



EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCE ON PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Performance is key to every organization aspiring to achieve its aspired goals. Strategic determinants of performance are very critical for an organization's success. This study looked into the human resources policies and leadership strategies and their effect on organizational performance. The study was guided by two specific objectives being to determine the influence of leadership on the universities performance and to determine the influence of human resource policies on the universities performance. The study employed a descriptive research design. A sample size of 51 employees was selected from a population of 165 employees within the private universities in Kenya. Primary data was collected through the use of a semi-structured questionnaire. The study used descriptive and inferential statistics through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) tool. The study established that both leadership and human resources strategies had significant influence on the performance of the private universities. The study recommended that the management should have in place clear tenure periods on leaders which greatly sensitize them on the delivery performance expectations bestowed on them. Management should focus seriously on matters pertaining staff welfare. This is by equipping them with the skills for knowledge enhancement, having in place a disputes handling committee; and allowing them join in affiliations with workers union for the safeguarding of their interests. It also recommended embracement of technological development to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the private universities as the world is very dynamic and competitive, hence performance achievement.

Key words: *Strategic determinants, human resources policies, leadership, organizational performance*

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INTRODUCTION

Demand for higher education is so dire both locally and globally. After independence, the need for higher education was perceived very crucial. This is because having in place highly qualified Kenyans would dully replace the foreign workforce leaving the service (Wangenge-Ouma, 2007). Kenya has gone through a major growth in the higher education sector both publicly and privately in order to accommodate the huge number of to be graduates. Since 1972, Kenya has experienced massive growth in university education by having the largest university education system in East Africa (Bailey, *et al.*, 2013). Education has not only been vital for national development in Kenya but also very influential in the world of globalization. The education system is to ensure that it creates highly trained personnel vital for the social economic development in order to be globally competitive in the first dynamic and more diverse economy (Ministry of Education, 2012). Private universities have been greatly tasked with imposing the right strategies in order to gunner a wider market share. Human resources and leadership are key strategic determinants of performance. Human resources policies are the particular guidelines on the management of an organizations workforce (Deb, 2006). Organizations have acknowledged that human capital is key for organizational success hence a greater market share (Pier, 2006). The achievement of the organizational goals relies greatly on human resource, terms of skills, intelligence base and experiences and how other resources thereof are optimized in realizing the set objectives (Dubey., R., Gunasekaran, 2015). Naturally human beings will desire to be associated with an organization which is a going concern which will translate into them giving their best as per the reward thereof in matters salaries, incentives and growth. The reward system is key which greatly affects performance (Shields, *et al.*, 2015). This calls for the motivation of firms employees in order for them to give their best for the achievement of the set goals. In case of the reverse,

high rates of labour turnover hence non-performance are the end results. This is a competitive edge to the competitors.

Leadership is key in any organization as it gives the direction towards the achievement of the organizations' goals in regard to its mission and vision. Leadership is the associated cycle in regard to behaviour; managerial wise, meant for the integration or individual interest for the achievement of aspired goals (Mitonga-Monga & Coetzee, 2012). Leadership has been viewed as the driving force which pushes organizations into higher levels of performance (Daft, 2014). Private universities should ensure that they have the right personnel in leadership for the achievement of performance. Good leaders are those who are capable of integrating all the components of the organization for smooth running of operations hence achievement of the aspired goals (Asuga, Eacott and Seevak, 2015). Leadership being very key for performance achievement, is attributed to three vital elements namely, direction establishment, aligning and motivation of people (Gonna and Ogolla, 2016). Leaders' actions must motivate and encourage the staff under their supervision to move on and achieve the organization's goals (Ciula, 2014). This greatly enhances team work which leads to the achievement of the aspired goals.

