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# INFLUENCE OF INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION ON PERFORMANCE OF SUGAR COMPANIES IN WESTERN KENYA

Adega, A. A., <sup>1\*</sup> & Miroga, J.<sup>2</sup>

Candidate, Master of Business Administration (Strategic Management Option), Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology [JKUAT], Kenya Ph.D, Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology [JKUAT], Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

Sugar Companies in Western Kenya have encountered performance challenges in terms of both in financial and human resource as tools for production. These companies have been overwhelmed with underproduction of a core product which is sugar that leads to importations of sugar while there are factories to produce enough for local and foreign consumption. Such challenges necessitates for any concerned stakeholder to be eager to know the reasons behind the state of underproduction. This gave rise to this study with the specific objectives being; to establish the influence of Individual Consideration on Performance of Sugar Companies in Western Kenya. The study sample was selected using simple random technique where each organization had equal chance of participating. Data collection was through structured questionnaires. The analysis was done quantitatively. The results of the study indicated that idealized influence had a significant influence on the performance of sugar firms in Western Kenya. The study recommended for companies to embrace the use of transformation leadership Practices for success and development.

Key Words: Individualized Consideration, Transformational Leadership, Organizational Performance

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### INTRODUCTION

Research regarding the topic of organizational performance suggests that this variable is one of the most important for leaders to consider when attempting to build and improve their operations (Kroll, 2016). Despite the importance of organizational performance few investigators have sought to understand what facilities desired outcomes when it comes to performance (Kroll, 2016). Leadership offered within the organization has been targeted as a potential area for enhancing organizational performance (Overall, 2015). In particular transformational leadership has been identified as a -refreshingly different approach to supporting employees; one that has the potential to markedly revolutionize organizational p erformance (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015).

Bain, (2015) asserts that by providing transformational leaders encourage followers to think 'out of the box and to adopt generative and exploratory thinking processes. Transformational leaders stimulate their followers to think about old problems in new ways and encourage them to challenge their own values, traditions, and beliefs. Oftentimes, transformational leaders are able to accomplish this shift in perspective by serving as role models. By showing high expectations and confidence in followers' capabilities, transformational leaders also help to develop commitment to followers' long-term goals, missions, and vision and to shift their focus from short-term and immediate solutions and objectives to long-term and fundamental solutions and objectives. In China, transformational leadership creates an environment in which employees are motivated and energized (De Jong & Bruch, 2013). Motivated employees working in a supportive climate provide more effective customer service, reinforcing organizational performance and leading to financial gains for shareholders (Giroux & McLarney, 2014).

Transformational leadership has garnered considerable attention in the literature because

of its potential implications for the performance of the organization. Research indicates that this type of leadership can collectively impact employee behavior and commitment leading to improvements in the work climate and knowledge sharing. When combined, these changes can positively influence the performance of the organization (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015)

Several studies have examined this relationship more directly and found positive results. In Austria, Dess and Picken (2015) found that transformational leadership increased followers' creativity in a computer-mediated brainstorming exercise. In Germany, Mumford et al. (2012) also found that transformational leadership positively influenced performance of research and development (R&D) project teams in a large R&D organization. In Italy, Jaussi and Dionne (2013), did an experiment to test the direct relation between transformational leadership and employee creativity and found no correlation but indirect relationship with performance. In Korea, Si and Wei (2011) showed that the relationship between transformational leadership and subordinates' creative performance was moderated by team empowerment climate, in such a way that the relationship is stronger when empowerment climate is low than when it is high. In Ethiopia, Trmal, Bustamam, and Mohamed (2015)substantiate this assertion bv noting that transformational leadership is effective because it drives changes in individual behavior which leads to the achievement of organizational goals. In Nigeria, Ojokuku, Odetayo and Sajuyigbe (2015)Transformational leadership acts as a bridge between leaders and followers to develop clear understanding of follower's interests, values and motivational level.

In Kenya, Mbithie *et al.*, (2016) found that the characteristics of transformational leadership such as inspirational motivation, hopeful influence, personal observations and intellectual encouragement influence both organizational culture and performance. Maingi (2018) indicates

transformational that leadership stimulates organizational commitment, which in turn influences job satisfaction. Gonnah & Ogollah (2016) established that transformational leadership is significantly used in both public and private institutions in Kenya. In addition, individualized consideration, charisma, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation were found to improve employee commitment and organizational performance.

