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INFLUENCE OF STIMULATING MANAGERS ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The concept of leadership has received considerable public and institution's attention both in developed and developing world. This study examines the crucial role of stimulating managers on organizational performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The study involved all the commercial banks currently in Kenya. The study thus reached a total of 384 employees, sampled on a stratified random sampling method. The questionnaires were administered through drop and pick method to the respondents targeted. They were then coded and edited for completeness and consistency and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). The response rate was 273 respondents which was 71% of the respondents. The study concluded that personal integrity and intensity are powerful drivers for organizational performance and leaders in many organizations create an environment where people willingly engage their passion, creativity, imagination and unique motivations to generate the financial results. Stimulating leaders inspire employees to get a sustainable competitive edge and that strategic leaders enable the organization to engage in a relevant and dynamic way. The study concluded that there was need for future researches to be done to establish other specific areas of employee engagement influenced by transformational leadership behaviors, as well as their contribution to organizational performance. There was need to establish other factors that may influence employee engagement levels which will further boost organizational performance.

Key Words: *Integrity, intensity, Stimulating Managers, Organizational Performance, Commercial Banks in Kenya*

Background of the Study

Effective leaders and managers are vital to ensuring employees are fully engaged at work. Organizations believe that creating the opportunity for each individual to do his or her work every day will improve business performance and make working life enjoyable. The concept of leadership has received considerable public and institution's attention both in developed and developing world. There is a fundamental assumption in today's business environment that leadership is central to business. This idea is core to the way we structure and manage our organizations. It is of no great surprise that most companies are heavily engaged in a war for leadership talent and that leadership succession has become a major boardroom topic, (House & Aditya 2007).

The last few decades have witnessed organizations that have had relatively significant success with various kinds of transformational leadership models. A leading example is the Kouzes & Posner's (2003) model which offered a leadership model with five distinct practices that outstanding leaders use to influence employees' performance. This model consists of some of the key elements of the transformational leadership styles. The five practices of exemplary leadership are: (a) challenging the process: searching and seizing challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate, and improve, with the willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes; (b) inspiring a shared vision: enlisting followers' support in a shared vision by appealing to the followers' values, interests, and aspirations; (c) enabling others to act: achieving common goals by building mutual trust, empowering followers, developing competence, assigning critical tasks, and providing continuous support; (d) modeling the way: being a role model and being consistent with shared values; and (e) encouraging the heart: providing recognition for success and celebrating accomplishments. Do leaders really make the difference to organizational futures in today's turbulent environment or is success more to do with favorable circumstances? Where should executives put their money? Is leadership more important than for example, effective brand management or a carefully designed structure for a business or should we just take the value of leadership on trust? (Bass, 2007).

Transformational leadership is the leader's ability to motivate followers to rise above their own personal goals for the greater good of the organization (Bass, & Avolio, 2004). Bass (2007) theorized that transformational style of leadership comes from deeply held personal values which cannot be negotiated and appeals to the subordinates' sense of moral obligation and values (Chan & Donna Suk-Hing, 2005). Transformational leaders go beyond transactional leadership and are characterized as visionary, articulate, assured, and able to engender confidence in others so as to motivate them to surpass their usual performance goals (Schwarzwald *et al,* 2001).

The transformational leaders attempt to stimulate the undeveloped or dormant needs of their subordinates (Chan, 2005). Bass declared there were four types of transformational leadership behavior, namely idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Bennett, 2009).

Intellectual stimulation represents cognitive development of the follower and occurs when the leader arouses followers to think in new ways and emphasizes problem solving and the use of reasoning before taking action (Johnson, 2006).

