy then made appropriate recommendations for an effective background check policy and implementation.

The major conclusions drawn from the study were that there is a formal background check procedure undertaken by the Human Resource department for new employees at USIU Africa. That management and campus administration was interested and involved in all the processes involving background check procedures in order to strengthen the structures that oversee the formulation and implementation of a sound background check policy. Like other learning institutions USIU would like to be abreast with appropriate background check policies that are conducive and proactive to the global market demands, checking strategic crime trends and realization that it will give the organization a cutting edge as a safe working and learning environment.

The study recommendations with respect to three research objectives were as follows; The study recommended that optimization of the best practices should be embedded within the core values of the organization’s mission and vision. On the second research objective, the study recommended that the members of staff and college community should be sensitized on the background checks as this facilitates the realization of the organizational objectives. On the third objective, the study recommended that learning institutions should adhere to best background check practices in order to get full benefits and minimize the challenges associated with the background checks.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All things are possible for those who believe but above all those who accept wise counsel, willing to share and tirelessly aiming to achieve their personal goals and objectives. I acknowledge God the almighty for His grace and the divine opportunity to be a student again and my great family members for their great inspirations, prayers, dedication and sacrifice.

I appreciate the invaluable guidance, patience and dedication of my supervisor Dr. Njenga Kefah and reviewer Dr. Peter Kiriri, my research assistants and respondents for their inputs as I undertook this research project report. Thank you to Professor Francis Wambalaba for a great introduction to Research Methods course and USIU management under the Dean, Chandaria School of Business Dr. Amos Njuguna for the immense logistical support and guidance throughout the EMOD program.

God bless you ALL!
DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my EMOD CLOUD group 3 for their best team efforts and encouragement that helped me to conceptualize and complete my research topic. To my late father Kimokiy Ngurtutu for encouraging me to go back to school, my beloved family members, friends and work colleagues for their understanding, moral support and encouragement while going an extra mile in writing this research paper.
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Background Check</td>
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<tr>
<td>CID</td>
<td>Criminal Investigations Department</td>
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<td>CRO</td>
<td>Criminal Registry Office</td>
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<td>CRB</td>
<td>Credit Regulatory Board</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resource</td>
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<td>Kenya Revenue Authority</td>
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<td>SHRM</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Background check, applicant screening or investigations is the due process of formally carrying out verification of criminal, employment and financial records of an individual or organization for the purpose of recruitment or admission (Sennewald and Tsukayama, 2001). The hiring process for example is a challenging task in any organization hence the human resource personnel as well as security department needs an appropriate management risk strategy. It all boils down to improving the process of background screening and acquiring the right human resources (Arthur, 2012).

According to Goldenkoff (2007), currently there is readily available material needed to effectively carry out background screening and investigations on new employees. Hayes and Ninemeirer (2009) observes that this process allows the organization to recruit the right employees for the right job. Employees who give false information in this case stand a chance of not meeting the job requirements. However, at times the scope of background check highly depends upon the sensitivity of the position in question.

Sennewald and Tsukayama (2001) assert that the most important thing in the entire process is to protect personnel privacy and at the same time maintain applicant’s rights. This means that the people doing the investigations need clearance and consent from the applicant or institution in a bid to get access to sensitive information. The applicant’s information should be secured against any unauthorized access, stored in secure facilities and, accessed by only those who are allowed by official duties.

According to Nixon and Kerr (2011), background screening and investigations is an essential guide to succeeding in a contemporary turbulent business environment. A crucial part of any hiring process should be employment of background screening which gives hiring or admission personnel a glimpse into a person’s past behavior patterns, propensities and likely future behavior. Goldenkoff (2007) also asserts that it is important that the community in a university or institution of high learning is not only supported by qualified employees but a safe and secure environment for its internal and external...
publics including student, visitors and employees. It should also take meaningful actions to protect its funds, property and other valuable assets.

A sound background check policy should be able to support the verification of credentials, criminal history, credit status and other information related to employment or university admission decisions. Arthur (2012) says that in the global scene, a background checks policy is aimed at promoting safe work environments and assist employers to make prudent employment decisions. In this case, background checks are conducted on all newly hired employees both full and part time as well as periodic certifications for effective staff retention. The university is expected to authorize lawful background checks as part of the application process. It means that employment is only offered upon verification of information provided by the applicant.

Most institutions in the global scene make use of services of third parties such as consultants to handle background checks procedures (Davies, 2011). Nixon and Kerr (2011) says employees are a valuable resource that may contribute in different ways to an organization’s performance and customer service, provided that the organization gives them appropriate chance and sound management policies. To be successful, an organization needs employees who act towards the organization’s goals and have a strong desire to belong and remain in the organization.

Today, organizations are transforming and entering new working environments that are globally competitive, those that can find, develop and retain people who fit into this dynamically changing situation will be most successful (Goldenkoff, 2007). The recruitment and retention of qualified and skilled employees is the foundation of any business or organization. Sennewald and Tsukayama (2001) observe that employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to stay with their employers and hence maintaining high productivity or service delivery.

Keeping a cadre of happy and employees of integrity however is often elusive as the expectations of employee’s shifts. However MacHovec (2006), admits that most people find it difficult consulting to run background checks on them without their prior knowledge. This cannot be compared to an organization making a wrong decision during the hiring process. Upon making a bad decision, an organization goes through loss of cost and time of finding a new replacement. The most important areas to do background check includes, education, employment history, driving history and criminal history.
It is reported that most organizations lose potential candidates when they only concentrate on specific items or background check leads. Employers often have many opportunities to carry out effective background checks basing on expected rules. For instance, the local laws in any country should provide rules concerning background checks and in the same case, the organization hiring should also have rules regarding the same. MacHovec (2006) adds that it is also deemed important to be consistent in the process of carrying out background checks on all applicants across the board.

MacHovec (2006) adds that workplace security involves more than keeping track of who comes in through a window, installing an alarm system or employing guards for an after – hours watch. Organizations that are really security conscious plan and implement policies and programs that involve employees in protecting against identified risks and threats in addition to having in place sound security systems, paying attention or awareness of the following selection and security issues; workplace violence, security audit, vulnerability analysis, controlled access, employee screening, selection and employment of security personnel.

Nixon and Kerr (2011) recommend that ideally, a comprehensive corporate security program should have appropriate management concepts that include; Organizational philosophy and policy on crime that employees understand since no crime is acceptable. It is also notable that the employer has a zero-tolerance policy with respect to workers who commit crimes. Background investigations of job applicants are required by conducting full checklist as part of the selection process for every position or admission. Montgomery and Majeski (2005) add that, crime awareness training is done by making it clear during the training and orientation that the employer takes a tough approach to workplace crime and safety. Sound crisis management is in place by establishing and communicating the procedures employees should follow in the event of bomb threats, fire or other emergencies done through appropriate emergency action procedures.

An emerging issue of concern is that most of the white collar and violent crimes as other employee malfeasances reported by various organizations in Kenya point to an internal employee involvement or conspiracy. Lack of or inadequate background checks have continued to be identified as the root causes of most disciplinary, HR and security related cases. MacHovec (2006) suggests that, collusion is an integral part of professional crime; employees can collude with anyone from the security guard to an outside service
provider, even a client. Organizations need to adopt proactive management strategies as opposed to reactive actions.

Human resource and security departments in an organization can play an important role in managing and controlling people risks. A major risk item in the people risk category results from using ineffective pre-employment screening practices and improper employee reference-checking practices. According to Nixon and Kerr (2011), pre-employment and post employment screening should be seen as a pro-active way to maintain a higher and more productive workforce. While institutions continue with being vigilant with their staff, there is need to be aware of the sophisticated crime or fraud syndicates whose members often infiltrate an organization, lying low for some opportune time, then striking when their trust has been gained.

According to Majeski (2005), risk management is a process aimed at identifyng risk management goals, objectives and, analysis of risks itself. Many institutions are often ignorant of the essence of risk management which in this case includes; work safety, insurance, legal liability management and health. It is also worth it to include aspects of evaluation and minimizing of enduring organizations risks. These enduring risks may include aspects of the academic institutions, students, community members and other community agencies.

In Kenya apparently a general observation indicates that there is no formal legal framework that governs how organizations or employers should conduct background checks. However, the general background check methodologies should ensure that all aspects of the applicants are duly investigated and confirmed to be true and up to par. Generally an effective background check may be split into five main categories being; Criminal history records, education history records, Credit history record, previous employment records and references. Majeski (2005) recommends that the more the background checks elements or leads are covered, the better it is to realize its effectiveness for an organization or employer.

In recent years and from organizational security and human resource practices, there has been a growing attention to the issue of background check and most internal audit findings suggest that job applicants engage in extensive misinterpretation of academic and work credentials listed on resumes and job applications. An employer who fails to
perform a thorough background check on a prospective employee may be vulnerable to the charges of negligent hiring or employment discrimination. There is need therefore to adhere to standard human management practices in background checks that include the need to understand the job requirements, methods of background checks, the extensiveness of the process, documentation and nature of interviews.

USIU Africa is situated north-west of Safari Park hotel off Thika road with a campus community comprising of over three thousand employees and students. The campus community has a rich international network and diversity. As an institution of higher learning, USIU has in line with its Mission Statement a commitment to protecting the security, safety and health of its employees, student and others, safeguarding the assets and resources of the university and assuring individuals in responsible positions are worthy of the trust they are given (USIU Africa, 2014).

United States International University (USIU) Africa was established by the United States International University, a company incorporated in the United States (US) with a limited liability in accordance with the Corporations Code of the state of California in the U.S (Abagi, Nzomo and Otieno, 2005). By far and wide, specifically by African and Kenya standards, the institution remains one of Africa’s most expensive universities. The institution was the only university fully dependent on fees and as such is one of the universities that have broken even. In fact, as Abagi et al., (2005) point out, an analysis of USIU’s financial statements over a three year period (1999 – 2001) demonstrated that the university has been profitable with a revenue greater than its expenses.

The USIU management structure was highly bureaucratic with the Vice Chancellor at the apex of university management. This highly draws from the postulations of Max Webber who puts emphasis on the bureaucracy as the strategy for the attainment of organizational objectives. Under the Vice Chancellor there are several heads of Departments that report to the Vice Chancellor directly. There are also competent staff who oversees the functions of the various departments. The following departments exist in USIU’s managerial hierarchy; the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) Student Affairs and Enrolment Management, DVC Finance and DVC Administration (Abagi et al., 2005).

In addition to the DVC there is also the Board of Trustees that ensures the quality of education offered USIU Africa. The Board of Trustees consists of 14 members and
provides stability and continuity to USIU through an organized system of planning and evaluation. The management structure of USIU is highly stringent and the three important departments while being themselves accountable to the VCs office have themselves sub-departments under them which report directly to Heads of Departments (Abagi et al., 2005).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With the huge numbers of impersonations and forged educational certificates on the streets, post-employment screening can determine whether credentials supplied were in fact valid, and ultimately justify why an employee is not performing or is behaving suspiciously. MacHovec (2006) observes that negative behavioral patterns can also be identified through background screening mechanisms. For decades, the learning institutions and other organizations alike have continued to ride only on casual employee screening while staff or students with ulterior motives get access to perpetrate their vise, leading to high costs of doing business, reduced rate of development and high turnovers.

Background information regarding all the stakeholders in an organization is essential for maximizing risks. Many institutions in Kenya seem ignorant regarding the importance of risk management. In many instances, it is advisable to carry out this process frequently hence making it an organizational policy. This process also needs to analyze risk management policy inline with other aspects such as scholarships and even internship. This seems to affect institutional employees in terms of perceptions of personal risks. Many organizations fail to analyze these risks without stereotyping hence perpetuating negative images. The study therefore sought to evaluate the importance of effectively managing institutional background checks at learning institutions in Kenya.