### Statement of the problem

Results in research looking at transformational leadership in management have shown that transformational leadership has its advantages in organizations (Banjeri & Krishnan, 2000; Barnet et al., 2001). Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa and Nwankere (2011) revealed that while transactional leadership style had a significant positive effect on performance, transformational leadership style had positive but insignificant effect on performance. In another study, Ojokuku, Odetayo and Sajuvigbe (2012) examined the impact of leadership style on organizational performance in selected banks, in Ibadan Nigeria. They found that transformational enhance organizational efficiency.

The performance of the sugar industry has continued to be quite dismal. Kenya therefore continues to live off its legacy of being selfsufficient in terms of sugar production. For sugar companies get to their goals and improve their performance they have adopted good leadership (Ngatia, 2014). Locally, several studies have been done in Kenya regarding transformational leadership. For instance, Studies done by Mutai, Cheruiyot and Kirui (2015) on transformational leadership mechanisms used in Moi University Kenya. The study found that transformational leadership leads commitment and job satisfaction. . In a related study, Oloo and Orwar (2016) assessed the influence of transformational leadership at the retail markets in Kenya. The result from the study indicated that transformational leadership enhanced performance. However, the study used only descriptive approach and involved small sample size of 80 respondents. From the above studies, there has been a little attention given in exploring the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance.

# **Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study was to establish influence of individual consideration on performance of sugar companies in western Kenya

# LITERATURE REVIEW

# **Theoretical Review of Literature**

# **Transformational Theory**

Transformational theory by Bass *et al.* (2003) also known as Relationship theory focuses upon the connections formed between leaders and followers. These leaders motivate and inspire people by helping group members see the importance and higher good of the task. Transformational leaders are focused on the performance of group members, but also want each person to fulfill his or her potential. These leaders often have high ethical and moral standards. The most current leadership theory that has the most abundant presence in the current literature is that of Transformational Leadership.

According to Richard (2008), the theory is about leaders distinguished by their special ability to bring about innovation and change by recognizing followers needs and concerns, helping them look at problems in new ways and encouraging them to question the status quo. These types of leaders inspire followers to believe in the leader and in their own potential to imagine and create a better future for the organization. Transformational changes envisaged by transformational leaders are: lead changes in the organization's mission, strategy, structure, culture and innovation in products and technologies. The leader is able to use effective techniques to bring about the required change in the organization. Notably, creation of effective team that has enhanced cohesiveness and success

of organizational groups and teams, use of survey feedback i.e. questionnaires on organizational environment and other factors are distributed among employees and the results are reported back to them. The last one is the use of large group intervention.

Transformational Leadership is about getting everyone involved in decision-making. The overriding element of successful leadership is to involve people in the process of leading (Horan, 2010). Transformational leadership is a type of leadership style that leads to positive changes in those who follow. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process; they are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed as well. Leadership expert and presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns initially introduced the concept of transformational leadership. According to Burns (2014), transformational leadership can be seen when "leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation." Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions and motivations to work towards common goals. Later, researcher Bernard and Bass, (2003) expanded upon Burns original ideas to develop what is today referred to as Bass" Transformational Leadership Theory.

There are four factors to transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. Idealized influence describes managers who are exemplary and role models for associates whose influence can be trusted and respected by associates to make good decisions for the organization. Inspirational motivation describes managers who motivate associates to commit to the vision of the organization and they motivate and encourage teamwork to reach goals of increased revenue and market growth for the organization. Intellectual Stimulation describes

managers who encourage innovation and creativity through challenging the normal beliefs or views of a group.

According to Northouse (2014), there are four layers of characteristics that are key to the transformation process in leadership which are: Idealized influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and performance beyond expectation. Managers that are strong, role models, encouragers, innovators and coach's help transform their followers into better, more productive and successful individuals. Transformational leadership can be applied in one-on-one or group situations. The manager and the followers are transformed to enhance job performance and help the organization to become more productive and successful beyond expectation. The theory becomes relevant to the topic in the sense that that it helps in identifying intellectual stimulation and how it affect performance).

# Individualized Consideration Leadership and Performance

Bass noted that this dimension is characterized by how well the leader encourages individuals to develop themselves, how much feedback the leader thinks he or she gives to subordinates, and how well the leader takes the time to bring workers into the team or the group. Avolio et al. (1999) noted that in the process of transformational leadership, the leader takes the role of mentor by assigning responsibilities to followers as opportunities for growth and development through a process of selfactualisation.

