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ABSTRACT

The absence of quality leadership style in an organizational setting has been found to negatively affect performance. This leads to stagnation in organizational operations, which culminates into the inability to achieve set objectives. In today's globalized world, with organizations coping with rapidly changing environments, leaders face a new reality. Internal politics (IP) refers to the use of power and social networking within an organization to achieve changes that benefit the organization or individuals within it. The study sought to determine the role of internal politics on the relationship between strategic leadership and service delivery of County Governments in Kenya. The relevant theories reviewed for this study were the upper echelon theory and principal agent theory. This study used a positivism research philosophy. The study used a cross sectional survey. The target population for the study was drawn from the 47 Counties in Kenya as per 2010 constitution. The study used purely primary data which was collected using a structured questionnaire. Data analysis took place at two levels – descriptive statistics level and inferential statistics level. To test the study hypothesis, simple and multiple linear regressions were used. Multiple regression analysis was carried out to predict the dependent variable given the independent variable. P-value was used to check for significance of individual variables in the regression equations, whereby a relationship was considered to be statistically significant if the p-value was ≤ 0.05. The study found that strategic leadership was significant in influencing service delivery among county governments in Kenya. It was therefore recommended that county governments must understand the service delivery dimensions in order to carry out frequent analysis and develop strategic leadership concepts relevant to their counties.

Key words: Leadership Style, Internal Politics, Service delivery, County Governments of Kenya

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary situations, both public and private institutions need transactional or transformational leadership for efficient performance. Leaders and their subordinates are connected by the level of performance (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2012). On the part of the employees, their undaunted efforts, diligence and efficiency leading to the desired objectives, are the replica of various leadership styles (Iqbal, Anwar & Haider, 2015). The absence of quality leadership style in an organizational setting has been found to negatively affect performance. This leads to stagnation in organizational operations, which culminates into the inability to achieve set objectives. In today's globalized world, with organizations coping with rapidly changing environments, leaders face a new reality.

Internal politics (IP) refers to the use of power and social networking within an organization to achieve changes that benefit the organization or individuals within it (Brouer, Harris, & Kacmar, 2011). Dhar (2011) defines internal politics as actions which affect activities, behaviours and most importantly, in decision making, by the use of power. Onyeizugbe and Orogbu, (2015) defines internal politics as informal, unofficial and sometimes behind the scene efforts to sell ideas, influence an organization, increase power or achieve other target objectives.

This study will adopt the definition by Onyeizugbe and Orogbu (2015) on internal politics. Thus, internal politics is a prevalent element of virtually all work environments, and its influence has been substantiated across a variety of domains (Kacmar& Baron, 1999). internal politics, as argued by various researchers, can be either positive or negative (Othman, 2008). Negative internal politics are disapproved because of the ethical dilemmas encrusted with them and the workplace conflicts that are generated, whilst positive politics result from the amalgamation of shared goals and stimulating collaboration (Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2010). The influence of internal politics will be measured by looking at the structure, resources, processes, decision making and goals of the organization.

Du, Swaen, Lindgreen and Sen (2013) identify the two leadership styles that managers should possess, as transformational and transactional styles. More so, current leadership theories have categorized leadership behaviours into two major styles: transactional leadership and transformational leadership (Men & Stacks, 2013). Transactional leadership focuses on results, conforms to the existing structure of an organization and measures success according to that organization's system of rewards and penalties (Spahr, 2015). Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which leaders encourage, inspire and motivate employees to innovate and create change that will help grow and shape the future success of the company. This is accomplished by setting an example at the executive level through a strong sense of corporate culture, employee ownership and independence in the workplace (Sarah, 2018). It is in view of these studies that the transactional and transformational styles of leadership have been chosen to form the basis for this research study.

The context of the study was the public entities in Kenya with specific focus on 47 county government units. The 2010 Kenya Constitution introduced two distinct levels of government – the national and the county governments through a process of devolution (Ghai, 2011). The main objective of the county governments was to bring improved services closer to the people through fairness in distribution of resources and access to quality services. The current study was motivated by several convictions; First, the quest for better service delivery by the citizens. Secondly, substantial resources are being allocated to devolved units in Kenya and thus the need for evidence on the nature of outcomes obtained from devolved efforts and resources. The contentions on applicability and effectiveness of strategic management concepts such as strategic leadership, ethics, organizational structure and service delivery given the politically driven and

tribal nature of public entities also drove this undertaking (Keohane, 2008). With paucity of studies in this area, a study on how internal politics influence the associated link between leadership style and service delivery is extremely important in providing deeper understanding and insights to a prior line of inquiry on strategic research in County governments in Kenya.