Despite its fundamental importance to the verification process during recruitment and admission, level of scholarly attention that has been given to the issue of background checks is minimal (Arthur, 2012). Bullar (2003) contends that of the scholars that have examined the recruitment process in organizations and institutions, they have given little importance to the issue of background checks mainly focusing on the description of the process. In Kenya few studies have been entirely dedicated to the evaluation of background checks in many institutions and organizations in Kenya. The current study,
sought to bridge this gap in literature by examining the issues of background checks at learning institutions in Kenya. The study identified and assessed the background checks that were in place at USIU Africa. The study also examined the benefits of conducting background checks and determined the challenges associated with background checks. In general the study contributed more literature to a field which has been largely ignored by previous studies.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the importance of an effectively managed background checks among learning institutions in Kenya.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The study sought specifically to:

1.4.1 Evaluate the background check procedures in place at USIU Africa
1.4.2 Find out the benefits of an effectively managed institutional background check
1.4.3 Identify the challenges and make recommendations for an effective background check to an institution of higher learning

1.5 Importance of the Study

The findings and recommendations from this study are of mutual benefits to USIU Africa as well as many other learning institutions and organizations in the sense that it would provide a foundation for their studies.

1.5.1 Importance to USIU Africa Campus Mission Statement

The study would help USIU Africa to focus as an international learning institution and to achieve its objectives as outlined in its vision and mission statements by providing information through background checks of employees before being taken on board. This would ensure employment of staff with acceptable qualifications and character.
1.5.2 Importance to Donor agencies
The results of this study provided an avenue through which the donors would get value for their money through the various programs they support because the results showed the relevance and importance of background checks for employees and institution. Cost savings would also be realized as a result of working in a well managed, safe and secure institution.

1.5.3 Importance to Academicians and Researchers
The study provided a basis to local academicians and researchers on their further study of effective background checks. It also suggested areas that require further studies which the future researchers can actually draw their research topics and areas.

1.6 Scope of the Study
The study focused on USIU Africa. The population for the study including 400 teaching and non-teaching staff members as well as the contractors that worked in USIU during the time of the research undertaking. The sample size for the study included 60 individuals. The study examined sampled employees from different departments in the institution. The study made use of the research questionnaire as the preferred instrument for data collection. The study was conducted between the time periods of October 2013 to May 2014. Stratified random sampling was employed during the sampling process in order to determine the employees of the institution who participated in the study.

Apparently, some of the target staff was reluctant by virtue of their professional ethics and nature of information confidentiality to fully participate in the research. However the study sought to assure them of confidentiality of their responses. Since the study had also obtained an authority from the university to collect data, the respondents became open and gave the necessary information for the study. It is also recognized that employee screening approaches varies with other employing organizations or institutions.
1.7 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 Background Check

It is the process of looking up and compiling criminal, commercial and financial records of an individual or an organization to help in determining suitability for employment or engagement (Nixon and Kerr, 2011).

1.7.3 Applicant

A person who formally seeks or asks to be considered for a position, admission or employment in an organization (Nixon and Kerr, 2011).

1.7.4 Criminal History Check

It is a process through which employers use to check a person’s criminal history with law enforcement records or contacts to assess the person’s trustworthiness or integrity (John, 2010).

1.7.5 Credit History Check

It is a process used by employers to determine how financially stable their employees are. It is done through checking an individual’s past borrowing, repaying, late payments and bankruptcy information (Hope, 2013).

1.7.6 Education Verification

It is the process through which employee determine whether information or documents provided by the applicants regarding their education and professional qualifications are accurate or authentic (Publishing, 2000).

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter addressed the general development of background check procedures. It provided the background of the study as well as the statement of the problem. The chapter also provided the general objective and the specific objectives that directed the study. The importance of the study as well as the scope or the study has also been discussed in Chapter One. The chapter provided insightful information on the history of background
check, its inclusion in staff hiring or student admission, changes in institutional demographics and its potential advantages of effectively managing it.

The next chapter, Chapter Two examined the literature review. It assessed the secondary sources of information in order to determine the postulations and findings that have been made and established respectively with regard to three research objectives. Chapter Three provided the research methodology and highlights the research design, the population, sampling procedure, sample research procedure as well the data collections and analysis methods that were employed in the study. Chapter Four presents the response rate and the research findings with regard to the three research questions. Chapter Five provided a recap of the study presenting a summary of the major findings of the study as well as the discussion of the major findings. Chapter Five also provided the study conclusions and the recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter Two reviewed the existing literature regarding the research topic of effective background checks at learning institutions in Kenya. The literature to be reviewed relate to the three research objectives, namely; one, to evaluate the background check procedures in place at USIU Africa; two, to find out the benefits of an effectively managed institutional background check; three, to identify the challenges and make recommendations for an effective background check to an institution of higher learning. The chapter assessed and appreciated the major findings and key assertions by scholars who have previously conducted studies surrounding the issue of background checks and with respect to the three specific research objectives.

2.2 Global Background Checks Procedures at Learning Institutions

Throughout the world, background checks have been employed as the basis of determining and verifying the suitability of employees and organizations for recruitment or admission (John, 2010). The practice of conducting background checks throughout the world has been increasing constantly. Almost in all countries, employers and institutions including the institutions of higher learning often conduct background checks. Nonetheless as Arthur (2012) contends, the diversities in the cross-country legal frameworks hamper the universal assessment of the concept.

In the Western or developed countries, background checks are practiced as a standard procedure to confirm an individual’s suitability relative to the other prerequisites for employment. According to Lecoy and Revoy (2006), in the U.S, background checks is considered necessary and almost a must because it provides an importance means of providing a safe, secure and productive work and educational background to employees. In the U.S pre-employment background checks are widespread—approximately everybody authenticates prior employment and education, and several bosses check criminal history and credit reports (Arthur, 2012).

Arthur (2012) contends that according to a latest appraisal, over 85 percent of employers in the U.S conduct pre-employment and pre-admission background checks and over 2,000
companies have emerged to meet this growing demand. Certainly, some U.S. employers have been arraigned in courts from injured third parties alleging that an employer was neglectful in hiring dangerous personnel whose inclination to misdemeanors would have been revealed by a background check (Arthur, 2012).

In the Europe, there is a huge variation in the interpretation of the issue of background checks (Hope, 2010). In several European countries, the interpretation of data privacy laws on the validity of applicant consents vary extensively. For instance, in Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and France, the legal provisions on data privacy make background checks illegal. Nadil (2006) contends that in this region, data privacy laws limit the information respondents can legally give the employer.

In the Asian countries, the employers occasionally seek the services of agencies to conduct background check, however, the categories of information the agencies can obtain do vary markedly. In the case of Japan for example, commercial organizations are often able to determine the information regarding criminal convictions through informal channels. Background checks in the Philippines is conducted by private investigation firms for employment purposes, and criminal records are easily accessible provided that the background check company has acquaintances with the government agencies that keep the records (Bullard, 2003). In India, where law enforcement agencies operate without a centralized database where all information about an applicant's criminal background would be obtainable, most outside agencies possess the resources and the ability to substantiate criminal histories (Goldenkoff, 2007).

In South Korea, however, formalized background checks are unusual. Background checks and verification of employment history are essentially prohibited (Bullard, 2003). There are, nevertheless, consultancies that will perform background checks; multinationals operating in Korea is more likely to engage these services to conduct checks than local Korean employers. Similarly, in China, although criminal conviction records are generally reliable, access to them is strictly limited, and outside agencies are rarely used to obtain criminal histories or other records in China (Bullard, 2003).

The employers and institutions in the African continent are only beginning to adopt background checks as pre-employment and pre-admission process (Maxwell, 2006). However, in Africa the government law enforcement agencies are the ones that still have
the information relevant to the background checks. Indeed, this is highly problematic
given that most African governments and even the emerging private firms that provide
the relevant information are without a central database containing the necessary
information (Maxwell, 2012).

2.2.1 Regional Standard for Background Checks
In most countries in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA), private universities have mushroomed at
an alarming rate. The high rate of unemployment especially among non-degree holders
has emboldened many people to compete for the scarce resources so that they can obtain
quality university education to help secure employment (Hope, 2010). Employers have
also raised their benchmarks as most give priority to holders of higher degrees. Nairobi
and other major cities have become a beehive of activities in the evenings with professors
and students running to the classrooms. This poses questions on the quality of education
that everyone seems to be in a haste to acquire plus those responsible for ensuring that
students get full value for their money. Also the standards and benchmarks put in place by
the government to ensure that university education just another businessmen venture but
add value to the graduates and the community at large.

Universities that are accredited must meet certain standard government criteria that
include quality education, qualified staff and a safe learning environment. By law, such
institutions are supposed to indicate that fact on the home page of their university website
and share that information with all prospective students so that they can make informed
decisions. As such facts about accreditation and associations with questionable intuitions
should be a priority before any college or university is allowed to recruit students to
ensure that basic level of education provided at the institution and to make certain that the
degrees obtained will be globally accepted as a true achievement (Hope, 2013).

2.2.2 Background Checks Indicators in Kenya
There is no specific legal framework in Kenya that governs how background checks
should be conducted by private organizations or employers. However, the general
background check methodologies would ensure that all aspects of the applicants are
investigated and confirmed to be true and up to par. However the basic background
checks do focus on the five main categories being; Criminal history records, education
history records, Credit history record, previous employment records and references.
Kaplin and Lee (2013) shows credit acquisition and repayment history of an applicant is very essential for an organization so as to ensure a healthy and financially stable working environment for its staff. Credit history records in Kenya can be accessed through the Credit Regulation Board (CRB) which is solely mandated by the government to be the custodian of all credit records offered by credit institutions in Kenya. With approval off the staff a request is sent to CRB to validate that the recruit has had a clean credit history or otherwise explain the same.

Credit information can also be obtained from the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) which is a government body mandated in overseeing collection of revenues and taxes. KRA keeps a list of all tax defaulters in their repository for easy verification. This will ensure that the recruit is a willing tax payer. The credit information obtained will help the human resource department determine the profitability of the new staff into the university family (Kaplin and Lee, 2013).

### 2.2.3 Standard Background Check Procedures

Nadell (2004) says a bad hire can cost a company a very expensive lawsuit or paint a very bad image, management is entitled to carry out a detailed background check of any persons they hire to avoid such situations. Hayes and Ninemeier (2009), assert that the recruiting team will always oversee the full screening of the recruit so as to allow them access rights into their systems. It is very crucial for the management to understand the employee in-depth history before he/she understand the organization framework and procedures so as to provide a confidential working environment. Schwever (2010), admits that in the current trends, it is expected that organizations should screen through employees history including information regarding personal and financial information.

Williams (2013) adds that in recent cases, many organizations fear being held liable for negligence due to lack of inadequate background checks. Compton et..al (2009), gives examples of instance in cases where an employee engaged in criminal offences such as theft the company stands a great risk. It is for this reason that, organizations are advised to ensure they know their employees better before they know the organization. Lack of inadequate screening can pose a great security the organization. For instance, through background checks can identify potential liabilities such as criminal records. On this basis
background screening procedures are developed in a way that puts the interest of the management first so as to ensure perfect information security within the management.

Bohlander and Snell (2010) recons that a background check does not stop during the initial recruitment of a new staff but it continues even after the applicant has been confirmed and given a personal file number. The human resource management is responsible in ensuring that it continuously gets financial and criminal records of its staff at any time. This responsibility is meant to ensure that a staff does not plan to collude and jeopardize the university image. Arthur (2006) explains the importance of having a continuous background check of staff so as to ensure a stable working environment. He describes that financial obligations affects the working mode of a staff in any company, the necessity ensuring the staff is not a defaulter of any credit facilities is to ensure that the he/she give full concentration to its work station resulting to performance success which translates to company revenue.