Corrigan and Garman (1999) say individualized consideration positively affects and facilitates team building efforts. Yuki (2006) says individualized consideration behaviors include support, encouragement, and coaching to followers while Bass and SteidImeter (1999) say the relationship for mentoring and coaching is based on follower's individual development needs with the outcome being the evolvement of followers into leaders. Barnett, McCormick, and Conners (2001) describe individualized consideration as when leaders develop interpersonal relationship with followers and these interactions are the ones that allow the leader to personalize leadership and establish goals for each individual follower (Barnett et al. 2001).

In Germany, Zacher, Pearce, Rooney, and McKenna (2014) did a study on individualized consideration as components of transformational leadership on organization performance of Parastatals. They consider the scope if individual consideration noting that the process involves the willingness and ability of the leader to provide nurturing support for each follower.

A study carried in China on implication of individual consideration for organizational performance by Snell, Stanley, Zhang, and Almaz (2013) argue that this process can positively influence employee job satisfaction, leading to higher levels of engagement and motivation within the organization. When all employees experience this outcome organizational performance should improve (Snell *et al.*, 2013).

Leaders who welcome change always listen to the opinion of their subjects and advise them accordingly. They also make sure those issues troubling their subjects are well tackled, hence endearing themselves more to those being led. Such leaders are keen listeners, because they understand that it is through listening, they are able to learn new ideas and also develop themselves and According their followers intellectually. to Okechukwu and Godday (2015), this aspect is a good example of leaders who give a listening ear to their followers and support them accordingly. Leaders who are champions of change also take the responsibility of teaching their followers hence helping them to come into reality with matters of importance.

### Performance of Sugar companies in Kenya

Organizational performance is a concept frequently used as a dependent variable (Richard *et al.,* 2009) in various fields. While Organizational performance is relevant, problems based on researchers'

little convenience and attention of its dimensionality has led to lack of agreement and selection of indicators. (Combs et al., 2005; Crook et al., 2008; Richard et al., 2009). Even though Organizational performance is multi-dimensional, a number of studies measure it using a single indicator and represent this concept as onedimensional (Glick et al., 2005). Richard et al., (2009) posits that if several dimensions exist, researchers should choose the dimensions most relevant to their research and judge the outcomes of their choice.

Consequently, this study chooses to measure Organizational performance using marketing `indicators of customer satisfaction (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Yim et al., 2004; Abdulateef et al., 2010), customer retention or loyalty, and sales growth (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Yim et al., 2004; Day and Bulte 2002). Additionally, the measure of performance employed in this study is subjective in nature as opposed to objective. A "subjective" measure means that the firm's performance metric is anchored on a scale such as "much worse" to "much better", "very poor" to "very good," or "much lower" to "much higher" compared to competitors over time. These can be contrasted with an "objective" measure that would be a definite percentage figure for sales growth or profitability. It is important to note that dependence on subjective measures is a limitation of research to date (Jaworski and Kohli, 1996). However, subjective performance measures have been widely used in research on market orientation and its assumed association to Organizational performance (Dawes, 1999).

There are some good motives for using subjective measures. First, managers may be unwilling to disclose actual performance data if they consider it commercially sensitive or confidential (Gengeswari *et al.*, 2013). Second, performance measures such as profitability may not accurately point toward the underlying financial health of a firm. Last but not least, there exists a strong correlation between objective and subjective measures as reported in

several studies (Dawes, 1999). Comments on survey forms or customer comment cards emerged as the most popular choice for gleaning customer information as a measure of customer satisfaction (Melia and Robinsoni, 2010).

Another way to characterize Organizational performance is to distinguish between financial and non-financial performance (Ittner, 2008). The financial performance is often measured using accounting KPIs-Key traditional Performance Indicators such as ROA, ROS, EBIT, EVA or Sales growth (Ittner & Larcker, 2007; Fraquelli & Vannoni, 2000; Crabtree & DeBusk, 2008). The advantage of these measurements is their general availability, since every profit-oriented organization produces these figures for the yearly financial reporting (Chenhall & Langfield-Smith, 2007). However, balance sheet manipulations and choices of accounting methods may also lead to values that allow only limited comparability of the financial strength of companies.

The non-financial performance can be measured using operational Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as Market share, innovation rate or customer satisfactions are prominent examples (Hyvönen, 2007). Tangen, (2003) provides an overview of frequently used performance measures. Many researchers also use self-reported measures to operationalize performance (Evans, 2004; Chenhall & Morris, 2005; Henri, 2006; Ittner, Lanen, & Larcker, 2002). Others combine both, the accounted financial KPIs and self-reported measures in their reports (Cadez & Guilding, 2008).