Poor leadership leads to divisions amongst the team members which leads to deviation from the desired goal. A common challenge could be lack of collaboration between groups within an organization (Kissi, dainty, & Tuuli, 2013). This causes loss of morale on the stakeholders hence withdrawal and in severe cases it has led to collapse of organizations due to the presence of self-centered interests. Poor leadership through audit trails has portrayed embezzlement of funds through fraudulent deals which emanates from mismanagement of resources and lack of integrity on the leadership. There is lack of transparency in the organizations operations hence

no disclosure and due to non-involvement the result is very poor performance. Disclosure will create a transparent operational process (Madhani, 2009). Poor leadership stagnate operational strategies. They ought to slot the organization a greater market share as they require substantial amounts of financial resources and commitment which are not available. Liquidity or financial soundness is vital for the business performance in regard to its operations (Buseretse, 2015).

Problem statement

Performance is the key goal for any organization upon its formation. The market being very competitive, every other organisation is obliged towards devising strategies that will enable them to edge, thus gunnering a wider market share. These strategies are the key performance indicators which can be financial or non-financial which depict the degree of achievements of the to be achieved goals and their results thereof (Karlsson&Tavassoli, 2015). The higher education sector not being an exception, private universities have to effect growth strategies which are very vital towards achievement of performance. The higher education sector is obligated by the regulator to offer quality academic services which will enable producing graduates both locally and globally. The universities are highly constrained in order to achieve the desired which is encroached by various challenges which deter them from it.

The challenges amongst many others include poor leadership and failure to adhere to the requirements of effective human resources policies. Strategic leadership has been identified as one factor that can help an organization deal with the global economy (Zoogah, 2011). Leaders who provide their teams with proper guidelines tend to have a more satisfied and committed team of employees hence performance achievement (Agnew & Flin, 2014). Human resource is the most unique tool that an organization possesses that cannot be imitated by

competitors (Katou, 2008). Organizational success depends on a competent, motivated and a satisfied workforce (Lamba & Choudhary, 2013). Private Universities need to be very keen on these performance strategies as the repercussions have been so detrimental for culprits.

Study objectives

- To establish the effect of leadership on the universities performance
- To establish the effect of human resources policies on the universities performance

LITERATURE REVIEW

Resource based view Theory

This theory posits that in order for an organization to gunner a competitive advantage, hence achievement of the desired performance, it must possess unique resources and potentialities which should be exorbitant for imitation by competitors (Barney, 1991). This theory perceives the resources as inherently valuable and insists that they should form a base for the choice of worth strategies (Spanos and Lioukas, 2001). The firm's resources should be rare, inimitable, valuable and not easily substitutable (V.R.I.N) (Kraaijenbrink, Spender & Groen, 2011). Resource based view theory concentrates extensively on an organization's key competencies (Mahdi, Almsafir & Yao, 2011)

The firms resources should be in a position to enable or give limitations on the market choice pertaining the profit levels expected (Barney, 1997). This theory addresses the reason behind the organizations uniqueness, how they can edge more and sustain their performance through the use of their resources (Kostopoulos, Spanos, & Prastacos, 2002).

This theory was relevant to this study as it showed how paramount resources are in regard to the organizational performance. These resources could be financial or non-financial. Within the universities these being internal resources, they should be

optimally utilized for the improvement of performance (Kraaijenbrink *et al.*, 2010). This was quite ideal as the study was based on establishing effect of leadership on the universities performance. It also sought to establish the effect of human relations policies in regard to organizational performance. Human resources policies greatly enhance performance management. Employees understand and do the desired according to organizational goals, while at the same time the organization supports the workforce entailments (Cannell, 2010). Firms must ensure that they engage and maintain creative and knowledgeable personnel (Afioni, 2007). Appreciation of this theory is very beneficial to a firm as the optimal utilization of a firm's unique resources and capabilities create a competitive edge for an organization (Vaxevanou & Konstantopoulos, 2015)