Arthur (2006) explained that it is very important to train new and experienced staff on any field that will add value to their experience; therefore training is a critical part of any organization to ensure profitability of the company. New staffs are normally taken through a series of orientation so as to familiarize themselves with the university systems and protocols. Apart from the general orientation of the university organized by the human resource department, training is conducted to by the relevant departments on a new staff to ensure that they master their respective job descriptions so as to provide quality services to its clients.

During orientation a new staff is taken through the university values and cultures so as to ensure conformity to acceptable work ethics. Saks and Haccoun (2010) asserts that this also ensures the new staff becomes knowledgeable on relevant contact persons that may be used in case they are required for assistance on an issue. Such trainings are propelled to ensure that new staff feel welcomed by the university fraternity and ensures that their spirit remains high during their work life. It is also meant to ensure that the new staff understand the contract binding them to the university so as to avoid unnecessary lawsuits on neglect of duty.
Criminal records are obtained from the official government of Kenya repositories which are maintained by the Kenya Police who work in unison with other security agencies to ensure that their records are up to date. Applicants short listed for interviews are normally requested to provide a certificate of good conduct from the Kenya Police who are the only custodians of these records. The human resource department in collaboration with the security department forwards the certificate number to the Kenya Police who verify the eligibility of the certificate and relay the information confidentially to the human resource department for their action.

Educational history of the applicant is acquired at the institution of learning where the applicant attended. The human resource will send a confidential letter to the institution requesting them to cross check the applicant certificate and transcripts if it does reflect what they have in their database (Matiza, 2013). This information is then sent back to the human resource department for their action pertaining to the applicants’ educational eligibility.

Raes and Claessens (2002) shows credit acquisition and repayment history of an applicant is very essential for an organization so as to ensure a healthy and financially stable working environment for its staff. Credit history records in Kenya can be accessed through the Credit Regulation Board (CRB) which is solely mandated by the government to be the custodian of all credit records offered by credit institutions in Kenya. With approval off the staff a request is sent to CRB to validate that the recruit has had a clean credit history or otherwise explain the same.

Credit information can also be obtained from the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) which is a government body mandated in overseeing collection of revenues and taxes. KRA keeps a list of all tax defaulters in their repository for easy verification. This will ensure that the recruit is a willing tax payer. The credit information obtained will help the human resource department determine the profitability of the new staff into the university family. According to Niles (2013), it is always very essential to get an insight of how the applicant behaved, worked and associated with the previous employer. This will facilitate when projecting the future behavior of the employee.

The human resource department is mandated to oversee a communication between the new organization and the previous employer. This will also enlighten human resource on what grounds the new staff left the previous employer. This communication can be done
orally, writing or electronically. Calling or organizing a meeting with a referee is one of traditional methods of background checks but in the modern society this tool is not widely used in many organizations because there has always been a tendency of referees giving false information about the recruit. Although rendered ineffective it can still be a good approach of screening a new staff, once human resource department confirms that the referee is reliable and well known in his/her field of expertise.

2.2.4 Recruiting Applicants at USIU

An employment background check is no longer viewed as an option but a priority at the USIU. Screening is viewed as a necessity in a bid to avoid issues of lawsuits and costly mistakes. USIU recognizes background screening as a method of carrying out professional hiring process. USIU prides itself in providing world class services to its students and visitors in terms of transparency and integrity while providing its services, with these values in mind as well as its mission and vision; the university is dedicated to ensuring that it gets internationally recognized staff. This is achieved by ensuring that the human resource department follows the acceptable protocols involved when recruiting staff (Hubbartt, 1998).

The responsibility of recruiting applicants at the USIU is entirely in the hands of the Human Resource department. It is through hiring that USIU achieves its competitive strength in the market – hiring the best. The process in this case, follows a systematic procedure ranging from sourcing the applicants to, arranging for interviews and the climax of the recruitment process being the background check. USIU is aware that this process costs both time and resources yet, the most important thing is better results.

Recruitment of new personnel is done through an interview of the shortlisted persons who meet the criteria in one way or another as per the vacancy requirements and qualifications. Advertisement of vacancies can be done though the local dailies or through the university website. Vacancies can also be advertised internally if the required persons must be currently working in the university. Once applications are received, they are assessed to see if the applicants meet the desired criteria. By doing this, the recruiting department is able to determine candidates who are to be shortlisted for the oral interview. In other instances the recruiting department can choose to re-advertise the position if they do not find an applicant who meets the desired criteria (Schwever, 2010).
Interviews are done by the relevant heads of department or through a selected elite team recommended by their direct heads. Hubbartt (1998) advised that these oral interviews are meant to give the interviewees a chance to express themselves to the team and prove to them that they are well qualified for the vacancy. Oral interviews also enable the interviewing team to cross check the applicants’ credentials he/she applied with, against the original documents. This is a very crucial background check since it ensures that the applicant applied for the position with documents that reflect their capability. Once a favorite applicant is picked a copy of his documents are submitted to the human resource department for background checks and a personal file for the new staff is opened for integration into the payroll.

2.3 Benefits of an Effectively Managed Background Check

2.3.1 Organizational Corporate Image

Employee screening is very crucial in an organization’s framework and human resource management. The main advantage of pre-employee screening is that it ensures that the organization avoids vulnerability of disasters in terms of lawsuits and company image. Arthur (2006) concludes that once an organization has set up effective background checks of its applicants it will reciprocate the same in ensuring that fake applicants are discouraged from applying vacancies in the firm so as to avoid embarrassments and jail time for providing fake information and also ensuring integrity of staff in an organization.

Brisciana (2008) admits that a good background check also reduces the chances of an organization to hire negligently hence reducing chances of lawsuits. The government of Kenya through the employees act governs the rights of all employees in any organization within its jurisdiction, it is therefore essential for an organization to follow the protocol laid down so as to avoid privacy infringement and hence saving the organization an agony or embarrassment of mistreating its employees’ rights in any way. But off all the risks avoided the most important one is to ensure that the organization steadily improves its turnover at all costs.

There are many identity check overall benefits since background checks encourage applicant truthfulness to be forthcoming during the recruitment process. During the interview, reinforcing they will have a background check gives applicants the opportunity
to bring up any problems and provide an explanation for the behavior. This gives them a chance to explain something that may be difficult to discuss yet may take them out of the running for the job. By telling applicants while taking a job offer that a complete background check will be conducted discourages those with problem pasts from initial application and hence an organization the time, effort and the headache of a false start.

2.3.2 Employee Pre-employment Suitability

Employers face a number of human resource challenges. Recruiting the right employee for the right job is one of the most critical challenges, and that task has become more difficult with a global economy and very mobile workforce. Employers can no longer rely solely on candidate interviews to make a sound hiring decision. Pre-employment screening is a process that allows employers to verify information such as education, and prior job history and performance. In addition the screening process reveals important information about a candidate’s prior behavior which can help an employer assess potential risk posed by the candidate. Prior behaviors can include substance abuse, credit history and bankruptcy, driving records, and criminal convictions, and civil litigation (Bullard, 2003).

Better candidates lead to better employees for an institution’s human resource management. Employers who utilize pre-employment screening as a part of their recruitment process realize a number of important benefits. One of those benefits is a general improvement in the quality of applicants which ultimately leads to better workers, higher productivity, increased quality, and lower employee turnover. Simply announcing to all applicants the intention to conduct background checks will discourage some candidates from applying. At a minimum, candidates will be more likely to represent themselves honestly.

According to Catano (2009), most resumes contain inaccuracies in employment, job performance and educational achievement. Equally important, the announcement will encourage some high risk candidates with criminal backgrounds to eliminate themselves, which saves time and money in the recruitment process. Conversely, the announcement does not discourage good qualified applicants who know their background check will not reveal significant problems. When businesses began implementing pre-employment drug testing in the mid 80s, the practice quickly discouraged drug users from applying for
employment at companies who conducted the test. Drug users could only apply for work where drug testing was not conducted. Deploying pre-employment screening provides the same impact.

As more and more companies utilize pre-employment screening, those who do not will become the employer of choice for those who have criminal behavior or their high risk behaviors in their background. The return on investment for background checks is easily realized in turnover reduction. Background checking helps prevent the hiring of a problem employee which will ultimately become a turnover statistic. With the cost of a third party provided background check generally less than a single day’s pay, it is not hard to see a fast hard dollar return while the longer term benefits of productivity, quality, and increased customer satisfaction are being realized (Catano, 2009).

2.3.3 Organizational Risk Mitigation

Data collected by the American Association of University Women indicates that students who are victims of educator sexual misconduct report that they suffered emotional, educational and developmental or health effects (Shakeshaft, 2004). In April 2003, parents and educators in some US states work up to headlines related to a range of sexual offences by institutional employees or educators against students (Education Week on the Web, 2003). Although appropriate information is not kept consistently on how often educators cross the line and shatter the sacred trust of students, these cases continue to be of great concern to all.

The integrity and character of our institutional leaders should help guarantee stakeholders of safety, security and positive role models for children and students. Without accurate, timely background checks, institutions of learning increase the risks that students will be exposed to a myriad of dangers in a learning institution. Background checks is one of the most successful projects that seek to ensure transparency within an organization framework. Catano (2009) states that screening has ensured genuine terms of recruitment of new personnel and therefore rendered a very effective tool in terms of avoiding risks at an early stage. It is therefore advised that background checks be integrated into any form of interaction between the university and any external client or firm.

With the huge numbers of impersonations and forged educational certificates on the streets, post-employment screening can determine whether credentials supplied were in
fact valid, and ultimately justify why an employee or student is not performing or is behaving suspiciously. MacHovec (2006) observes that negative behavioral patterns can also be identified with screening mechanisms. For decades, the learning institutions and other organizations alike have continued to ride only on casual employee screening while staff or students with ulterior motives get access to perpetrate their vise, leading to high costs of doing business, reduced rate of development and high turnovers.

Bullard (2003) explains that background checks like most of the organization is a key tool that has ensured acquisition of highly qualified personnel in terms of skill, loyalty and honesty which are the key most fundamental values of any organization. But like any other tool background checks are not 100% effective as with time also conmen and frauds come up with new methodologies of avoiding being caught it is therefore very essential for one to ensure that all the procedures they use when acquiring background information of a person is up to date and legally acceptable by the government of Kenya.

MacHovec (2006) suggests that, collusion is an integral part of professional crime; employees can collude with anyone from the security guard to an outside service provider, even a client. Organizations need to adopt proactive management strategies as opposed to reactive actions. Human resource and security departments in an organization can play an important role in managing and controlling people risks. A major risk item in the people risk category results from using ineffective pre-employment screening practices and improper employee reference-checking practices.

2.3.4 Sound Working Environment

Background checks uphold the values of a positive working environment. It ensures that the wellbeing if employees is not jeopardized by the recruitment of a fraud. It is therefore a good tool in terms of maintaining a good working environment since it gives an insight of the kind of person that the university should be involved with. Arthur (2006) concludes that by conducting background checks the likelihood of having disciplinary action on employees is greatly reduced since the employed know that they have a mandate to deliver services in an orderly manner hence ensuring a positive growth of the organization.

Gruing and Dozier (2012) say that background screening of employees gives a surety and confidence to the recruiting team. This ensures that the acquisition of an honest and loyal
staff will ensure that the university maintains a good relation amongst its staff, students and to other cooperates. It also gives an insight of how performance on service delivery will be greatly facilitated by the employment of a hard working staff and a dedicated team.