Transformational leaders encourage their subordinates to bring creative viewpoints to work and stimulate a team vision through positive motivation. With regards to the law enforcement arena, the transformational leader expects their subordinates to be more occupied with problem solving and community-oriented policing which more often than not equate to lower statistics. (Engel, 2003).Transformational leaders are expected to enhance the performance capacity of their followers by setting higher expectations and generating a greater willingness to address more difficult challenges (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

The transformational leader motivates subordinates by focusing them on a greater cause, such as justice. Burns (2008) argued that transformational leaders have a more significant motivating effect on employees and are preferable to transactional leaders because they motivate employees to perform well even in situations that lack any chance of receiving formal recognition.

There is a relationship between transformational leadership and organization's success. The relationship is central to business success core to the way we structure and manage business organizations. Transformational leaders have been suggested to have an impact on institutions performance across the globe.

The concept of modern banking can be traced back to the 17th century England, where goldsmiths accepted gold deposits for safe keeping in their secure safes. The emergence of banks owned by the local private sector began in the mid-1970s, Bain (2003) despite the lack of academic evidence on the relationship between growth strategies and firm performance, the professional literature seems to provide some „mixed‟ answers that relates to the study's research questions (Xia, 2006). The Banking industry in Kenya is governed by the Companies Act, the Banking Act, the Central Bank of Kenya Act and the various prudential guidelines issued by the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK). The banks have come together under the Kenya Bankers Association (KBA), which serves as a lobby for the banking sector's interest's .The KBA serves a forum to address issues affecting members. Over the last few years, the Banking sector in Kenya has continued to grow in assets, deposits, profitability and products offering. The growth has been mainly underpinned by; An industry wide branch network expansion strategy both in Kenya and in the East African community region.

Statement of the Problem

Whereas corporate leadership and success has been widely researched by scholars in Kenya such as Wambugu (2002) and Fourie (2007), they have been done based on the concept of transformational leadership and only on manufacturing industries in Kenya. The above studies did not indicate a clear link between the impact of transformational leadership on organizational performance of commercial banks in Kenya.

Again Kenya has Vision 2030 which is a long-term development blueprint for the country. It is motivated by a collective aspiration for a better society by the year 2030. One of the sectors which has strategic role to materialize this vision is financial institutions specifically commercial banks.

Transforming Kenya to a financial hegemony in the region for the realization of the development blueprint requires transformational leadership, an area that is not explored by researchers. It is in this light that this study seeks to fill in this study gap by establishing the impact of stimulating managers on organizational performance of commercial banks in Kenya or else Vision 2030 will remain a pipe dream. Based on these studies and the varying gaps in literature, there is need to conduct similar studies in Africa and more so in Kenya where commercial bank's leadership styles have been varying in the past decade (Lipman, 2007).

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to investigate the influence of stimulating managers on organizational performance of commercial banks in Kenya.

Hypotheses of the Study

There is a positive significant influence of stimulating managers on organizational performance of commercial banks in Kenya.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was extended to the managers in all the 43 commercial banks in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the theories pertaining to stimulating managers. Specifically, the theories are: contingency theory of leadership, transactional theory of leadership and transformational theory of leadership. The chapter also reviewed the empirical literature concerned with the study topic.

Theoretical Framework

Organization followers always attempt to draw inferences about their leader's characteristics such as integrity, dependability, fairness, and ability because these inferences have consequences for work behavior and attitudes (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). If employees feel their leader cannot be trusted, they will spend energy on protecting themselves and this will detract from their performance (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

Individuals who feel their leader will demonstrate care and consideration may go above and beyond their job role which will result in higher performance and possibly in extra-role behaviors (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Extra-role behaviors such as helping a co-worker who has been absent or being courteous are called organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and are not part of the employees' formal job description (Jex, 2002).

Contingency Theory of Leadership

The Contingency Theory of Leadership suggests that the leader's ability to lead is dependent upon various situational factors, including the leader's preferred style, the capabilities and behaviors of followers and various other situational factors. There is no one best way of leading and effective leadership styles vary from situation to situation. The theory assumes leadership behaviors affect outcomes, such as group performance and achieving goals, by the influencing the subordinates' behavior (Butler & Reese, 1991).