This theory posits that Organizations rely on the environment for their continuous survival thus operating as open systems (Pearce and Robinson, 2005). Open system model focuses on events occurring without influencing change within the organization. Other factors are within the environment bringing various forces of an economic, political or social nature. All modern theories of organizations use the open system theory (Michael, 2004). Organizations pay a lot of attention to the open system theory as an organization has to directly relate both with the micro and the macro factors for the achievement of the desired (Daft *et al.*, 2011). The performance of the universities is highly constrained by both the internal and external factors. Strategies in matters leadership and effective human resources policies ought to be effected. This will enable them cope with the influencing factors hence competitive edging. Proper leadership is key as leaders' actions must motivate and encourage the staff under their supervision to move on and achieve the organization's goals (Ciula, 2014). Do a citation in hr check on Sandra

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The study reviewed several studies related to the study variables. Leadership is the process through which one is able to influence the commitment of others by causing them to realize their full potential by sharing of added value, passion and integrity (Ngambi, 2011). The outcome of an organization's desired goals, understanding of forecasting and control functions are majorly determined by various styles of leadership (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). Leadership is critical in an organization as leaders energize their teams to achieve tough goals set hence increase the level of performance from the entire team (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Improving any leadership behavior will have a positive impact on performance, though some changes may have more impact than others. (Ejere & Abasilim, 2013).

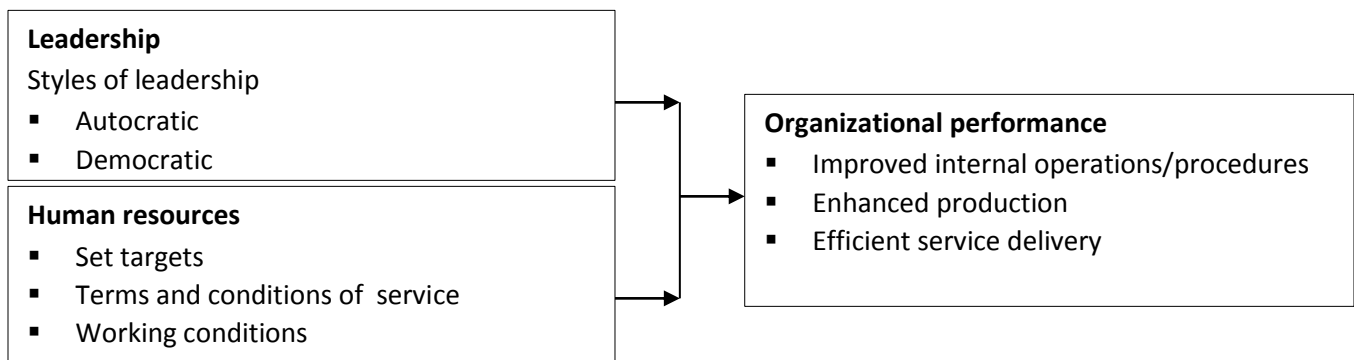
Kitonga, (2016) investigated on the role played by leadership on non-profit organizations on organizational performance in Nairobi county. The findings were that if the leaders within these non-profit making organizations clearly determine the organizational strategic direction, they are likely to improve their respective organizations performance greatly. A study on the possible behavioral prototypes of key decision makers at the central university level was carried out by Kretek *et al.*, (2013) on roles of the governing bodies, the diversified roles played by board members as well as on the governing body. The result was that board members in performing varying roles develop conflicts of interest thus role ambiguity ensuing.

Susan, (2016) investigated the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance through a case study of Safaricom Limited. The purpose of the study was to examine the three components of transformational leadership. They are inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. The findings were that there is a positive influence between the components and employee

performance. Anderson and Sun, (2015) carried out a study on the downside of transformational leadership while encouraging followers to network. They established that the most effective networks are rich in social capital characterized by trust and brokerage. Their findings show that most leaders described trust to mean both personal integrity and effectiveness for one to deliver. Their findings also depict that followers engage in greater networking behaviors through the encouragement by their leaders but its greatly moderated by leaders transformational leadership style. A significant relationship between leadership style and performance existed where democratic managers posted higher performance than autocratic ones (Goleman, 2017).