Institutions of higher learning develop a staff reward scheme that seeks to recognize the performing staffs as outlined by Abdullah, Zahari, and Adzmy (2012). These programs are designed in a way to improve the spirit of positive competition and performance. Staff rated the best during a certain period will be eligible to things like bonuses, vocational trips, promotions among many other rewarding schemes. This has seen a positive growth and interaction amongst staffs who seek to be recognized in all their endeavors which also reciprocate to greener opportunities and better chances.

2.3.5 Supports Staff Performance Evaluation and Monitoring

As a key HR function, performance appraisal is a continuous process that was developed to periodically report the performance and productivity of an employee against acceptable parameters. Geisel says performance evaluation is filled by the all the employees of the university so as to ensure commitment towards a desired goal in every department. Orme and Spicer (2001) adds that an employee is bound by a performance contract they signed when joining the organization’s managerial team. These contracts are frequently evaluated by the human resource department to ensure that a staff is performing within acceptable limits.

Catano (2009) shows how this tool of rating individual performance of employee in an organization is very useful in terms of keeping individuals at par while working towards their own self set goals. It enables the human resource team to easily evaluate and determine the most performing staff and the least performing. Through these evaluations USIU has developed a rewarding program that helps motivate its staff to work towards the realization of their goals and working towards achieving it. It has also improved on getting insights on areas that need more infrastructural support, more staff and salary increments. According to the evaluation summary report the human resource team has also been on the verge of ensuring that there is a continuous steady growth of all the staffs.
Monitoring of staff and giving them necessary support when need be is done by the quality assurance department, which its main goal is to ensure that all the procedures and frameworks within the company are followed to the latter while observing disciplined etiquettes. Geisel (2011) advises that the main functions of monitoring of staff are to ensure that a certain level of quality is achieved all through the university offices. This means that in every office within the learning institution have rules and guidelines that are placed to ensure that work is delivered timely an in the right manner, hence the quality assurance department provide support to its staff an issues related with service delivery by employees who have sound security clearance.

2.4 Challenges of Background Checks

2.4.1 Lack of Qualified Staff to undertake Background Checks

According to Nixon and Kerr (2008), hiring highly qualified people is crucial to every company in this regard; background check is an important prerequisite to succeeding in a turbulent business environment. Background checks however ought to be managed by highly qualified staff and unquestioned integrity who may not be compromised. An essential part of any hiring process should be employment background check, pre- and post-hire screening which gives employers or management a glimpse into a person’s past behavior patterns, propensities and likely future behavior. Background check helps to describe all aspects of the employment background screening processes, its history and evolution, the imperative for implementing a screening process and the creation of a comprehensive policy. Kerr shows how security and human resources professionals can work together to negotiate respective legal hurdles for a successful background checks.

Nexis (2010) gives an account of a good background of background check evolution that saw the end of last century bring new form of lottery to the forefront this being the employment lawsuits where the multi-million dollar verdicts awarded over the past years have been employment –related case. For many years, human resources professionals have been advising managers and supervisors to document everything. Employers have since learned that the best defense to much employment action is found in the documentation by qualified staff leading up to an informed decision.

According to Nexis (2010), it is also helpful to have policies that define how employee decisions are to be made and how problems will be addressed. Many times, employees
will allege that they have no knowledge of what is expected or how decisions are made. Having policies in a handbook or separate policies that are to be signed and maintained in a personnel file, will assist in defeating these claims of ignorance. Policies also help eliminate unnecessary misunderstandings, provide a source for supervisors to consult when unsure actions are under review and help inform employees of what is expected of them in an organized way.

2.4.2 Role Ambiguity in Recruitments

Once applications are received they are assessed to see if the applicants meet the desired criteria. By doing this the recruiting department is able to determine candidates who are to be shortlisted for the oral interview. In other instances according to McWay (2013), the recruiting department can choose to re-advertise the position if they do not find an applicant who meets the desired criteria. If the human resource department have settle on potential candidates, the next important process in employee selection is background check by the human resource department or security department.

Once applicants have been shortlisted, interviews are done by the relevant heads of department or through a selected elite team recommended by their direct heads. According to Wyatt, Aziz and Gilman (2008), advices that, this oral interviews are meant to give the interviewees a chance to express themselves to the team and, prove they are well qualified for the vacancy. Edenborough (2007) says that oral interviews also enable the interviewing team to cross-check the applicants’ credentials he/she applied with against the original documents. This is a very crucial background check since it ensures that the applicant applied for the position with documents that reflect their capability. Once a favorite applicant is picked a copy of his documents are submitted to the human resource department for background checks and a personal file for the new staff is opened for integration into the payroll.

Recruitment of applicants follows a code of conduct aimed at safeguarding both the interest of the applicant as well as that of the employer. For instance the applicant’s personal details are treated as confidential. Arthur (2012) adds that the recruitment process should begin with announcement of the vacancy where a job description, profile and description in indicated. A number of essentials are required to ensure that, the
organization gets the right candidate for the position. Such an essential is a transparent inclusive process where all key departments are given strategic roles to place.

According to Thurman (2007), applicants need to get a glimpse of what primary tasks they are expected to carry out, responsibilities and the positions they are expected to hold in the organization. Under the job title, the applicant is also expected to understand the job description, job requirement and, competencies expected. In some Institutions hence people hired require to be diverse and highly qualified for positions advertised. Also under the job title are the location and field of work of the position Rothwell (2009).

When it comes to job requirements, Wyatt, Aziz and Gilman (2008) states that Job requirements is related to aspects of job experience, knowledge and education background of the candidate. At the time of application, the job applicant is expected to provide correct names and contact information in case, the institution will need to communicate further details regarding the position. The closing date within the advert is also very important both to the applicant and the employer.

In an attempt to ensure that the right candidates are selected for various employment positions. Bullard (2003) says Vacancy announcement should be well structured by the select board committee. These are people who have the organization’s interests at heart. They are also people expected to make sound decision making regarding procedures, group assessment, terms of work, shifts and psychometric testing and especially background testing procedures. Due to technology improvement, many institutions try to comply with the international standards.

This being the case, they recommend job applications done digitally. Lecoy and Levoy (2006) observe that depending on the positions, in some cases applications may require aspirants to fill an application form which contains a set of questions. Mallari (2008) admits that this application is only required in the first stages of the application process. It is probably at this stage that the organization gets to know the applicants’ basic details such as name, contact details, date of birth, experience and educational background.

In the overall, recruitment of applicants should be procedural and geared towards better results. Maxwell (2006) observes that in an attempt to acquire the ideal target, the recruiting team should focus attention to performance and experience levels of the applicant. To achieve these goals, it is important to ensure job adverts are designed to
reflect on job search of target candidates. At this point, organizations are expected to prioritize their jobs in a bid to focus on their resources.

According to John (2010), organizations need to understand expected decisions regarding target group of employees. The most significant part of the recruitment process is capturing desirable talents that an organization cannot do without. Upon understanding what the organization needs, it is important to identify areas where this target group can be located easily. For instance, effective communications channels should be utilized and, skillfully selected details included. In the event of recruiting applicants, the organization should display content on what makes it a desirable organization to work in. This is a strategy of attracting the most qualified employees for the vacant positions.

2.4.3 Conflicts with Corporate Culture

According to Hollinger (2012), different organizations do background checks for many reasons, one of them is to ensure future behavior of the organization is safeguarded. The best way to achieve a fruitful future is to ensure that the past behavior is clean. Employees also rely on criminal background checks to avoid risky hires. According to the ‘good in Theory’, people often make bad decisions early in life which often lead to regrets. However, good people often find ways to recover and mend their ways.

During hiring, employers have no means of knowing whether the people they hire have fully reformed. This somehow leads to discrimination of employee who may have criminal records but have already reformed. This gives rise to a theory named “disparate treatment” theory where employees are given benefit of doubt basing on their improved behavior. This form of discrimination is faced with challenges since people who hire are forced to sometimes discriminate basing on the aspect of color, race, sex or nationality. Bohlander and Snell (2007), admit that in the current business scenario, organizations are becoming competitive hence people value the effect of culture in improvement of customer experience. Integration of background checks with corporate culture is deemed necessarily since it influences the overall performance of an organization.

Andler and Herbst (2003) add that these cultures seem to suggest that employees are an organization’s greatest asset. It has come to the notice of most employers that basic principles of hiring best performance should be taken as the new cultural thinking. This
means that in a bid to hire and maintain high profile employees, they need to be treated well. The right culture in this case, should be able to create a win-win situation both for the organizations sake and the employees as well.

Bohlander and Snell (2007) contend that in accordance to the organization theory, organizations are complex entities that require good behaviors. This means that discipline has to be instilled through organization behavior. Systems theory gives an opportunity for better interrelationships. Organizations in this case, are charged with the responsibility of analyzing behavior in terms of “macro” dealing with studying both individuals and groups. The “Meso” deals with aspects of culture, power and networking of both organizations and individuals (Bohlander and Snell, 2007).

2.4.4 High Costs of the Background Check Process

Bhatia and Mittal (2010) states that the main essence of any kind of training conducted to new and experienced staff is to ensure that all the staff knows what they are doing at any one time. It ensures that an organization saves time by providing all necessary materials to the staff instead of him/her looking for them, it also ensures that the staff gets a good feeling of appreciation and acceptance by the organization and finally ensures that all new staff get off to a good start after getting security clearance through an effective background check process.

With the above values in mind all new staff should be taken through an exhaustive background checks, orientation and experienced staff are taken through routines of development based trainings. Bohlander and Snell (2010) said that this is done to ensure work environment safety, clients and staff satisfaction and increased productivity. For all this to be realizable, all staff should be well knowledgeable on emerging trends and tricks so as to keep up with competitors and while at the same time ensures a steady growth of university revenue while maintaining high quality.

Personal development entails performing activities that improves ones awareness, talent, skill, health and potential. Arthur (2006) explains that that the essence of personal realization is to facilitate the realization of one’s dream and help working towards fulfilling it. Employers should developed programs that ensure support of staff development even at individual levels through routine appraisals and background checks for staff retention.
Gallen and Buckle (2001) says management should ensure proper well being of its employers by ensuring that all the above features are integrated in one way or another through its trainings. This should be well insinuated through team buildings and vocational trips offered by the university to its staff on an acceptable basis. Jasper, Rosser and Mooney (2013) stated that such events always give time its employs to socialize amongst them while at the same time having time to relax and plan personal road maps to success.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has stated the understanding and arguments of various researchers regarding the management of an effective background check. It has reviewed the relevant literature available on the subject of effective management of background check with the parameters of the research questions guiding the study. The literature sources that have been reviewed are in line with the three research objectives that the study sought to achieve. The Chapter has stated the understanding and arguments of various researchers regarding background check procedures at learning institutions. It has critically focused and examined discussions about the practices undertaken by learning institution for effective management of background check procedures.

The study made deliberate efforts at giving in-depth appreciation of the benefits and sought to identify the challenges encountered in effectively managing institutional background checks. Another focus was made on appropriate recommendations to realize full benefits sound background check approaches. The chapter in conclusion indicated that there was very little published research done in the field of background check procedures among learning institutions in Kenya. The next chapter will highlight the research methodology to be used. It focuses on the research design applied, sampling procedures and frame used to collect data.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This chapter contains information on the research methodology, design and procedures that were utilized in this study in order to answer the research questions raised in the first chapter. It also focused on the choice of the research design and reasons for it being favored over other optional designs. The chapter also outlined the population sample and sampling technique that were employed. According to Kumar (2010), research methodology structure would simply include; research design, population and sample, sampling design and sample size, data collection method, research procedures, data analysis methods and the chapter summary.

