

EFFECT OF ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP STYLE ON ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE AT KENYATTA UNIVERSITY IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: The main objective of this study was to determine the effect of organizational leadership style on organizational performance at Kenyatta University in Kenya. The study used the following theories to fully comprehend and understand the research under study, Transformative, E-Learning, The Khan Model Theory and the Self Determination theories. The study adopted descriptive research design where 1629 non-teaching members of staff were targeted. Primary data and secondary data collection instruments were used. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to the participants. The final data was ordered, coded and analyzed using SPSS. The quantitative findings were presented in tables and figures where applicable. Findings revealed that organization leadership has a strong positive and significant influence on organization performance at Kenyatta University. The study concluded that good leadership establishes workplace duties of self-managed teams capable of handling issues that might arise in the absence of team leaders. The study recommends that the university leadership framework should create self-managed teams that can address grievances raised by non-teaching staff. This will ensure that issues that can be easily adjudicated by self-managed teams do not affect the university's core mandate.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Organization Performance, Leadership Framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is comprised of the manner of how well a task is performed and completed. It is essentially the result of work, a record of an individual's achievements (Macey & Schneider, 2018). Employee engagement refers to staff members' willingness to go beyond the call of duty and having confidence in the organization and what it stands for. Engaged employees are those who work for an organization, are enthusiastic about their jobs, and are committed to helping the organization succeed (Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2017). Since the early 2000's, the topic on employee engagement came up in the Human Resource and Management agenda, increasingly attracting the attention of professional, academic scholars and other leaders. Organizations need to be aware of the central role that employee engagement plays in order for business performance to increase. Written studies reveal that higher engagement levels can have a positive impact on employee turnover, productivity, and financial performance. In the United States, higher

education and the preeminence of U.S. universities continue to be a topic of discussion among educators, students, policy makers, and other stakeholders, especially given challenging economic conditions, limited resources, and increased competition. The challenges facing United States of America higher education include structural challenges in terms of declining public support and annual state appropriations, declining federal support for sponsored education in addition to basic research, increased competition from profit organizations, and a questioning of the purpose and worth of a university education. (Baumruk, 2017).

Universities in Africa face difficult decisions on daily basis that depend on several different kinds of expertise and judgment that can include high-stake consequences for the future of the students and these calls for additional commitment, satisfaction of employees, learning and development, reward strategies and employees being fully engaged (Roche *et al.*, 2023). For instance, Arowojolu (2021) listed nine behaviors and characteristics of an effective performance of public universities in Nigeria. These include building a sense of community in the classroom, openness, warmth, enthusiasm teamwork, and ability to set the high standards for every student, ability to change gears, flexibility, good communication systems, and collaboration of a skilled leader with passion for learning. In South Africa, poor performance of public universities was due to several variables, which are poor leadership, teacher to student ratio, infrastructure, lack of competent lecturers, poor communication systems and leadership capabilities (Hayward, 2020). The South African education system remains in a state of revolution as the government is in a process of trying to improve its education (Zewotir & North, 2011). African countries must develop education systems that allow as many children as possible to go to school and to seek an education that would allow them to enter the labour market and contribute to the economy in a manner that contributes to the society and attract investors (Herbst & Mills, 2012).

Sendawula, Kimuli, Bananuka, and Muganga (2018) investigated the connection between learning and development, employee engagement and employee performance in the Ugandan Health Sector. Correlation analysis results demonstrated that there is a critical positive connection among learning and development and employee performance. Moreover, a partial intervention impact of worker commitment in connection with learning and development and employee performance was observed keenly. As per this researcher, the primary review is to lay out the contribution of learning and development and employee performance on worker execution. Additionally, it gives a preliminary empirical proof on the mediation impact of worker commitment in connection to learning and development and employee performance. Locally, various scholars in Kenya have studied how employee engagement affects workers' performance. Cheche *et al.*, (2019) studied employee engagement, demographic characteristics, and training corporations' performance in Kenya. The results established that employee engagement is attained through proper leadership, work environment, learning and development, reward strategies, career management and employee motivation. This leading to an enhanced working environment and thus employees staying longer in an organization. This shows that when employees are well engaged, better job output and results are observed. Similarly, Otieno, Waiganjo and Njeru, (2015) conducted a research in the horticultural sector in Kenya. The findings were that employee engagement is a major determinant of organization performance. According to Chebiwot, Misoi, and Wanza (2020), staff reward had a very favorable influence on the performance of public universities in Kenya's North Rift area. This good impact was ascribed to the universities' pay scheme, which raised employee morale and in turn boosted their performance. Notably, the survey found a low incidence of resignation among university employees, reflecting strong worker commitment. It was also obvious that human resource policies had a beneficial impact on strategy execution, with the majority of respondents believing that rewards should be merit-based.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Performance in public Universities has often received criticism throughout the years due to inconsistent and subpar performance (Cheche *et al.*, 2019). When highly rated individuals perform, poorly and other employees resign or leave, employers are frequently perplexed. This happens after they have proactively implemented fair compensation policies, learning and development, reward strategies, and favorable working conditions (Human Resource) best practices that ought to motivate and retain employees and enhance engagement in an organization. Likewise, management also struggles to comprehend why some workers lack commitment to the company (Irefin & Mohammed, 2018).