Langfield-Smith, (2007) writes that there are various ways non-financial performance can be measured; however, the performance can be hardly assessed without the link to corporate strategy. Performance differences in firms are often the subject of academic research and government analysis (Verreynne and Meyer 2008). Traditionally, emphasis analyzing variations the in in Organizational performance has been at the industry level, implying that the structural

characteristics of an industry ensure substantial homogeneity among firms within that industry and as a result determine to a large extent Organizational performance (Frazier and Howell 2003).

### METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive survey research. The descriptive survey research design was preferred because of its appropriateness to examine causal relationships between study variables (Saunders et al., 2007). The population on focus in this study comprised of the 191 middle level employees from 7 Sugar Companies in Kenya. This research adopted stratified sampling method which is referred by Kothari (2012) as a sampling method put into usage when a populace, where a sample is taken from does not conform to the homogenous group. This was the situation as the research had small groups or strata which were heterogeneous in the aim population whose answer was significant in realizing the purposes of the research. The study sample had 129 respondents. Data collected mainly through questionnaires which were self-administered by the researcher. The questionnaires in usage for this research were of close-ended questions. The questionnaire was structured with likert scale to quantify the responses. A pilot study was conducted before the main study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) facilitated the data analysis.

### FINDINGS

A total of 129 questionnaires were administered and 122 questionnaires were returned, cleaned and found to be suitable for use. This translated to a response rate of 95%. This response rate was high enough and hence adequate.

### **Descriptive Results for Individual Consideration**

The study wanted to examine the influence of individual consideration on sugar company performance in Kenya. The influence of individual consideration was conceptualized using six statements. The study asked respondents to rate the statement provided based on a Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree. The results obtained are shown on Table 1

below.

Table 1: Results on Individual Considerati
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Statement	SD D		D	D		Ν		Α		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Leaders pay close attention to the needs of followers	23	19	49	40	28	23	19	16	3	3	
Leader listen, learn and develop ways of thinking of followers.	24	20	49	40	31	25	14	12	4	3	
Provides a supportive climate to followers.	24	19	50	41	27	22	17	15	4	3	
Act as coaches and advisors to followers.	22	18	45	36	35	28	16	13	4	3	
Use delegation as a means to help followers grow though personal challenges.	27	22	44	36	31	25	17	14	3	2	
Spend time learning about the specific motivations, hopes and dreams of each individual.	29	24	45	37	28	23	17	14	3	2	
Average		21		38		23		15		3	

Table 1 showed how respondents rated individual consideration. For example on the statement that 'Leaders pay close attention to the needs of followers,' 19% disagreed, 28% were neutral while 19% agreed. On the statement, 'Leader listen, learn and develop ways of thinking of followers, 60% disagreed; 25% were neutral, while 15% agreed. On the statement, 'Provides a supportive climate to followers,' 60% disagreed, 22% were neutral while

18% agreed. On the statement 'leaders act as coaches and advisors to followers,'55% disagreed, 29% were neutral while 16% agreed. On average 82% disagreed while 18% agreed.

### **Regression Analysis**

The regression analysis was also performed and results for model summary are as reported on table 2 below.

#### Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate					
1	.829ª	.688	.677	.43495					
a. Predictors: (Constant) Individual Consideration									

Regression analysis showed that the idealized influence correlated with the dependent variable with R= .829. This showed the existence of a strong correlation. The coefficient positive of determination, which showed the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that was explained by the independent variables as  $R^2$  = .688. This indicated that the idealized influence explained 68.8% of the total variations of performance in sugar companies in Western Kenya while 31.2% could be explained by other variables which were not considered in this study. These results corroborated with those of Snell, Stanley, Zhang, and Almaz (2013) which showed that when employees have a strong sense of being valued by

the organization, it results in improvement of organizational performance. Okechukwu and Godday (2015) also confirm that leaders who give a listening ear to their followers and support them accordingly will reap the performance benefits for the organization.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that Individualized Consideration Leadership had a positive significant influence on performance Sugar Companies in Western Kenya. Corrigan and Garman (1999) assert individualized consideration positively affects and facilitates team building efforts. Yuki (2006) implied individualized consideration behaviors include support, encouragement, and coaching to followers while other scholars among them, Bass and Steidlmeter (1999) stated the relationship for mentoring and coaching is based on follower's individual development needs with the outcome being the evolvement of followers into leaders.

This study recommended that Organizations can effectively utilize Transformation leadership and

end up with very encouraging results. Proper leadership minimizes cost expenditures, on overall improve on market sales as well as satisfaction of employees on their jobs. Organizations should particularly encourage the use of idealized influence since the advantages that arise from such leadership practices could lead to an overall improvement of performance and attainment of organizational goals.

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