3.2 Research Design
The researcher adopted descriptive research design. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), descriptive studies deal with questions of who, what, when, where and how of the topic and are used when there is some understanding of the topic. Research design is a detailed outline of how a study or investigations took place. It typically included how data was collected, what instruments were used, how and the intended means for analyzing data was collected. Research design is the contextual thinking process behind a given research problem. It basically refers to the ways the researcher plans and structures the research process. The design provides some sort of guideposts to keep the research in the right direction to achieve the desire objectives.

This research employed descriptive research design since it sought a description of what exists. The approach was used as it focused on relationships and processes of one organization of the same sector. According to Mugenda, M. O. and Mugenda, A. G (2003), descriptive research design is used when the problem has been well designed and where the researcher can engage in a study by going to the population of interest in order for the respondent to explain certain features about the problem under study.

Descriptive design therefore was appropriate in this study since it involves the procedures of collection and analysis of data from the members of a given sample which in this case
are employees of USIU Africa. The researcher attempted to determine the impact of the variables in a particular situation as recommended by Churchill and Iacobucci, (2000). The dependent variable in the study was effective background check while the independent variables included high cost of the background check process, lack of trained staff and role ambiguity among others.

3.3 Population and Sampling Design

3.3.1 Population

A population refers to the total collection of elements about which one wishes to make inferences (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). Also a target population refers to all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which we wish to generalize the results of a research. For this study, the target population comprised of employees of USIU Africa Campus. Also according to Gomez and Jones (2010), a population is the total collection of elements whereby references have to be made. Mugenda, M. O. and Mugenda, A. G (2003) define population as an entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics. USIU had a population of about 400 employees that included non-teaching staff, teaching staff and contractors. The population in this study consisted of teaching and non-teaching staff at USIU Africa Campus who were easily accessible on campus.

Table 3.1: Population Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Teaching staff</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Staff</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor Staff</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: USIU (2014)*

3.3.2 Sampling Design

According to Mugenda, M. O. and Mugenda, A. G (2003), sampling is the process of choosing the study subjects or objects from a larger population. It was important because the method used determines whether or not the study sample represents the entire
population from which it is drawn. The findings from the sample are generalized to the study population.

### 3.3.2.1 Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is the completed and correct list of population, individuals or events, source material or device from which a sample is drawn. It comprises a list of all those within a population who can be sampled, and may include individuals, households, organizations or institutions (Mugenda, A. G. and Mugenda, M. O., 2003). For this study, the sampling frame was teaching, non-teaching staff and contractors within USIU Africa. The list was provided by USIU Africa Human Resources Department.

### 3.3.2.2 Sampling Technique

Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) define a sample as a specific group which information is obtained. Selecting the individuals to research on from the population then becomes sampling. Sampling is a method that allows researchers to infer information about a population without having to investigate every individual in population. To get a sample, the researcher used the stratified random sampling technique. Stratified random sampling is defined as the process in which certain sub groups or strata are selected for the sample in the same proportion as they exist in the population (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000).

This study adopted stratified random sampling, which ensured that the representation of the population at the sample was equitable by allowing both the academic and non-academic members to be in the sample. Bailey (2008), asserts that the advantage of the stratified method is that it increases statistical efficiency and provides data for analysis of the various sub-populations.

A reduced number of individuals in a study lowers the cost and workload and may make it easier to obtain high quality information but these needs to be balanced against having an ideal sample to portray or detect a true association. A stratified sampling method was used to identify the USIU employees selected for the study while stratified sampling was used on the study subjects (employees). Individual employees interviewed were randomly selected. The sample size of 60 out a total of 400 employees was an adequate representative of the view of the group while fitting within a reasonable budget and timeframe for the study.

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3.3.2.3 Sampling Size

The sample size is a smaller set of the larger population (Cooper and Schindler, 2006). The sample size in a research is the number of observations or replicates to include in a statistical sample. The sample size is important in achieving the objective of making an inference about a population from a given sample. In practice, the sample size used in a study is based on the expense of data collection and to some extent the duration of the study.

Also, the sample size is a smaller set of the larger population. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a representative sample must be at least 10% of the target population. For this study, 15% was used to identify a sample of 60 respondents. Out of the sample frame of about 400 employees a sample size of 60 employees that is an equivalent of 15% was selected. Questionnaires were sent to sample employees and interviews were done on the staff in management category. Follow up reminders were made to ensure that there was a good response on the questionnaires sent out. These reminders were done by means of emails, personal visits and phone calls.

Table 3.2: Sample Size Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff &amp; Students</th>
<th>Sampling Frame</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>% Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Teaching Staff</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor Staff</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Staff</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>15%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Data Collection Methods

This study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by use of structured questionnaire and secondary data was drawn from review of the organizations human resources management policy documents. The management staff were also involved in the process of giving preliminary information about the institution. Cooper and Schindler (2001), defines primary data as original information collected in relation to specific research objective. Typically, a researcher may decide to use one or multiple data collection methods while considering its overall appropriateness of the research in conjunction with other practical factors like; quality of data required, estimated costs, response, errors and duration of the research study.
The study collected primary data for analysis. Lim and Ting (2013) advice that primary should be collected by use of structured interview questions and secondary data was drawn from review of organizations’ profiles, annual reports and journals, the internet, books, magazines, past research findings among others. Cooper and Schindler (2006), defines primary data as original search where data being collected from despondences is designed specifically to answer the research questions.

Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire having both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The questions that were asked in the questionnaire related to the three specific research objectives. According to Rubin and Babbie (2011), the questionnaire comprises both open ended and closed ended questions. It is divided into five parts; Part A to D has closed ended questions with multiple choice options for the responded to select from while Part E has open ended questions used during interviews with key management staff from USIU Africa Campus.

With regards to the closed ended questions; Part A has general information on the respondent, Part B answered questions on benefits of background checks, Part C and Part D tackled questions on challenges facing organizations in managing an effective background check. The questionnaires were coded to ensure ease of tracking when doing the final data analysis.

### 3.5 Research Procedures

Once the questionnaire was developed, the researcher subjected the tool to a pretest. Pilot questionnaire was prepared and administered to ensure the objectivity and clarity of the final questionnaire. The pilot test involving a focus group was carried out to evaluate precision, completeness, accuracy and clarity of interview questions. This was done with 10 selected respondents. This ensured that the data collection tools and data collected for the study was reliable. From the pilot study, feedback received from the pretest was incorporated into the questionnaire before administering the final copy.

Primary data was vital for the study whereby the questionnaire was self administered and shared by the respondents either in two ways. One was hand delivered and the second method was through emails. The researcher also ensured that confidentiality was maintained and the respondents were not expected to reveal their identity while filling in
the questionnaires. The researcher used the introduction letter from the University for the visit to the offices of the USIU Management for familiarization.

When collecting data, a trained research assistant support was used to deliver, collect and check completeness of the questionnaires with various offices at USIU and also assisted in data entry into SPSS system. Interviews were carried out by the researcher and the entire exercise took approximately four weeks. The follow up and strong rapport created by the researcher both ensured a maximum response rate for the questionnaires.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

Upon collection of questionnaires, the researcher prepared for the process of data analysis. Data was coded according to different variables of study for ease of data entry and interpretation. Data analysis is basically a process of inspecting, cleaning transforming and modeling data collected in a research. Data analysis methods that were used in the study included both qualitative and quantitative techniques (Wagner, Halley and Zaino, 2011). The analysis of the data found permitted inferences and interpretations to be made regarding the three research objectives. The qualitative answers were categorized into themes while some were analyzed through scales.

Pallant (2010) says raw data is transformed into charts, tables, with frequency distribution and percentages. These helped in analyzing the data that was collected by use of various measures of central tendency including the median, mode and measures of dispersion including standard deviation and variances. Punch (2009), adds that data is presented in the form of tables and figures to give a clear picture of findings from the study for appropriate applications. The study made use of qualitative and descriptive statistics to present the data that was collected from the field. The data collected from the primary and secondary sources was analyzed statistically to yield descriptive statistics and frequencies presented in tables, figures and percentages.

Tools were used to present and interpret research data that included the use of tables and figures. The data collected from primary sources was analyzed using a computer package known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The responses to questionnaires were also analyzed using SPSS and categorized according to the study objectives.
Qualitative answers were categorized into themes while some were analyzed through scales. The data was fed into the program which allowed for further statistical calculations such as standard deviations and correlations to be derived.

3.7 Chapter Summary
This chapter described the research design, the plan that showed when, where and how data was collected and analyzed. It covered the methodology used in conducting the research study, describes the descriptive design process and procedures that were followed in locating and collecting data relevant to the study. It also captures the research methodologies that helped the researcher collect and analyze data with reference to research questions that was raised in the first chapter and outlines the research procedure used.

Data was collected using structured questionnaire to the respondents in USIU Africa Campus. Questionnaires were developed and used for purposes of collecting data which was analyzed using SPSS. The methodologies mentioned above facilitated the presentation of the research findings in form of charts and graphs. The next chapter, Chapter Four, presents and discusses the key findings of the research study while the final chapter five mentions the important conclusions and recommendations made from the study.
4.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the results and analysis of the research findings with regards to the data collected from the respondents being employees of United States International University (USIU) Africa. The results are divided into three broad categories in accordance with the results of the research objectives; background check procedures at USIU, benefits of an effectively managed background checks and challenges in management of an effective background check plus made recommendations for an effective background check. The questionnaires were issued as hard copies to the respondents at their USIU Africa campus workstations. A sample size of 60 respondents was determined and contacted for purposes of responding to the data collection instruments. Out of the 60 questionnaires issued, the research recorded a 73% response rate with 44 questionnaires being returned completed.

4.2 General Information
The researcher sampled a total of 60 respondents being employees of United States International University (USIU) Africa participated in the survey. All the respondents successfully filled the self-administered questionnaire and open ended questions that represented about 11% of the total institutional population. A 73% response rate was achieved as a result of the follow up made by the researcher as well as the rapport that was developed during the data collection process.

Response Rate = \( \frac{\text{Number of Surveys Completed}}{\text{Number of People Contacted}} \)

\[ = \frac{44}{60} \times 100 \]

\[ = 0.7333... \times 100 \]

\[ = 73.333...\% \]

\[ = 73\% \]
Table 4.1 Response Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strata</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Response Rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contractors</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Teaching Staff</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Staff</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

From the results, the study obtained an equal number of respondents in terms of their sex. As shown in Figure 4.1, there was an equal representation of 50% for both male and female respondents.

![Figure 4.1: Gender of the Respondents](image)

4.2.2 Age of Respondents

When the respondents were asked about the age bracket they fell into, the majority (41%) said that they were aged between 30 and 39 years while another 34% said that they were aged between 20 and 29 years. Fourteen percent (14%) of them said that they were aged between 50 and 59 years while the remaining 11% said that they were aged between 40 and 49 years.
4.2.3 Work Period

According to results in figure 4.3, the majority of respondents (36%) said they had worked for USIU Africa for below 2 years while another 30% said they had worked for between 2 and 5 years. The remaining 34% had worked for the University for over 6 years.
4.3 Background Check Procedures in Learning Institutions

The study sought to examine the background check procedures at learning institutions and in particular that had been initiated at USIU. This was the first objective of the study through interviews to some key campus managers on their routine human resource practices; recruitment and the dependent variable effective background check from the employees through a structured interview questionnaire. The following are the findings when the respondents were asked questions corresponding to the research objective.

4.3.1 Background Check Knowledge by USIU Staff

Table 4.2 is indicative of the results that were determined when respondents were asked whether they understood the essence of background checks. Ninety-five percent were in agreement that they had an idea of what background check entailed or the basic process. Looking across the categories, male and female equally agreed while 13% of those who had worked for 0-2 years were not familiar with background checks. Further analysis using chi-square revealed that there was no statistically significant association between gender and the knowledge of background checks ($\chi^2 = 0.001$; d.f. = 1 p-value = 1.00), further no association was found to exist between years worked and the knowledge of background checks ($\chi^2 = 3.540$; d.f. =3 p-value = 0.477). This means that gender or the number of years work was not a determining factor for knowing what back ground is all about.