Performance Contract Report (2020) on performance evaluation for state corporations indicate that Kenyatta University service delivery is rated at good, which was interpreted at 70% as non-achievement of performance target, which may attract performance sanctions. In the same report, the University is missing in the list of top ten performing state

corporations based on core mandate. Commission of Higher Education report (2022), state that there is low number of non-teaching staff working at Kenyatta University with a number employed as temporary employees. Unfortunately, and despite the genuine efforts by the various University Administrations, the university has continued to experience a demoralize staff whose work performance level can only be favorably compared to that of employees on a go-slow. This means that the Public Universities are getting very little from their staff as compared to what they would harvest from their workers if they were to perform at their optimum individual and hence collective level (Benoit, 2018).

At Kenyatta University, and through participatory observation, employees especially the non-teaching one just seems not to care about their work. Frequent absenteeism, lateness, fake sick leaves, and poor work ethics and consequently low productivity, is a daily phenomenon. This is an indication that the work motivation of most of the non-teaching staff is wanting and therefore negatively affecting the whole working system in the Universities, and therefore unable to effectively meet the goals for which these institutions were established to achieve. Employees at Kenyatta University are required to sign daily in register to indicate what time they report on duty, and also what time they leave for home later in the evening (Nkironke & Kiiru, 2018).

Grading system at Kenyatta University for non-teaching staff, progression path from one level to another is based on qualifications attained at School. The structured promotional policies are set by management but there are delayed communication problems within the universities and lack the timeliness needed (Wang *et al.*, 2019). A research report on employees of Kenyatta University states that the boundaries between categories of staff are blurring, as graduates assume jobs that would previously have been taken by non-graduates. In libraries, computer centres and laboratories people who will be expected to be challenged to have careers that will allow them to continue learning are filling those jobs once labeled “non-professional”. The challenge of lack of trained cadre of professionals to support the integration and use of I.C.T. without on-site technical support leads to waste of time and money that may be lost due to technical breakdowns.

There are other several reports related to employee engagement, which have been conducted globally, the research findings associate high levels of employee engagement to increased profitability and productivity. A report by Gallup’s State of the Global Workplace revealed that 20% of the global workforce felt engaged in 2020. That is down from 22% in 2019 due to COVID 19 but a considerable improvement on 12% in 2009. The statistics mean that 80% of the world’s workforce is not engaged at work, thus leading to disengagement that affects business performance, employee retention, organization culture, and competitiveness if the issue is not addressed conclusively. This research study therefore aimed at spanning the existing knowledge gaps because despite human resource practices being practiced in an organization, employees at the university are still unable to cope with the growing demand for higher education.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have found a satisfactorily good balance and influence between transformational leadership style, workplace spirituality, and work engagement. They provide evidence that transformational leaders that encompass conflict management, problem solving and self-managed teams play a crucial role in shaping workplace mysticism and employee’s level of work engagement in an evolving organization work setting (Arokiasamy & Tat, 2020). This indicates that employees who have transformational managers tend to be energetic, dedicated and absorbed in work fully. Gozukara & Simsek also carried out a study on transformational leadership and employee engagement in 2015, which concluded that full job independence affects the relationship between transformational leadership and job engagement.

York and Barr (2019) examined teacher leadership research and published the results in 2019. The review was to examine how teacher leadership should be defined, how teacher leaders are prepared, their impact, and those factors that facilitate or inhibit teacher leaders’ work. Beyond this, the review considered theories informing teacher leadership within disciplinary contexts, and the roles of teacher leaders in social justice and equity issues. Within this review, the most salient findings were that teacher leadership, although occasionally defined as a determination on establishing on the roles beyond the classroom, supporting the professional learning of peers, influencing policy/decision making, had a purpose of pursuing student learning. The research was only somewhat theoretical that principles, school structures, and norms are important factors that empower or marginalize the roles of teacher leaders, and the finding found that very little employee leadership research exists to examine issues on leadership in Public Universities on organization performance that could yield different outcome in Kenya.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study used the following theories to fully comprehend and understand the research under study, Transformative, E-Learning, The Khan Model Theory and the Self Determination theories. The study adopted descriptive research design where 1629 non-teaching members of staff were targeted. Primary data and secondary data collection instruments were used. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to the participants. The final data was ordered, coded and analyzed using SPSS. The quantitative findings were presented in tables and figures where applicable.