There have been several models utilizing the contingency theory concepts – the Contingency Leadership Theory (Fiedler, 2000), Normative

Decision Theory (Vroom & Yetton, 2008), and Path-Goal Theory (Butler & Reese, 1991). The Situational Leadership Model (SLM) by Hersey and Blanchard (2007) stands out in terms of its popularity with practitioners (Blank, Weitzel & Green, 2012). The SLM depicts four leadership styles grouped by "task behavior" and "relationship behavior". The four styles are labeled (1) telling a high risk/low relationship, (2) selling a high risk/high relationship, (3) delegating a low task/low relationship, and (4) participating a low task/high relationship. The SLM recommends the appropriate leadership style based on the "maturity" of the subordinates. Maturity is the subordinates' willingness and ability based on education and/or experience to focus their behavior on a task or objective. A manager's adaptability is measured by a tool called the "Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD) (Butler & Reese, 1991).

Transactional Theory of Leadership

Transactional theory, as its name implies, involves a "transaction" or quid pro quo between a supervisor and a subordinate. The type of the transaction, whether a reward or discipline, depends on the employee's performance. Bass (1985) theorized that the transactional leaders appeal to the subordinates' self-interests (as cited by Chan, 2005). Transactional leaders attempt to meet the current needs of their subordinates through bargaining and exchanging. Transactional leaders expect their followers to attain agreed-upon goals without encouraging them to take on greater responsibilities for self-development or leading others. There is no attempt to change followers' attitudes, values, growth, and development on a long-term basis. Both leaders and followers focus on achieving the negotiated performance level (Chan, 2005). A transactional leader motivates subordinates by giving rewards for services provided. This leader clarifies the subordinates' goals and arranges contingent rewards as inducements toward the achievement of the goals (Singer and Singer, 2001).

Transformational Theory of Leadership

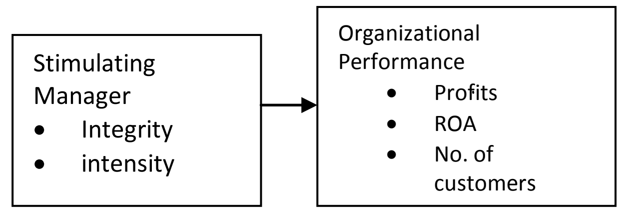
Transformational leadership is the leader's ability to motivate followers to rise above their own personal goals for the greater good of the organization (Bass, 2005, 2006 as cited by Murphy & Drodge, 2004). Bass (2005) theorized that transformational style of leadership comes from deeply held personal values which cannot be negotiated and appeals to the subordinates' sense of moral obligation and values (as cited by Chan, 2005). Transformational leaders go beyond transactional leadership and are characterized as visionary, articulate, assured, and able to engender confidence in others so as to motivate them to surpass their usual performance goals (Schwarzwald, Koslowsky and Agassi, 2001). The transformational leaders attempt to stimulate the undeveloped or dormant needs of their subordinates (Chan, 2005). Bass declared there were four types of transformational leadership behavior, namely idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Densten, 2010).

Intellectual stimulation represents cognitive development of the follower and occurs when the leader arouses followers to think in new ways and emphasizes problem solving and the use of reasoning before taking action (Johnson, 2006). This type of leadership supports followers as they try new approaches and develop innovative ways of dealing with organizational issues. This leadership challenges not only their own believes and values, but also those of the organization they lead. (Northhouse, 2010)

A transformational leader applies such individual considerations by: listening to each follower's needs and concerns, expressing words of thanks or praise as a means of motivation, making public recognition of achievements and initiatives, making private notes of congratulations to boost self-confidence, ensuring fair workload distribution and undertaking individualized career counseling and mentoring.