Table 4.2: Knowledge of Background Checks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How long have you worked or studied at USIU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total count</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square result: $\chi^2 = 0.001; d.f. = 1$ p-value = 1.00

$\chi^2 = 3.540; d.f. =3$ p-value = 0.477
4.3.2 Background Check Procedures at USIU

According to the findings from the open ended questionnaire administered to the respondents, USIU carries out a comprehensive background checks on its employees. The correspondents admitted for example that the institution contacts one’s previous employers prior to hiring in a bid to determine previous conduct, behavior and efficiency at work. At times, the institution does not merely call to inquire reasons for leaving previous work but also to find out if indeed it is true the employee in question worked with them. Basing on the results in the questionnaire, the importance of referees was also mentioned. The correspondents pointed out that, the aim was to ensure a safe working environment was achieved.

The respondents explained their knowledge of background check procedures at USIU to include the following leads; contacting previous employers, criminal records, academic institutions attended and references. That the human resources manager calls the previous work place to find out the applicants work history and reasons for leaving employment previous employment. The background information is obtained through completing of employment forms with structured questionnaires and through oral interviews.

USIU Africa has a Human Resource Department that manages the campus wide core human resource functions including pre-employment background checks. The human resource management activities in the campus for the employees that pertains to background checks include past employment records, education or academic certificates verifications, criminal record checks and reference checks. There is an elaborate formal procedure used by the Human Resource department during the pre-employment process but not much is done during subsequent contract renewals or staff retention process.

There is acknowledgment among the managers that employees need to meet the outlined background check procedures and this is communicated to all new employees as a prerequisite for employment in addition for example to medical examinations. There is a clear distinction however in the human resource practice on background checks done for teaching and non-teaching staff but not for contracted staff who do not undergo the formal background checks since they are administratively managed by the concerned
contractor whereas both categories of employees need to be compliant to the institutional goals of effective background checks.

4.3.3 Accepted Background Checks Procedures

Sound background check procedures and practices is a priority area for a learning institution’s management so as to have employees who have been dully vetted before coming on board or subsequent employment retention. Institutions now acknowledge the good reasons to put in place procedures that seek to have an effective background check so as to realize its maximum benefits. Most of the employees and management staff are aware and acknowledge the place of background checks in institutions of higher learning. Such basic background checks include the basic procedures of vetting an applicant to determine that the employee has a clean bill of health from official criminal records, previous employment, educational institutions and personal reference checks.

An acceptable background check procedure would be done by an employer after getting a formal consent from an applicant or employee. Background checks may be carried out by the human resource department, security department or outsourced to a professional agency. In the case of USIU Africa, background checks are basically conducted by the human resource department to include employment, criminal and personal references. Again the levels of background checks differ for teaching and non-teaching staff while no background checks are conducted for contractor staff.

4.3.4 Background Checks Indicators

USIU Africa has a vision, mission and values which are known in the various college departments but the department managers interviewed agreed that the background check procedures should be extended to all levels of employees who operate on campus grounds to include contractors. Some of the respondents agreed that a good background check requires the collaboration of the security department conducting some interviews and the due process being subjected to routine audit checks plus appropriate routine reviews to meet the required global standards.

Another key background check indicator is having in place a formal and well documented policy that outlines what is in place at an institution. At USIU, the Human Resource department has in place as part of its recruitment procedure the requirement of new
applicants to undergo background checks before coming on board. For continued employment, background checks are done at a given interval to ensure that an employee is above board in terms of the background check parameters. Such changes may include an employee criminal, financial, residential and academic records that require scrutiny or vetting. At USIU, there is no elaborate procedure for routine background checks for old staff and managers agreed on the need for appropriate reviews.

In order to conduct an effective background check, consent of the applicant is a prerequisite. Such consent may be oral or structured forms where an applicant agrees to the level of background check leads that an employer seeks to undertake. At USIU Africa, the human resource forms outlines that some elements of background check leads will be undertaken. By signing the forms, a new employee understands that the employer will undertake background check that will include checking with a previous employer, education institutions, criminal checks and individual referees.

4.4 Benefits of an Effective Background Check

The study sought to identify the benefits of an effective background check to which the responses for the various aspects of this section indicated generally a positive feedback on these aspects.

4.4.1 Benefits to Organizations

The respondents were asked whether the background checks are beneficial to organizations. Table 4.3 below shows that all the participants (100%), from sex perspective as well as the length of service at the University, agreed that background checks are beneficial to organizations.
Table 4.3 Benefits of Background Checks to Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long have you worked or studied at USIU</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years and Above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2 College Community to Undergo Background Checks

The study further sought to establish which college Community should undergo background checks. As seen in the figure 4.4, for majority (73%) were of the view that teaching staff should mostly undergo background checks, followed by non teaching staff at 64%, contractors at 53% while the students were least expected to undergo the background checks at 43%.

![Figure 4.4: College Community to undergo background checks](image)

4.4.3 Main Benefits of Background Checks

When the study sought to find the main parameters that would benefit from background checks, an equal number of respondents (66%) of the respondents said that a safe working community and qualified staff (employees) would benefit most. Another 48% of the
respondents felt that good corporate image would benefit while another 45% consented that better human resources management would benefit from the background checks.

Figure 4.5: Areas of Benefit

### 4.4.4 Administration of Background Checks and Reputable Organizations

The study also sought to know whether the background checks had a role in enhancing a reputable organization to which the majority (55%) strongly agreed, 20% of them moderately agreed, 11% just agreed while a similar percentage (11%) strongly disagreed. the remaining 2% of the respondents just disagreed.

Figure 4.6: Background Checks and Reputable organization

### 4.4.5 Benefits to USIU Africa

Table 4.4 shows the study findings when the study sought to know if the respondents thought that the background checks had benefited USIU Africa itself, majority of the
respondents (77%) agreed that the checks had benefited USIU. However there were more 
female respondents (86%) agreed while 68% of the male agreed. The responses based on 
the length of experience within USIU Africa, all those who had worked for over 9 years 
(10) agreed, only 40% of those aged between 6 and 8 years agreed, 62% of those aged 
between 2 and 5 years agreed while 88% of those who had worked below 2 years agreed 
that the checks had benefited USIU Africa.

Further analysis using chi-square revealed that there was no statistically significant 
association between gender and USIU benefit of background checks ($\chi^2 = 2.071; d.f. = 1 p-
value = 0.281$), further it was revealed that a statistical significant association existed 
between years worked or studied at USIU and USIU benefit of background checks ($\chi^2 = 
9.682; d.f. = 3 p-value = 0.020$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.4: USIU Benefit from Background Checks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi- square result</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.6 Effectiveness of Background Check towards Organization Objectives

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of background check management in 
terms of ensuring that the organization meets its objectives. As seen in the table below, 
majority of the respondents (50%) rate it very important, 36% most important, while only 
5% felt that it was not important. This was equally reflected across the two categories of 
gender and work period.
Table 4.5: Background Checks and Organizational Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Length of Stays</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0-2 years</td>
<td>2-5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Important</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Important</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.7 Institutional Reputation of an Effective Background Check Management

The study also sought to find out how the reputation of the institution would be influenced by the background check management. The half of the male respondents (50%) said that it was effective while 23% of the female respondents said that it was effective. The majority of the respondents (60%) who had worked between 6 and 8 years said that it was effective and so were another 54% of those who had worked for between 2 and 5 years.

Table 4.6: Efficiency of Background Checks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How long have you worked or studied at USIU?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0-2 years</td>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>6-8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Effective</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Effective</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Effective</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.8 Summary of Benefits of an Effective Institutional Background Checks

Educational institutions enhance success through trust and credibility. This being the case, a comprehensive background screening program is essential. This research found out that many benefits are experienced by carrying out a thorough background check. For instance, institutions will enhance safety of students, employees and the public. Background checks are the best way to verify education and qualification of both students and staff. For the case of students, the institution will help ensure for example that learning is conducted on a drug free environment. Basing on interviews carried on staff, this research found out that background checks decreases employee turnover as well as minimizes ignorance and creation of awareness regarding hiring decisions.

According to the findings of this research, when conducted prior to admission of employees, criminal background checks provide a range of benefits. Basing on the results of interviewing key departmental employees, background checks is essential for identifying criminals related to drug abuse, sex offenders and other forms of organized crime among others. Employees also agree that background checks ensure a safer working and learning environment.

4.5 Challenges of Background Checks
4.5.1 Challenges in Effective Background Check Management at USIU

When asked whether there were challenges in effective background check management at USIU, 84% of the respondents agreed that there were challenges at USIU. In addition more male (95%) compared to females (73%) were also in agreement to the presences of the challenges.

Table 4.7: Background Check Management Challenges at USIU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How long have you worked or studied at USIU?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.2 Main Background Check Challenges

When the study sought to know the specific challenges that the checks faced, half the respondents (50%) indicated the high costs involved in the process while 36% mentioned role ambiguity as the main challenge of background checks. A similar number of the respondents (36%) mentioned lack of trained staff (employees) to conduct the checks as an impediment in the exercise. Only 11% of the respondents mentioned the non-profit main nature of the institution as a challenge to the exercise of background checks.

![Figure 4.7: Challenges of Background Checks](image)

4.5.3 General Challenges of Background Checks

When asked about challenges associated with background checks, the sampled population indeed admitted that challenges exist ranging from high cost of the process, lack of trained staff, role ambiguity and others relates to non-profit making institution among others.

A poor hiring decision is deemed a costly exercise to any organization. Background checks is a very important activity and regarded as the best way of achieving reliable human capital. The most challenging aspect of background check is the fact it relies on public records to vet employees while hidden criminal activity such as drug abuse may not be featured. Since background checks rely on databases which hosts billions of records, it may be prone to errors hence may give false information.
Instances of people missing jobs because they have been incorrectly linked to criminal activity are common. Despite the fact that errors are a problem, the worst problem is lack of follow up by background check providers to confirm existence of records. Most of them avoid this process due to costs incurred or duration and efforts that the due process requires. Common names are also challenging when carrying out background checks and especially where a unique identifier such as ID number or date of birth is not used. It is possible to find a mixture of people with the same first name, middle and surname that would require additional identity verifications. This research found out that some people are locked out of opportunities due to their past histories yet, if given a chance they can actually perform better than those selected. It is also wrong to assume that since someone has not committed a crime in the past he will not commit it in future. Also the fact, someone filed a Bankruptcy does not mean he will do it again.

The general results of the sampled group admitted that USIU faces challenges in the process of carrying out background checks. The contracted staff seems to register the highest percentage given the fact that they work on temporary assignments. The contracted staffs also get challenges in accessing certain facilities of the institutions since most of them have not yet met the required standards to be accepted as permanent employees. This sample group believe that challenges incurred in process of carrying out background checks has denied them an opportunity for consideration in subsequent permanent positions.

4.5.4 Challenges in Enhancing an Effective Background Check for USIU

Upon analysis of the results and findings of this study, a number of challenges were identified. For instance, the respondents noted that that prior to conducting a background check, the applicants were not formally asked to provide a written consent. The aim of so doing is to alert potential employees who wish to apply to understand why a background check is needed as well as its due process or implication. When conducting the interview sessions, the panelists also tend to use interview guides such as those used in Criminal Investigation Departments which in turn make the applicants feel uncomfortable.