5. FINDINGS

The study analyzed respondents' views on how organization leadership influenced organization performance at Kenyatta University. Using five-point Likert scale options, the respondents' views were summarized in the table 1 in form of frequencies, percentages, and mean.

Table 1: Effect of Organization Leadership on Organization performance

Statements	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
At my workplace my duties are meaningful due to self-managed teams	247	8 3%	15 6%	23 9%	162 66%	39 16%	3.844
When faced with a problem we address it immediately	247	8 3%	31 13%	23 9%	124 50%	62 25%	3.813
Conflicts are always addressed on time	247	0 0%	39 16%	39 16%	108 44%	62 25%	3.781
Overall mean							3.813

Findings on the influence of organization leadership on organization performance revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that it does affect organization performance, with an overall mean score of 3.813. With a mean distribution of 3.844, 66% of the respondents agreed that workplace duties are meaningful due to establishment of self-managed teams, 16% strongly agreed, 9% indicated neutral, 6% disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed with the statement. Concerning management and leadership ability to address conflict, majority of the respondents 50% agreed with the statement, 25% strongly agreed, 9% indicated neutral, 13% disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed with the statement. This was represented by a mean distribution of 3.813. The respondents at 44% agreed that personal problems were solved immediately, 25% strongly agreed with the statement, 16% indicated neutral on the subject, 16% also disagreed with the statement, indicating a mean distribution of 3.781.

From the analysis, evidence emerge that management addressed issues through self-managed teams even though it takes long to adjudicate problems immediately. In agreement, a study by Arokiasamy and Tat (2020) advocates leaders with transformational leadership characteristics play a crucial role in shaping organizational workforce spirituality by using self-managed teams to spearhead conflict management and problem solving in various work settings. On the other hand, Kazimoto (2016) study advocates that employee engagement should be characterized by fulfillment of its responsibility, leadership relationship with workers and leadership consideration of workers as focal point for organizational performance. This means that employee engagement and organization performance is shaped by organization leadership characteristics that define work relations among employees.

The study analyzed how employee engagement influenced organization performance at Kenyatta University. Using five-point Likert scale options, the respondents' views were summarized in the table 2 in form of frequency, percentages, and mean.

Table 2: Organization Performance

Statements	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Organization structure affects my ability to finish tasks in time.	247	0 0%	8 3%	31 13%	170 69%	39 16%	3.927
I am able to meet work deadlines in time due to efficient systems in place.	247	0 0%	15 6%	31 13%	124 50%	77 31%	3.913
Organizations tasks should have a desired outcome that is less stressful.	247	0 0%	15 6%	69 28%	108 44%	54 22%	3.771
Overall mean							3.870

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents agreed that organization performance is highly influenced by employee engagement with an overall mean score of 3.870. The respondents at 69% agreed that the structure of the organization influences their ability to execute tasks in time, 16% strongly agreed with the statement, 13% indicated neutral while 3% disagreed with the statement, indicating a mean distribution of 3.927. The respondents also at 50% agreed that organization tasks should have a desired outcome that is less stressful. 31% strongly agreed with the statement, 13% were neutral on the statement and 6% disagreed with the statement, indicating a mean distribution of 3.913. Concerning whether efficient systems would enable them meet work deadlines in time, 44% of the respondents agreed, 22% strongly agreed, 28% indicated neutral and 6% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, indicating a mean distribution of 3.771.

Cheche et al. (2019) studied employee engagement, demographic characteristics, and training state corporations' performance in Kenya. The results established that employee engagement is attained through proper leadership of employees, work environment, employee learning and development, reward learning and development, career management and employee motivation leading to enhanced working environment and thus employees dwelling or staying for quite long in an organization. Similarly, Ameen and Baharom (2019) found that employee engagement is closely linked with employee performance highlighting that engaged employees have higher employee retention because of reduced turnover and reduced intention. Furthermore, engaged employee accomplishes assigned tasks with ease, which in turn improves organization performance in the end.

The study also found that organization leadership had a positive effect on organization performance at Kenyatta university ($t=4.668$, $p=0.000$). York and Barr (2019) advocates for leadership based on the roles beyond the classroom, supporting the professional learning of peers, and influencing policy that addresses employee needs and wants.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that good leadership establishes workplace duties of self-managed teams capable of handling issues that might arise in the absence of team leaders. A self-managed team ensures that leaders adjudicate problems immediately without their presence. The study recommends that the university leadership framework should create self-managed teams that should manage grievances raised by non-teaching staff. This will ensure that issues that easily can be adjudicated by self-managed teams do not affect the university's core mandate.

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