On the influence of human resources policies in regard to the performance of the hotel industry, the

study found out that employees enhancement of skills through training and development and the reward systems were the key predictors of a hotel performance (Onyango & Kipchumba, 2012). This showed a positive relationship between the independent variable, human resources policies and the dependent variable, performance. On the effect of human resource policies management and intellectual capital on Iranian universities, the study established a significant multiple correlation between human resources and organizational performance (Bahrami *et.al.* 2013). Human resources policies are more critical than they were three years ago, hence greatly affecting performance (Khaled *et.al.* 2015). The study established that there was significant relationship between human resources policies and organizational performance.



Independent variable

Dependent variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source (Author, 2019)

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted/employed a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design aims at describing the state of affairs as exists in the organization (Kangogo & Gachunga, 2015). The population in this research study comprised of 51 employees from the selected private universities. Inferential statistics and specifically simple regression analysis was employed in order to show the

relationship between the variables. When using simple regression, one variable (dependent variable) is used on one independent variable. The equation that the researcher used in order to predict whether the independent variables would enhance the dependent variable was as follows:-

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

Where Y= Performance

β_0 = Constant term

β_1, β_2 = Beta co-efficient
 X_1 =Leadership
 X_2 = Human resources policies
 ε =Error term

RESULTS

The researcher administered 51 questionnaires out of which 42 were returned. These were used for data analysis. This represented a response rate of 82.4%. This response rate was considered adequate for drawing conclusion in regard to the study objectives. According to Saunders *et.al*; (2009) a response rate of 50% is considered as adequate, 60 percent being

good whereas 70 percent and above is considered being very good.

Leadership on performance

The study sought to find out on the extent effect of leadership on organizational performance on the selected private universities. Table 1 below showed the findings. The response was based on a five point Likert scale (1-5). The means were computed and categorized as either high= 3 and above or low= below 2.85. The study asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they conquered with the statement on the role played by leadership on organizational performance.

Table 1: Leadership on performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Participatory_ & democratic_leadership	3.60	.989
Policies_governing_leadership_requirements	3.79	1.001
Clear_structure_roles_leaders	3.90	1.100
Training_development	3.33	1.223
Orgaizational_culture	3.50	1.153
Clear_tenure_periods_on_leaders	4.00	1.036
Aggregate Mean	3.68	1.084

The researcher asked the respondents on leadership within their acquisition of knowledge in their organisation on a gauge calibrated from 1 to 5. 1 stood for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 represented neutral, 4 stood for agree and 5 for strongly agree. The results were shown in Table 1 below.

The respondents were required to indicate whether various elements affected organizational performance. Democratic and participatory styles of leadership, policies governing leadership requirements, clear roles on leaders, training and development, organizational culture and clear tenure on leaders and employee skills. Results in the table above showed that the respondents were neutral on whether Democratic and participatory styles of leadership (mean=3.60), policies governing leadership requirements (mean=3.79), clear structure roles on leaders (Mean=3.90), training and development

(Mean=3.33), organizational culture (Mean=3.50). They agreed that clear tenure on leaders (Mean=4.00) significantly affected organizational performance. The results showed that leadership generally affected performance. This was in tandem with Arslan & Staub (2013) who established that for an organization to have a greater market share, hence a competitive edge, performance levels must be high and leadership is key.

The study sought to find out on the extent effect of human resources policies on organizational performance on the selected private universities. Table 2 below showed the findings. The response was based on a five point Likert scale (1-5). The means were computed and categorized as either high= 3 and above or low= below 2.85. The study asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they conquered with the statement on the role played by human resources on organizational performance.