The respondents explained that background checks need the services of highly qualified security officers or personnel hired or outsourced to conduct this function only. Once an employee is considered, the employers get the full contact details of the referees and other leads like past employers or educational institutions that may not be forthcoming. Since
the procedure for background checks takes much time, costs and effort, some learning institutions outsource this function in a bid to ensure a thorough background check is done. It also requires appropriate research done to ensure that the best Human Resource, security preparedness and security practices are utilized. An individual’s educational background is worth scrutinizing in terms of how long he has been in place.

The managers interviewed agreed on the need for verification of all certificates and transcripts by the Human Resource manager. The commonly used method is through the CID where co-operation between the employers is sought and especially in cases where a mutual database is required. They also agreed that background checks requires a holistic criminal record declaration such as the finger print report from the CID and certificate of good conduct or police clearance certificate issued.

4.5.5 Lack of Trained Staff as Challenge to Background Checks

The researcher asked the respondents if they agreed that the lack of trained staff was a challenge to Background Checks. Figure 4.8 shows the responses that were obtained. One respondent (2%) disagreed that the lack of trained staff was a challenging factor to background checks while five respondents (11%) indicated that they strongly disagreed that this presented a challenge to background checks. On the contrary, another groups five respondents (11%) and 9 respondents (20%) ‘agreed’ and ‘moderately’ agreed that the lack of trained staff was a challenging factor to background checks. The rest of the respondents, 24 in number (55%) indicated that the lack of trained staff was a challenging factor to background checks.

![Figure 4.8: Lack of Trained Staff as Challenge to Background Checks](image-url)
4.5.6 Presence of Challenges to Conducting Background Checks

Table 4.8 is indicative of the results that were realized when the respondents were queried on whether they agreed that there were challenges to background checks. Seventy-seven percent (n = 32) of the respondents indicated that there were challenges encountered in conducting background checks. The rest, 23% of the respondents (n = 12) disagreed that there were challenges that were encountered in conducting background checks.

Table 4.8: Presence of Challenges to Background Checks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Presence of Background Checks?</th>
<th>0-2 years</th>
<th>2-5 years</th>
<th>6-8 years</th>
<th>9 years and Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>77% (n = 32)</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23% (n = 12)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi- square result</td>
<td>(χ² = 2.071 ; d.f. = 1, P-value = .281).</td>
<td>(χ² = 9.682; d.f. = 3, P-value = .020).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.7 High Cost of Conducting Background Checks

Table 4.9 is indicative of the results that were obtained when the respondents were asked to indicate whether they thought the cost of conducting background checks was high. Eighty-four percent of the respondents indicated that the cost of conducting background checks was high while the rest, 16% of respondents indicated that they thought the cost was not high. Of the respondents who indicated that the cost of conducting background check was high comprised of 21 males and 22 females.

Table 4.9: High Cost of Conducting Background Checks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Do you agree that the cost of conducting background checks is high?</th>
<th>0-2 years</th>
<th>2-5 years</th>
<th>6-8 years</th>
<th>9 years and Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on data analysis and the findings of data analysis. The researcher presented the results and findings of the survey on the background check procedures in place, the benefits and challenges of an effective background check at USIU Africa. The findings were analyzed and presented according to the study’s objectives using figures and tables. The findings were in relation to the three research objectives that the study had sought to determine. In the three research questions formulated for the study, majority of the respondents felt that they supported background checks administered on campus employees due to its wide range of benefits despite the outlined challenges encountered. The respondents were generally knowledgeable about the issues that were being considered in the study and provided information that was quite relevant for the study objectives.

The response rate was not quite high but at 73% it was valid in facilitating the realization of the research objectives. The participation of both males and females was in equal proportions in the study and was highly commendable because it contributed to the establishment and generalization of the study findings across the sexes.

Generally, most of the respondents agreed that optimization of background check process was moderately implemented in the institution where the research was conducted. It was for this reason, that a number of recommendations were proposed as a means of improving its effectiveness and minimizing the challenges. The next chapter reviews then discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the study.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter gives a summary of the purpose of the study, the research questions and methodology used in conducting the research. The chapter provides a summary of the study including a synopsis of the major findings based on the specific research objectives. It also provides a discussion the major findings of the study. The Chapter ends by providing the conclusions from the study as well as offers recommendations useful to the current and for further research.

5.2 Summary
The purpose of the study was to investigate and evaluate the effective management of background check at learning institutions, a case of USIU Africa. The research study was guided by the following three objectives; to evaluate the background check procedures in place at USIU Africa; to highlight the benefits of an effectively managed background checks, identify the challenges and make recommendations for an effective background check at an institution of higher learning.

The research project incorporated a descriptive design in order to carry out an in-depth study of an effectively managed background check. The study was carried out at USIU Africa and with the target population being employees of USIU Africa who included teaching, non-teaching staff and contractors. The study employed stratified random sampling technique in determining the representative sample for the unit of analysis from the sample frame of USIU Africa employees. Primary data was collected by use of structured questionnaires and interviews with target staff of USIU Africa.

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics for the content and thematic data analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was then coded according to different variables and descriptive statistics such as percentiles, variances and standard deviations used for study for ease of interpretation. The data was presented in the form of tables and figures for appropriate analysis and interpretation.
From the study, it was determined that 66% of the correspondents happen to have worked in USIU between 0-5 years meaning that the USIU staff is made of relatively young people. The results also indicated that, about 95% of the respondents knew what background checks was however, 13% seem to be clueless of what it is. The question of whether the background checks are beneficial or not to the organization indicated that 100% of the correspondents were in agreement.

When asked about effectiveness of background checks, 50% of the participants rated it as very important, and 36% indicated that it is most important while 5% said it was not important. 84% of the respondents also admitted that challenges exist when carrying out background checks. More male correspondents were in agreement of the existence of challenges than women.

The findings regarding the first research objective on the evaluation of background check procedures in place at USIU Africa indicated that employees had different knowledge and perceptions about background check procedures in place at the institution. The findings on the benefits of an effectively managed background checks overwhelmingly outlined a number of benefits in line with the institution's mission and vision for mutual gains. Such benefits include institutional reputation, low hiring risks and a safe learning as well as working environment.

5.3 Discussion

The main objective of the researcher was to identify the relationship between high costs of background checks, role ambiguity, lack of trained staff and effective background checks. With effective background check as the dependent variable, it was important to see how the other variables influenced it through correlation analysis of the data for this objective.

5.3.1 Background Check Procedures at USIU

Accredited universities must meet certain standard government criteria that include quality education, qualified staff and a safe learning environment. By law, such institutions are supposed to indicate that fact on the home page of their university website and share that information with all prospective employees so that they can make informed decisions before seeking employment opportunities with the concerned institution. To this
end, the study found that USIU has indeed made in-roads through the user friendly and informative website that addresses the employee recruitment process. This practice and procedure is in line with the fact that employers and institutions in Africa are beginning to adopt background checks as a pre-requisite process for employment and or admission (Maxwell, 2006).

The study established that management is moderately involved in the background check process while recruiting candidates for employment but depending on the departments involved. Some of the things the institution looked for when hiring includes, academic and social history, birth information, work experience, training, referees and former employers, schools/colleges. The institution also looked into the HR previous background check and aspects of work performance and individual applicant’s character. In the overall, the institution conducted background checks on an applicant’s family, academic, professional and, criminal background. However the basic background checks procedure focused on the five main categories of leads being: Criminal history records, education history records, Credit history record, previous employment records and references (Kaplin and Lee, 2013).

The institution applied appropriate strategies on background checks which may differ from other institutions but geared to achieve its vision and mission objectives. Like majority of higher learning institutions, USIU has been authorized by the government to conduct background checks. This is in line with the fact that background check is a key condition now for an institution of learning accreditation and to ensure that basic level of education provided or degrees awarded are globally accepted as a true learning achievement (Hope, 2013). The screening process at USIU entailed employees or applicants submitting their certificates, degrees, licenses and other testimonials prior to hiring. It has also a risk-focused approach aimed at determining when the background screening is appropriate for new employees and for those already under employment like a recertification process. For instance, candidates for more sensitive positions are screened thoroughly and additional leads done.

At USIU Africa, new employees get to know the basic background check requirements through the provision of information pertaining to previous educational institutions, criminal records, past employment and individual references. By completing the
employment forms, individual applicants consent to the university conducting background checks. If an applicant does not meet the desired criteria qualify for employment after a background check, the Human Resource department can choose to re-advertise the position (Schwever, 2010).

The study did not identify an elaborate procedure for continued employment and at any given intervals. This was based on the fact that most employees in the response to the open ended question explained their knowledge of background checks only during initial recruitments for employment. Bohlander and Snell (200) assert that an appropriate background check practice in an institution does not stop during the initial recruitment of new staff but continues even after an employee has been taken on board. That the human resource department is responsible in ensuring that it continuously gets background check leads of the employee at any time. The respondents who were interviewed agreed that there is room for improvement on the background check procedures at USIU to meet the market standards and organizational objectives.

5.3.2 Benefits of an Effective Background Check

The study recognized the need for management involvement in the processes of development and reengineering of background check procedures in order for the institution to realize the outlined benefits such as avoiding costly risky hires (Brisciana, 2008). The institutions also reap benefits by employing people who do not have past criminal records that may lead to dangers to the organization. Background checks also ensures that the institution avoid lawsuits which are deemed common with risky hires. Arthur (2006) explains that the importance of having a consistent background check of employees is to ensure among other benefits that an organization has a stable working environment.

The study also showed that 50% of the respondents rated the effectiveness of background check as very important, 38% as most important and 5% as not important. This indicates that the effectiveness of background check in the institution is average. The Management was therefore expected to come up with strategies to improve on the program. A number of recommendations raised in this research may be helpful if considered and implemented
as appropriate. With regard to the benefits, Nexis (2010) contends that it is also helpful to have policies that define how employee decisions are to be made and how problems will be addressed. Indeed, from the study, the respondents’ sentiments were indicative of the extent which they thought the background checks were beneficial.

The findings rated a very high percentage of respondents indicating that most of the institutions benefit from background checks. Members of staff and in particular top management are a source of information on the gaps in the current implemented background check procedures. In the event that appropriate reviews are formulated and implemented, they should be consulted to identify the limitations and implications that the current procedures have. At USIU Africa, new staff are taken through the institutional values and cultures to ensure conformity to acceptable work ethics. Saks and Haccoun (2010) asserts that this ensures the new staff become knowledgeable on relevant avenues in case they require guidance on any issues of concerns.

According to respondents, institutional background checks are a source of an organization’s integrity. An organizations that performs background checks means that they hire competent and highly qualified staff which is a source of corporate image, safe working community and, better human resource management. It is also deemed a means of discouraging dishonesty among applicants who tend to hide their ugly past. Credible employees have also proved dependable and effective. There is no doubt that background checks promotes safe work environment since staff hired are legitimate (Arthur, 2006).

When background checks are conducted some respondents pointed out those important details concerning the employees are gathered and especially regarding possible security concerns. Some of this information is of great help to the institution which might help in enhancing growth in terms of service delivery. The institution also benefits by protecting its employees and college community from prior behaviors or bad vices such as drug abuse, credit history, bankruptcy, driving records, criminal and civil litigation (Bullard, 2003). The correspondents also asserted that with background checks, the institution creates a circle of trust, openness, reliability and reliability. Also with effective background checks, institutions create safe working community and environment which in turn leads to good management of the institution.
Conducting a background check is not an easy exercise since it requires time and money yet very vital to an organization. Basing on interview conducted the sample population gave various remedies for conducting effective background checks. There is need to advocate for proper legal procedures when executing a background check and the purpose of legalizing the process is to avoid challenges that come with it such as high cost, cases of mistaken identity and avoiding errors. It is worth noting that currently most resumes contain inaccuracies in employment and educational achievements (Catano, 2009). The institution should also conduct background checks in accordance with the required local government laws and policies. In many cases institutions of higher learning work with affiliate companies where they often send their staff or students for internships. This being the case, the institution should instruct such organizations to further carry out background checks on their students during internship.