Transformational leaders encourage their subordinates to bring creative viewpoints to work and stimulate a team vision through positive motivation. With regard to the law enforcement arena, the transformational leader expects their subordinates to be more occupied with problem solving and community-oriented policing which more often than not equate to lower statistics. (Engel, 2003). Transformational leaders are expected to enhance the performance capacity of their followers by setting higher expectations and generating a greater willingness to address more difficult challenges (Bass and Avolio, 2007). Transformational leaders continuously show concern for their subordinates' needs, treat them with respect and utilize a flexible approach towards them. This does not necessarily mean that the transformational leader never resorts to punishment or negative feedback. When these behaviors are used, they are perceived or may be interpreted as exceptional and required for completing the present task (Schwarzwald, Koslowsky, Agassi, 2001).

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables **Dependent variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Review of Literature

The transformational leader's personal integrity and intensity is a powerful driver of organizational energy and direction. However, left unchecked the leader's personality and drive can overwhelm or suppress input and engagement more widely in the organization. The strategic leader needs to create an environment where people willingly engage their passion, creativity, imagination and unique motivations to generate the financial results required by the business (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Even though a distinctive leadership competency is considered to be a corporation's key strength, a key strength may not always be a distinctive competency. As competitors attempt to initiate another company's competency, what was once a distinctive competency becomes a minimum requirement in the industry? Thus, organizations must continue to innovate as well as improve activities in their value chain in order that they can be able to get a sustainable competitive edge over their competitors.

To manage the dynamic balance between the organization, its people and the demands of a complex unstable environment, the strategic leader needs to enable the organization to engage in a relevant and dynamic way with its environment. This requires leaders capable of building an organization designed to attract develop and retain the best talent (House, 2007). It also demands leaders who are capable of aligning people across the organization with an uncompromising customer focus which informs the organizational systems, structure and strategic decisions.

The primary responsibility for effective transformational leadership rests at the top of the organization, in particular with the CEO. Other recognized transformational leaders include the board of directors, top management team and divisional general managers. The board of directors plays an important role as a governance mechanism for monitoring the strategic direction of the organization as well as representing the interest of internal and external stakeholders. The board of directors should develop an effective relationship with the organization top management team in order to best serve the interest of all stakeholders (Hitt *et al*, 2007). The code of corporate governance requires boards of directors to provide transformational leadership, and specifically be responsible for providing strategic direction to the organization, appointing the CEO, retaining control over the organization, monitoring management in implementing formulated strategies and plans, complying with all relevant laws, regulations and codes of good practice, identifying and monitoring non-financial aspect relevant to the organization, communication with internal and external stakeholders and identifying and monitoring key risk areas (Code of Corporate Governance, 2002).

Empirical Review

According to Yukl (2006), leadership has been defined in terms of traits, behaviours, influence, interaction patterns, role relationships and occupation of administrative positions. Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it; and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives. House & Aditya, (2007) defined leadership as the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization.

In the context of strategic management, Warrick (2011) described leadership as the art and process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically to achieve the mission of the organization. Leadership can, therefore, be regarded as an important determinant of organizational success. Leadership can exist at all levels of an organization. According to Dent (2005), three levels of leadership can be distinguished: team leadership operates at team level and its prime responsibility is the people who work with it and the achievement of the goals for which they are jointly responsible; operational leadership is responsible for a functional area in the organization, all the human capital in that functional area, and for contributing to decisions in their own specialist areas; and transformational leadership is at the top level of the organization and is responsible for a range of organizational functions and for contributing to major decisions.

Transformational leadership, therefore, represent a relatively small group of leaders who control the organization and with whom the final authority and accountability for formulating, implementing and controlling the performance strategy of the organization rest. Transformational leaders have substantial decision-making responsibilities that cannot be delegated. Transformational leadership responsibility rests at the top of the organization, generally with the board of directors, and in particular with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO cannot delegate this responsibility to the manager of any other functional area of the organization, regardless of how important that function might be.