Table 2: Human resources policies on performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Remuneration_commensurate_service	3.57	1.151
Handling_of_staff_matters	3.79	.925
On_and_off_training	3.45	1.234
offer_of_non_monetary_incentives	3.67	1.141
Disputes_handling_committee	3.48	.969
technological_development	3.83	1.057
Promotions_on_other_aspects_apart_from_academic	3.24	1.411
university_legal_advisor	3.40	1.191
Affiliation_staff_union	2.98	1.259
Aggregate Mean	3.49	1.148

The results in the table 2 above showed that the respondents were neutral on remuneration commensurate with service delivery (Mean=3.57), handling of staff matters (mean=3.79), on and off job training (mean=3.45), offer on non-monetary incentives (Mean=3.67), Disputes handling committees presence (Mean=3.48), Technological development (Mean=3.83), promotions on other aspects apart from academic grounds (mean=3.24), having in place a university legal advisor (Mean=3.40), and affiliation of employees with a staff union (Mean=2.98) embraced and supported. The results showed that human resources generally affected performance. This was in agreement in with Kwenin, Muathe and Nzulwa, (2013) who investigated on the influence of employee's rewards, job satisfaction and

human resource policies on employee retention in Vodafone Ghana Limited.

Simple Regression

A simple linear regression model was employed to give a forecast of organizational performance. The forecast was done based on the effect of the independent variables; leadership, human resources policies and the dependent variable; organisational performance. Regression analysis showed how the dependent variable organizational performance was affected by the independent variables. This study came up with a model summary, the anova model and the regression coefficients model as shown in tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 below:-

Human Resources

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.699 ^a	.489	.477	4.36598

a. Predictors: (Constant), HumanResources
Source: (Survey Data, 2019)

Table 4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	730.506	1	730.506	38.323	.000 ^b
	Residual	762.470	40	19.062		
	Total	1492.976	41			

a. Dependent Variable: Perfomance_total

- b. Predictors: (Constant), Human Resources
Source: (Survey Data, 2019)

Table 5: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.688	2.828		5.547	.000
	Human Resources	.541	.087	.699	6.191	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Performance
Source: (Survey Data, 2019)

Table 3 showed a model summary on regression analysis between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The study established a correlation value of .699. The value of R square was identified as .489 which was adjusted to .477 which enabled the measuring of the variability. This indicated that the predictor variable (human resources) accounted for 48.9 % in regard to the predicted variable (organizational performance). The remaining 51.1% were as a result of other variations not captured within the objectives of the study. The variability was measured by the standard error of estimate.

Table 4 showed an analysis of variance statistics as well as the F-test of the linear regression model. The value of F at a significance level of 5% was found to be 38.323. The F value enabled the researcher to assess the statistical significance of the model. The regression model was statistically significantly at $F(1,40)=38.323$ with a significance level of 0.0000 which was adequate for the study.

Table 5 presented the coefficients as a result of multiple regression analysis. The coefficient table

showed that the beta value for independent variable was 0.541.

The regression equation can be done as below:

$$\hat{Y} = 15.688 + 0.541X_1 + 2.828.$$

Where; \hat{Y} = organizational performance, α = constant, β = coefficient factor, X_1 = Human resources policies and ϵ = error term.

The proposed model implied that if all factors were held constant, organizational performance of the organization would be at 15.688 units. A unit improvement in the use of human resources policies would lead to an increase in organizational performance by 0.541. The independent variable had a P value of less than 0.05, an indication that it was statistically significant. Organizational performance was therefore attributed to the human resources policies. The findings were in tandem with Wagner III & Hollenbeck, (2014) that for an organization to be unique from their competitors hence competitive edging, has been through an Organization's workforce.