As regard to employment, the respondents agreed that it is important for the organization to include some clause in the adverts that cautions applicants on giving false information as they risks termination of the job. Also upon accepting an applicant, the institution should come up with standardized procedures. Previous information such as addresses and employment background is worth being verified. During interview sessions, it is worth to asks valid questions related to reason for leaving previous job. Complete contact information of the applicant should be noted including contact information like cell phone, home phone number and complete address to include street or residential details (Bullard, 2003).

5.3.3 Challenges of Background Checks at USIU

Like in any academia or philosophy, respondents underscored that discipline is paramount wherever there is realization of effectiveness and success. Institutions too face challenges when it comes to execution of background checks. For instance, the fact that background checks rely on public records to vet their employees while hidden criminal activity such as drug abuse may not be featured. Since background checks rely on databases which hosts billions of records, it may be prone to errors hence may give false information where the human resource department does not follow acceptable protocols in recruitment as recommended by (Hubbartt, 1998). When asked whether there were challenges in effective background check management at USIU, 84% of the respondents agreed that
there were challenges at USIU. In addition more male (95%) compared to females (73%) were also in agreement to the presences of the challenges.

Respondents also cite instances of people missing jobs because they have been incorrectly linked to criminal activity are common. Despite the fact errors are a problem the worst problem is lack of exhaustive and follow up by background check providers to confirm existence of background check records. Most of them avoid this process due to costs incurred that include qualified staff handling the background check process (Nixon and Kerr, 2008). Common names are also cited as challenging when carrying out background checks and especially where a unique identifier such as ID number or date of birth is not used. It is possible to find a mixture of people with the same first name, middle and surname.

In the process of hiring, employers have no means of knowing whether the people they hire have fully reformed. This somehow leads to discrimination of employee who may have criminal records but have already reformed. This gives rise to a theory named “disparate treatment” theory where employees are given benefit of doubt basing on their improved behavior. The research found out that some people are locked out of opportunities due to their past histories yet, if given a chance they can actually perform better than those selected. Respondents agree that it is also wrong to assume that since someone has not committed a crime in the past, will not commit it in future. Also the fact, someone filed a Bankruptcy does not mean such a person will do it again.

The results and findings of the study with respect of the data collected and analyzed, provided meaningful information. The study explored some of the key areas where emphasis needed to be put in order to realize effective background check procedures among learning institutions in Kenya. With the focus on the USIU Africa Campus, it exposed the gaps and challenges that may cause lack of realization of the benefits of background check procedures in place or practiced as appropriate. More importantly, it asserted the need for further research, policy and practices in other institutions of high learning in order to realize effectiveness of an institutional background check and competitiveness in the market.

Role ambiguity was cited as one of the challenges in conducting an effective background check at USIU Africa since the human resource department solely conducts the process. In response to the open ended questions, most managers agreed that the process should be
well structured and the role of some human resources or security staff outlined. Arthur (2012) adds that the recruitment process should begin with announcement of vacancy is done with the job description and profile clearly indicated plus the requirement of a background check to ensure that the organization gets the right candidate for the position.

Conflicts with corporate image emerged as a challenge to an effective background check. In this regard, being an institution of learning with a diverse community an open door policy is sometimes advocated. According to Hollinger (2012, organizations do background checks for many reasons one of them being to ensure the corporate image is of the organization is safeguarded as being a safe and secure earning environment which conflicts with an open door policy management approach.

5.4 Conclusion
Findings showed that there is a positive relationship between the benefits and challenges of an effective background check procedures in a learning institution.

5.4.1 Knowledge and Background Check Procedures at USIU
The institutional employees and management knew and demonstrated their interests with appropriate background check procedures. They had put in place and continue to develop the due process of an effective background check for its employees for mutual benefits. Management was also keen on strengthening the structures that oversee the formulation, implementation and periodic audits of the effective practices that would largely contribute to the success of an effective institutional background check process.

5.4.2 Benefits of an Effective Background Check
Employees and management understood and supported practices for an effective institutional background check that would allow collective responsibility and constant reviews. Top management was willing to support systems that created a safe and secure working environment, more productivity and institutional reputation. That optimization of the background check procedures eased a lot of human resources and security implications and in essence made the working environment conducive for mutual benefits.
5.4.3 Challenges of an Effective Background Check

The dynamic learning institutions required competitive trends that included appropriate background check procedures. In order to maximize on new technology and global diversity, institutions faced the challenges of a reactive market demands. Practicing best background checks procedures comes along with the need for a well trained staff, attracts huge budgets and present cultural as well as institutional conflicts of interests.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Recommendations for Improvement

5.5.1.1 Effective Background Check Procedures

There is need for informing USIU and other learning institutions about the importance of effectively managing background check. Conducting a background check however is not an easy exercise since it required time and money yet very vital to an organization. Basing on interviews conducted the sample population gave various remedies for conducting effective background checks. The population sampled also advocated for proper legal procedures when executing a background check. They cited the purpose of legalizing the process to avoid challenges that come with it such as high cost, cases of mistaken identity and avoiding errors.

Some of the population sample said the institution should conduct background checks in accordance with the required state laws and policies. In many cases institutions of higher learning work with affiliate companies where they often send their employees or students for internships. This being the case, the population asserted that the institution should instruct such organization to further carry out background on their students during such engagements. As regard to employment, the respondents added that it is important for the organization to include some clause in the adverts that cautions applicants on giving false information as they risks termination of the job. They also indicated that upon accepting an applicant, the institution should come up with standardized procedures.

Some portion of the population asserted that previous information such as addresses and employment information is worth analyzing. During interview sessions, it is worth it to asks valid questions related to reason for leaving previous job. Complete contact
information of the applicant should be noted including cell phone, home phone number and complete work or residential address.

5.5.1.1 Recommendations for Effective Background Check Procedures

Management needs to be on the forefront in spearheading the strategic optimization of appropriate background check procedures so as to create value realization in the current competitive business environments. Optimization of the best practices should be embedded within the core values of the organization’s mission and vision. It is worth it to realize that the current business world depends on a competitive human resource team. Furthermore it promotes a safe and secure working environment.

The study recommends that learning institutions should have management fully involved in providing and equipping human resources involved in appropriate background check procedures to realize its full potential. A combined team of experts in this field should be consulted widely and systems reviewed periodically as appropriate. Cost benefit analysis should be undertaken with the view of adding value and staying ahead of the security threats associated with poor human resource hiring systems and practices.

5.5.1.2 Benefits of an Effective Background Check

Top management role in these practices is vital for effective practices and management of change by equipping and empowering systems for best operations. The environment upon which the campus learning and working community operate should be conducive to enable optimization of resources within their reach. The study stipulated that training and audits are undertaken as a continuous process. That management should own the process and offer information on how best to make improvements for the internalized process.

The study also recommended that management should also offer support to the key departments responsible for effecting a functional background check procedures so that they have a common theme and goal. The members of staff and college community on the other hand should be sensitized on the requirements and be ready to embrace change in tune with the current market trends on background check requirements for mutual benefits.
5.5.1.3 Challenges of Background Check

Learning institutions should adhere to best background check practices in order to get full benefits in terms of having the right manpower and a secure working environment. This is in essence a standardized process that adds value to any modern business environment and more importantly an institution of higher learning with a global outlook.

Well researched and proven practices should be embraced and practiced. Change should be well managed to realize its full potential with the given capacity. The study showed that lack of proper best practices leads to a range of vulnerabilities both with human resources and security management. This in turn adversely affects the learning environment and the reputation of an institution.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Further Studies

The study was indeed an eye-opener to future researches that should be comprehensive in terms of sampling and coverage. Again the study only provided a guide to the expected objectives and the results herein does not fully characterize the true population at USIU Africa. The research was designed to cover a limited sample size given the limited timeframe and resources. Consequently, a further study that could broaden on both the sample size and campus community covered could go a long way in adding more insight to the subject under consideration. Ultimately research to employ a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods so as to achieve an in-depth inquiry and analysis is necessary. Further studies also need to be done with regard to background check on campus community to include all direct employees, contractors and the student population in order to realize its optimum community benefits.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to inform you that am a graduate student at United States International University pursuing an Executive Masters degree in Organization Development (EMOD). As partial fulfillment of my Business Research Methods Course, I am conducting a research to examine the management of institutional background checks using a case study of USIU Africa Campus.

Please note that any information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and at no instance will it be used for any other purpose other than for this project. Your assistance will be highly appreciated. I look forward to your prompt response.

Yours Faithfully,

Mathew Kimoki
APPENDIX2: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Kindly answer the following questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire is to collect data in partial completion of the requirements for an Executive Master of Science in Organizational Development (EMOD) at the United States International University. The questionnaire seeks information about the effective management of background checks for employees and students at USIU Africa Campus.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Kindly answer all the questions by ticking in the relevant box or answer.

1. Gender? Male ☐ Female ☐

2. In which age group do you belong to?

20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60 and above ☐

3. Do you know what background check is about?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. How long have you worked or studied at USIU?

a. 0-2 years

b. 2-5 Years

c. 6-8 Years

d. 9 Years and Above
SECTION B: BENEFITS OF BACKGROUND CHECKS

Kindly tick the box corresponding to your opinion for each statement

1. In your opinion, are background checks beneficial to organizations?
   
   Yes [ ]
   
   No [ ]

2. If yes in (1) above which of the following college Community should undergo background checks?
   
   (a) Teaching staff [ ]
   
   (b) Non-Teaching staff [ ]
   
   (c) Contractors [ ]
   
   (d) Students [ ]

3. Which 2 issues below do you consider the main benefits of background checks
   
   (a) Qualified staff [ ]
   
   (b) Better HR management [ ]
   
   (c) Good Corporate Image [ ]
   
   (d) Safe working community [ ]

4. On a scale of 1-5 do you consider institutions that administer background checks, reputable organizations? Consider 5 as Strongly Agree and 1 as Strongly Disagree.
   
   (a) Strongly Agree [ ]
   
   (b) Moderately Agree [ ]
   
   (c) Agree [ ]
   
   (d) Disagree [ ]
   
   (e) Strongly Disagree [ ]
5. Do you believe that USIU Africa has benefited from background checks?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

**SECTION C: EFFECTIVENESS OF BACKGROUND CHECK**

On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the effectiveness of background check management in terms of ensuring that the organization meets its objectives? Consider 5 as most important and 1 as not important.

(a) Most Important [ ]
(b) Very Important [ ]
(c) Slightly Important [ ]
(d) Important [ ]
(e) Not Important [ ]

1. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rank your institutional reputation in terms of how effectiveness in background management. Consider 5 being very effective and 1 as not effective.

(a) Very Effective [ ]
(b) Moderately Effective [ ]
(c) Effective [ ]
(d) Less Effective [ ]
(e) Not Effective [ ]
SECTION D: CHALLENGES OF BACKGROUND CHECKS

1. Do you see any challenges in effective background check management at USIU?
   Yes [Blank]
   No [Blank]

2. In your opinion, which is the key background check challenge?
   (a) High costs of the process [Blank]
   (b) Non-Profit making Institution [Blank]
   (c) Lack of trained staff [Blank]
   (d) Role Ambiguity [Blank]

PART E: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Kindly answer the questions in the spaces provided.

1. What kind of background check procedures have you gone through at USIU?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

2. What would you consider as challenges in conducting background checks at USIU Africa?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

3. What do you consider as the main benefits of an institutional background checks?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

4. What recommendations do you think will enhance an effective background check for USIU Africa?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________