Transformational leadership and corporate performance represent two sides of the same coin. Transformational leadership is critical in ensuring that the planned goals of the organisation are effectively realized. Companies need competent leaders who are able to translate planned initiatives into actions and then results. According to Hsieh and Yik (2005), the best conceptualized vision is worthless if it can't be translated from concept to reality, and even the best vision can fail if a corporation doesn't have a cadre of leaders with the right capabilities at the right levels of the organization. The major reason for the failure of efforts to achieve the firm's planned profitability and growth levels is that many firms do not recognize the leadership capacity that new goals will require, let alone treat leadership as the departure point of success. While most CEOs agree that leadership is important, few correctly assess leadership capacity systematically. The gap between the number of available leaders and those required in the organization can have significant negative consequences in the organization.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of performance strategies is viewed as the prime responsibility of the transformational leaders of the organization. These leaders should therefore be personally and deeply engaged in the organization and must have an understanding of the business, the people and the environment (Bossidy and Charan, 2002). Thompson and Strickland (2003) emphasizes that for overall organizational success, transformational leadership should play key roles such as exerting the internal leadership needed to drive the implementation of performance goals forward and keep on improving on how the process is being executed; and managing transformational change through mobilization and sustaining of organizational resources toward the shared vision.

There is continuing controversy on the differences between leadership and management and that the degree of overlap between these two concepts is a point of disagreement (Yukl, 2006). According to Warrick (2011), leadership and management are qualitatively different and are mutually exclusive. Other scholars (Bass & Avolio, 2004) view leadership and management as different types of processes, but do not assume that leaders and managers must necessarily be different types of people. Kotter (2001) argues that management is about coping with complexity. Good managers facilitate order and consistency by formulating plans, designing organizational structures to support these plans, and controlling or monitoring results against these plans. Managers tend to be more analytical, structured and controlled, and view their work from a quantitative perspective. In contrast, leadership is about coping with change.

Leaders establish the strategic direction of an organization by developing a vision for the perfect future of the organization as well as a mission statement that serves as a means to accomplish the vision. Leaders then communicate this vision and mission in clear and concise terms and motivate and inspire employees on all levels of the organization to achieve this vision. Leaders tend to be more experimental, visionary, flexible and creative, and they value the intuitive aspect of their work. Mintzberg (2004) however insisted that the dysfunctional separation of leadership and management should be stopped, and that instead of isolating leadership, it should be diffused throughout the organization. Leadership is no better than management, neither is it a replacement for it. They complement each other, and expertise in both is required in order for organizations to achieve their planned goals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology presents a description of how the study was approached. This study adopted a cross sectional survey design. The study was done as a census. According to Kothari (2008) a census where practical was preferred to give a clearer outcome in a research. The population of this study included all the 43 commercial banks in Kenya's banking industry. To reach employees across the two management levels, the researcher approached respective study areas' human resource departments from which the organization's structure was acquired. This enabled the researcher determine employees in both management levels. The study reached a total of 384 employees, sampled on a stratified random sampling method, from the middle cadre employees.

Data was collected using questionnaires which were semi-structured in nature, with both open and close-ended questions, employing the MLQ approach as proposed by Bass and Avolio (2004). The study used both primary and secondary data which were largely quantitative and descriptive in nature. The pilot study involved pre-testing the questionnaire on 10 respondents of management in different commercial banks within Nairobi City County. To establish the validity of the research instrument the researcher had to seek opinions of scholars and experts in leadership field including the supervisor and lecturers. The survey instruments were subjected to overall reliability analysis using the cronbach alpha's formulae. From the semi-structured questionnaires both quantitative and qualitative data was produced. The questionnaires was coded and edited for completeness and consistency and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20).