MATERIALS

This section provides the theoretical perspective of the study and reviews available scholarly work relevant to the study objectives. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) noted that literature review requires the logical identification, sorting and analyses of documents with relevance to the stated research problem. The literature was reviewed from books, articles and online source relevant to the subjects under study.

The relevant theories reviewed for this study was the Upper Echelon Theory (UET) as developed by Hambrick and Mason (1984) view strategic organizational processes and outcomes as a product of managerial qualities of topmost managers. Hambrick and Mason's (1984) as well as Hambrick's (2007) arguments are a basis for this study which also holds that styles (such as strategic leadership) and top leadership qualities (such as ethicality) shape the services offered by county governments. The central tenet of the upper echelon theory is that, organizations are a reflection of the skills, expertise and values of the senior leaders as they work at a strategic level (Chuang, Nakatani & Zhou, 2009; Phipps & Burbach, 2010; Mason & Reilly, 2006). The assertion is similar to the study's main objective which supposes that an ethical strategic leadership can influence the services provided by public entities such as county governments.

This theory provides a framework within which the role of strategic leaders in influencing organizational outcomes can be interpreted, the key postulation being that organizational outcomes and strategic decisions are partially predicted by

strategic leaders (Carpenter et al., 2004. The propositions by the upper echelon theory have brought forth significant literature in research of the role of strategic leadership and service delivery. Strategic leaders are therefore critical in yielding quality service delivery of public service organizations. This theory guides the conceptualization of strategic leaders in influencing service delivery in the context of county governments in Kenya.

Internal politics have the ability to manipulate behaviors and transform organizational harmony and effectiveness to a more destructive outcome on the employee level (Dakin &Tezer, 2012). The rise of globalization has emphasized the importance of organizational justice effects across cultures, thereby outlining that differences in cultures may lead to differences in reactions and practices of organizational politics (Shao, Rupp, Skarlicki, & Jones, 2013). While studies have examined employee reactions to organizational politics, it remains indefinite whether or not national culture contributes to the level of organizational politics practiced within organizations (Tlaiss, 2012). The current study will introduce moderating and mediating variables in assessing the relationship between leadership style and performance.

Tlaiss (2012) found a positive relationship between the management level and job satisfaction as it relates to pay, promotion, and benefits. Tlaiss' (2012) study included 50 female bank managers in Lebanon. Tlaiss' (2012) research was conducted to better understand the relationship between job satisfaction and management levels of control. Yunxia and Jianmin (2010) utilized 287 articles and cross-examined the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance across different cultures. This meta-analysis review revealed that there is a positive relationship between culture and job performance and thereby directly affecting job satisfaction levels. Organizational Politics within the workplace has been researched thoroughly in literature, and so has employee motivation and overall employee reactions within the workplace.

The current study will introduce moderating and mediating variables and assess their relationship with performance.

A study by Ng'enoh (2015) on the East African Breweries Limited, Kenya employees concludes that organizational politics with dimensions of leadership, group orientation and organization structure play a central role in employee performance. Through many elements of leadership for instance the manager's ability to motivate and empower employees thereby creating conducive environment for performance. The study revealed that managers were very supportive and were able to motivate their employees by giving them the power to decide on certain pertinent customer issues. The previous study failed to measure the relationship of the moderating and mediating variables. The current study will introduce moderating and mediating variables in assessing the relationship between leadership style and performance.

METHODOLOGY

The target population for the study was drawn from the 47 Counties in Kenya as per 2010 constitution. The study selected participants based on how the study deemed their input necessary to accomplish the objectives of the study and also their availability during data collection period. The study purposively selected six departments which were common across all the counties and offered services which were the same in all the counties that is, Education, Health services, Public works, Economic planning, Natural resources and Agriculture. Chief Officers and administrators were selected to participate in

the study since they were directly involved in the service delivery process and capable of giving information especially on strategic leadership and service delivery.

The study used primary data collected using questionnaires. A close-ended questionnaire was used to collect primary data relating to the all variables. The questionnaire enabled the researcher to collect views of respondents on the manifestations of strategic leadership and service delivery. The questionnaire adopted a 5-likert scale. The use of 5-likert scale made it possible to quantify the qualitative data, and therefore, enable the attainment of more objective results regarding the views of respondents on the different manifestations. Before administering the data collection instrument, respondents were assured of complete confidentiality and anonymity regarding their responses. The questionnaire was administered using the 'drop and pick up later' method so as to allow the respondents ample time to respond to the questions, thereby enhancing accuracy in responses and improve response rate.