Leadership

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.479 ^a	.230	.210	5.36198

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership
Source: (Survey Data, 2019)

Table 7: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	342.943	1	342.943	11.928	.001 ^b
	Residual	1150.033	40	28.751		
	Total	1492.976	41			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership

Source: (Survey Data, 2019)

Table 8: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.717	3.564		5.813	.000
	Leadership	.541	.157	.479	3.454	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: (Survey Data, 2019)

Table 6 showed a model summary on regression analysis between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The study established a correlation value of 0.479. The value of R square was identified as 0.230 which was adjusted to 0.210 which enabled the measuring of the variability. This indicated that the predictor variable (leadership) accounted for 47.9 % in regard to the predicted variable (organizational performance). The remaining 52.1% are as a result of other variations not captured within the objectives of the study. The variability is measured by the standard error of estimate.

Table 7 showed an analysis of variance statistics as well as the F-test of the linear regression model. The value of F at a significance level of 5% was found to be 11.928. The F value enabled the researcher to assess the statistical significance of the model. The regression model was statistically significantly at F (1,40)=11.928 with a significance level of 0.01 which was adequate for the study.

Table 8 presented the coefficients as a result of multiple regression analysis. The coefficient table showed that the beta value for independent variable was 0.541.

The regression equation was as below:

$$\hat{Y} = 20.717 + 0.541X_1 + 3.564.$$

Where; \hat{Y} = organizational performance, α = constant, β = coefficient factor, X_1 = Leadership and ϵ = error term.

The proposed model implied that if all factors were held constant, organizational performance of the organization would be at 20.717 units. A unit improvement in the use of leadership would lead to an increase in organizational performance by 0.541. The independent variable had a P value of less than 0.05, an indication that it was statistically significant. Organizational performance was therefore attributed leadership. The findings were in tandem with Arslan & Staub, (2013) who established that for an organization to have a greater market share, hence a competitive edge, performance levels must be high and leadership is key.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Optimal Organizational performance is the aspired goal for any organization. In this study, the researcher investigated how leadership and human resources

policies affected the organizational performance within the universities. In regard to the first objective which sought to establish the effect of leadership on the performance of the private universities, it was established that leadership was significant in enhancing the performance of the private universities. The universities management should ensure that there are clear tenures of leadership as well as policies which clearly guide and set on the expectations of the leaders within a time frame which greatly enhances organizational performance. In respect to the second objective which sought to establish the effect of human resources policies on organizational performance, it was established that the universities relied heavily on human capital and technology for the enhancement of the desired performance. The management should ensure that human capital entailments are well catered for in regard to the policies in place. Embracing technology is very key for competitive edging in the dynamic educational sphere. The study findings in general depicted that both leadership and human resources policies enhance performance.

From the study findings, respondents indicated that they did not consider training and development for the enhancement of skills in matters leadership as affecting performance. The management should have in place strategies on impacting knowledge and skills to their leaders through trainings and seminars. This will enable them drive the organizations towards their desired goals as per the mission and vision. The study revealed that employees did not consider having an organizational culture pertaining leadership as key. Universities should be committed in creating a strong and positive culture which depicts what is

expected to those that have been bestowed on power hence achievement of performance. From the study findings respondents indicated that affiliations of staff members with workers union, promotions on other aspects apart from academic qualifications, having a legal university advisor and having a disputes handling committee on staff matters as not key in affecting the performance. For employees to feel that they belong, it's the duty of the organizations to look into their welfare keenly which would include having the right channels of disputes handling, Internally a committee being set up is vital and externally a professional on the same is also paramount. Allowing them to join unions which safeguard their welfare and interests, and appreciating their efforts through other ways not necessarily on academic grounds is paramount for performance achievement.

Recommendation for Further Research

The researcher recommended that a similar study be carried out on other institutions of higher learning. Although the findings established that leadership and human resources policies have a positive effect on performance; the study was carried out only on selected private universities in Kenya, hence difficult to generalize the results on other institutions of higher learning. Organizations are different and operate within different environments. It was recommended that further research be carried out on public institutions of higher learning. It was also recommended that a comparative study be carried out on non-academic institutions. Another study could be carried out using other variables apart from financial management, leadership and human resources to establish their effect on organizational performance.

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