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

This chapter covered data presentation and analysis. The targeted sample size was 384 respondents of management in different commercial banks within Nairobi City County. Out of the 384, 273 responded which is 71% of the respondents. To establish validity, the research instrument was given to two experts who were experienced in transformational leadership to evaluate the relevance of each item in the instrument in relation to the objectives. The demographic information of the respondents included gender, age, number of years as a manager and academic qualification of the respondents. According to the analysis it was evident that majority of the respondents were male which represented 70.0% while 30.0% were female. The study findings indicated that majority (50.0%) indicated that their age bracket was between 41 and 50 years. Analysis of findings also indicated that 20.0 % of the respondents were between 51 and 60 years of age and 31- 40 years respectively. The findings further indicated that 10.0% of the respondents were between 21- 30 years. The finding therefore implies that the respondents were old enough to provide valuable responses that pertain to the influence of stimulating managers on organizational performance. The findings indicated that the respondents had enough experience to provide valuable responses that pertain to the influence of stimulating managers on organizational performance. Regarding the level of education of the respondents the findings indicated that majority (50%) had attained master degree followed by 30% who indicated that they had bachelor's degree and 10% indicated that they had attained college diplomas and PhD respectively.

Stimulating Managers

The researcher sought to establish if stimulating managers influence the performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The results of the findings as indicated that Personal integrity and intensity are powerful drivers for organizational performance, that leaders in many organizations create an environment where people willingly engage their passion, creativity, imagination and unique motivations to generate the financial results, that Stimulating leaders inspire employees to get a sustainable competitive edge and lastly that strategic leaders enable the organization to engage in a relevant and dynamic way.

The strategic leader needs to create an environment where people willingly engage their passion, creativity, imagination and unique motivations to generate the financial results required by the business (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Organizational Performance

The researcher study sought to establish if transformational leadership influences organizational performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The results of the findings as indicated that most of the Company's profitability have increased for the last three years due to transfromational leadership, that the organizations have audited their financial reports, that the organization is able to achieve objectives within their budgets and that Over the past three years, most of the organizations have shown steady, measurable cost reduction due to transformational leadership. Yukl (2006) stated that research does demonstrate that leaders have less influence over organizational events than is often assumed but emphasized that the research in no way supports the conclusion that leadership is unimportant to organizational success. Thus, despite all the internal and external constraints, individual transformational leaders and top teams still have substantial influence on organizational performance and effectiveness. Also that the decisions and actions of transformational leaders have a strong influence on organizational success (Bass, 2007).

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presented the summary of the research findings and discusses the broader implications of the findings for theory, practice, policy and further research in the commercial banks in Kenya. The study sought to investigate the influence of stimulating managers on organizational performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The recommendations refer to suggestions for further study or proposal for change.

The findings of the study show that Personal integrity and intensity are powerful drivers for organizational performance and leaders in many organizations create an environment where people willingly engage their passion, creativity, imagination and unique motivations to generate the financial results. Stimulating leaders inspire employees to get a sustainable competitive edge and lastly that strategic leaders enable the organization to engage in a relevant and dynamic way.

The strategic leader needs to create an environment where people willingly engage their passion, creativity, imagination and unique motivations to generate the financial results required by the business.

Conclusions

The study concluded that Personal integrity and intensity are powerful drivers for organizational performance and leaders in many organizations create an environment where people willingly engage their passion, creativity, imagination and unique motivations to generate the financial results. Stimulating leaders inspire employees to get a sustainable competitive edge and lastly that strategic leaders enable the organization to engage in a relevant and dynamic way.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the following are the recommendations that can be made for managerial policy and managerial practice

Leadership style behaviors that have a strong positive relationship with organizational performance should be put into practice. It is therefore recommended that managers should provide recognition or rewards. Managers should consider acquiring the transformational leadership skills because they are very important in the revolutionizing of the commercial banks in Kenya.

Areas for Further Research

This study focused on the influence of stimulating managers on organizational performance of commercial banks in Kenya. There is however still need for future researches to be done to establish other areas of employee engagement influenced by transformational leadership behaviors, as well as their contribution to organizational performance.

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