RESULTS

The objective for the study was to determine the moderating effect of internal politics on the relationship between leadership style and service delivery of county governments of Kenya. This was done through testing the hypothesis;

H_0: *There is no significant moderating effect of Internal Politics on the relationship between leadership style and service delivery in the county governments of Kenya.* Results were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Regression Results showing Moderation Effect of Internal Politics on Relationship between Leadership Style and Service delivery

Model Summary[c]

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.675[a]	.456	.454	.46775	.456	208.132	1	248	.000	
2	.715[b]	.511	.505	.44546	.055	13.718	2	246	.000	1.913

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Style, Internal Politics

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Style, Internal Politics, LS_IP interaction

c. Dependent Variable: SD

ANOVAᵃ

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	45.537	1	45.537	208.132	.000ᵇ
	Residual	54.259	248	.219		
	Total	99.796	249			
2	Regression	50.981	3	16.994	85.638	.000ᶜ
	Residual	48.815	246	.198		
	Total	99.796	249			

a. Dependent Variable: SD

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Style, Internal Politics

c. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Style, Internal Politics, LS_IP interaction

Coefficientsᵃ

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.864	.168		5.158	.000		
	Leadership Style, Internal Politics	.681	.047	.675	14.427	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	.657	.164		3.992	.000		
	LS_IP Interaction	.259	.083	.246	3.143	.002	.324	3.086

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Table 1 showed that model 1 is significant (p-value < 0.05, R^2 = .456) implying that leadership style and internal politics jointly explained 23.2% of variation in service delivery. Further, upon introduction of the interaction term, coefficient of determination (R^2) changed from .456 in model 1 to .511 in model 2 therefore giving a variation change of .055 which is significant at 95% confidence level (p=0.000<0.05). Further the change in p-value in model 2 is 0.00 which is also significant (p-value<0.05) implying that internal politics significantly moderate the relationship between leadership style and service delivery. The results further depicts that F-value for both models were high and significant (F=208.132 for model 1; F=85.638 for model 2) implying that the overall models for direct and moderating relationships are significant and have explanatory value in explaining service delivery. The results further showed that leadership style and internal politics individually are significant in explaining service delivery (t=14.423, p<0.05) and for model 2 when interaction term is introduced it is also significant (t=3.143, p<0.05). Therefore based on the results of the test, the hypothesis that there is no significant moderating effect of Internal Politics on the relationship between leadership style and service delivery among county governments in Kenys was rejected and the alternative hypothesis supported .

This was guided by the following model; Y= α+ B_1Z+B_2X.Z + ε

Where: Y_i is Service delivery

Z is Internal politics (Moderating variable)

X.Z is Leadership style and internal politics (interaction)

ε= Error term

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β = the beta coefficients of independent variables after the regression analysis results, the model became Y= .864 + .681 Z +.259 XZ

CONCLUSIONS

The study established that internal politics had a significant moderating influence on the relationship between leadership style and service delivery. The findings concluded that internal politics have both positive and negative influence on an organization's service delivery. Harmony and health exist if people in the organization trust each other, have a sense of oneness in purpose, are creative and innovative, talk to each other freely, share and learn together, are committed to organizational goals, have shared culture and same potent to work and feel collectively responsible for the results of the organization. However if people are allowed to focus their attention to non-functional politics, politics may derail good performance. The findings concur with study by Ng'enoh (2015) on the East African Breweries Limited, Kenya employees concludes that organizational politics with dimensions of leadership, group orientation and organization structure play a central role in employee performance. Through many elements of leadership for instance the manager's ability to motivate and empower employees thereby creating conducive environment for performance. It was therefore recommended that county governments must understand the service delivery dimensions in order to carry out frequent analysis and develop strategic leadership concepts relevant to their counties. The study further recommended that for any leadership to be termed as strategic and successful, the leaders need to ensure that they share their desires to the staff for implementation.

If the staff of your organization are not aware of what is expected from them, chances are each person will carry out the task in the manner he or she feels it is supposed to be conducted and therefore this may lead to lack of achievement of the set goals and vision.

Implications of the Study

The study further revealed that internal politics had a statistically moderating effect on the relationship between leadership style and performance. The findings concurs with social exchange theory which concerns over the fairness of the distribution of outcomes, the commitments that emerge between actors, the formation of coalitions, particular strategies of action, and whether the power is reward power or punishment power. Employees will be satisfied if they perceive the management to be fair, trust the management to meet their interests, communicate honestly about their needs, are engaged in decision making, talk and consult each other, do not feel pressured to seek power in informal means most of the times and are clear about the organizational expectations of quality and are themselves quality.

Since internal politics mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and service delivery, leaders in county governments should ensure harmony and health exist and people in the organization trust each other, have a sense of oneness in purpose, are creative and innovative, talk to each other freely, share and learn together, are committed to organizational goals, have shared culture and same potent to work and feel collectively responsible for the results of the County governments.

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